Chapter 9

Reverse mission: Pentecostals in the Diaspora – Altering or enforcing the dependency syndrome?

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1. Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between colonialism and missionary activity, along with the legacies that continue to shape Christian mission today. One such enduring legacy is the distinction between "mother" churches and "daughter" churches - with the Global North (represented by North America and Europe) and the Global South (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) - which still defines ecumenical relations. The chapter interrogates how the "dependency syndrome" continues to shape this relationship and remains evident in Pentecostal Christianity, in the Diaspora and in home countries. It further explores how this dynamic is framed within the context of "reverse mission", arguing for the decolonisation of mission and theology and considering the implications for ecumenical diakonia. By aligning the decolonisation of mission with the *missio Dei* concept, the chapter offers a framework for contextualising Pentecostal mission in a way that can foster glocal missional transformation.

2. The legacy of the older–younger churches

Mission has been understood in various ways throughout history, and Bosch (2011) distinguishes between several key emphases. He highlights, in soteriological terms, the former focus on saving individuals from eternal damnation; in cultural terms, the emphasis on introducing people from the East and the South to the blessings and privileges of the Christian West; in ecclesiastical terms, the priority given to the expansion of the church; and in salvation-historical terms, the understanding of mission as the process by which the world will be transformed into the kingdom of God.

What concerns us in this chapter is primarily, though not exclusively, the cultural language that has described the original movement of the gospel from the West to the rest, and how the "older–younger" concept of mission emerged to define and shape the relationship between churches on both sides of the East/South–West divide. Additionally, we examine how the other terms intersect with these cultural categories, contributing to the concept of "reverse mission" and its implications for ecumenical diakonia.

At the Jerusalem Conference (1928) of the International Missionary Council (IMC), the relationship between the "older" and "younger" churches was placed firmly on the mission agenda, and this theological exploration was further advanced at Tambaram (1938). There, the distinction between Christian and non-Christian countries was abandoned, and Europe and North America were also recognised as mission fields. Bosch (2011) describes the evolving relationship between the older and younger established churches as one of partnership, where missionaries from the older churches are welcomed and tolerated, though no longer central to the life and future of the younger churches. The prevailing understanding today is that the Christian church is missionary by its very nature and that the concept and practice of mission remain indispensable.

What is needed, is for the church to repent from the mistakes from the past and rediscover the essence of its missionary nature and calling. Bosch (2011) explains that

> repentance has to begin with a bold recognition of the fact that the church-in-mission is today facing a world fundamentally different from anything it faced before.

It is a period of transition, a paradigm shift, a time of crisis where danger and opportunity meet. A paradigm shift means continuity and change that involve faithfulness to the past and a boldness to engage the future, and includes constancy and contingency, tradition and transformation (Bosch, 2011).

3. Missio Dei: Missionary by nature, rooted in the Triune God

At the Willingen Conference (1952), the concept of the *missio Dei* was embraced, whereby the church was no longer regarded as the starting point or goal of mission - but God. The church now shifted from being the sender to being the one sent by God, and during the Ghana Assembly of the IMC (1958), the home base of mission was no longer seen as the West, but everywhere. Mission was understood as mission in partnership, marking the end of guardianship by one church over another (Bosch, 2011). A distinction emerged between the missionary dimension and the missionary intention of the church. The missionary dimension is expressed when the church worships as a community with open doors to outsiders, equipping its members for their calling and service in the world. The church's missionary intention, by contrast, is expressed when it moves beyond its walls to become intentionally and directly engaged in the world.

Bosch (2011) describes Karl Barth as the first Protestant missiologist to speak of the "gathering, upbuilding, and sending" of the church, based on John 20:21: "As my Father has sent me, so I send you". The questions posed by Newbigin about the Western church becoming a missionary church have also become significant, since its context has itself become a mission field (Reppenhagen & Guder, 2011). In 1962, Johannes Blauw used the imagery of centripetal and centrifugal to describe the missional pilgrimage of God's people in his study of congregations in mission for the WCC. *Centripetal* describes the inward pull - from the centred vocation of Israel in the Holy Land, Holy City, Holy Place, and Holy of Holies - while *centrifugal* describes the outward vocation of the New Testament communities, whose mission was to witness to God's love in Christ throughout the world (Reppenhagen & Guder, 2011).

