



Basis for discussion

Global Pentecostalism and Agenda 2030

A research overview



 **pingst Sweden**

The Pentecostal Alliance of Independent churches

"Pentecostal churches are often rather more effective change agents than are development NGOs [...] they are exceptionally effective at bringing about personal transformation and empowerment, they provide the moral legitimacy for a set of behaviour changes that would otherwise clash with local values, and they radically reconstruct families and communities to support these new values and new behaviours. Without these types of social change [...] it is difficult for economic change and development to take place."

Dena Freeman, London School of Economics



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Foreword

The global Pentecostal movement (often called “the charismatic movement”) is the largest and fastest growing religious movement in world history.¹ Pentecostals/charismatics presently gather almost 700 million believers and according to analysts that figure is expected to rise to more than 1 billion year 2050.² The term Pentecostalism refers to a large number of different churches and movements, some of which exist within other church structures, while others are separate churches and denominations.³ There are indications that the Pentecostalism may also be the largest movement ever for social justice.⁴ Hence, it would probably be an understatement to describe pastors and other leaders of the Pentecostal movement as legitimate key actors for change. The sociologist Donald E. Miller has examined churches in developing countries that have active social programmes. Through this research, he discovered that 80% of these churches were charismatic.⁵ Miller and his team of researchers then coined the term “*progressive Pentecostals*”. For those who belong to this group, social justice and the fight against poverty are essential driving forces. Miller points out that it is important to note how the movement offers dignity to people living in poverty, by conveying the message that they are created in the image of God and therefore have rights. In an anthology, edited by anthropologist Dena Freeman at the *London School of Economics*, it is affirmed that the Pentecostal movement has probably, in some respects, done more for Africa in terms of poverty reduction, than all international aid organizations combined.⁶ Freeman writes:

“Pentecostal churches are often rather more effective change agents than are development NGOs...they are exceptionally effective at bringing about personal transformation and empowerment, they provide the moral legitimacy for a set of behaviour changes that would otherwise clash with local values, and they radically reconstruct families and communities to support these new values and new behaviours. Without these types of social change [...] it is difficult for economic change and development to take place.”

Dena Freeman

When working with the Agenda 2030 and the 17 global development goals, the need for many processes and inflow of resources besides the aid becomes obvious, as the expected cost to reach the goals by far exceeds the total aid given worldwide. To reach the goals, we must find new

¹ Jacobsen (2011)

² Johnson & Zurlo /World Christian Database (2018)

³ Pew Research Center (2006)

⁴ Miller & Yamamori (2007)

⁵ Miller & Yamamori (2007)

⁶ Freeman (2012)

innovative partnerships through which we can reach the poorest, so that no one is left behind. At the same time, there is a growing belief that the role of religion in processes of change must be clarified, given that religious belief is such a determinant for people's world view, identity, values, attitudes and behavior, as well as the cultural expressions of a society. For a long time, research and practice has omitted religious aspects. Kakwata Fredrik shows in his research how people from different African contexts have handled the fact that the development theories from the West have failed to explain the problem with poverty and weak development.⁷ To address the situation, it is necessary to tackle poverty by means of spirituality.

Therefore, it is central for a good societal development to establish, within the framework of Swedish development cooperation and in global platforms (e.g. religious networks and arenas), relations and innovative partnerships with progressive, legitimate and locally rooted religious forces. Islam and Pentecostalism are among the global movements that have had the most important impact throughout the 20th century, and that are exceptionally important to consider when we build for the future.

Researchers have lately been increasingly intrigued by the strong development and the influence that the Pentecostal movements have obtained, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa. In this document, PMU and Pingst (the Swedish Pentecostal churches) have attempted to compile an overview of the current research about the movement. Based on the global poverty map, a special focus will be given to Africa.

PMU and Pingst hope that a better understanding of the Pentecostal movement will make it easier to find areas for deepened cooperation between Pentecostals and other development actors. Since Pentecostalism is a very broad movement, it is not enough to define the "Pentecostal Church" as a partner. Rather one must assess, in each specific case, which Pentecostal or charismatic actor to strategically cooperate with. There are evidently many challenges connected to cooperating with faith based actors, which is also being discussed here. However, with this overview, PMU and Pingst mainly wish to highlight a few positive contributions that have been noted by current research, and thereby draw attention to the potential among Pentecostals to promote a fair global development. 2030 is only eleven years away, and we have no time to lose in the fight against world poverty and vulnerability. All constructive and progressive forces are needed to make the Agenda 2030 a reality.

Stockholm August 2019

⁷ Kawata (2017)



Global Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism is a relatively late phenomenon in the historical development of the Christian Church. Even though researchers are talking about several parallel “birth places”, they agree that the breakthrough among Afro-Americans in Azusa Street, Los Angeles in 1906 is the most important founding event, in a symbolical as well as an organizational aspect.⁸ This is where the Classical Pentecostalism was born, after which we have seen at least two more charismatic waves: the charismatic movement in mainline churches from 1967 and the Neo-Pentecostal movement in the 1980s. The Pentecostal movement has grown very fast.⁹ Religious Historian Douglas Jacobsen has even said¹⁰:

“Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity has become the fastest-growing religion in the history of the world.”

Douglas Jacobsen

Today, the Pentecostalism is a movement that fosters both a desire for spiritual experiences and a strong social commitment. Jacobsen divides the Christianity into four families: Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals and Orthodox, with several overlaps between the groups, whereas Pentecostals/charismatics may sometimes simultaneously be Catholics, Protestants or Orthodox.¹¹ Several other researchers share this view, and some claim that one fourth of all Christians in the world are Pentecostals, or charismatics. This means that with their 690 million members, the Pentecostals make up the second largest group among Christians worldwide, after the Catholics. Thereby, the Pentecostal Christians have also become one of the largest movements for globalization in our time.¹² In Africa and Latin America, as well as many places in Asia, Pentecostalism has come to have a large influence as moral obligation bearers and now has a strong presence in the public room, leading to many forms of political, economic and social impact, for better or for worse.¹³

As a movement, the Pentecostalism is diverse, and researchers have not yet reached consensus about where exactly to draw the lines between the different subgroupings. One of the difficulties is that the movement is not organized under a central entity, like the Catholic Church or traditional Protestant churches. The fact that the Pentecostalism does not have its own unique “home-territory” (like Rome

⁸ Blumhofer (1989)

⁹ Anderson, & Bergunder (2010)

¹⁰ Jacobsen (2011)

¹¹ Jacobsen (2011)

¹² Hefner (2013)

¹³ Hefner (2013)

for the Catholics or Mecca for Muslims), has certainly contributed to the fact that it is nowadays being viewed as the first truly global religion¹⁴, sometimes called “*a religion made to travel*”.¹⁵

In an attempt to get a picture of the broadness, PEW Forum on Religion and Public Life did a mapping of the Pentecostal movement in 2006. The report that was subsequently presented has become an important piece of reference for research about Pentecostalism.¹⁶ The report was based on a review of the movement in ten countries: USA, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, India, the Philippines and South Korea. Among other things, it covered the difficulty for researchers to classify the different branches of contemporary Pentecostalism.¹⁷ Instead of a homogenous Pentecostalism, one should rather talk about many different types, with a variety of “birth places”, and with discernable theological as well as historical differences. Nevertheless, there seems to exist a strong feeling throughout the movement of being united by the same driving force. This connection strengthens the impression among Pentecostals of being together as *one* global moment.

