

Asian Pentecostalism: Serving All the Pentecostal Waves¹

Wonsuk Ma

At the emergence of the Third Wave movement, I critically interacted with Charles Kraft's lower-level power encounter, questioning several assumptions, methodologies, and implied theologies.² At the end of my engagement, I voiced a clear need for the First-Wave (or Classical Pentecostals) to undertake a robust conversation with the Third-Wavers (now part of the Neo-Charismatic category).

Now a half-century onward, the global landscape of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity has radically evolved, and the call for inter-waval exchanges, mutual learning, and mutual strengthening remains even more urgent and essential. This essay is intended to map today's global Pentecostal families, the characterization of each family in the world, the Pentecostal scenery in East and Southeast Asia, and the role of the classical Pentecostal church and academia in serving all the "waves" in the world toward the future.

Global Pentecostal Families/Waves

In the present century, Todd Johnson and Gina Zurlo have emerged as the dominant team for Christian statistics, beginning with Johnson's role in the second edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*³ and the *Atlas of Global Christianity*.⁴ The Johnson-Zurlo duo became responsible for the third edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia (WCE)*⁵ and the

¹The original version was presented at the William Menzies Annual Lectureship at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio City, Philippines, February 2023.

²Wonsuk Ma, "A 'First Waver' Looks at the 'Third Wave': A Pentecostal Reflection on Charles Kraft's Power Encounter Terminology," *Pneuma* 19, no. 2 (Sept. 1997): 189–206.

³David B. Barrett, George Thomas Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁴Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

⁵Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

ongoing companion series to the *Atlas*. Many derivative titles come from their reference books, one of which is *Introducing Spirit-Empowered Christianity (ISEC)*.⁶

In identifying Pentecostal believers, *ISEC*, aside from one theological definition by Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, uses a descriptive profile called “Family Resemblances.” This profile includes the baptism of the Spirit, glossolalia, and the validity of (especially supernatural) gifts of the Spirit.⁷ To refer to the entire Spirit-Christianity in its diversity, various terms have been tried: “Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity,” “P/pentecostalism,” “Renewal movement,” “full gospel,” or “Spirit-empowered movement.” I use Pentecostal(ism) as an umbrella term, sometimes interchangeably with “Pentecostal/Charismatics.”

Three Families

As generally accepted, the book presents three blocks or types of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity: Classical Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Neo-Charismatics or Independent Charismatics. However, it is not always easy to determine who belongs to which group and for what reason. There are at least two reasons for this difficulty: 1) defining Pentecostalism itself has been long debated with no reasonable consensus, and 2) the entire movement is constantly evolving in new socio-cultural contexts with new ecclesial forms and theologies. The following is the generally agreed-upon categorization, which was also adopted by the Johnson-Zurlo team. The figures are also from *ISEC*.⁸

The first type, or Classical Pentecostals, is the easiest to define. They are believers belonging to Pentecostal denominations. Most are historically traced to the Azusa Street Mission (1906-1909), although some groups may predate it. As they are organized in denominations, they are structurally identifiable. They also share theological resemblances, such as baptism in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues as its common evidence. Among the three types, this is the smallest (only 19.2% of global Pentecostal believers in 2020).

The second type, Charismatics, accept and practice key tenets of Pentecostalism, such as fullness in the Spirit (instead of “baptism in the Spirit,” the Classical Pentecostal term) and the validity of supernatural

⁶The data is from the pre-publication version of Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, *Introducing Spirit-Empowered Christianity: The Global Pentecostal & Charismatic Movements in the 21st Century* (Tulsa: ORU Press, 2020).

⁷*Ibid.*, 14-30.

⁸The following table was constructed using the data in *ISEC*, 35-36.

gifts such as healing and speaking in tongues, but remain in their existing churches. The origin of the Charismatics is commonly attributed to the 1960s when Dennis Bennett, an Episcopal priest in California, publicly announced his experience with the Holy Spirit.⁹ This is the second largest group among the three types, but tracing their numbers and practices is difficult. Their largest subgroup is Catholic Charismatics (195.5 million in 2020), followed by Protestant Charismatics (68 million). Between 2020 and 2050, its annual growth rate is projected to be 1.28%, the lowest among the three (cf. 1.68% for Classical Pentecostals).

The third type of Pentecostal/Charismatics is called either Neo-Charismatics (by the *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements*) or Independent Charismatics (by Johnson and Zurlo). By far, this category is the largest (predicted to be 42.1% of global Pentecostal believers in 2050) with the fastest growth rate (projected as 1.83% between 2020 and 2050). While Neo-Charismatics or Independent Charismatics are the largest group, they are also the hardest to identify. “Renewal” is a popular term referring to the pneumatic experiences of the believers of this group who believe in and experience the immediate and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, but do not identify with either type discussed above. Those in this “catch-all” category are, therefore, extremely challenging to identify, as are the reasons why they are counted in this group. The Third Wave leaders once claimed that their movement represented this third category, a claim proven to be presumptuous. Scholars frequently include the African Independent/Initiated churches and some Chinese house church networks in this broad yet ambiguous category.¹⁰ This categorization also challenges distinguishing between this third category and “Independents” as a major Christian classification.

⁹Dennis J. Bennett, *Nine O’Clock In The Morning* (Newberry, FL: Bridge-Logos, 1970).

¹⁰For a discussion on the Pentecostal nature of several Chinese house church networks, see Luke Wesley, *The Church in China: Persecuted, Pentecostal and Powerful*, Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies, Book 2. (Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, 2004). More recently, Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson, eds., *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies 22 (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 2017).

Table 1.