The congregation as a missional community reflects this same dynamic: radiating God's love outward through witness and practising the hospitality of God's love (centrifugal), while gathering for worship, encouragement, and correction, which in turn leads to being sent out again (centripetal).

The church, as a contrast or alternative community in various contexts, implies a critical tension with those contexts. The missional church, as a public companion, continues the creative work of the triune God in civil society, demonstrating compassionate commitment to the institutions of society - working to create and strengthen the fabric of society, not alienating, but transforming the world (Reppenhagen & Guder, 2011). The missional church should concentrate on the threefold call to follow, to witness, and to serve, as marks of faithful discipleship and as part of its mandate in a post-everything world.

Prinsloo and Dreyer (2024) review the different periods of church engagement with poverty in South Africa, showing how churches transitioned from a focus on charity and paternalistic attitudes to a stronger advocacy for social justice and systemic transformation. They argue for a missional ecclesiology focused on a comprehensive and transformative approach to address the complexities of poverty. In a missional ecclesiology, the emphasis is placed on the church's participation in God's mission to the world, adopting a holistic understanding that integrates spiritual, social, and material dimensions - tackling immediate needs and underlying causes (Prinsloo & Dreyer, 2024:5). A missional ecclesiology can provide a guiding framework for shared commitment to holistic mission and community empowerment.

The church is called and mandated by the triune God to participate in God's mission to the world, which forms the basis for the diaconal nature of the church (WCC, 2014:47). This is not an optional function; it is realised through the gifts of the local church, which becomes a sign and servant of God's design for the world as a missional church. Every Christian shares the mandate to serve (discipleship), not as an instrument for proselytising or furthering the church's own agenda, but unconditionally, with the aim of proclaiming God's reign and goodwill for all creation, our common home. What should be kept in mind is that diaconal action, in the past and still today, has been accompanied by the exercise of personal and structural

power, which in most cases has been abused through the dependency relationship between older and younger churches, a legacy that urgently needs to be broken (WCC, 2014:51).

Diakonia holds together what the church is and does, and its Trinitarian basis represents a turning point or paradigm shift, that can be described as faith- and rights-based action (Nordstokke, 2022:38). The Trinitarian basis of diakonia is described as: faith in God as Creator and Lord over creation, granting dignity to all; following Jesus the Saviour through discipleship, showing what it means to be called and sent; and the Holy Spirit, who energises, inspires, transforms, and empowers the followers (Nordstokke, 2022:41). Knoetze (2022) similarly finds in the Trinitarian basis the foundation for a missional diaconate, whose purpose is to honour the presence of God in the world and to worship God (doxology).

It is through the sending of the Spirit by the Father and the Son that the church is created and becomes a window of the kingdom to the world. The equipping of the church through the charismata benefits the church internally and the world externally. The missional diaconate finds expression in koinonia (experiencing love, forgiveness, and empowerment), diakonia (deeds), and kerygma (words). In the *missio Dei,* the missional and diaconal natures are rooted in the Trinity.

4. Decolonising missional Christianity

Mission is a product of various encounters between indigenous communities and missionaries, alongside colonial traders and administrators (Mpofu, 2022:88). The Eurocentric approach to mission, which undermined indigenous knowledge systems (epistemicide) and disregarded local spiritualities (spiritiicide), led to an understanding of conversion in Christianity as equivalent to Westernisation (Seroto, 2018:4).

The result was that African Christians lived a double life or had a double allegiance, on the one hand being Christian meant denouncing their culture as a form of paganism and becoming Western European or white. Conversion meant totally denouncing culture. On the other hand, although Africans, dressed, behave and acted like the missionaries, they still practiced their African culture (White, 2017:1). This is what Resane (2025) describes

as a dubious faith or 'double faith' that continues until today, given the multi-religious context in which African Christians find themselves. In response, African Christian theologians have explored the indigenisation of Christianity through inculturation theology - an attempt to decolonise Western-centred mission theology and embrace an inclusive African approach that focuses on African identity and values (Mpofu, 2022:88).