From a sociological and anthropological perspective however, it is more interesting to look at how the movement is shaping itself in the public room. A common way to label Pentecostals with a social, economic and political commitment is to use the term “progressive”, which, in this case, is defined as follows¹⁸:

“Christians who claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit and the life of Jesus and seek to holistically address the spiritual, physical, and social needs of people in their community”.

Miller & Yamamori

The Pentecostalism is characterized by the fact that the members see themselves as carriers of a revolutionary message, which has the power to transform people and societies. This revolutionary idea often leads Pentecostals to break up with their old and traditional cultures. This breakup should generally not be understood as a “cultural destruction”, but more often as a “*reinvention of society*”¹⁹. It is also worth to note that the response of progressive Pentecostals to people’s vulnerability is defined by the attitude that help and support is given without an ulterior motive to win new members or followers.

¹⁴ Lende (2013)

¹⁵ Murray et al (2011)

¹⁶ Pew research (2006)

¹⁷ The term “renewalists” was used as a common name for Pentecostals and charismatics. Pentecostals was, in turn, divided into established Pentecostal denominations and more recent autonomous and independent churches. These churches were called Neo-Pentecostals or neo-charismatics. In addition to these groups, the report mentioned “charismatics” as a term referring to Christians describing themselves as charismatics within the Catholic Church and the traditional Protestant denominations. In later research, the terms used to describe different branches of Pentecostalism has varied, maybe in part depending on the focus of each researcher.

¹⁸ Miller & Yamamori (2007)

¹⁹ Soothill (2007)

Global Pentecostalism in Summary

- With more than 690 million followers, the Pentecostals form the second largest group within Christianity, after the Catholics, representing 25 percent of all Christians.
- According to Religious Historian Douglas Jacobsen, Pentecostalism is the fastest growing religion in world history.
- The Pentecostal Christianity has become one of the largest religious globalization movements of our time.
- Pentecostals see themselves as carriers of a revolutionary message, aiming at transforming people and societies.



Current Research on Pentecostalism

Research on Pentecostalism is a relatively new phenomenon within the academic sphere. Many factors have contributed to the increased interest in this field, one of them being the fact that religion have come to get a more visible place in public life. One of the early researchers to examine the public displays of religion was José Casanova. He noticed in his research that religion has returned to the public sphere, and that is not only present, but also an important factor for change.²⁰ This is where research discovers the role of religious actors as locally rooted and legitimate key actors for change.

A number of phenomenon can be identified, which have lead the academic world to update its view on the links between religion and development. On a sociological level, the dichotomy between religion and society has been broken down, on an ontological level, the borders between spiritual-material, secular-sacred, individual-society, etc. have been blurred,²¹ and religion is, to a higher degree, understood as a vital component of all societies. Many researchers have realized that it is impossible to understand a society without understanding the role that is played by religion, and that there exists a dynamic relationship between religion and other aspects of society; even the aspect of development.²²

The quick growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America, Africa and Asia has led the community of researchers to seriously examine the impact of the movement, as well as the effect of its activities. In, for instance, Africa south of Sahara, this impact has grown to become extremely important, not the least through the power of change that lies in phrases such as “*What God wants for Africa – a continent blessed with wellbeing and where people are dedicated to work, prayer and upright moral lives*”.²³

The engagement for wellbeing has assumed many different forms. Already in 2006, Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori saw in a study that medical and other forms of care, emergency services, economic development, etc. have become characteristic for many Pentecostals.²⁴ As has been mentioned above, Miller and Yamamori chose to label this as “*progressive Pentecostalism*”.

The academic research is now looking at Pentecostalism from several angles. Researchers like Allan Anderson, Harvey Cox, Richard Burgess and Daniel Arhazemea are engaging in traditional studies of churches. Others, like Ruth Braunstein, Gregory Deacon, David Martin and Jane E. Soothill are looking into the sociological field. Yet others, like Clifton Clarke, Simon Coleman, Hansjörg Dilger, Dena Freeman, Birgit Meyer and Joel Robbins are coming from an anthropological angle. Pentecostalism in relation to politics and economy currently seems to be treated mostly within the sociological and anthropological fields. Even if Western perspectives are still dominant, the research on Pentecostalism also sees a growth in significance in the global South, e.g. at African universities,

²⁰ Casanova (1994)

²¹ Freeman (2012)

²² Anderson (2014)

²³ See for instance. <http://aeafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/AEA-Jubilee-A5-Booklet.pdf>, <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2015-03/2015-03-ibmr.pdf>

²⁴ Miller & Yamamori (2007)

here research on Pentecostalism in relation to fields like environmental issues²⁵, philosophy²⁶ and gender²⁷ is being conducted.

Current Research on Pentecostalism in Summary

- Many researchers have realized that it is impossible to understand a society without understanding the role that is played by religion, and that there exists a dynamic relationship between religion and other aspects of society; even the aspect of development.
- The academic research is now looking at Pentecostalism from several angles:
 - Traditional studies of Pentecostal churches
 - Sociological studies of Pentecostalism
 - Anthropological studies of Pentecostalism
 - Pentecostalism in relation to politics and economy currently seems to be treated mostly within the sociological and anthropological fields.
- Even if Western perspectives are still dominant, the research on Pentecostalism also sees a growth in significance in the global South, where research on Pentecostalism in relation to fields like environmental issues, philosophy and gender is being conducted.

²⁵ Ben-Willie Kwaku Golo (2012:3)

²⁶ Afolayan, Adeshina et al. (2018)

²⁷ Njeri Mwaura (2013)



An Overview of the Research Conclusions

Pentecostalism and Transformed Individuals

The Pentecostal view on change is characterized by the belief that restored and transformed individuals bring change to societies. The members of the Pentecostal movement thus become natural and locally rooted agents for change. This happens because the actions of the Pentecostals (e.g. common reading and reflection over the Biblical texts) leads to changes at the individual level in areas such as world view, self-image, behavior, initiative, entrepreneurship, etc. The change is initiated by a breach in relation to the past (the notion of repentance is central), and often takes the form of liberation rituals, which become a point of departure for an increased control over one's situation and one's life. Pentecostals emphasize that the individual must take the initiative and stresses the importance of being active. The ownership and control of the individual over his or her own life, which is being promoted by the Pentecostals, includes everything from cultural habits and sexuality to social relationships and economy. To support this behavior, Pentecostals encourage each other to exert self-control, to set up goals and realize their life projects, and to plan and budget their time and money well. Hence, within the Pentecostal movement it is often emphasized that everyone has a personal responsibility for his or her life and mission. In addition, each individual is also part of a larger context, which makes cooperation necessary to reach a whole life where no one or nothing is being excluded.²⁸