Global Pentecostal Families					
	1900	agr* 1900- 2020	2020	agr* 2020- 2050	2050
Classical Pentecostals	20,000	7.75%	123,700,000	1.68%	203,700,000
Charismatics	12,000	8.70%	268,300,000	1.28%	393,200,000
Neo-Charismatics	949,400	4.76%	252,300,000	1.83%	434,600,000
Total	981,400	5.55%	644,300,000	1.58%	1,031,500,000

* annual growth rate

As argued elsewhere, global Pentecostal Christianity is the main growth engine for global Christianity. For comparison, between 2020 and 2050, Johnson and Zurlo projected the world population to grow at 0.76% each year, global Christianity at 1.03%, but global Pentecostalism at 1.58%.

Two Global Networks

Today, there are two world networks for the Pentecostal world. The Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) was first organized in Switzerland in May 1947. David DuPlessis, at the helm of the fledgling fellowship from 1948, led four triennial gatherings. Its mission statement is “To unite and mobilize the global Spirit-filled family in completing the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.”¹¹ Its objectives are heavy in fellowship and partnership among member churches, promoting world evangelization.¹²

The PWF is an organization among Pentecostal denominations, thus, Classical Pentecostals. This exclusive nature has a historical root: the founding of the fellowship predated the appearance of the Charismatic movement, although Neo-Charismatic churches both predate and postdate the PWF. It is also assumed that the Fellowship, at one point, decided that

¹¹Pentecostal World Fellowship, “Our Mission Statement,” <https://www.pwfellowship.org/about-us> (accessed December 26, 2022).

¹²For the historical overview of the Fellowship, see William M. Wilson, “The Pentecostal World Fellowship: Its Past, Present, and Future,” *Pentecostal Education* 7:2 (Fall 2022): 153-164.

it should serve the Pentecostal denominations. Its structure, therefore, is a membership organization. It currently has three Commissions: the Christian Unity Commission, the Education Commission (served by the independent World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education [WAPTE]), and the World Mission Commission.¹³ WAPTE's biennial journal, *Pentecostal Education*, serves as a voice of the Fellowship. In its 2019 Calgary meeting, William Wilson, the president of Oral Roberts University and the chair of Empowered21, was elected chair of the PWF. He was re-elected in the 2022 Seoul conference to serve another three-year term. It has held triennial conferences since its establishment. The list of host nations reflects the heavy Euro-North American centrism in the early years, but the number of host countries in the Global South has increased in the later gatherings.¹⁴

Until the birth of Empowered21 in 2010, the PWF was the authoritative voice for the global Pentecostal churches. It has also exhibited stability and continuity as a membership organization. Throughout its history, the office address changed according to the elected chairperson. Thus, in recent years, the "headquarters" was in Kuala Lumpur, where Tan Sri Prince Guneratnam served as the chair (2010-2019), then changed to Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA (2019 to present), where William Wilson operates as the president of Oral Roberts University. An ongoing effort is being made to bring the scattered records to one place for posterity. All three commissions of the PWF agreed to deposit their records with the Center for Spirit-Empowered Research of Oral Roberts University. However, it has proven challenging to trace old documents of the central committee from its inception, digitize them, and collect them in one place. When the collection is complete, researchers will be significantly served to access official records of the Fellowship.

Whereas the PWF limits its membership to the Classical Pentecostal denominations (or Type 1), Empowered21 has an organic or relational structure, tracing its historical root to the 2006 centenary celebration of the Azusa Street Mission. Its organizer, William Wilson, made the gathering international and inter-waval, including more than Classical Pentecostals. After this successful celebration in Los Angeles, he was left with the first-time database of who's who in global Pentecostal-

¹³The 2022 Conference edition of *Pentecostal Education* 7:2 (Fall 2022) includes a historical overview of each commission followed by a featured study(s). Until recently, there was the fourth commission, Pentecostal Commission on Religious Liberty, which has been combined into the World Mission Commission. For the full text, see <https://wapte.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Pentecostal-Education-7-2-Fall-2022-v2.pdf>.

¹⁴See the list of the Pentecostal World Conferences in Wilson, "The Pentecostal World Fellowship," 156.

Charismatic Christianity! After a series of discernment processes with the awareness that the PWF had been serving the Classical Pentecostal constituencies, he launched the Empowered21 network in 2010 as an inclusive global network, embracing all three families of Pentecostal Christianity. Through an extensive survey among the world's leaders of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, "Spirit-empowered" was selected to serve as the umbrella term for the full spectrum of pneumatic Christianity. After a series of international preparatory meetings, the ground was laid for the 2015 Jerusalem gathering during Pentecost week.¹⁵ Understandably, its Global Council, the highest decision-making body, includes Pentecostal denominational leaders, megachurch pastors, independent ministry executives, evangelists, prophets, mission leaders, scholars, and younger leaders.¹⁶ It currently has three specialty groups: Global Evangelist Alliance, NextGen Network, and a scholarly group running the annual Scholars Consultations. Regional meetings are held each year, while a global conference is organized every five years (so far). The first was held in Jerusalem in 2015, and the second was planned for 2020, also in Jerusalem. (However, this conference was pivoted to virtual meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Despite its relational nature, the programs of Empowered21 prove to be intentional with its active and engaging Global Council annual meetings. For example, the Scholars Consultation has met around a specific theme each year, culminating in a substantial scholarly book published each year (previously by Charisma House and from 2018 by ORU Press). The Evangelist Alliance and NextGen also meet annually. Its 2023 gathering in Amsterdam launched the EveryONE campaign with a bold plan:

In 2033, the world will celebrate the 2000-year anniversary of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and the birth of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. We believe the decade leading up to 2033 will be a defining decade, a decade in which it is possible for

¹⁵Vinson Synan and Billy Wilson, *As the Waters Cover the Sea: The Story of Empowered21 and the Movement It Serves* (Tulsa: Empowered Books, 2021) includes Synan's introductory section (55-67) and Wilson's reflection on his journey from the centenary celebration of the Azusa Street Mission (2006), the organization of the Empowered21, and its vision toward the two-thousand year anniversary of the church's birth (75-148).

