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A South African view of Pentecostalism as another response to modernism

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A popular way used by most sociologists, anthropologists and theologians to define the Pentecostal movement, its origins and growth is by way of the Deprivation Theory, implying that Pentecostalism can be explained in terms of its origins among the poor, marginalised and disenfranchised. However, it is argued that Pentecostal identity was rather formed by its Bible reading practices, its hermeneutics that resulted in its doctrinal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Full Gospel message and the lifestyle it generated that caused others to convert to Pentecostalism. It is submitted that this was the result of utilising a specific Bible reading method prevalent in holiness circles of the 19th century, which involved reading from a primitivist-restorationist and revivalistic perspective, and also served as the primary cause of the establishment of Pentecostalism and its growth. Individuals were attracted to Pentecostalism not because they were deprived – although many of them were – but with the way they read and interpreted the Bible, the resultant religious quest for Jesus and their enchanted worldview. Deprivation and disorganisation should rather be viewed as facilitating rather than causing its attraction, implying that the popularity of the movement is to be sought somewhere else – in the dynamics of the movement itself. It is concluded that Pentecostalism is a countercultural paramodern movement that defined its praxis-oriented identity and restorationist-primitivist spiritual ethos as a social and spiritual response to modernistic liberalism and Protestant fundamentalist cessationist orthodoxy.

Keywords: modernism; fundamentalism; restorationism; hermeneutics; cessationism; continuationism.

Introduction

Classical Pentecostalism was birthed in multiple geographic locations as a diffuse group of restorationist revivalist movements, including inter alia Topeka, Kansas that was associated with the Bible schools of Charles Parham, the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California in the USA, associated with the ministry of William Seymour, an African American, as well as various other revival sites across the world. Its diverse origins were also reflected in the diversity of its theology and praxis. The first Pentecostals came from the Wesleyan holiness tradition; later other adherents of the holiness movement joined in the Pentecostal revival, including Keswickian or 'Finished Work' believers. This led to the first differences of opinion and schisms in the early years about holiness as a finished or ongoing work (Synan 1988:220–221). Hence, Pentecostalism grew from the roots of the Wesleyan holiness movement, its immediate predecessor, and the Keswickian higher life movement. The holiness movement was characterised by literal-minded biblicism, emotional fervour, puritanical mores, enmity toward ecclesiasticism, care for the poor and belief in the imminent second coming of Christ (Dayton 1991:38).

Up to 1910, most Pentecostals accepted two works of grace or blessings. The first is conversion and the second is a personal experience subsequent to regeneration identified in holiness circles with the filling or the baptism of the Spirit in which the believer is cleansed from original sin – also called sanctification. However, Pentecostals defined a third work as a distinct baptism of the Spirit which was usually accompanied by tongues. Spirit baptism served as an enduement of power for proclamation and demonstration of the gospel with word and power (Archer 2009:20). Those that did not embrace Pentecostalism understood the second work of grace, sanctification, as Spirit baptism. The purpose of the Spirit baptism experience for them was to eradicate inbred sin; thus enabling one to live a life or moral perfection. Pentecostals agreed, but added a new emphasis. Spirit baptism empowered believers for their missionary task to reach the ends of the world with the gospel before the second coming of Christ.

Around 1914, Oneness ('Jesus Only') groups originated alongside the mainly trinitarian Pentecostal movement (Reed 2008:174). In addition, Pentecostals did not represent a homogenous ethnic

group either; from its beginning and initially, it was multi-racial in several countries. In the USA, Wesleyan holiness slaves with their African slave spirituality and worship, contributed to the dynamic experiential and worship characteristics of the movement (Cox 1995:149). It illustrates that early Pentecostalism cannot be defined in terms of a main figure or event, and does not present a historical pattern or coherent line of development for all groups as is the case in many Protestant traditions (Riss 1988:307). It could be argued that it was its diversity, ability to adapt and to connect with current cultures without losing its essential beliefs and practices (vs. syncretism) that aided in its growth during the past century (Keener 2016:83; Omenyo & Arthur 2013:51).