Mission is carried out in context; therefore, the sociopolitical, economic, and religious realities that define the African context - such as the legacies of colonialism and apartheid - must be considered, especially in terms of how the oppression, domination, and exclusion of Africans by Western nations and churches have shaped that context. Mpofu (2022) regards thinking contextually as a way of decolonising theology and mission that stimulates theologies from below, informed by the voices of the poor and marginalised. Given the lack of effort by early missionaries to understand local indigenous knowledges and practices, there remains an ongoing need to interrogate the influence of Western culture on indigenous communities, including the symbols of Christian mission and Western civilisation itself (Mpofu, 2022:96).

5. Dependency syndrome – A legacy accompanying Christianity

With the rediscovery of the local church as the church-in-mission, the idea is portrayed that no local church should stand in a position of authority over another local church - a principle aligned with the New Testament conception of the church (Bosch, 2011). The "three-self" formula of *self-government, self-support*, and *self-propagation* has, in theory, equalised the relationship between older and younger churches. However, Bosch (2011) argues that this has not truly changed; younger churches are still often viewed as immature and dependent on the wisdom, experience, and help of the older churches. In such a relationship, independence can be seen as pedagogical, where the self-appointed guardian decides when "home rule" should be granted. A New Testament understanding of the church, by contrast, sees the universal church finding expression in the local church, evident in its martyria, leitourgia, koinonia, and diakonia. Bosch (2011) emphasises that although the rediscovery of the local church as the primary agent of mission has led to new interpretations of mission, the reality is that

> a donor syndrome is still very much in evidence in the affluent churches of the West and a 'dependency syndrome in the churches of the Third World.

Evidence describing this relationship is found in several recent contributions. Mashau (2020) argues that the relationship between empire and Christianity is not only historical but has become a present reality. Tracing the deceptive and domineering powers of empire back to early Christianity, Mashau (2020) calls for a "liberative praxis of engagement" to transform encounters between empire and Christianity in Africa, identifying how empire is manifested and operates. It can be described as domineering, enslaving, and divisive in its approach, perpetuating an inferiority complex amongst black people, enslaving, and creating a dependency syndrome. Empire is also manifested through dominant systems or hegemonies, is anti-life, and uses the culture of greed to further impoverish Africans.

Some of the ways in which empire is reflected in Christianity in Africa, according to Mashau (2020), include denominationalism that has turned African churches into sites of struggle, creating a divided faith with a divided mission. Prinsloo and Dreyer (2024) advocate for a united mission that transcends denominational boundaries and aims to create a more cohesive approach to combatting systemic poverty. Another feature is the lack of contextualisation, which has failed to foster meaningful conversation between African culture and religiosity, leaving Christianity as "a faith covered by a Western coat". This has contributed to a form of Christianity shaped by the spirit of consumerism, marked by spiritual blindness, and lacking the capacity for self-critique and self-correction. It continues to marginalise, dominate, and confine women to roles of childbearing and domesticity. Most critically for this chapter, it perpetuates a dependency syndrome - described by Mashau (2020) as a culture of begging and reliance on Western funding - which reinforces paternalism by the Western church.

Kim (2019) views paternalism as a danger stemming from cross-cultural missions, producing a culture of dependency in the indigenous church. Part of the legacy of paternalism lies in the Western military conquest and economic, cultural, and intellectual superiority complexes that shaped the partnership between younger and older churches in mission. Financial

paternalism can hinder church growth; therefore, mission agencies should consider the danger of dependency when supporting churches or pastors financially (Kim, 2019). A culture of dependency between Afrikaans-speaking (older) churches and Tswana-speaking (younger) churches in the Reformed Church (*Gereformeerde Kerk*) developed. The Afrikaans churches adopt a superior attitude, instead of a loving servant leadership style, towards the Tswana churches. Meanwhile, Tswana churches often exhibit a receiving mentality, which should be replaced with responsible stewardship and entrepreneurship for their churches to become financially sustainable. Kim (2019) proposes a holistic transformational model of missions to help overcome paternalistic and dependency tendencies.