¹⁶<https://empowered21.com/about/global-leaders/>.

every person on earth to hear the gospel. Amsterdam2023 is the starting point for this decade of unprecedented evangelism.¹⁷

This vision of 2033 has been the foundational commitment of Empowered21, first articulated in the 2013 Global Council meeting in Honolulu.¹⁸ Thus, the 2023 meeting was sharply focused on this vision. Providentially, Wilson leads both the PWF and Empowered21, fully representing the world's Spirit-empowered or Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in many ecumenical platforms. This fast-growing segment of world Christianity now has a credible voice. How each network will strengthen the other is a question. In the 2022 Seoul PWF triennial conference, Empowered21 maintained the service posture. For example, its Scholars Consultation was jointly organized by Empowered21, WAPTE of PWF, and the host church, although much of the burden of planning and managing was on Empowered21's shoulders.

An Inventory Exercise of Gifts and Un-gifts of Each Wave

This section is the crux of the study. I want to take a close look at each Pentecostal-Charismatic family/wave and identify its unique gift to strengthen the other waves. At the same time, it is my conviction that each also has weak (or "un-gifted") areas where gifts from other waves can fill the gap. For each wave, I will look into 1) gifts coming out of the mode of its organization; 2) the way it is represented in and recognized by the broad church world; 3) the general social status of the adherents; and 4) areas of "un-gifts" (or weakness) which other Pentecostal families may assist.

Classical Pentecostals

The first type, Classical Pentecostals, comes with the most organized operation as they are Pentecostal denominations. Thus, they bring strengths and gifts due to their intentional development, as first exhibited in their institutions.

Mission comes first since all the Pentecostal denominations subscribe to the belief in Spirit baptism and its missional purpose (based on Acts 1:8). For a snapshot, the 2021 report of the USA Assemblies of God lists 5,224 mission workers out of its 2.9 million membership,

¹⁷Empowered21, "Amsterdam2023," <https://amsterdam2023.com/> (accessed December 27, 2022).

¹⁸Synan and Wilson, *As the Waters Cover the Sea*, 83-85.

561 members sending one mission worker.¹⁹ This is compared with the North American statistics: 135,000 mission workers out of 267.9 million believers. That is, 1,984 members send out one mission worker.²⁰ Aspects of distinguished mission operations of the Pentecostal denominations can also be examined, including finance. In the 2022 report of the USA Assemblies of God World Mission, a total of \$232.7 million was given toward mission, with every member giving \$81.80 per year.²¹ As Pentecostals have expanded their understanding of mission and activities from evangelism to social service and public theology²² and numerical growth, their voice is heard by other churches and society. Although other statistics are not available, this giving must outperform that of the Christian average in the continent.

Another area of strength in the structured nature of Classical Pentecostals is theological development. The theological education institutions of Pentecostal denominations train the workers of their denominations and other churches. The institutions also function as research centers, while the faculty members act as researchers. An increasing number of these institutions offer both academic and professional post-graduate programs. Both the denominations and theological institutions have developed publishing outlets, initially to serve local churches of the denominations, but also to disseminate theological studies to the broader Christian world. With financial resources, their theological identity is well established. This growing institutional and theological strength has led to the establishment of academic societies. For example, the Society for Pentecostal Studies (with its journal, *Pneuma*) was established by three Classical Pentecostal scholars: William W. Menzies, H. Vinson Synan, and Horace Ward in 1970 to advance Pentecostal scholarship. It has also drawn academics from Charismatic and Neo-Charismatic camps and illustrates the convening power of Classical Pentecostalism to bring other “waves” together.

¹⁹Assemblies of God, “Statistics,” <https://ag.org/About/Statistics> (accessed December 28, 2022).

²⁰*WCE*, 3rd ed., 32.

²¹Assemblies of God World Missions, “Vital Stats” (2022 Issue 1), <https://www.agwm.org/cms-data/file/vital-stats.pdf> (accessed December 28, 2022). One should be reminded, however, that other regional pictures may not closely correspond with the North American illustration.

²²For the evolution of Pentecostal mission thinking, see Wonsuk Ma and Julie C. Ma, “Missiology: Evangelization, Holistic Ministry, and Social Justice,” in *Routledge Handbook of Pentecostal Theology*, ed. Wolfgang Vondey (London: Routledge, 2020), 279–89.

Their organized structure affords Classical Pentecostals' presence and voice among churches. One useful example is the sustained desire for the Secretaries of Christian World Communions to have a representative of the world's Pentecostal churches. This invitation was formally fulfilled only in 2021 after the Pentecostal World Fellowship instituted the Christian Unity Commission.²³ Despite the unofficial nature of the body, it has wielded a formidable influence on the ecumenical movement, international politics, and social issues. Due to the organized nature, this Secretariate naturally sought to include the Pentecostal presence from Classical Pentecostals. Similarly, the PWF has a place in the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. The growing alternative space of church unity is the Global Christian Forum. From its inception, Pentecostals have been considered to be a "pillar" of world Christianity, thus, of the Forum. (More discussion in the next study.) This representing power brings Pentecostal voices to various discussions and processes.