Research notes that people from both poor groups and from the middle class join the Pentecostalism. Among the extremely poor in urban contexts, Pentecostalism has done a lot to restore self-worth, self-esteem and social influence among people who have felt broken down, excluded and deprived of hope and power. Here, the poor get a chance to see themselves as valuable individuals, belonging to the people of God, carrying capacity and power in their own hands. The thought of a God who can help and give hope creates a possibility to dismantle mental blockages. An important aspect in the ability of Pentecostals to bring about manifest change is thus that they can spur a shift in the individual's self-perception, and a belief in the possibility to make life better through hard work and intensive prayers.²⁹

The rhetoric of the Pentecostals, with a focus on hard work and spiritual warfare, seems to make people more engaged than secular NGO's rhetoric about poverty reduction. The emotional aspects of the Pentecostal experience contribute to the social change. Dena Freeman claims that Pentecostalism achieves more through spiritual rituals and gifts, than secular development organizations can usually reach through their programs.³⁰

²⁸ Freeman (2012), Van Dijk, Rijk, Ed. Robert W. Hefner (2013)

²⁹ Freeman (2012)

³⁰ Tomalin (2015)

They do what Esther Duflo asks for: they create and establish local links to all aspects of people's lives, they build hope, and thereby they help people to carry out their resolutions.³¹

In her research, Dena Freeman has defined three linked processes which lead to a radical transformation of people: (1) embedded transformation and empowerment of the individual, (2) a shift in values which offer moral legitimacy for behavioral changes which would otherwise collide with local practices and culture, (3) a reconstruction of social and economic relationships within family and society.³²

Esther Duflo has showed in her research that people who live in poverty are often depressed, something that must be considered in the fight against poverty.³³ In research literature on Africa and Latin America it is often suggested that Pentecostalism make people develop a personality or an approach that promotes stability, thereby contrasting and counteracting failing, uncertain and flexible contexts. Pentecostalism fosters sobriety, new economic priorities, discipline, power of initiative, a spirit of entrepreneurship and optimism. It also creates security in that the individual sees him or herself as the object of God's care. All of this makes it easier for believers to handle poverty and to find ways out of it. It also fosters a more effective adaptation to, for instance, the uncertain conditions of an informal economy.³⁴

Pentecostalism and Transformed Individuals in Summary

- The Pentecostal view on change is characterized by the belief that restored and transformed individuals bring change to societies; they become locally rooted agents of change.
- Pentecostalism transforms the individual's world view, self-image, behavior, initiative and entrepreneurship. The change is initiated by a breach in relation to the past, and often takes the form of liberation rituals.
- Dena Freeman has defined three linked processes which lead to a radical transformation of people: (1) embedded transformation and empowerment of the individual, (2) a shift in values which offer moral legitimacy for behavioral changes which would otherwise collide with local practices and culture, (3) a reconstruction of social and economic relationships within family and society.
- Pentecostalism fosters sobriety, new economic priorities, discipline, power of initiative, a spirit of entrepreneurship and optimism. It also creates security in that the individual sees him or herself as the object of God's care.

³¹ Esther Duflo is also critical towards big words such as "Democracy" or "Fight Against Poverty", which sound good but often don't link up to people's real lives: "The problem is "Democracy", "Fight Against Poverty", the problem are all these capital letters, these empty ideas which fall as soon as they encounter a little bit of realism. We need to go back to real things and not set impossible objectives. We need to look not just at "how much" but "how" relationships are forged, interventions are carried out, policies are made and expectations are created. We need to start from the field and oblige ourselves to keep our word."

³² Tomalin (2015)

³³ Duflo (Tanner Lectures May 2012)

³⁴ Martin Lindhardt (2015)

Pentecostals as Legitimate Agents for Change

Pentecostalism has come to have a large influence in many countries. When Pentecostals get a chance to describe with their own words what defines a progressive Pentecostalism, they put emphasis on both the spiritual and the social aspects. For example, Derick Wilson lists ten values that should characterize Pentecostal movements.³⁵ Researchers have noticed that the movement focuses on different things in different contexts. The African Pentecostalism puts a lot of emphasis on social change, a gospel of prosperity, and a breach with the past. Here, the Pentecostal movements influence all levels of society.³⁶

The progressive Pentecostal approach avoids fragmentation, but has a holistic approach to addressing needs. As was mentioned in a previous passage, Esther Duflo has showed in her research that people who live in poverty are often depressed, something that must be considered in the fight against poverty.³⁷ Even though it is not true that a strengthened spirituality or psychological wellbeing always leads to positive changes in other areas such as economy, politics, environment or social relations, a Pentecostal theory of change is based on a holistic context analysis instead of narrowly focusing on economic, environmental or social aspects.

One of the reasons behind the success of the movement in Africa is likely that the Pentecostal holism shares features with the African ontology.³⁸ Within Pentecostalism, the spiritual is associated with the ordinary, not the least when it comes to the fight against evil. In the West, religion has often come to be treated as a separate sphere, while in Africa, spirituality and religion is an integrated part of both public and private life. This makes it difficult to approach the African context with a secularized approach. The Pentecostalism's entry into African countries is supported by the fact that it shares, in many ways, the African view of the influence of the spiritual and supernatural in the world. The "spiritual war" in which many Pentecostals believe they are participating helps to strengthen emotional life and free it from degrading memories. This is important when helping people to redefine their situation so that they can better handle it and find the motivation to study, work or do other things that improves quality of life.

One reason why Pentecostals are often more effective agents for change than secular NGOs is their focus on key aspects for change (e.g. cultural structures and practices), things that NGOs sometimes ignore because they find them difficult to handle with legitimacy.³⁹ The combination of generating personal transformation, offering empowerment and authority, providing legitimacy for behavioral changes, and reconstructing families and communities so that they support the new values and behaviors, is considered crucial for a sustainable economic change and development.

The high effectiveness of Pentecostals in regards of social change, compared to other types of organizations, is also due to the fact that their resource bases are different (they mostly work with locally raised funds and volunteers), which in turn leads to other types of activities and a strong local responsibility. Pentecostals are seen as adept in mobilizing people and fostering participation. New church members are quickly involved, and processes of decision making often have a highly

³⁵ 1) Commitment to Christ, 2) faithfulness to the Bible's intent, 3) holistic service before God, 4) transparent leadership, 5) shared leadership, 6) commitment to quality and responsibility, 7) inclusive membership, 8) balance between the secular and the sacred, 9) solidarity with those who lack influence and power, 10) reconciliation

³⁶ Köhrsen (2015)

³⁷ Duflo (2012)

³⁸ Ontology (from Greek *on*, genitive *ontos* "being" and *logia* "doctrine", from *logos* "word") is, within philosophy, anthropology and other similar sciences, a term for the doctrine about the being, speaking about how the world and the things are created and what their essential features are.

³⁹ Freeman (2012), see also Hefner (2013)

democratic character where everyone in the community is involved, even women and marginalized groups. Yet another important factor is that Pentecostals are not afraid to give clear instructions on how members should handle, or sometimes dissociate themselves from, traditional religions and cultural practices. They thus act within the traditional cosmology, but liberate it from depressing practices and attitudes. The Pentecostal emphasis on the transformation of the individual is highlighted as central. As Freeman says⁴⁰:

“the transforming capacity of Pentecostalism is quite astonishing”.