In their study of township congregations, Pali and Schoeman (2020) report that the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) has long existed as a product of the mission history of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), shaped by the apartheid-era ideology of paternalism and segregation. The father–child relations that described the paternalistic relationship between the white DRC and black DRCA churches were further exacerbated by the dependency leadership style followed by the DRC. In the process, African culture was undermined, while low self-esteem, and spiritual and cultural confusion were cultivated amongst African Christians. Pali and Schoeman (2020) further argue that the withdrawal of financial and human resource support by the DRC missionaries from the DRCA resulted in increased conflict and the decline of finances, mission, and diaconal ministry. A prophetic and missional ecclesiology is needed to break free from the dependency syndrome and create an African Christianity that is publicly engaged and seeks justice for all.

Afrane-Twum (2024) describes how the dependency relationship continues today, in his study on the relationship between African immigrant churches in the British context and their home countries. The Church of the Pentecost (COP) in Ghana supports the planting of churches in Britain but remains in control of the running of these churches. Although the COP churches in Britain are not centrally controlled by the international headquarters in Ghana, the headquarters plays a supervisory role and intervenes where appropriate (Afrane-Twum, 2024:89). The COP offers African members a place of worship where they can discover a sense of

identity, respect, and belonging. The second generation of immigrants holds the possibility of cross-cultural mission, maintaining their identity, family, culture, and Christian beliefs while at the same time adapting to the culture of the host country (Afrane-Twum, 2024:122).

6. Reverse mission: A misnomer or a move of the spirit?

The story of Abraham and his family migrating to Egypt is an example of how crucial the phenomenon of migration is to the human story - and, importantly, the story of faith (Agbiji & Etukumana, 2015:200). Reflecting on this migration story, the declaration, "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien", are drawn from Deuteronomy 26:5. This raises questions such as whether Abraham and his children had the proper documents to stay in Egypt, whether the children had the appropriate Egyptian social security credentials, and whether they could speak the Egyptian language. It touches on the sociopolitical and economic factors involved in issues of migration and xenophobia. This is also the story of Christian mission; for centuries, there has been this sending-receiving dynamic, host-home relationships, and the resulting fear and stereotyping of the 'other'.

The world has become increasingly borderless, with people migrating for economic, social, and religious reasons throughout the 20th century (Adedibu, 2015:172). For migrants, this means facing discontinuities at various levels, and because of the push-and-pull factors of their host communities, they must find a way to acculturate in that context. Migration is driven by push-and-pull factors, with push factors referring to unsatisfactory conditions such as economic, religious, sociopolitical, and educational challenges on the African continent, and pull factors including good education and economic opportunities in the American context (Sackey-Ansah, 2020:68). The paradigm shifts in Christianity over the last century reflect the shift in the gravity of Christianity from the churches in the North to those in the South; the rise of Africa as an influential hub for Christianity; and, lastly, the development of reverse mission, making Africans an influential wave within global Christianity.

The world is witnessing the greatest movement of humanity today, which present the church of Jesus Christ with marvellous opportunities to join in solidarity with strangers in all parts of the world (Van Engen, 2018:1). The immigrant or stranger should not merely be seen as someone else, but also as part of 'us' according to Scripture, which calls for care and compassion towards them. Although there are many perspectives on the stranger - as an enemy of the people of God; as someone who should obey the same norms and keep the same commandments as the people of God; and as someone who should not only be treated fairly and equitably but also be cared for - this care is not optional. The stranger also has an instrumental role in God's mission (Van Engen, 2018:5).

The oversimplification of the "reverse mission" model, which assumes that Southern Christians (from the Global South, specifically Ghana, Africa) come to Europe (Belgium) to "re-Christianise" them, are also critiqued, finding that such an intention is largely absent from the missionary activities of these churches (Oppong-Konadu, 2023:130). Reflecting on the African Pentecostal planting of churches in the Canadian context, Jerimade (2017) finds that certain plantings by the Redeemed Christian Church of God cannot be regarded as "reverse mission". Eriksen (2019:2), reflecting on discovering a charismatic Spanish church in his neighbourhood in Norway, concludes that

> the mere presence of the church gave a clue that religion may be essential to migrants and that some migrants are Christians with needs to meet in multicultural, multilingual, Pentecostal-charismatic, and mission-minded churches like this.