In a century, these Classical Pentecostals evolved from their "poor" identity, both social, economic, and even ecclesiastical status, to a recognizable, reputable, and invited position even as this identity of "poor" has played a vital role in Pentecostal identity. The movement began as a marginal religious phenomenon among the socially and economically "disinherited." For example, the participants of the Azusa Street Mission were primarily "colored," less educated, and just poor, drawn from the lower social strata.²⁴ The presence of whites in this midst disgusted local media. Branded as religious fanatics, a local newspaper chose the headline of its report as "Weird Babble of Tongues: New Sect of Fanatics Is Breaking Loose."²⁵ They were no longer welcomed by their churches due to their Pentecostal beliefs and experiences. This was a rich soil for an explosive religious movement to be nurtured and developed. Since then, Pentecostal churches throughout the world have attracted the marginalized and deprived masses to the message of Christ's imminent return, spiritual empowerment, physical healing, miracles, and blessing. Unsurprisingly, the belief in and experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit were the central tenets of Pentecostalism. And the crux of it is "empowerment," as discussed earlier. The "poor" are now "fired up" and revolutionizing their lives and the Christian faith.²⁶ The premillennial

²³Cecil M. Robeck, "Growing Opportunities for Pentecostal Ecumenical Engagement," *Pentecostal Education* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2022): 180.

²⁴A window to the daily scene of the Mission is provided by Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street* (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1980).

²⁵Los Angeles Daily Times, April 18, 1906.

²⁶For example, Wonsuk Ma, "'When the Poor Are Fired Up': The Role of

eschatological urgency further fueled the missionary zeal for the Spirit-empowered “poor.” A century onward, the movement has spread like wildfire and “moved on” from its “poor” status, physically, economically, and socially. As discussed above, the presence of Classical Pentecostals is now sought by the associations that once ignored and distanced these disreputable “fanatics.”

These strengths, however, have now become their very weaknesses. The organizational structure, which once supported the spiritual vitality of Classical Pentecostals, is now “running” the institutionalization. Once, I asked how the Pentecostal denomination maintains a high level of mission operation in the face of an eroded Pentecostal spirituality and waned premillennial urgency, and a highly respected denominational leader and scholar responded, “The organization!” Already a generation ago, a prominent Pentecostal sociologist issued a clear warning.²⁷ The steady decrease in baptism in the Spirit among Classical Pentecostal believers indicates eroded Pentecostal distinctives. Church attendance has also steadily declined from 1.9 million in 2011 to 1.7 million in 2021, a 10.5% loss in a decade.²⁸ The aging of ministers is another worrying indicator: the 2021 status reports the average age of the 37,557 credentialed ministers at 56, but 61 for ordained ministers. This aging trend has been consistent over the years.²⁹ There are also signs of cultural and doctrinal rigidity, slowly moving away from its original nature of a “fellowship.” Several independent ministries/churches with global influence, such as Hillsong in Sydney and Bethel Church in California, were once Classical Pentecostal congregations. They might have concluded that their denominational affiliation limited rather than enhanced their broader outreach. One encouraging demographic change is the increase of multi-ethnic constituents from less than 30% in 2001 to 44.3% in 2021.³⁰ Perhaps this is the redemption of the denomination’s infamous founding ideology, dividing American Pentecostalism along

Pneumatology in Pentecostal-Charismatic Mission,” *Transformation* 24, no. 1 (2007): 28–34.

²⁷Margaret M. Poloma, *The Assemblies of God at the Crossroads: Charisma and Institutional Dilemmas* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

²⁸(USA) Assemblies of God, “Reports: Major worship Service Attendance by District Network, 2011-2021,” <https://ag.org/About/Statistics> (accessed December 30, 2022).

²⁹(USA) Assemblies of God, “Reports: Ministers by Age 2021,” <https://ag.org/About/Statistics> (accessed December 30, 2022).

³⁰(USA) Assemblies of God, “Reports: Adherents by Race 2001 through 2021,” <https://ag.org/About/Statistics> (accessed December 30, 2022).

racial lines by creating a white Pentecostal group (separating from the celebrated multi-ethnic nature of the Azusa Street Mission).³¹

The extensive use of the USA Assemblies of God data is an unmistakable illustration of the organizational resource of Classical Pentecostalism. While Pentecostal denominations in other parts of the world may not provide such detailed data, the challenges identified are not limited to Western Pentecostal denominations. In both the global north and south, many Classical Pentecostal churches are experiencing aging memberships and the erosion of spiritual vitality with various signs of institutionalization. For example, the Korean Pentecostal churches struggle with these issues, desperately searching for answers.

Charismatics

This type two Pentecostal family is mainly found in historic churches, particularly among Catholic and Protestant churches. Johnson-Zurlo provides the following figures:³²

Table 2.

	1900	agr* 1900-2020	2020	agr* 2020-2050	2050
Catholic Charismatics	10,000	8.58%	195,475,000	0.93%	257,800,000
Protestant Charismatics	2,000	9.08%	68,000,000	2.16%	128,919,000
Orthodox Charismatics	0	9.40%	4,813,000	0.99%	6,464,000
Global Total	12,000	8.70%	268,288,000	1.28%	393,183,000

* Annual Growth Rate

Statistically speaking, Charismatics grew fastest between 1900-2020, compared with 7.55% for Classical Pentecostals and 4.76% for Neo-Charismatics. However, for 2020-2050, Charismatics are expected

³¹Sociologically speaking, the most astonishing accomplishment of the Azusa Street Mission was brilliantly captured in the saying, “the ‘color line’ was washed away in the blood.” Frank Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles: The Story Behind the Azusa Street Revival*, ed. Cecil M. Robeck Jr. (Originally published in 1925; Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2017), 54.

³²*ISEC*, 39.

to grow the slowest (at 1.28%) among the three families (1.68% for Classical Pentecostals and 1.83% for Neo-Charismatics).