Dena Freeman

In his research, Ben-Willie Kwaku Golo highlights the framework of the African cosmology where health and prosperity have very deep linkages.⁴¹ According to the African world view, health and prosperity is not measured only in relation to the physical or the biological aspects, but is linked to social relationships, family, environment and spirituality. Those who want to maintain health and prosperity must do so in relation to all these dimensions. When African Pentecostals talk about health and prosperity it is therefore important not to interpret this in Western and secularized terms. For these Pentecostals, being healed by Jesus englobes a healing of the entire living environment: from the body of the individual to society, economy and environment. Jesus' reconciliation does not only include individuals, but the whole creation. WHO's definition of health (from 1948), which includes physical, psychological and social health⁴², has lately been enlarged to also include existential health. WHO lists eight perspectives that can be seen as building blocks for a good existential health: hope, harmony, wholeness, meaningfulness, wonder, spiritual contact, personal faith and fellowship⁴³. This fits well with the holistic approach of the Pentecostal movements, and also contributes to a deeper understanding of why these movements play such an important role in many people's lives, in processes of change and in the search for meaning and context.

Development can essentially be analyzed from two theoretical perspectives: “*development theory*” (DT) and “*post-development theory*” (PDT). DT can be understood as a pursuit of Western ideals, while PDT aims at truly respecting locally defined and culturally adapted goals for change, and a local ownership. Until now, research within both theories have omitted religious aspects, but despite the lack of interest that can be noted so far, PDT probably have the best possibility to highlight the impact of local religion on different situations.

⁴⁰ Freeman (2012)

⁴¹ Ben-Willie Kwaku Golo (2012:3)

⁴² WHO 1948: “ Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not just the absence of illness”,

⁴³ Melder & Kostenius (2016)



Linking to the criticism from PDT, Kakwata Fredrik shows in his research how the failure of the Western development theories to explain the problem of poverty and lack of development has been handled in many African contexts.⁴⁴ In the midst of crises and hardships, a locally rooted Pentecostal understanding of development has been developed, advocating a conceptual framework that includes spirituality. The Pentecostal view is thereby close to the African ontology, in that it claims that the root causes of poverty and vulnerability are also spiritual. Hence, to truly change the situation, it is also necessary to combat poverty by the means of spirituality.

PDT and the associated interest in mapping all aspects of the complex flows between cause and effect, offers a greater opportunity to discover what is really accomplished through Pentecostalism, something that is otherwise easy to overlook when examining Pentecostalism solely through Western development theory glasses. The effects of the Pentecostal insistence on a total breach (repentance) with the old cultural context are overlooked in ordinary development frameworks, which is regrettable as certain features of the former cultural context can prevent positive change.⁴⁵

Today, Pentecostalism is not spread from North to South. To understand the importance of Pentecostalism for the development of societies, researchers have begun to examine its role as a mediator to and for modernity. Contemporary Pentecostalism, as it is being expressed in Africa, is nowadays considered a particularly “modern” religion. Researchers claim that it fits the context and helps bridging the gap to Western modernity in areas such as individualism, economy, politics, spirituality, social relationship, media, etc. Hence, the Pentecostal movement helps people to stay in balance during the transfer towards modernity and individuality.⁴⁶ David Martin sees Pentecostalism as a precursor and a messenger for modernity.⁴⁷ He relates modernity to aspects such as gender, secular law, transnationalism, voluntarism, pluralism, capacities for peace, personal freedom, personal working ethics, consumption, modern communication, and social and geographical mobility.

In cultural terms, Bernice Martin sees Pentecostalism as a hybrid because it combines expressions from rural and urban cultures.⁴⁸ In these combinations, she notices clear breaks with the old traditional culture, together with a tendency to define the future in relation to the past. Thereby, it seems difficult, when it comes to Pentecostals, to talk about a dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Rather, Pentecostalism creates its own space in between these two entities, with links to both. In comparison to traditional local cultures, Pentecostalism succeeds, in many aspects, in being relatively “modern”. According to Rachel Riedl, the driving forces of these processes are probably connected to the fact that Pentecostals have their own story about vulnerability and marginalization, that they have chosen to organize themselves in local independent groups, and that they maintain a strong focus on individualism and a message about human dignity.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Kawata (2017)

⁴⁵ E.g. circumcision, financing of cultural events, economic support to the whole extended family, mental and psychological blocks leading to negative expectations, slave-like economic bonds and dependence on magicians, etc.

⁴⁶ Frahm-Arp (2010)

⁴⁷ Martin (2006), Sothill (2007)

⁴⁸ Hefner (2013)

⁴⁹ Riedl (2014)

Pentecostals as Legitimate Agents for Change in Summary

- People who live in poverty are often depressed, something that must be considered in the fight against poverty.
- A Pentecostal theory of change is based on a holistic contextual analysis. It is not enough to only look at economic, environmental or social aspects.
- Pentecostalism substantially shares the African view on the influence of the spiritual and the supernatural in the world.
- One reason why Pentecostals are often more effective agents for change than secular NGOs is their focus on key aspects for change (e.g. cultural structures and practices), things that NGOs sometimes ignore because they find them difficult to handle with legitimacy.
- The high effectiveness of Pentecostals in regards of social change is also due to their resource base with locally raised funds and volunteers, which leads to a strong local responsibility. Pentecostals are adept in mobilizing people and fostering participation. New church members are quickly involved, and processes of decision making often have a highly democratic character.
- Contemporary Pentecostalism, as it is being expressed in Africa, is nowadays considered a “modern” religion, which helps bridging the gap to Western modernity in areas such as individualism, economy, politics, spirituality, social relationship and media.
- Pentecostalism can be seen as a hybrid in that it combines expressions of rural and urban cultures.
- Pentecostals have their own stories about vulnerability and marginalization and focus their message on individualism and human dignity, as well as organize themselves in local independent groups. All these things together help Pentecostals to maintain a relatively “modern” approach.



Pentecostalism as a Contribution to Citizenship

Basically everything that is described in research about how Pentecostals choose to organize themselves, how they relate to contemporary society and how they mobilize and act, can be found in the history of the Swedish Pentecostal movement. The Swedish Pentecostal movement can thus be seen as a classical example and an expression of how Pentecostals widen their view from a narrow focus on spiritual experiences, to a mobilization of resources to support development and change for marginalized a vulnerable people all over the world. The first expression of commitment to international social issues came already in 1919-20, when Pentecostals came together to support a humanitarian intervention in Vienna.⁵⁰

Social and economic mobility is common among young Pentecostals, even if that is not true for everyone.⁵¹ This mobility is justified theologically. The mobility, and processes of change, are based in the possibility offered to the individual to discover that he or she is special, unique and valuable in the eyes of God, and *“with this new identity and authority, Pentecostals are encouraged to go back out to the world and live successful lives”*.⁵²

Within development theory (DT) mentioned previously, participation and empowerment is a precondition for successful processes of development. This approach leads to the restitution of people’s dignity, together with a shift in traditional power structures, which helps to create trust and peace. The ability of Pentecostals to stimulate networking, cooperation and participation is a reason why many researchers consider Pentecostals more successful than secular NGOs in achieving effective and sustainable change.⁵³ The Pentecostal churches are locally owned organizations, where locally rooted people work together with and for people in a local context. Members get involved in activities from the very beginning, and one of the main tasks of Pentecostal pastors is to help members to discover their *gifts* (strengths and abilities) and put them to use.