Migrant churches can become powerful forces to restore faith, and they not only bring mission back onto the agenda of the church but also generate a reverse flow (from the Global South to the Global North) of spirituality, theology, and energy for mission - a shift that now includes everyone in the conversation (Biehl, 2022). Calling migration the DNA of Christian mission, with its roots already visible in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost, when people from all over the earth heard the gospel message in their own language, Biehl (2022) asserts that the Christian church today is a global gathering of men and women, serving as a model of and for cross-cultural mission.

Congregations of African immigrant churches in Britain are organised along ethnic lines - a structure that, while notable, is necessary to support the integration of recently arrived immigrants (Afrane-Twum, 2024:2). There is a huge need for more effective cross-cultural collaboration between white majority churches and African migrant churches, for the Great Commission to be fulfilled in Britain (Afrane-Twum, 2024:4). Sackey-Ansah (2020:66), mindful of the push-and-pull factors accompanying the migration of Africans to the West, specifically to America, observes that these African immigrants brought with them skills, talents, academic potential, and religious beliefs. They have impacted their spheres of influence by raising churches, forming prayer groups, preaching the gospel, and creating mission fields in their host countries.

International migration can be appreciated as a God-given opportunity to spread the gospel, with Christianity declining in Britain, North America, and Western Europe. The influx of Christian migrants can serve as "a providential means for reaching out to the host," and in order to achieve this, white majority churches and black immigrant churches will need to "combat mission ignorance and apathy that has over the years affected the work of the ministry in the country" (Afrane-Twum, 2024:133). Migration is seen as the will of God, with all people created by God and deserving of respect. Währisch-Oblau (2006:32) calls this "spontaneous forms of mission" that did not die with early Christianity but continue today through migration movements from the South to the North and from the East to the West.

Migrants are not simply like all of us, although we are all migrants as a people on the move; rather, migrants and refugees are people who were forced unduly and unjustly to leave their countries, and their struggle to realise their human rights and dignity is real. Bautista (2022:417) describes their experiences as a tragic consequence of the push-and-pull factors, with push factors playing a greater role in migration. This aligns with Dube (2016), who finds in the migration stories of Abraham and Jesus how the push-and-pull factors contribute to a migration perspective that allows for a dialectical interaction between the biblical world and the reader.

Romanticising or idealising migration is also not helpful for the migration debate. Stenschke (2016) derives from the biblical accounts, especially from the Book of Acts, that the movements of the early Christians, whether voluntary or forced, opened new opportunities for the gospel and may remain relevant for the church today. Stenschke (2016:146) identifies in Luke's writings a dynamic and mobile community of followers of Jesus, a distinctive trait not as a judgement but as obedience in following Jesus. He notes that there is a significant responsibility on the church to support those who emigrate, including the provision of basic necessities, assistance with integration, pastoral care, and using its influence to engage governments and communities where immigrants encounter xenophobia (Stenschke, 2016:147).

Migration carries the church into geographical areas that were once closed and introduces Christians from other continents into secular Europe. It also relocates people who have not been witnessed to or ministered to into countries where they are more easily reached by Christians whom they encounter. Afrane-Twum (2024:140) notes that in countries where government stances on Christianity make mission work difficult and complicated, embracing migrants and equipping them to return and evangelise in their home countries can serve as one of the most effective mission strategies.

Reverse mission, however, is a misnomer if it remains focused only on one's own kind within the host country, as it may appear to be "more of a global extension of their Christian faith than a new expression of faith in their host country" (Afrane-Twum, 2024:137). In some cases, the involvement of Africans in mainline churches resembles more a "Macedonia call" for help than genuine reverse mission, making the concept more a work in progress than an established reality. Asamoah-Gyadu (2012) disagrees with the notion that

> those from the underside of history use Christianity simply to make up for the shortfalls of uprootedness and alienation in hostile foreign lands.