The table also reveals that the largest in the Charismatic family is Catholic Charismatics, almost 73% of the global Charismatic believers in 2020. The overview of Catholic Charismatics by Johnson and Zurlo in the Americas is also helpful. They are frequently organized in covenant communities, such as The Word of God Community (Ann Arbor, Michigan) and the El Shaddai DWXI Prayer Partners Fellowship International in the Philippines. Francis MacNutt's Spirit-filled missionary itinerary illustrates the pattern of their growth and expansion through Latin America. After his experience with the Holy Spirit, this Dominican American priest journeyed through Bolivia, Peru, and Mexico. Teaching about and advocating the fullness of the Spirit in prayer meetings and conferences, Catholics with spiritual experience began to influence their parish churches. Various communities were established while "Pentecostalizing" existing prayer groups, communities, and parish churches. The Philippines witnessed a similar surge of Charismatic prayer groups in the early 1980s, resulting in various communities, including the large El Shaddai group, claiming eight million adherents worldwide.³³ Other prayer groups also developed into Protestant fellowships and networks. With its growth and prominence advocated by Joseph Suenens (1904-1996), the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) has been recognized since the papacy of John Paul II. Today, the Vatican-based Charis International serves the worldwide Catholic Charismatic communities and believers. Pope Francis celebrated CCR's 50th anniversary in June 2017.³⁴

How Protestant Charismatics are organized is an entirely different matter. Charismatic Anglicans in Great Britain are identified by local churches, such as the Holy Trinity Brompton in London and St. Aldates of Oxford. Considering the parish nature of local congregations, the Charismatic identity of local congregations happens more in cities than in rural communities. Charismatic churches and ministers, however, created New Wine with a clear Charismatic identity: "a Spirit-empowered movement . . . to equip the local Church to release

³³For Mike Vilarde's theological controversy, see Katharine L. Wiegele, *Investing in Miracles: El Shaddai and the Transformation of Popular Catholicism in the Philippines* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2007).

³⁴Jeannie Ewing, "Gloden Jubilee Year for Catholic Charismatic Renewal," *Today's Catholic* (Dec. 11, 2017), <https://todayscatholic.org/golden-jubilee-year-catholic-charismatic-renewal/> (accessed January 2, 2023).

confident, Spirit-filled followers of Jesus.”³⁵ Its annual conference serves as the space to gather, build relationships, and strengthen Spirit-empowered churches. Although it is an “evangelical” entity, New Wine has been promoting and strengthening the Charismatic segments of the Anglican Church. However, there may not be similar structural support for Anglican or Episcopal Charismatics in other parts of the world. Similarly, most Protestant Charismatics are scattered (or even “hidden”) in existing congregations with no structural support. Johnson and Zurlo sampled a wide range of churches with substantial Charismatic presence: Evangelical Church of Makane Yesus of Ethiopia, Evangelical Free Church of Finland, Wabag Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, Korean Presbyterian Church (Tonghap), Salvation of Army India, United Church of Zambia, and Ethiopian Orthodox Church.³⁶

The unique strength of Charismatics is the interface of Pentecostal theology and spirituality with those of their “mother churches.” As I once argued that the ultimate purpose of the modern Pentecostal outpouring was to renew the whole church, the Charismatics have demonstrated that the vitality of the Holy Spirit can renew and vitalize any theological system. Many believe the Charismatic renewals have revitalized many Catholic congregations to slow their ongoing decline. This creative engagement between Pentecostal pneumatology and historic theological traditions has challenged rather narrowly defined Pentecostal theology. It was refreshing to hear a sermon on “Ethical Fashion” by a Charismatic Anglican preacher admonishing his parishioners to count the human cost of cheap clothes.³⁷ This sermon was delivered in the wake of a fire in a garment factory in Sri Lanka, which killed many women workers. Similarly, a Charismatic Anglican missiologist, Andrew Lord, published a study on Charismatic missiology. He combined Anglican theological resources with the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit. This creative interaction and interface resulted in a holistic missiology by incorporating justice and public responsibility into the Pentecostal mission framework.³⁸ Also coming from English Anglican Charismatics is the Alpha course, which is a widely used tool for evangelism with the Spirit baptism at the climax. Many more examples can be added from other ecclesial traditions.

³⁵New Wine, “About Us,” <https://www.new-wine.org/about/> (accessed January 1, 2023).

³⁶*ISEC*, 86-107.

³⁷Charlie Cleverly (sermon, St. Aldates Church in Oxford, UK, n.d.).

³⁸Andrew Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission: A Holistic Charismatic Missiology* (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2005).

Charismatics' general social status tends to reflect the middle class of society as the general population of mainline Christianity. Unlike the "poor" identity of Classical Pentecostals, Charismatic believers exhibit higher educational, social, and economic status with more influence on their society. They meet in hotels, restaurants, or large homes. Their eschatology also tends to move away from premillennial urgency, perhaps an indication, as several sociologists have suggested, that the Pentecostal faith's explosive energy comes from individuals' deprived states. As Classical Pentecostals struggle to maintain Pentecostal fervor and ethos in economically developed settings, the flourishing of Pentecostal spirituality in a non-deprivation environment may hold the key to sustained spirituality in good and bad times.

On the other hand, the "mother church" theology and ecclesial hierarchy can limit the work of the Holy Spirit. For example, adopting the guidelines for Catholic prayer and healing meetings in the Philippines resulted in the independence of many prayer groups from the Catholic Church, forming various fellowships.³⁹ Potential critical theological tension is another possibility should the "mother" theology have no room to accommodate the immediate and supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. An example may be a church hierarchy's promotion of dispensational theology, including a cessationist understanding of supernatural gifts today.