Martin Lindhardt is among those who speak about Pentecostals’ ability to mobilize for change. NGOs are often perceived as distant institutions, with a low relevance for people in their everyday life. In comparison, the Pentecostals’ larger ability to stimulate participation is due to the fact that they are involved in people’s daily lives, and that they are able to involve members in a number of different activities. According to Lindhardt, the Pentecostal emphasis on a new beginning and a breach with the past becomes more meaningful and relevant for the vulnerable in their struggle to handle the situation.⁵⁴

To address the need for development, many Pentecostal churches offer a large number of social services such as child care, health care, maternal care, basic education and support to people living with HIV/Aids. Several churches also arrange educations in different areas, like leadership, self-help, entrepreneurship and business activities, and engage themselves for structural changes. Many churches also push members to be responsible, to try to change social and economic structures, and to engage wholeheartedly in their work.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Bundy (2002)

⁵¹ Hefner (2013)

⁵² Hefner (2013)

⁵³ Burgess (2015)

⁵⁴ Lindhardt ed (2015)

⁵⁵ Agang (2016)

Pentecostalism as a Contribution to Citizenship in Summary

- Social and economic mobility is common among young Pentecostals, a mobility which is theologically justified through the belief that everyone is special, unique and valuable in God's eyes, and called to embrace this new identity and go out in the world to live successful lives.
- The ability of Pentecostals to stimulate networking, cooperation and participation is a reason why many researchers consider Pentecostals more successful than secular NGOs in achieving effective and sustainable change.
- Many churches push members to be responsible, to try to change social and economic structures, and to engage wholeheartedly in their work.



Pentecostalism, Democracy and Equality

The strong ability of Pentecostals to self-organize has contributed to the development of a democratic ecology and to the formation of a civil society. In many aspects, Pentecostals are able to create a culture which favors popular movements. This implies that Pentecostalism has not focused on creating a governing hierarchical top layer, which is otherwise common within church structures. The short and direct decision paths make it possible, and even relatively easy, to create popular and democratic institutions based on voluntary engagement to support the socially and economically vulnerable. The prerequisite for people to act in such movement-influenced structures is dependent on the ability of the participants to define themselves.⁵⁶ This self-organization is connected to a clear desire for a cultural reformation; a reformation that starts with the transformation of individuals, which in turn leads to the economic, social and moral transformation of families and societies. Furthermore, the Pentecostal movement has a manifest interest in transnational networking.

Research in areas such as sociology and anthropology has showed how Pentecostals are able to create sustainable change in individuals and in societies. The democratic expression that has been noted by research stretches from the rehabilitation of individuals and families, to a view on Pentecostals churches as schools of democracy.⁵⁷ Research also shows that Pentecostals contribute to the democratic development in relation to rule of law.⁵⁸ Even if the influence of Pentecostals over the development of democracy (as well as over other areas) has been both encouraging and sometimes discouraging, it is still clear that Pentecostalism has contributed to strengthening the civil society, and that people in the Pentecostal movement are being organized for change.⁵⁹

Concerning the ability of Pentecostals to generate democracy, Richard Flory and Kimon H. Sargenat take note of the fact that Pentecostal leaders usually come from the same social context, class or ethnic group as the members, which leads to an increased democracy within the church, as possible distinctions between leaders and members are evened out. In principle, anyone can also become a leader within the Pentecostal church, since a formal theological education is not a prerequisite.⁶⁰

In many Pentecostal churches, the traditions as well as the theological and practical view on leadership promote a so called *apostolic leadership*. The meaning of an apostolic leadership varies depending on the person practicing it, but it tends to shift from democratic to more authoritarian, as the leader is seen as an instrument of God in the same way as the first apostles. Even though women can be apostles in many Pentecostal contexts, a more common view is that men are the ones that receive the spiritual gifts that are associated with apostles. This way of thinking can prevent women from exercising influence and leadership in some Pentecostal theological spheres where the apostolic leadership is being promoted.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Hefner (2013)

⁵⁷ Hefner (2013)

⁵⁸ Miller et al. (2013)

⁵⁹ Miller et al. (2013)

⁶⁰ Miller et al. (2013)

⁶¹ Laitinen (2014)



The attitude of Pentecostal movements towards sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) differs in part from the secular agenda, but there are also important overlapping areas in the two agendas. Practical experience shows that religious leaders, Pentecostals included, are open to discuss questions about sexuality if they understand that the problems are also internal. To base the work for human rights, equality and SRHR on a theological framework is of great importance to truly achieve change. A traditional attitude towards sexual morality in several Pentecostal movements is that sexual allegiance within marriage is emphasized something that violates traditional ways of looking at sexual relations in many African cultures. Even if a Pentecostal sexual norm can sometimes confirm the male dominance, it also brings about possible gains in equality in that the woman can choose her partner. A prayer to God about finding the right husband is a legitimate way to say no to a suitor. The progressive emphasis of Pentecostals on change and transformation, as well as the emphasis on the right of everyone to make his or her own choice, opens for interesting opportunities for cooperation between Pentecostals and the secular discourse for human rights in strengthening women's rights, working with family planning and reducing the spread of, for instance, HIV.⁶²

⁶² Bartelink & Meinema (2014)

The view on the apostolic leadership, as well as the view on sexuality and SRHR, must be deepened within the Pentecostal movements. There are issues and doctrines which need to be challenged, problematized, deepened and processed theologically. At the same time, the values and approaches of the movements must be understood from the context in which they work, and preconceptions about Pentecostals must sometimes be challenged. Does the surrounding community have views and approaches that are similar to those of the churches? Is the view of the churches on, for instance, female leadership or SRHR more or less progressive than that of the local community at large? In the work to obtain the goals of Agenda 2030, it is important to encourage and support the breaking of harmful cultural expressions and norms, something that Pentecostals often succeed in, and to confirm steps taken in a more progressive direction to improve the situation, including women's leadership and SRHR.

Elizabeth Bruscos research about changes within the “machismo” culture in Colombia shows that Pentecostalism has primarily strengthened the status of women in their own homes, but also pushed women to become church leaders.⁶³ A distinct trait of Pentecostalism is the constant effort towards economic, social and moral rehabilitation of families. This focus on the family has meant, for instance, that repented men have stopped living a profligate and irresponsible life. The men have also reduced their “machismo” culture, which has strengthened women’s voice (even though much is still to do before equality is obtained). The work for re-establishing families has also strengthened the parents’ commitment to their children and their education.⁶⁴ Although this focus on families has been relatively constant, the movement towards increased equality in the different cultural contexts has come to have slightly different focuses.⁶⁵ Another example of women’s liberation is found in South Africa. There, Pentecostalism has given women an increased opportunity to become successful in business.⁶⁶

⁶³ Christian Science Monitor (2007)

⁶⁴ Hefner (2013)

⁶⁵ Attanasi (2013)

⁶⁶ Attanasi (2013), see also Frahm-Arp (2010)

Pentecostalism, Democracy and Equality in Summary

- Pentecostal churches have a function as schools of democracy, and may contribute to a society characterized by the principles of rule of law.
- Pentecostal leaders usually come from the same social context, class or ethnic group as the members, which leads to an increased democracy within the church, as possible distinctions between leaders and members are evened out.
- In principle, anyone can become a leader within the Pentecostal church, since a formal theological education is not a prerequisite.
- In churches that practice an apostolic leadership, the distribution of the spiritual gifts is often considered to favor the men, which in the long run might prevent women from exercising leadership.
- The attitude of Pentecostal movements towards sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) differs in part from the secular agenda, but there are also important overlapping areas, something that has a positive effect on equality and sexual health.
- The focus of Pentecostals on the family has meant, for instance, that repented men have stopped living a profligate and irresponsible life. The men have also reduced their “machismo” culture, which has strengthened women’s role and voice.
- Research about changes within the “machismo” culture in Colombia shows that Pentecostalism has primarily strengthened the status of women in their own homes, but also pushed women to become church leaders.
- Studies from South Africa shows that Pentecostalism has given women an increased opportunity to become successful in business.