Citing two examples from African pastors in the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition, Asamoah-Gyadu (2012) demonstrates how they successfully planted churches in Kyiv, Ukraine (the Church of the Embassy of the

Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations), and in London, England (Kingsway International Christian Centre). The major difference between the two is that the one in Ukraine consists mostly of Eastern Europeans and is led by an African immigrant, while the one in England mainly attracts African immigrants and black members. The shared denominator between them is how lives are transformed through their born-again message (conversion) and their emphasis on experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Afrane-Twum (2024) confirms that African immigrant churches from the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition believe that their God-given task cannot be fulfilled without the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Just as the baptism of the Holy Spirit was crucial for Christians in the first century, it remains vital in the twentieth century to empower believers with the gifts for ministry. Afrane-Twum (2024) offers a thorough biblical understanding, a missiological foundation, and a Spirit-led theological framework to foster partnership between African immigrant churches and white majority churches.

7. Ecumenical diakonia: Dispelling the dependency syndrome in service together

The ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) and the WCC held an international consultation in Malawi in 2014, where they conceptualised "ecumenical diakonia" from two perspectives. First, it is understood theologically as the diaconal church being an integral dimension of the church's nature and mission - a core expression of what churches are and what they do. Second, it refers to how churches engage in diaconal action across confessional and geographical boundaries. The vision is for the church, ecumenically, to assist all people in need and to work for a better world for all (WCC, 2014:10). A key part of the vision is to change the development paradigm - moving beyond simply offering aid to developing countries by integrating other critical dimensions. One of the dimensions mentioned in the document *Ecumenical Diakonia* is forced migration, described as the large numbers of people leaving their home countries in search of better opportunities, often facing uncertainty and a lack of rights in the process (WCC, 2014:18). This aspect of the church's diaconal service

is also the focus of this chapter, which proposes ecumenical diakonia as an opportunity to challenge the entrenched dichotomy between older and younger churches and to break the legacy of the "dependency syndrome" that has long shaped their relationships

Push factors, which can be defined as the forced movement of people in conditions of dispersal, displacement, and dislocation in migration, undermines the human dignity of migrants and refugees, who, like all other human beings, are also carriers of the divine gift of God's likeness (Bautista, 2022:418). Migrants are also bearers of the Good News of God's justice and liberation - not just in the traditional sense of being diaconally understood as recipients of aid, but as people with voice and agency. Bautista (2022:419) reports on the work of Churches Witnessing with Migrants (CWWM) and presents the tripartite model of partnership amongst migrants and refugees, migrant- and refugee-serving institutions, and faith and religious bodies. The partnership models "a radical koinonia of equals (in a tripartite framework) and a contextual and prophetic diakonia". It makes possible a koinonia of equals between the different parties involved, fostering a diakonia of shared thinking and doing, shared knowledge, and material resources. The tripartite framework of being, knowing, and doing can be a unique platform that works for the salvation and liberation of everyone involved in the process.

Dikova-Osthus (2022) explores the concept of the "liturgy after the liturgy" within the Orthodox tradition, which is also embraced by the ecumenical church. In the Eucharist, the cosmos becomes the church and includes all aspects of human life, so that the liturgy is not an escape from the world but a constant transformation of the individual and the community, who are then sent out into the world. The personal sacrifices made on behalf of those in need become a diaconal behaviour from which everyone draws strength through the Eucharist, prepares for conscious participation in it, and becomes transformed through its celebration (Dikova-Osthus, 2022:413). It is a service to God and others using our gifts. The heterogeneity of the Orthodox community in Germany has resulted in diverse community pastoral care, offering a spiritual and social home to its members in the Diaspora through neighbourhood assistance that has grown into a community-organised diakonia.

An important observation by Dikova-Osthus (2022:416) centres on the vitality for ecumenism offered by involvement in the diaconal field, connecting Christian churches in theory and practice, and filling the ecumenical community with life. Klaasen (2020) argues for the centrality of diakonia in the liturgy of the church but also extends it to include the cosmos in his understanding of the mark of catholicity of the church. As he aptly states, diakonia as whole-making bridges the gap between service and liturgy. Ecumenical diakonia affirms the dignity and power of those who work for it and the beneficiaries of its practices - "a diaconal application of the Pentecostal gift of experiencing 'God's deeds of power' in one's own language… rooted in local contexts of life and gifts" (WCC, 2014:47).