What held the Pentecostal movement, despite its diversity that suggests that one should rather refer to Pentecostalisms, together and served as its magisterium was its primitivism and restorationism, called by Blumhofer (1993:4) the basic components of the movement, and that consists of its doctrinal commitment to the five or four-fold 'Full Gospel' message. The Full Gospel understands Jesus in his work as saviour, Spirit baptiser, healer and soon coming King, with sanctifier added by some groups not associated with Finished Work. It also placed an emphasis upon ecstatic religious experiences associated with Spirit baptism and the ongoing work of the Spirit in encounters with God as a precondition for being Pentecostal. Pentecostal restorationism that spurred revivals whenever Pentecostals experienced routinisation as a result of the desire for respectability (Hefner 2013:8), argued that to restore the demonstration of the power of God in the rebuilding of the kingdom of Christ in the end times, the church needed to restore the (idealised) New Testament church (Hunt 2010:185, 189). To realise this goal, the church needs to go back behind inadequate church traditions to Scripture and replicate the ideal lifestyle and spiritual experiences depicted in the New Testament (Keener 2016:27–28). With 'primitivism' is meant any effort to deny history, or to deny the contingencies of historical existence, by returning to the time before time, to the golden age that preceded the corruptions of life in history (Wacker 1984:357).[1] Early Pentecostals viewed their revival as continuing or even completing the restoration of the church begun in the Reformation, and going back to the Early Church (Keener 2016:313).[2] Many restorationists used an ahistorical approach that lacked sufficient appreciation for history or historical context as venues for divine activity as seen in early Pentecostal disregard for the historical context of the Bible (Keener 2016:313).

1.Early Pentecostals manifested three patterns of primitivism, according to Wacker (1984:358–369): philosophical primitivism, in that their belief that they could know absolute truth in a very personal manner which was unencumbered by the limitations of finite existence existed at a preconceptual level of their worldview; historical primitivism (or restorationism), that consists of the notion that they replicated New Testament Christianity, which explains why they found church history irrelevant; and ethical primitivism, a cluster of anti-modernist behaviour patterns which were patterned after the New Testament in order to bring about the power of New Testament Christianity. However, the impossibility of describing the conditions and situation in the Early Church is acknowledged.

2.A part of the impetus that also fuelled the Reformation was the Renaissance emphasis on recovering the early sources (Bartholomew 2006:195–197).

South African Pentecostalism

South African Pentecostalism was gestated during the social chaos and revivalistic vigour of the late 19th century, a millenarian spirit of expectation of Christ's second coming that accompanied the arrival of a new century and the volatile first decades of the new century. It followed in the aftermath of the 1860 revival in the Dutch Reformed Church in the wake of the revivals in Europe and the USA, with leaders such as Andrew Murray and Servaas Hofmeyr reacting to what they perceived to be the dangers of liberalism and rationalism (Burger 1987:85).[3] The revival spirit also reached many black churches. South Africa was caught up in the aftermath of the devastating Second Anglo Boer War (11 October 1899 – 31 May 1902) that led to the burning of 30 000 farm homes and the death of 35 000 South Africans of which 28 000 were women and children who died in concentration camps established by British soldiers. At least 31 000 farmers were held captive in camps of which 24 000 in India, Ceylon, Bermuda and St. Helena (Burger 1987:121). After the war, many farmers lost their farms and, together with their farm labourers, they were forced to look for employment in the cities. The vortex of changes included urbanisation and industrialisation, leading to many societal problems that were aggravated by poverty, poor race relations, a lack of moral values and spiritual decay, and that were characterised by alcohol abuse, gambling, disregard for the church and immorality.

Revival became one of the means to transform a small group of individuals across racial barriers, implanting principles of personal responsibility and moral accountability that changed the lives of the individuals and families involved, and eventually also society.[4] For evangelicals, revival was the means for healing and transformation of societal and personal illnesses.[5] Revival evangelists preached the necessity of a personal conversion experience, placing individual experience at the centre of the religious stage. Revival meetings were lively, emotional, fervid and powerfully encouraging (Archer 2009:16), providing in the emotional and spiritual needs of many South Africans caught in the intolerable economic and social conditions of the day.

The same is true for the classical Pentecostal movement. At first, it was a revival movement with its emphasis on conversion, healing and Spirit baptism defined in terms of the accompanying initial sign of *glossolalia*. Initially, they formed

3.Marsden (1991:32) explains that 'modernism' and 'liberalism' are often used interchangeably by many scholars.

4.Revivalism is defined in line with Bebbington (1998) as consisting of four hallmarks or characteristics: biblicism, or a high regard for the Bible as the primary source of spiritual truth; crucicentrism as a focus on the atoning work of Christ on the cross; conversionism or a belief in the necessity of spiritual conversion and activism, which consists of the priority of publicly proclaiming and living out the gospel. The Methodists were a good example of this movement that strove for renewal of Christianity rather than the establishment of churches, although they eventually lapsed into ecclesiastical structures.