Pentecostalism and Economic Development

Research about economic behavior has nuanced the former image of the human being as solely rational. Nowadays, non-material aspects such as faith, values and morality are being included.⁶⁷ The insight that has been developed by economists has also begun to shape actors within development theory, and there is a growing understanding about how failed economic or social development is often connected to the fact that suggested innovations and changes have collided with local ideas, values and social structures. Given the ambition of particularly African Pentecostals to keep existence together as a whole, it is important to see how this approach is taking shape in relation to economic development.

Pentecostals are of course interested in the present time and in their own context, and want to see a good development on all levels of society. Within African Pentecostalism, the visions for development have been formulated in terms of “what God wants for Africa”. This englobes development within many areas, such as economy, the use of resources, peace and politics. For Pentecostals, the answer to the general question about how to create economic development is to strive for a transformation of people’s ideas and behaviors. This struggle for development is nowadays formulated as something that could be seen as a gospel of prosperity. But to see this gospel of prosperity as an expression for a narrow struggle for economic wealth would be wrong. The prosperity is also related to health, relationships and environment.

A difference can be noticed both in view and in approach between urban and rural Pentecostals. In urban contexts, with an inflow of people who have just left their rural backgrounds, the Pentecostals offer a new community and a moral standard that suits the new social context. Here, the focus lies on encouraging and empowering people to be brave, aim high and start businesses. Similar changes of values and motivations, and a legitimization of new behaviors, can also be generated by Pentecostals in rural areas, where people are more tied to their agricultural lifestyle and don’t get as closely in touch with capitalist practices and values.⁶⁸ In these areas, many development actors work on stimulating a shift from traditional economy to market economy. But in their attempt to inspire behavioral changes, they often forget to consider how people’s values and motivations fit with these new behaviors. For the new market-adapted behaviors to be accepted, a radical shift in values must take place. This is maybe where the Pentecostal ethics can most visibly support an atmosphere that favors development.⁶⁹

Maria Frahm-Arp shows in her research how black women have managed to make their way into the labor market in South Africa. Her study makes it clear that a good education is not enough; the women must also have a strong cultural capital (e.g. know how they should act).⁷⁰ Many South African Pentecostal churches work hard to help especially black women to obtain necessary knowledge. This is done through mentor programs and leadership conferences, focusing especially on social and cultural aspects of business. Even the churches as such have given these women the security of being linked to a network which they can trust and which supports them. The same kind of commitment among Pentecostals can be found in many African countries.

For a Pentecostal, the road to prosperity does not involve passively waiting for a miracle to happen. Instead, each person’s possibilities, and the potential given by God, is emphasized.⁷¹ What thus characterizes Pentecostalism from an economic perspective is the insight into opportunities for quick start-up (entrepreneurial identity), low entry barriers (long education is not necessary) and an

⁶⁷ Freeman (2012)

⁶⁸ Tomalin (2015)

⁶⁹ Freeman (2012)

⁷⁰ Frahm-Arp (2010)

⁷¹ Frahm-Arp (2010)

immediate approach to change. In many Pentecostal churches, worldly success is interpreted in positive terms as a symbol for God's goodness and grace towards his people.⁷² A dominating theme in sermons is often to strengthen the believers in their autonomy and the appreciation of their own individual potential. The Pentecostal approach is thus directed towards a mental shift and a focus on the individual. Thereby, Pentecostalism contributes to the formation of disciplined individuals for a neoliberal economy.⁷³ Isabelle V. Barker claims that Pentecostalism has embedded the self-regulating aspects of neoliberal capitalism.⁷⁴ Thus, for Pentecostals, the path to prosperity often goes not through employment but through enterprise, which is why Pentecostals often place great importance on emphasizing behaviors that promote this. In this aspect, Pentecostalism is clearly supporting a spirit of development. In Sweden, we have seen this expressed in what has come to be called the "spirit of Gnosjö".⁷⁵

Pentecostals stress planning and business logic rather than financial miracles. Pentecostal pastors often train their members in entrepreneurship and business. The content of the training is often a combination: "Gospel and Business". The aim is to foster an ambition among the members to be competent and effective in all areas of life. Dena Freeman shows in her research how members of many Pentecostal churches become time managers, thanks to their training in planning, self-control and time management.⁷⁶ Managing time is connected to being pronouncedly goal-oriented. Pentecostals find motivation for time keeping in that it prevents idleness, jealousy, anger and bitterness. Freeman shows that the result of this approach is a shift in which Pentecostals become better at making use of their resources and finances. It is also worth to highlight the changed patterns of consumption that are encouraged by Pentecostals. When people cease to put large amounts of money on alcohol, tobacco and relationships outside marriage (e.g. men's use of prostitutes), financial resources are being freed and can be used to develop the family's wealth.

The image of Pentecostals that appears is that their ideas about planning and life strategies can be considered relevant, and lead to desirable results. Päivi Hasu⁷⁷ has noted that Pentecostalism is able to respond to two types of local environments: both to the middle class and to the extremely poor. But these two groups are addressed in different ways. Members belonging to the entrepreneurial middle class are encouraged to work hard, strengthen themselves and enjoy their wealth. A basic notion is that development is created by hard work, not by miracles. In a Pentecostal church where the members live in vulnerable and poor contexts, more focus is put on healing activities, deliverance from evil spirits and economic liberation. Here, the church community helps to reform and reshape people's ideas about life and development. As we have seen, Pentecostalism is thus able to cater for the needs of the wealthy as well as the vulnerable and poor. In both cases, Pentecostals strive towards substantial changes in ontology, self-perception and behavior, thereby contributing to creating possibilities for individuals to be better equipped, thanks to a personal transformation, to handle their social and economic circumstances.

⁷² Frahm-Arp (2010)

⁷³ Freeman (2012)

⁷⁴ Barker (2007)

⁷⁵ The "spirit of Gnosjö" (Swedish: Gnosjöandan) is a cultural element in the Swedish region of Gnosjö, which has made the region successful, with a lot of small businesses. In a wider aspect, the expression is used to describe regions that are characterized by entrepreneurial energy, many small businesses and informal networks. Historically, the region of Gnosjö has benefited from rich social networks, including a large number of churches and strong popular movements.