Migrant churches have given Christianity in the Netherlands a comeback, as it had almost disappeared over the last 30 years (Van Laar, 2006). It offered the West unique opportunities to meet the world church on their own ground, where "… unfamiliar African, Korean, Brazilian, and Chinese shapes of Christianity give rainbow colour to multi-ethnic cities like Rotterdam, Madrid, and London". After being challenged by the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism and the WCC, the Netherlands Missionary Council, together with the Evangelical Missionary Alliance and the Roman Catholic Mission Council, held a consultation in 1998 to bring together Christian leaders from across the spectrum in the Netherlands. The aim was to develop a new vision for cooperation and unity in the mission of God (*missio Dei*) and to create a framework for a common missionary strategy for the 21st century (Van Laar, 2006:11).

The Missionary Quarterly Council, representing Christian leaders from Ecumenical, Evangelical, Charismatic, and Pentecostal traditions in the Netherlands, has met over the last two decades to engage in conversations around the relationship between Pentecostalism and Western Christianity, Ecumenical, Reformed, and Pentecostal Christians. The focus has largely been on how they work together against xenophobia, which seems more powerful than tolerance and hospitality, and on how old and new churches can work together and overcome past brokenness through healing. The outcomes of these consultations are helpful for the discussion in this chapter on how an ecumenical diakonia centred on the *missio Dei* can reshape the

relationship between older and younger churches, refute the legacy of the dependency syndrome, and allow the Spirit to lead us in new and fresh ways in a time such as ours.

8. "The Spirit blows where it wants": Following the Spirit's leading

Most immigrant churches in Britain, Europe, and America discern the involvement of the Spirit in their calling and sending within their host countries. Währisch-Oblau (2006) prefers the term "New Mission Churches" over the term "migrant churches" because these churches see their role in the host countries as a form of missionary outreach. Even amongst Pentecostal and Charismatic churches,

> they see themselves as missionaries within the European context-they will give testimony that God has sent them here with the Gospel, and they start new churches without asking anyone for permission (Währisch-Oblau, 2006:32).

Anderson (2006) argues that Pentecostals should come to grips with the freedom of the Spirit that allows them to formulate a theology meaningful for people in different life situations. Theology, he suggests, is more than just its written or academic form; it is also found in the preaching, rituals, and practices of a contextualised Christianity - what he calls an "enacted theology" or "theology in practice" (Anderson, 2006:31).

Some of the challenges that Pentecostalism poses to older churches come through this form of Christianity that appeals to ordinary people, identifies with an identity of being separated, promotes an egalitarian community, and offers democratic access to spiritual power. Pentecostals witness to the world in the power of the Spirit, see themselves as a born-again people of God, emphasise a conversion experience, encourage the availability and use of the gifts of the Spirit, and uphold a holistic dimension of salvation - most importantly, one that should be experienced in the here and now. Anderson (2006:31) states that

> the experience of the power of the Spirit is potentially a unifying factor in a deeply divided church and world; the motivation for social and political engagement; and the catalyst for change in the hope of a new and better world.

The New Mission Churches discuss mission and evangelism in a structural way, and Währisch-Oblau (2006:45) questions whether their flexible organisation is much more appropriate to the *missio Dei*, the movement of God's Spirit in the world, than the bureaucratic structures of the established churches. Mainline Protestant churches are changing towards New Mission Churches as they throw off their roles as clients and receivers of pastoral-diaconal care, accusing the newcomers of being "sheep stealers" and of "sectarianism". Instead of mission being only the task of all churches, it is also a happening that confronts them - namely, the *missio Dei*, how the Holy Spirit is at work in the world outside the confines of their own denominations.

In his investigation of migrant churches, Van der Laan (2006) identifies churches from the ecumenical mainstream (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant), reverse mission churches (Church of Pentecost, Kimbanguist), independent migrant churches (Everlasting Salvation Ministries, House of Fellowship International), and denominational migrant churches (Assemblies of God, United Pentecostal, and Gospel Assemblies). Van der Laan (2006:60) opines that these churches are prevalent in Dutch society and exist for various reasons. Migrants come to the Netherlands hoping to find green pastures in a land of milk and honey, knocking on heaven's doors, but are usually disappointed by its harsh, secularised Western world. Migrant churches become, for these migrants, places of belonging and islands of hope where they can cry out to God for their needs.