5.Trueman (2011:14) notes within evangelicalism the lack of any institutional or ecclesiastical dimension, the primacy of experience and the nearly complete absence of doctrinal criteria which, to his mind, represent such a diversity of groups and movements that the definition and identity of 'evangelicalism' cannot be discovered at all (p. 19). The only way to say something sensible about 'evangelicalism' is in a negative manner, for example evangelicals are not Catholic or mainline and their view of the Bible is not liberal. The difficulty in a floating signifier with no extra-textual referentiality rooted in a communal semiotic scheme is demonstrated as having no true reference point, according to Trueman (2011:13).

part of the so-called 'Come out' movement. It referred to the radical Wesleyan holiness wing that called people out of the established Methodist and other mainline churches to become a part of the independent holiness churches. The same hermeneutic as the holiness movement was used, and only added to the experience of Spirit baptism, already emphasised in holiness circles, the gift of speaking in tongues as initial sign of Spirit baptism as well as the other word charisms. Initially, South African Pentecostals did not want to establish denominations and they avoided the establishment of any ecclesiastical structures and institutionalisation, believing that the mainline, institutionalised churches were backslidden.

Deprivation theory as a means to define Pentecostalism and its origins

Most scholars, interested in the phenomenon of classical Pentecostalism, including historians, sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists along with many theological scholars, explained the origin, expansion and attraction of Pentecostalism in terms of the social deprivation theory, which refers to social disorganisation and psychologically defective individuals forming its compounding factor.[6] The movement can then be explained in terms of deprivation, disorganisation and defective individuals that interpret Pentecostals' religious experience as a personality defect resulting from socio-economic deprivation. Their peasant roots and material, and social deprivation explained their predisposition to the mystical, supernatural and even animistic and magical notions that characterised their religious expressions. Anderson (1979:154) asserts that most Pentecostals were characterised by their social discontent, because they were frustrated with their low social position in society. They came largely from rural-agrarian origins, even though they represented a diversity in racial and ethnic origins. They experienced the shock of transplantation as a result of mass urbanisation, leading to disorganisation also due to their low social status and general lack of education (Anderson 1979:240). In this way, Anderson interprets Pentecostals' intense desire for a spiritual walk with Jesus as saviour, healer, sanctifier and coming King in negative terms, showing a gross reductionism (Archer 2009:30).

When Pentecostalism is interpreted in terms of the social deprivation theory, it serves as another example of the Church-sect theory which argues that Pentecostals fit the classical pattern of socially deprived persons that in time, developed 'churchly' characteristics as the deprivation of its membership ameliorated (Anderson 1979:228). Its religion served as a kind of defence or compensation mechanism for those who suffered from societal stresses, economic problems and psychological deficiencies. These people turned to the Pentecostal movement, because they were deprived, disorganised and defective.

The truth, however, is that Pentecostalism also spread among those living in larger towns and cities, including people from the middle class, and although the movement probably initially had reached mostly the marginalised, the continuing wave attracted the middle and upper class who were not suffering from economic deprivation. The characteristics associated with the 'sect type' and the economically disadvantaged in the Church-sect theory are found not only among poor assemblies, but also in churches representing the economically advantaged. These characteristics included an emphasis on religious experience, lay leadership, a confessional basis for becoming a member, a high degree of membership participation, reliance on the spontaneous guidance of the Spirit in the arrangement of the organisation and participation in house churches (Hine 1974:656). If communities that were socially advantaged were attracted to Pentecostalism, then socio-economic deprivation cannot be the condition for the spread of the movement. Deprivation and disorganisation should be viewed as facilitating rather than causing its attraction, implying that the popularity of the movement is to be sought somewhere else – in the dynamics of the movement itself (Gerlach & Hine 1968:23).