⁷⁶ Freeman (2012)

⁷⁷ Freeman (2012)

Pentecostalism and Economic Development in Summary

- Pentecostals are interested in a good development on all levels of society. Within African Pentecostalism, this vision has been formulated in terms of “what God wants for Africa”, which includes economy, the use of resources, peace and politics.
- Pentecostals stress planning and business logic rather than financial miracles.
- Pentecostals encourage and empower people to be brave, aim high and start businesses. A dominating theme in sermons is often to strengthen the believers in their autonomy and the appreciation of their own individual potential.
- For Pentecostals, the path to prosperity often goes not through employment but through enterprise. In Sweden, we have seen this expressed in what has come to be called “the spirit of Gnosjö.”
- Pentecostals also foster a change in consumption patterns: people cease to put large amounts of money on alcohol, tobacco and (men’s consumption of) prostitution, which frees up resources that can be used to develop the family’s wealth.
- Pentecostalism is able to meet the needs of the middle class as well as the poor. The middle class are encouraged to work hard, strengthen themselves and enjoy their wealth. For members who live in vulnerable and poor contexts, more focus is put on healing activities, deliverance from evil spirits and economic liberation.





Pentecostalism and Political Engagement

As the Swedish Pentecostal movement was strengthened during its first decades, it also developed political ambitions. Similar tendencies can be observed today in contexts where Pentecostals have gone from being a small and marginalized group to a numerically large movement. The growth of the movement has opened for a great variety of interest and political ideologies among its members, since political views and ideologies are heavily influenced by local or contextual circumstances.⁷⁸ With such diversity of interests, it is not possible to distinguish a consistent doctrine around political design.⁷⁹ Thereby, Pentecostalism does not have a coherent and uniform political ideology. But with the growing interest in the movement for education and academia, and with the large number of Pentecostal researchers in the North as well as the South, and ambition to form a clearer politically oriented theology can be noted.⁸⁰ Over time, it seems that the views of the movement on politics has shifted from being rather apolitical, focusing on the empowerment of the individual, to becoming more and more engaged in creating a political theology with the aim to transform entire nations.⁸¹

The “Christian citizenship” includes a clear emphasis on morality and ethics. However, the citizenship is not primarily linked to the state, but to a Biblical version of Shalom⁸² and of transformed nations. Grace Milton claims in his book “*Shalom, the Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion*” that the concept of Shalom characterizes the Pentecostal view on repentance, and that Shalom is God’s primary purpose for his creation. The Pentecostal vision of the good society stretches out from the Church and encompasses the society at large, as well as the whole creation. The Pentecostal theology around Shalom gives impulses to public values and ideas, economic notions, strategies, regional agendas, and to self-images about being an important political actor. Today, Pentecostals contribute to the development of new social and political landscapes in many countries. Pentecostalism calls for observance of the words of the Sermon of the Mount about justice, peace and lasting relationships.⁸³ Shalom is something that should happen outside Church, and many Pentecostals believe that God will hold the Church accountable for the society at large. Thereby, the Church has a responsibility to train its members to become more like Christ, and equipped to act, within each different domain, on the basis of divine principles.⁸⁴

Within progressive Pentecostalism and socio-politics, the provision of social services to people is considered vital.⁸⁵ In this regard, Pentecostals see the Church as the engine of change, and therefore, members are encouraged to engage in politics. In Nigeria, for instance, a Pentecostal pastor took the initiative to create a forum for religion and leadership – *African Forum for Religion and Government*⁸⁶ – which has resulted in the gathering of hundreds of participants from Pentecostal movements of most African countries. The aim of the movement is to form African leaders that are characterized by integrity and a commitment towards “*transforming Africa into a First World continent shaped by*

⁷⁸ Hefner (2013)

⁷⁹ Many attempts have been made to describe the origins of a Pentecostal political theology; Studebaker, S.M. “A Pentecostal Political Theology”, Yong, A. “In the Days of Caesar”, Beckford, R. “Dread and Pentecostal – A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain” (2011, Wipf & Stock) etc.

⁸⁰ See for example Kärkkäinen (2015), Amos Yong (2010), Studebaker (2016)

⁸¹ Yong (2010), Bompani & Valois (2018)

⁸² Milton (2015)

⁸³ Matthew 5

⁸⁴ Agang (2016)

⁸⁵ Agang (2016)

⁸⁶ African Forum for Religion and Governance (2019)

*God-centered values.*⁸⁷ Another example of political mobilization in Nigeria is the *Guiding Light Assembly* in Lagos, that has arranged a special training to prepare members to engage in politics.

A reflection by PMU and Pingst is that the political engagement of Pentecostal movements can sometimes follow the paths of nationalistic or isolationistic political trends, and at times even become racist in nature. There are several examples throughout history of Pentecostal churches that have chosen to remain silent in the face of racial segregation, or to contribute to the maintenance of racist structures. However, there are also examples of the opposite. Theologically and historically, the Pentecostal movement has its roots in the revival of Azusa Street, which was led by the black American pastor William J. Seymour, and many of the first members came from different backgrounds: black, white, Asians, American natives, immigrants, rich, poor, illiterate and educated. It is worth to notice that this happened at a time when racial segregation was still a norm in the USA.⁸⁸

Pentecostalism and Political Engagement in Summary

- Pentecostalism does not have a coherent and uniform political ideology.
- The Biblical concept of Shalom, which describes a redeemed creation according to God's will, characterizes the Pentecostal view on repentance.
- The Pentecostal theology around Shalom gives impulses to public values and ideas, economic notions, strategies, regional agendas, and to self-images about being an important political actor.
- Within progressive Pentecostalism, the provision of social services to people is considered vital. The Church is seen as the engine of change, and therefore, members are encouraged to engage in politics.

⁸⁷ Miller et al (2013) see also African Forum on Religion and Government (2019)

⁸⁸ Robeck (2006), Synan (2001)

Pentecostalism and Peace

Ever since its very early days, the Pentecostal movement has had a pacifist legacy to cherish. Many of the early Pentecostals were outspoken pacifists, opposing nationalism and promoting equality between different ethnic groups. Throughout history, however, Pentecostals have displayed a great variation in how they have handled affiliation, inclusion and conflicts. More recently, it seems that Pentecostals are about to retake the old tradition of more clearly advocating peace.