The primary mission of Pentecostalism is to renew the meaning of Pentecost for the whole church (Johns, 2006:94) Four signs of Pentecost are inherent in Pentecostalism: it is an ongoing festival, functioning as an epistemological key, as a festival of deconstruction and reconstruction, and as a marginal festival. Johns (2006:98) warns against efforts to tame or domesticate the power of the Holy Spirit to fit our agendas and our liturgical and ecclesiastical structures. Attempts to control the power of the Holy Spirit are fruitless; therefore, it is mostly experienced within marginal contexts.

While the church often aims to be mainline and have a voice in the centres of power, "Pentecost calls us to relinquish this desire for centrality … calls us to its own core, its own center of power and authority", uniting people from all around the world in a new form of human community (Johns, 2006:99).

Pentecost offers a transformational vision for the cosmopolitan future of the world, highlighting "the radical hospitality of God towards the other, incarnated in the community of faith via the agency of the Holy Spirit" (Augustine, 2011). Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, Christ is made present in the community of faith, turning His followers into Christ-bearers, making possible an embodied gospel realised in humanity and the entire cosmos. As a royal priesthood and a prophethood of believers, they become a prophetic Pentecost community that is truth-embodying and truth-proclaiming through the Spirit as the agent, engine, and navigator (Augustine, 2011:206). Augustine (2011:208) is critical of Western multiculturalism, which outwardly displays an attitude of tolerance and respect for local cultures but persists in its own cultural superiority and self-justifies its privileged status (Augustine, 2011).

Augustine (2011:213) proposes an unconditional hospitality that is an act of taking the place of the stranger in one's own home, handing over the keys to the other, and letting them abide by their own terms and conditions. The unconditional hospitality of God is also offered and received by the other through the agency of the Holy Spirit, inviting all humanity into the inter-sociality of the Trinity, initiating dialogue by respacing oneself and creating conditions for inclusion. It is in the prophesying community of faith at Pentecost that the radical hospitality of God is articulated, providing a vision of a democratic society where radical emancipation and inclusivity extend across all socio-economic strata, embracing the other and the different - all as outcomes of the work of the Spirit (Augustine, 2011:218).

The Pentecost community continues the ministry of hospitality to a destitute humanity, displaying the nature of the triune God who welcomes the stranger, the wanderer, the marginalised, and the displaced in an embrace of divine hospitality (Augustine, 2011:219). Dube (2013), responding to the crisis of landlessness and homelessness in biblical and current times, finds in the nascent Jesus community a locus of hospitality and equality. Contrasting the economic system outside the house (the

hierarchical Roman economy) with the system inside the house (the alternative system of Jesus that welcomes the homeless, the landless, and the poor), Dube (2013) portrays how Jesus entrenches a radical status reversal of the Kingdom - a radical reordering of space, power, and belonging. Indeed, it is this radical hospitality, embodied in an ecumenical diakonia, that can assist migrant churches and their host countries to dispel the older-younger church dichotomy and break the legacy of the dependency syndrome, creating a welcoming common home.

9. Conclusion

This chapter focused mainly on migration and reverse mission, interrogating how an ecumenical diakonia centred on the *missio Dei* can equalise the relationship between older and younger churches, refute the legacy of the dependency syndrome, and allow the Spirit to lead us in new and fresh ways in a time such as ours.

The relationship between older churches, with their centres of origin in the West and the Global North (Western Europe and North America), and younger churches in the Global South (Africa, Asia, and Latin America), has historically been marked by dependency. Although colonialism and its symbiotic relationship with missionary Christianity have ended, the legacy of dependency still exists in many forms today.

The New Mission Churches (migrant churches) that emerged through migration and reverse mission hold the potential to alter this dependency syndrome, though various forms of it are still reinforced in host and home countries. An ecumenical diakonia, rooted in the *missio Dei*, offers significant potential and presents compelling opportunities for older and younger churches to follow the leading of the Spirit. It fosters a transformed society that is tolerant and hospitable towards the other

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