As argued, Pentecostals are motivated by the 'Full Gospel', allowing for believers to experience conversion, healing and the charisms associated with Spirit baptism as a continuous realisation of the promises made in the New Testament (e.g. in Mk 16:15–18; Mt 28:18–20). This is in direct opposition to modernism's conception of reality representing the established order of society.[7] It is submitted that Pentecostalism attracted people because of the lure of its enchanted worldview, supernatural signs, healing and its seemingly scriptural message in direct opposition to the predominant worldview of modernism. Pentecostals believed in the paranormal, experienced in Spirit baptism, as an alternate worldview to the instrumental rational modern society (Poloma 1989:xvii–xx) with its disenchanted worldview (Keener 2016:202).[8] It provided an alternative by fusing the natural and supernatural, emotional and rational as well the charismatic and institutional in a decidedly postmodern way (Poloma 1989:xix). It also represented the collision of Scripture, signs and societal worldviews based on the passionate desire for an unmediated experiential encounter with Jesus (Archer 2009:37). In the next section, it will be argued that the attraction of Pentecostalism for individuals has more to do with the way Pentecostals read the Bible and their religious quest in response to the modernist world than being deprived.

Pentecostalism as a response to modernism

It has been argued that, although social deprivation was an important facilitating factor, Pentecostalism's origins and popularity cannot be distracted from it. It should rather be

6.The scholars are, for example Gerlach 1974; Gerlach & Hine 1968; Hine 1974; Anderson 1979; Fay 1987; Smelser 1992; Miller 1996; Poloma 1996; Robbins 1996; Kenneson 1999.

7.'Modernity' and 'modernism' is to be distinguished from one another. 'Modernity' refers to the quality or condition of being modern while 'modernism' refers to a movement based on philosophical suppositions that modified certain traditional beliefs in accordance with modern ideas, because in its view, the traditional forms of religious faith were becoming ill-fitted to their tasks and outdated in the new economic, social and political environment of an emerging fully industrialised world.

8.'Pentecostal rituals exhibited a worldview that presupposes that worship was about encountering God, including faith in an all-powerful God who was *there* to meet human needs and the experience of the Spirit's presence was seen as a normal part of daily life and was brought to bear upon all situations' (Anderson 2013:138–139).

seen as another reaction to modernity (or multiple modernities, in Martin's terms [2013:58]) next to and alongside Protestant fundamentalism, and distinguished from fundamentalism by its experiential hermeneutic, self-authenticating and community-validating religious experiences and continuationist beliefs.

The revival spirit that spread since 1858 in America and Europe, and reached South African shores by 1860, as already referred to, can be characterised as a reaction to what was perceived as the evils of modernism based on rationalism, and the cold cerebral Christianity of most mainline Protestant traditions (Cox 1995:75; Burger & Nel 2008:25–26). Pentecostalism and the Wesleyan holiness movements from which it emanated, joined this populist movement. They represented a conservative counterweight among the lower income groups to the liberal thinking[9] of some in the middle and upper socio-economic classes (as well as to ethical challenges such as abortion, homosexuality and communism [Hefner 2013:17]). They protested innovative 'modernistic' developments by longing for and trying to re-establish the apostolic Christianity of the Early Church. As products of Wesleyan thought, their traditions did not represent the tradition of 'Protestant orthodoxy', but rather protested against it, especially the widely prevalent cessationist view. Although it would eventually join with Old School Princeton fundamentalism against modernism in the 1930s and 1940s, it existed as a protest against Presbyterian orthodoxy with its pattern of doctrinal drilling and ideological inflexibility (Hefner 2013:9).[10] During the modernist-fundamentalist controversy, Pentecostals rather threw in their weight with fundamentalists than with antisupernatural modernists, despite fundamentalists' obsession with doctrinal purity (Cox 1995:74). They reacted to higher biblical criticism, modernism, Darwinism, new historical, sociological and Freudian psychological ways of thinking (Marsden 1991:32) and the social gospel (Keener 2016:310). In the process, they exposed themselves to fundamentalist influences.[11]