The one area of vulnerability among Charismatics is their lack of organizational identity, which deprives both their churches and other Pentecostal-Charismatic believers of the impact of their presence and voice. Due to this lack of structural support, Charismatic growth is a result of the leadership of Charismatic champions. During its heyday in the 1970s, leaders of the Charismatic movement created an interdenominational service arm: the North American Renewal Service Committee. Organized by Vinson Synan, large interdenominational Charismatic conferences were held in New Orleans (1986 and 1987), San Antonio (1988), Indianapolis (1990), Orlando (1995), and St. Louis (2000).⁴⁰ However, this ambitious ecumenical corporation soon waned as the champions disappeared from the stage one after another. The movement's relative instability is reflected in its projected slow growth,

³⁹"Guidelines of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Archdiocese of Manila" (Manila: Archdiocesan Office for Research and Development, 1983).

⁴⁰For archival collection, see Digital Showcase, "North American Renewal Service Committee," <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/narsc/> (accessed January 3, 2023). See also the personal accounts of Vinson Synan, *Where He Leads Me: The Vinson Synan Story* (Franklin Springs, GA: LifeSprings Resources, 2019).

a 1.27% annual growth rate between 2020 and 2050, lower than Classical Pentecostals (1.68%) and Neo-Charismatics (1.83%).

Also noticeable is the stagnant “growth” of Charismatic believers. Let’s take Catholic Charismatics as an example. In the twentieth century, it grew at an annual rate of 8.58%. This is compared to the Catholic Church’s growth of 1.36% per annum. Charismatics grew over six times faster than its mother church. However, almost all the “conversion” occurred within the Catholic Church. While it renewed the church with spiritual vibrancy, direct evangelism might have been negligible. This argument is supported by the stagnation of Catholic Charismatics in the current century. Between 2000 and 2020, they recorded only a 0.93% annual growth rate, even lower than the Catholic Church (0.96%).⁴¹ This limitation is inherent in the nature of the Charismatic movement: Its primary focus has been on the “renewal” of existing churches. This indicates the primary theological focus of the movement, unlike Classical Pentecostals who have been eager in evangelism. This again shows the urgency and validity of inter-waval exchanges and engagements. One viable space for such interactions is academic networks and gatherings. For example, the Society for Pentecostal Studies has welcomed Catholic Charismatic and non-Classical Pentecostal scholars for fellowship and interaction.

Neo-Charismatics

Neo-Charismatics are the most challenging and scattered among the three families. The sampling of Johnson and Zurlo illustrates this complexity: Apostolic, Charismatic (former Type 2), Deliverance, Full Gospel, Hidden non-Christian “Believers in Christ,” Media believers, Non-traditional, house, cell, Oneness, Pentecostal (former Type 1), Word of Faith, Zion, and Others (non-Charismatic networks).⁴² Preferring the term “Independent Charismatics,” Johnson and Zurlo argue: “While the classification and chronology of the first two types is rather straightforward, there are thousands of churches and movements that ‘resemble’ the first two types but do not fit their definitions. These constitute a third type and often pre-date the first two types.”⁴³

This family is by far the largest (about 42.1%) and fastest-growing (1.83% annual growth rate) among the three families (using the 2050 projection). For comparison, the whole of Pentecostal-Charismatics will

⁴¹See the table above.

⁴²*ISEC*, 39-40.

⁴³*ISEC*, 107.

grow at 1.57% and global Christianity at 1.03% per annum, as seen in the first table of this study.

Due to their extremely diverse nature, sampling a few Neo-Charismatic groups may be useful to map the landscape. The first is the Third Wave. Purported to be the third evolution of Pentecostal renewal after the two “waves,” some scholars use this term to represent all Neo-Charismatics. The Third Wave started in the early 1980s with the “Church Growth and Miracles” course offered by Peter Wagner and John Wimber at Fuller Theological Seminary. This also marks the beginning of the Pentecostalization of Evangelical churches. Signs and wonders characterize the Third Wave, with close attention to the theories and practices of power encounters.⁴⁴ Some of the early advocates later created the New Apostolic Movement. Today, many churches, networks, and ministries are loosely connected with this movement.

A second group of Neo-Charismatics is the International House of Prayer (IHOP) in Kansas City, Missouri, USA, founded by Mike Bickle in 1999 to become the center of intercessory prayer and worship on a 24/7 schedule. Perhaps taking a cue from the power-encounter teaching of the Third Wave, the goal is to prepare thousands of full-time intercessory missionaries for the Lord’s return. Over the years, it has expanded the scope of its ministry to include community service in inner cities, such as caring for orphans and children at risk. The front-page buttons may illustrate the ministry’s main emphases: “Prayer Room,” “Prophetic History,” “Works of Justice,” and “Global Bridegroom Fast.”⁴⁵ Its staff and missionaries freely exercise various spiritual gifts, and prophecy often stands out. As it attracts a large crowd of young people, IHOP’s organized counterpart may be the Youth With A Mission.

A third group of Neo-Charismatics include the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Brazil and the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria. Founded by Edir Macedo in 1977, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Brazil operates throughout Brazil and more than 100 countries and claims about 8 million members worldwide. When I attended its mid-week meeting in Sao Paulo, the service lasted the whole day, with singing, prayers, testimonies, preaching, and an extended session for healing exorcism. The message was about God’s power and blessing. The entire rear wall was full of crutches and wheelchairs, signs of healing. The church was in the middle of a large

⁴⁴E.g., C. Peter Wagner, *Signs and Wonders Today: The Story of Fuller Theological Seminary’s Remarkable Course on Spiritual Power*, exp ed. (Alamonte Springs, FL: Creation House, 1987).