Richard H. Burgess has researched how a Pentecostal commitment to peace can manifest itself in Nigeria.⁸⁹ His research shows the potential of Pentecostals to build social bridges. By taking on a mediation role, the Pentecostals can help to reduce tensions and prevent violence. Burgess research also shows that in relation to peacebuilding processes that are initiated by faith-based actors such as Pentecostals, it is important to distinguish between “social capital”, “religious capital” and “spiritual capital”.⁹⁰ While social capital is largely about social organization, religious capital can be determined in relation to the concrete actions and resources that a faith-based community assists with. Finally, spiritual capital is the motivational foundation in the form of beliefs, conceptions and values. According to Burgess, it is through the inclusion of religious and spiritual capital that it becomes possible to understand the value that Pentecostals generate in relation to social capital. The religious capital of the Pentecostals consists in their closeness to vulnerable groups of people, as well as in their organizational culture, which is formed to mobilize and stimulate participation. Burgess claims that this is one of the fundamental reasons why Pentecostals are so effective in strengthening the social capital. Pentecostal churches represent strong networks of religious capital, through which large groups of volunteers can be mobilized for social engagement. Thus, there is an inherent culture of trust within Pentecostalism. Burgess’ research shows that Pentecostals have increased their public presence and participate actively in the strengthening of peace and trust between conflicting groups. The personal repentance and the transformed self-perception have led many people to no longer see themselves as victims, but rather as overcomers. This makes it possible for Pentecostals to oppose a passive, fatalistic faith and instead reclaim ownership and action even in processes for building peace and generating trust. In the dedicated task to build peace, the proclamation of Jesus in the Sermon of the Mounts, “*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God*”, clearly shows the way forward.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Burgess (2015)

⁹⁰ Burgess (2015)

⁹¹ Matthew 5:9

Pentecostalism and Peace in Summary

- Many of the early Pentecostals were outspoken pacifists, opposing nationalism and promoting equality between different ethnic groups. Throughout history, however, Pentecostals have displayed a great variation in how they have handled affiliation, inclusion and conflicts.
- In relation to peacebuilding processes, it is important to distinguish between:
 - “*social capital*” – which is largely about social organization
 - “*religious capital*” – the concrete actions and resources that a faith-based community assists with
 - “*spiritual capital*” – the motivational foundation in the form of beliefs, conceptions and values
- The religious capital of the Pentecostals consists in their closeness to vulnerable groups of people, as well as in their organizational culture, which is formed to mobilize and stimulate participation. With the help of this religious capital, large groups of volunteers are being mobilized for social engagement. In this, there is an inherent culture of trust.
- Pentecostals strengthen peace and trust between conflicting groups.
- In the task to build peace, the proclamation of Jesus in the Sermon of the Mounts, “*Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God*”, clearly shows the way forward.





Cooperation Between Pentecostals and Aid

Even though there are studies that show that religion as a concept and phenomenon is largely missing in public policies of development agencies such as Sida⁹² there are many examples of cooperation between the secular aid and religious actors within the area of aid. The cooperation between PMU and Sida is a good such example. Development is favored by a closer cooperation between Pentecostals and secular development actors, something that could be seen by, for instance, Dena Freeman in her research in Ethiopia. Freeman's research shows that a cooperation between a local Pentecostal intervention and a secular NGO resulted in a very favorable outcome, when local commitment and international resources could be brought together.⁹³ In this meeting between two different types of organizations, it became possible to set up common goals and strategies. All the effects which have been described above, such as the transformation of individuals, democratization, equality, economic development, peace and resilience, can be realized in the cooperation between Pentecostals and aid organizations. PMU, as a faith-based organization, has seen this synergy in action, but the principles are also validated in Freeman's research. To optimize the effect of the cooperation between secular aid and Pentecostals, it is important that the understanding of the role of religion in society is updated, and that religion and its representatives are not only seen as a channel for aid, but are also appreciated for their added values, their individuality and their challenges. This is being concluded by Holmefur in his thesis in the quote "When religion is excluded, it appears unannounced" (our translation).⁹⁴

In the work with the Agenda 2030 and the 17 global development goals, the need for many processes and inflow of resources besides the aid becomes obvious, as the expected cost to reach the goals by far exceeds the total aid given worldwide.⁹⁵ To reach the goals, we must find new innovative partnerships through which we can reach the poorest, so that no one is left behind. At the same time, there is a growing belief that the role of religion in processes of change must be better understood, given that religious belief is so determinant for people's world view, identity, values, attitudes and behavior, as well as the cultural expressions of a society.

⁹² Holmefur (2016)

⁹³ Tomalin (2015)

⁹⁴ Holmefur (2016)

⁹⁵ The Swedish Government/Swedish Foreign Ministry: "*Strategi för kapacitetsutveckling, partnerskap och metoder som stöder Agenda 2030 för hållbar utveckling*" (*Strategy for capacity development, partnership and methods supporting the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development*)

Cooperation Between Pentecostals and Aid in Summary

- Religion is largely invisible in the policies of Swedish development agencies.
- There is a need to update the view on the role of religion for development.
- Cooperation between secular aid and Pentecostals can lead to favorable outcomes. Ignoring religion as a factor can lead to deteriorating results, or at worst counter-reactions and setbacks.
- To reach the goals of Agenda 2030, new innovative partnerships must be founded, for instance with the world wide Pentecostal movement.



Final remarks

The global goals and the Agenda 2030 aim to eradicate poverty and hunger, realize human rights for everyone, obtain equality and empowerment for women and girls, and ensure a lasting protection for the planet and its natural resources. The goals are universal, integrated and indivisible, and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, the social and the environmental aspect. In this document, PMU and Pingst have tried to emphasize the importance of working with Agenda 2030 and, in order to fulfill the promise of not leaving anyone behind, of ensuring that religion and religious aspects of poverty and vulnerability are not forgotten in the analysis, and that the world truly makes use of the potential that exists in religion and religious networks. The global Pentecostal movement, as well as other faith-based networks and actors, possesses a power for change and a chance to mobilize people which should be seen as important, considering the size and the fast growth of the movement, as well as its commitment towards the vulnerable and the poor. A secular agenda will have limited possibilities to influence deeply religious contexts. It is our hope that this document will contribute to a deeper analysis and to new partnerships.





About PMU

PMU is a Swedish faith-based development and humanitarian organization working in about 35 countries. PMU is part of the global Pentecostal movement which is one of the largest and fastest growing social movements in the world with approximately 700 million followers. In Sweden, PMU is part of the Swedish Pentecostal Alliance of Independent Churches. PMU wants to contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives in Agenda 2030 and PMU's strategic priorities to contribute to Agenda 2030 is described in *PMU's Compass to 2020*. In the *Compass to 2020* PMU describes the ambition to intensify PMU's knowledge of, and focus activities on two areas: *Democratic Culture and Governance* (with an emphasis on Peace) and *Gender Equality*, during 2016–2020. In addition to this, PMU considers it a priority to deepen the organization's understanding of the connection between religion and development, and of the role of faith-based actors and the context in which they operate. PMU will develop its strategic focus in the future strategic direction *PMU's Compass to 2025*.



About Pingst Sweden

Pingst Sweden, the Swedish Pentecostal Alliance of Independent Churches (Pingst – Pingst fria församlingar i samverkan) is the national organization of the Swedish Pentecostal movement, counting 436 independent Pentecostal Churches gathering about 87 695 members all over Sweden. Pingst Sweden is part of the international Pentecostal movement and is a member of the Pentecostal European Fellowship (PEF) and World Pentecostal Fellowship (WPF). Pingst Sweden's vision is to *"Be known for our genuine love for Jesus and people, and to be a clear and respected voice in society and a movement that never stops growing"*. Nearly all of the Swedish Pentecostal Churches are cooperating with sister churches abroad, in around 100 different countries, with church building activities, development work or with humanitarian interventions. In Sweden the Pentecostal movement has special branches for Rehabilitation of drug and alcohol addicts, Youth work, Training of pastors and other leaders, Church development, Education, Relationship and Social awareness.



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