The protest of both fundamentalism and Pentecostalism was defined in terms of what it perceived as rationalistic modernism's acceptance of the evolutionary theory of the origins of life on earth, which diminished the traditional doctrines of divine origins and intervention by many Protestants. Higher criticism or historical critical methods of exegesis, developed mainly in Germany and undermining the authority of the Bible, and comparative religious studies which relativised Christianity, depriving it of its unique and absolute character (Anderson 1979:31). Modernism, as such, can be defined as Descartes' autonomous, rational substance encountering Newton's mechanistic world (Grenz 1996:3). It is characterised by humanism (the mastery of all naturalistic and supernatural forces), positivism (with science and rational reasoning serving as sole arbiters for truth) and a naturalistic mechanistic universe, with the material and observable as the sum total of reality (Vorster 2004:598). It is no wonder that modernity perceives especially Pentecostals as overtly superstitious or even psychologically deranged as asserted, inter alia by those who interpret Pentecostalism in terms of the social deprivation theory. For Pentecostals, however, their cultural enchanted worldview with its persistent emphasis upon the supernatural charismatic manifestations of the Spirit within the worshiping community, presented an alternative to secularised modernity's increasingly materialistic, rationalistic and individualistic society (Bellah 1976). Modernity was marked by democratisation, free markets, pluralism and a radical rejection of both patriarchy and supernaturalism (Martin 2013:59). On the contrary, Pentecostals advanced a primal spirituality, seeking the very nature of spiritual experience behind the Christian faith and the very essence of religion. Primal spirituality consists of three elements: Primal speech is the ecstatic utterance of *glossolalia* – a language of the heart. Primal piety consists of the articulation of archetypal religious experiences of trance, vision, healing, dreams, praise and supplication. And primal hope looks forward to a new age – God's millennial kingdom on earth. It represents an anti-rationalism that allowed religion to re-enter the world, contributing to reversing the secularity of the West (Cox 1995:82–83; see Hunt 2010:195).

Pentecostalism, with its supernaturalistic culture, stood in opposition to modernism. It viewed Spirit baptism and the accompanying charisms as a mystical encounter with God, offering a transforming perception of reality that invested all of life with a new meaning (Blumhofer 1993:9). Its insistence on continuous mystical experiences with the Spirit in the same terms as those experienced by believers in the Early Church, also placed the movement on a collision course with fundamentalism's cessationist theology, leading to the exclusion, derision and even demonisation of Pentecostals by fundamentalists (Keener 2016:17).[12] Text-oriented believers in any religion (as fundamentalists were) tended to be wary of mystics. While fundamentalists enshrined their beliefs in formal doctrinal expositions and creeds proclaimed from the pulpit, those of Pentecostals were embedded in testimonies, ecstatic speech and bodily movement (Cox 1995:5–6). They sang their theology and explained it in pamphlets for distribution at street corners (Cox 1995:15). Their mode of existence differed radically from that of both modernism and fundamentalism.

9.'Liberal' is used in the sense of 'freedom from tradition' (Marsden 1991:33).

10.Marsden (2006:22) called Princeton the bastion of conservative or 'Old School' Presbyterianism.

11.The influence by fundamentalism was eventually widespread so that Brouwer (1996) defines the movement as an integral part of the global impact of USA-style fundamentalism. To a large extent, most members and leaders of classical pentecostal churches today, use a rather fundamentalist based hermeneutic to interpret the Bible. However, Cox (1995:6) is correct when he states that Pentecostals are not fundamentalists in the usual application of the term, given the boundaries established (through a certain animosity) by traditional fundamentalists with Pentecostalism. The difference between Pentecostalism and fundamentalism is essentially phenomenologically. The arbitrary nature of definition of 'fundamentalism' (and 'Pentecostalism') should also be acknowledged (Droogers 2010:37). A heterogeneous miscellany of movements and sects are designated as 'fundamentalist'. However, Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby is correct in stating that the diverse movements share a 'family resemblance' to each other (in Cox 1995:302).

12.Fundamentalism is defined by Marsden (1991:1) as a militancy within evangelicalism in opposition to liberal theology in some churches and to changes in cultural mores and values associated with secular humanism. It represents religious conservatives willing to take a stand and fight for their beliefs. It professes complete confidence in the Bible. It is preoccupied with the message of God's salvation of sinners through the death of Jesus Christ. It proclaims that acceptance of the gospel message is the key to virtue in this life and to eternal life in heaven. Rejection of the gospel means following the broad path that ends with the tortures of hell (Marsden 2006:3).