⁴⁵International House of Prayer, “About the International House of Prayer,” <https://ihopkc.org/about/ihopkc>.

market, and most attendees were from lower social sectors. Macedo's prosperity gospel is well-known, with a personal asset of \$1 billion in 2015.⁴⁶ The church impacts politics by endorsing candidates. In Africa, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria, is part of the African Initiated or Independent Churches. Founded by Olufemi Akindayomi in 1947 and succeeded by Enoch Adoboye, the church is known for its contemporary and lively worship, spiritual warfare, and prosperity message. The Redeemed Church has campaigned against Islamic influence and violence from the north, responding to the nation's delicate religious tension between Christianity and Islam. Its membership in the country was 1.6 million in 2015, with half a million spread throughout the globe.⁴⁷

As suspected from the sampled communities, Neo-Charismatics are organized either as free-standing congregations or networked churches, including multi-site churches (often large or mega in size). Single independent churches tend to have charismatically gifted and strong leaders, attracting followers. For example, Life Church in Oklahoma, founded and led by Craig Groeschel in 2006, is listed as the largest church in the United States by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. This multi-site church is in several states (43 in the Jan 2023 count)⁴⁸ and reported a weekly attendance of 85,000 in 2018.⁴⁹ Its service, member demography, music, message, and ethos are modern, younger-generation friendly, celebratory, and uplifting. Although we hardly hear anything close to Pentecostal teaching, e.g., healing, praying in tongues, or prophecy, Groeschel's illustrations and his own testimonies do not exclude God's supernatural intervention. The most "Charismatic" element of the church may be its music: dynamic, celebratory, and participatory. The church has exercised its extreme generosity in freely releasing its ministry resources.⁵⁰ Perhaps the most significant contribution is the YouVersion Bible app. Launched in 2008 by Life Church, this Bible app offers the Bible in more than 1,900 languages, installed on 545 million devices, with 5.5 billion app openings in 2022.⁵¹ Thanks to the church's

⁴⁶*ISEC*, 134.

⁴⁷*ISEC*, 142-43.

⁴⁸Life Church, "Locations," <https://www.life.church/locations/> (accessed January 6, 2023).

⁴⁹Hartford Institute for Religion Research, "Database of Megachurches in the US," <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html> (accessed January 6, 2023).

⁵⁰Life Church, "What Is Open Network?" <https://open.life.church/> (accessed January 6, 2023).

⁵¹YouVersion, "YouVersion reports Verse of the Year and Ukrainian movement," <https://www.youversion.com/press/youversion-reports-verse-of-the-year-and-ukrainian-movement/> (accessed on January 3, 2023).

substantial investment, this tool is offered to anyone, all free of charge. Then, in this same category, we see many African denominations and networks under the Organization of African Instituted Churches (AICs) umbrella. The organization's website claims about 60 million members over "tens of thousands of AICs denominations across Sub-Saharan Africa and the African Diaspora."⁵² As each denomination has its unique history and leader's vision and theology, one church's structure, theology, and ethos are much different from another. Some have been criticized for indigenous spirituality incorporated into the church's theology and life, while others for extreme prosperity preaching and the flamboyant lifestyle of its leaders.⁵³

Despite this challenging diversity, they are organized by congregations, networks, and denominations, unlike the Charismatics. Because of this structured nature, some denominations are members of various global church networks, including the World Council of Churches. I already mentioned the Organization of AICs, enhancing the presence of member churches. The Organization is also a member of the All African Conference of Churches. However, such may not be true for other Neo-Charismatic churches and networks. For example, several house church networks in China are categorized as Neo-Charismatics, yet their data is hard to obtain. Also, sheer diversity in theology and organizational structures allows maximum autonomy for each entity to explore creative spirituality and engagement with their contexts. This may explain the move of Classical and Charismatic groups to this category, such as Bethel Church of California, with their theological slant towards the New Apostolic movement and its celebrated music. This family also tends to intersect with local communities, addressing their challenges. Prosperity preaching may have arisen from their concern for widespread poverty in their communities.

Many of their strengths may also turn into weaknesses (or un-gifts). Prosperity preaching has become a theological and social challenge as some preachers boast of their wealth and private jets. All three Pentecostal families can combine their resources and reflections

⁵²Organization of African Instituted Churches, "About Us," <https://www.oaic.org/about-us/> (accessed January 6, 2023).

⁵³For a useful snapshot, see J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, Studies of Religion in Africa 27 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2004).

to distinguish the biblical teaching of God's blessing from biblically questionable teachings.⁵⁴

Implications for Pentecostals in East and Southeast Asia

After reviewing the numbers of Pentecostal-Charismatic believers worldwide, regional statistics clarify the situation for the 1,277 million people in East and Southeast Asia. Among these, in 1970, about 4.6 million, or 0.36% of the population, were identified as Pentecostal-Charismatics. In 2020, the Pentecostal-Charismatic believers grew to almost 100 million followers, representing 0.43% of the population in the region. However, they also occupied a sizeable (more than one-third) proportion of the total Christian population. Equally noteworthy is their annual growth rates, especially in East Asia (7.94%), which is the second highest (after West Asia, which has a much smaller population).⁵⁵

Table 3.

East & Southeast Asia, 2020 (in millions)					
	Population	Christians	Pentecostal-Charismatics	% of Christians	Annual Growth Rate 1970-2020
East Asia	1,663.6	128.8	47.4	37%	7.94
Southeast Asia	669.0	153.1	52.5	34%	5.51
Total	2,332.6	281.9	99.9	35.4%	

I leave the conclusion open for everyone's pondering. With many shared values, assumptions and practices, Pentecostal-Charismatics have clear differences, including their social contexts. These differences open new space for fruitful engagement and gift-sharing among the waves. The first wave is better positioned to reach out to the other waves and offer its organizational, institutional, and theological resources. At the same time, its institutionalizing trend and waning dynamic demand new vitality and energy from the other waves.

I may share a recent experience with Catholic Charismatic leaders in Europe. In an annual leadership conference outside of Rome, Italy,

⁵⁴For a reflective essay, see Wonsuk Ma, "Blessing in Pentecostal Theology and Mission," in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, ed. Wonsuk Ma, V-M Kärkkäinen, and J. K. Asamoah-Gyadu (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2014), 272-91.

⁵⁵*ISEC*, 158.

around 200 Italian lay Catholic Charismatic leaders gathered. However, the speakers were diverse: Catholic academics from England, Poland, Belarus, Argentina, and Brazil, in addition to Italian leaders. I was the only non-Catholic presenter. I shared my casual observations, including the stagnation of Catholic Charismatics in this century, offering the renewal focus as a major reason. Then, I compared Brazilian Catholic (148.5 million adherents) and Pentecostal churches (in this case, the Assemblies of God with 21.0 million). However, the Assemblies of God has more local churches (160,978) compared to the Catholic number (11,716). The results are staggering. Each Catholic church serves 12,675 members, while each Assemblies of God church ministers to 130.5 people on average.⁵⁶ The other side of the same token is the saturated presence of Pentecostal churches, sometimes a makeshift structure in small villages and storefronts. In contrast, a Catholic church is found only in cities and large towns with massive buildings. This difference comes from different theological foci of the Spirit-filled and empowered life: renewal (from the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit) for the Catholics and Spirit-empowerment for witness (from the charismatic gifting of the Holy Spirit) for the Pentecostals. The latter expands to what is called “the prophethood of all believers,” with an endless supply of people called to serve. I admonished them to check out the Pentecostal understanding of the Holy Spirit.

This illustration and several suggestions above indicate the unique gift that Pentecostal churches and institutions have for other Spirit-empowered families. One space I suggested is academics, such as theological education and scholarly engagement. Classical Pentecostals, with the most developed institutional and theological assets, can proactively open their theological schools to smaller Pentecostal churches, Charismatic communities, and developing independent and neo-Charismatic churches. With formal and informal agreements, a Pentecostal Bible college or seminary can offer common courses for future leaders of other communities with their unique courses, such as history, doctrine, etc., taught by their leaders either as an adjunct or associate faculty member. The explosion of online course delivery enhances such collaborations. A joint colloquium or seminar on a common subject can also afford an opportunity for fellowship and mutual learning. The annual William Menzies lectureship of the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS) in the Philippines has encouraged

⁵⁶The statistics are from *WCE* 3rd ed, 138-142. It is well recognized that the Catholic Church has defined a “church” much more strictly than Protestant churches. For example, chapels, monasteries, and convents are not counted as local churches, while they regularly hold worship services open to the public.

active interaction among Pentecostal theologians. Following its success, other Pentecostal schools began similar programs. For example, the Pentecostal Leadership Conference hosted by the Pentecostal Research Center of the Bible College of Malaysia is one of the newest. Both programs extend their invitation to various Pentecostal-Charismatic constituencies.

To make a mutual exchange more intentional, the Asian Pentecostal Society has the potential to bring Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal academics to a common place for interaction and sharing. They have learned from the history of the Society for Pentecostal Studies that, by nature, an academic society is ecumenical. This also calls for the leadership to be ecumenically minded in extending their invitation to the broad Pentecostal-Charismatic academics.

The Asia Pacific Theological Association (APTA) is another promising instrument. Established in 1990, initially among the Assemblies of God Bible schools and seminaries in the Asia-Pacific region, the Association has expanded to other Pentecostal denominational schools.⁵⁷ It has provided accreditation, teaching certification services, and theological resources for member schools. For example, its Theological Commission organized conferences on national Pentecostal histories and eventually collected and edited them for a valuable resource book.⁵⁸ In its three-decade history, the Association has brilliantly achieved national representation and cooperation among theological educators and institutional leaders in the region. APTA has generously included non-member schools in its meetings from the beginning, taking advantage of opportunities to foster interactions and exchanges while enhancing the Association's visibility.⁵⁹ In the next decades, APTA can offer the same generosity to Charismatic and Neo-Charismatic institutions, including church-based training programs.⁶⁰ Every time the Association and its Commissions meet in different cities of the region, the leaders

⁵⁷For its history, see Denise A. Austin and John F. Carter, "Asia Pacific Theological Association: Three Decades of Contribution toward Pentecostal Research and Ministry Training," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 46:4 (Oct. 2022): 505-15.

⁵⁸Denise A. Austin, Jacqueline Grey, and Paul W. Lewis, eds., *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2019).

⁵⁹Austin and Carter, "Asia Pacific Theological Association," 507.

⁶⁰This extended vision is already present in the Association's Constitution and By-Laws: "This association is a cooperative effort among these [Assemblies of God Bible schools] and other Pentecostal/Charismatic schools in the region," <https://apta-schools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/APTA-Constitution-and-By-Laws-2011-Edition.pdf> (accessed June 12, 2024).

can carefully identify and invite Pentecostal-Charismatic theological institutions in the area.

Similarly, academic periodicals afford similar opportunities for sharing studies and interacting with others. The launch of the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* in 1998 by APTS signaled the birth of Asian Pentecostal scholarship and its desire to dialogue with fellow Pentecostals and Evangelicals actively. For example, its “Speaking in Tongues” issue in 2000 included Evangelical scholars interacting with Pentecostals. The same seminary created the *Journal of Asian Mission* and later gifted it to the Asia Graduate School of Theology, the consortium of Evangelical schools under the Asian Theological Association.

Conclusion

There are other potential opportunities and spaces to promote inter-wal engagement, fellowship, and cooperation. As history teaches us, no church or denomination is so perfect as not to need others’ gifts. Thus, we are all called to generously offer gifts to others to edify the whole Body of Christ while exercising humility in receiving others’ gifts to strengthen ourselves. As stated at the beginning of this article, the need for mutual learning and strengthening among all the waves is crucial. This is why Classical Pentecostals in Asia know their gifts and share them with other Pentecostal-Charismatic communities.

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