It is their emphasis on continuous divine interventions in the lives of believers and supernaturalistic worldview that served as the primary reason for Pentecostalism's popularity and growth as a populist alternative to the mainstream churches (Martin 2013:40). This is especially true in the majority world or global south. In the words of Poloma (1989:19), Pentecostalism can be explained as an anthropological protest against modernism by providing a medium for encountering the supernatural and miraculous to those disillusioned by modernism (and colonialism, which brought modernism to the global south).[13] In other words, Pentecostalism should be defined in light of the cultural shift from modernism to late postmodernism (Hunt 2010:180) and as essentially a response to liberalising tendencies among certain strands of evangelicalism in response to the challenges of modernism. Pentecostalism protested against the growing secular order as well as the sterile mainstream denominations that sought to accommodate themselves within the worldview of modernism through a particular form of sectarianism that articulated the movement's unique ecstatic and esoteric expression of Christianity. In the process, it has proved to be the 20th century's most successful embodiment of revivalism, ensuring the successful transmission of the Protestant religion into the modern era (Walker 1998:6). However, its revivalism was not opposed to critical rationality, individualism, the capitalist ethic and progressivism, and especially after the Second World War, Pentecostals became reluctant modernisers by a slow process of cultural osmosis (Hunt 2010:181).

Pentecostalism protested the secularised social order produced by modernity and the urban-industrialised capitalist society that also determined the values of middle-class people, requiring a formality in worship, ornate cathedrals and choirs (Archer 2009:22). It existed at the fringes of society, along with other radical holiness groups. What characterised the movement in its diverse forms was an ardent desire for the unmediated experiential manifestation of the Spirit which did not rely solely on emotions or the intellect, but on a sign that people had met God, demonstrated in the gift of *glossolalia*.

Most early Pentecostals were neither highly educated nor economically prosperous, and few held any positions of influence in society.[14] In the beginning, only a few people from the middle class associated with the Pentecostals or joined their movement, partly due to their ecstatic religious practices and social behaviour during worship services. They represented a radical paramodern counter-culture identity motivated by the eschatological fervour to take the gospel to the ends of the world within their generation (in terms of Mk 13:30). They moved at the fringes of society, willing to live without any luxuries or guaranteed income as long as they could spend their lives proclaiming the good news of Pentecost. Mostly the marginalised, also from established religious institutions (Hefner 2013:6), were reached by their message that promised them wholeness and healing within a frame of defining ultimate concerns (Blumhofer 1993:92).

Their social status and milieu as marginalised people also affected their reading of Scripture and what themes appealed to them – themes that, at times, were ignored by both fundamentalist and liberal Christians (Archer 2009:265). The humanisation of socially and economically marginalised people was the result of interpreting the Bible filtered through the worldview of the Pentecostal community that allowed for continuationism in terms of divine intervention (Archer 2009:28). They read and interpreted the Bible from their experiences with the Spirit. The Bible defined what they expected in terms of present-day encounters with God and provided them with the necessary linguistic tools to describe their experiences in testimonies.

They based their teaching on the Bible, but their heartbeat was determined by their experience with the Spirit, and not some theological premise or system that was the result of studies, explaining its non-alignment with modern theology. Their emphasis on Spirit baptism, healing and the ministry of the charisms separated them from the rest of Western Christian tradition, and set them at odds with Protestant orthodoxy and liberal theology. Behaviour codes of conduct were reinforced within the family of faith that was closely connected to each other and anyone could participate in democratic manner in worship services by means of testimonies, songs and even preaching. Revivalist restoration preaching brought meaning to their lives.

Inspiration was not seen as limited to the Bible in the sense that it was a document dictated by God and containing no mistakes, but it included the present ability of the Bible to speak to the community as well as the Spirit directly revealing the will of God in the lives of believers. Fundamentalists, however, viewed the inspiration of the Bible in terms of a past written document only. They reaffirmed the factuality and authority of the Bible by appealing to Baconian Common Sense which produced a confidence that one could discover the facts contained in the Bible in archaeology and other scientific endeavours in the same way as other facts of science (Marsden 1991:128). They viewed the Bible as being scientific in the sense that it reported on facts that could be vindicated by evidence while they judged Darwinian evolutionism as unscientific, because in their perception, it was based upon a mere hypothesis that could not be proven. In their attempt to maintain a balance between scientific rationality and the Bible, they formed an academically informed anti-modernist movement. However, by utilising the main concepts of modernism, rationalism and evidence-based reasoning, fundamentalism remained a modernistic phenomenon despite its opposition and resistance to modernism.

13. However, Robbins (2010:158, 168–173) is correct in his observation that although Pentecostalism viewed its relationship with modernism in negative terms, at the same time it fostered important values connected to modernism such as individualism by disembedding the individual from extended family networks, changing gender norms by promoting gender equality (although it also embraced traditional Pauline notions of patriarchy in which women were expected to subordinate themselves to men), and the transformation of economic and political ideas by modernising people's economic lives and spurring democratisation. As a result, in some respects, pentecostal lived in practice, looked modern.

14. In the words of D.W. Myland, an early pentecostal leader, in 1910: God sent the latter rain to the poor and outcasts, taking the despised and base things and being glorified in them (in Cox 1995:67).

They used scriptural foundationalism as a propositional approach to religious language based upon a referential theory of language, which argued that the propositions of theology were commensurable with other kinds of knowledge (Marsden 1982:95). In order to resolve problems of consistency with science and history, they appealed to the divine inspiration of Scripture, which represented to them a divine act of intervention by God, implying that each word contained in the Bible is correct and true.

Pentecostals (along with adherents of Wesleyan holiness) affirmed the objective nature of Scripture, but combined it with the importance of personal experience as means and precondition to reaffirm the inspiration of the Bible. They located the inspirational work of the Spirit in both the past written document and in their present experience with the Spirit while reading the Bible. They expected that the word of God would be made alive and become relevant to their daily situation when they read the Bible prayerfully.

In contrast to fundamentalists and Pentecostals, modernists or liberals argue that the authority, accorded to the Bible, did not rest upon scientific or historical claims. Christianity's authenticity was not based on 'objective revelation' found in a written document. It was rather found in 'personal experience' as Schleiermacher (1998 [1838]) already stated at the beginning of the 19th century. Modernists based their theological understanding upon an experiential foundation which required an expressive theory of religious language that understood that religion and science were incommensurable and hence found no possible conflict between them (Murphy 1996:61).[15]

It was argued that Pentecostalism had a radical paramodern counter-culture identity, because it provided a postmodern alternative to the prevalent worldview and values. It should not be viewed as premodern just because it originated within the modern period, although it shared some characteristics with premodern (and modern) times. On the contrary, it functioned within the parameters of modernistic language and belief to articulate its practices and beliefs, even though it stood in opposition to modernism. It was also not anti-modern, because it chose to function outside modernism's acceptance as an epistemological premise that truth and faith were based entirely upon objective historical evidence such as the fundamentalists (Marsden 2006:94). It is suggested that the movement should be viewed as paramodern, because it emerged within a specific historical time frame, modernity; yet, existed on its fringes, both in sociological and theological sense by its emphasis on physical evidence of Spirit baptism representing scientific experimentation language.

15.The fundamentalist-liberal debates that marked Protestantism during the early 20th century also separated Christians from one another. Dominations were established as fundamentalists, and liberals withdrew from older denominations, with some who 'preserved the truth' and others who 'preserved community' in ways that relativised any notion of 'truth' (Kinnamon 1988:1–18). As a result of the alignment between a part of Pentecostalism with fundamentalist hermeneutics (Yong & Richie 2010:252–253; Hefner 2013:3), pentecostal fundamentalism, as far as it existed, led to the closed attitude of exclusivism (characteristic of many (most?) forms of religious fundamentalism [see Vorster 2004:597]) positing that a conscious personal response to the preached gospel is not only normative, but also necessary for salvation. It is connected to their understanding of the great commission and an excessive literalist approach to biblical hermeneutics.

Synthesis

It was argued that the origins, popularity and phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism, ascribed by many scholars in terms of the Social Depravity theory to deprivation, disorganisation and defective individuals, should rather be interpreted as a paramodern movement originating and existing as a protest against modernism. Fundamentalist Christianity also opposed modernism, but Pentecostals at the same time, also protested against cessationist Christianity. This explains why Pentecostalists and fundamentalists could hardly find each other. Although Pentecostalism did never accept modernism's worldview, it utilised aspects of modernity such as its technology, language and inductive reasoning to advance its cause. However, its emphasis on Spirit baptism and divine healing separated it from modernism and fundamentalism. For that reason, the Bible read through the marginalised Wesleyan holiness and Pentecostal eyes, from a restorationist and revivalistic perspective, served as the primary cause of Pentecostalism and its growth. Individuals were attracted to Pentecostalism not because they were deprived, but with the way they read and interpreted the Bible, and their emphasis on Jesus as saviour, healer and Spirit baptiser and enchanted worldview. Deprivation and disorganisation should rather be viewed as facilitating rather than causing Pentecostalism's attraction implying that the popularity of the movement is to be sought somewhere else – in the dynamics of the movement itself.

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Competing interests

The author declares that no competing interest exists.

Author's contributions

I declare that I am the sole author of this research article.

Ethical consideration

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Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

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