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# A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PAULINE MISSIOLOGY, ASSEMBLIES OF GOD MISSIOLOGY, AND CONCLUSIONS FOR TODAY

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PAULINE MISSIOLOGY, ASSEMBLIES OF GOD  
MISSIOLOGY, AND CONCLUSIONS FOR TODAY

by  
Colbry Martin

Submitted to the Honors Committee  
in partial fulfillment  
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2018

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2018

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family. Thank you, Dad, for living a life of conviction which inspired this thesis. Thank you, Mom, for setting an example of academic excellence and integrity throughout my entire educational career. Thank you, Shelby, for bringing a competitive spirit to academics and giving me goals to chase. Thank you, Abby, for constantly reminding me that life is, ultimately, about loving God and serving people.

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## Abstract

The following work researches the Missiology of the Apostle Paul, displayed in his mission's practices in the book of Acts. This work also researches the mission practices of the Assemblies of God in order to discover their unique missiology. The key principles from these two parties are then compared in order to discover the similarities and differences. Since the argument is made that the recordings in the book of Acts of the working of the Apostle Paul are inspired by the Holy Spirit, the similarities between Paul's practices and Assemblies of God practices are seen as strengths which need to be replicated. However, the disparities are seen as weakness which need to be assessed. This paper hopes to find these disparities and offer biblical solutions which call for the Kingdom of God to be established through the principles of the Holy Spirit.

**KEY WORDS:** Pentecostalism, Missiology, Book of Acts, Pauline Missiology, Missions

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## Introduction

The first three centuries of Christianity saw an explosion of growth, unlike any movement before or after. What started with a carpenter from Nazareth and twelve disciples, rapidly turned into the talk of the Roman Empire. Men and women alike gave their lives to spread news that the Messiah of Israel had brought salvation to the world. The question remains: how were the early believers so effective in spreading the gospel?

When looking at the heart of the mission's movement of the early church, one can look no farther than the Apostle Paul. Once a persecutor of the church, Paul became the tool God used to take the gospel to the Gentile world. Despite intense persecution, Paul embarked on various missionary journeys which turned the Roman world upside down. We find detailed accounts of these journeys in the book of Acts. God's hand was clearly upon Paul, and we must give credit to God as the one who causes any ministry to flourish. With that being said, we are still called to seek effective methods for mission practices. As stewards of the good news, we must be inspired to reach as many people as possible. Paul's ministry was clearly effective, and this effectiveness was ultimately due to the leading of the Holy Spirit, not a unique anointing which Paul possessed. Therefore, our missiology should derive from the accounts in the book of Acts of how the Holy Spirit led Paul in his missionary journeys. While we face new and unique challenges in our world today, we must follow a biblical example in our modern day missiology, for the ways of the Spirit are never failing. While some may argue that Paul's success was simply based on personal advantages and the cultural climate, the universality of his methods can transcend these factors.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours*. S.I.: Forgotten Books, 2017.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street led to a dynamic shift in Evangelical missions. Early Pentecostals saw this revival as a sign of the imminent return of Christ. In fact, many believed that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the church anew, so that the church could evangelize the entire world right before the return of Christ. The urgency which these early Pentecostals possessed closely mirrored the urgency of the early church. Many of the New Testament letters reveal that the disciples believed that Jesus would return in their own lifetime. This urgency led to a call for evangelism from every member of the Christian faith, not just the conventional ministers.

In this thesis, the following questions will be answered:

1. What truly exemplifies Pauline missiology?
2. What truly exemplifies Assemblies of God missiology?
3. What are the correlations between Pauline missiology and Assemblies of God missiology?
4. In what ways does the Assemblies of God need to return to Pauline practices in their missiology?

The thesis statement is as follows: In order to recapture a Pauline view of missiology, the Assemblies of God needs to push back against over institutionalization which can limit the Spirit's ability to lead, use financial restraint when entering into community so that the gospel is not muddied by financial agendas, establish the church through the Pauline principle of the raising up of national leaders, and establish compassion ministries through stimulating the generosity of national churches, rather than suppressing generosity through overwhelming a community with foreign funds.

## What is Missiology?

Missiology is the study of the work of God's people in bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to every corner of the earth. Some have wondered why missiology is necessary. Did the apostles spend a few years studying how to most effectively reach the Roman world before spreading the gospel? Did Paul need a degree from a university to give him the right to go on his missionary journeys? Certainly not. However, there undoubtedly is a need for missiology in our generation. As Jean-Francois Zorn discusses, there was an initial resistance to the field of missiology. Western missionaries had embarked all over the world in the 8<sup>th</sup> century; however, these same missionaries opposed the incorporation of missiology into the universities in Europe. This is due to a fear that the university would weaken the passion and heart behind the movement. However, as missionaries began to receive accusations of being agents of colonialism, they recognized the need for missiology to clarify their mission and increase their effectiveness.<sup>2</sup> As those entrusted with the gospel, we must be committed to being as prepared as possible so that we can fulfill the Great Commission with maximum effectiveness.

While the early church had no formal universities to study missiology, they certainly practiced missiology in action. In fact, Denton Lotz argues that the early church was the most committed of any generation to the Great Commission. Each believer oriented their lives around the advancement of the kingdom. It was only once that Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire that their missiology became muddled. The church became an enforcer of culture, rather than a counter-cultural movement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Francois Zorn, "III What Mission? For a Missiology of Western Culture", *International Review of Missions* 95, no. 378 (2006): 320.

<sup>3</sup> Lotz, Denton. "Paradigm Shifts in Missiology." *Evangelical Review of Theology* 32, no. 1 (2007): 4-21.

William Schumacher argues that missiology must not become focused on simply studying the history of missionaries and mission's movements. While this may seem natural, it fails to recognize the church's role in missions. Instead of missions being viewed as the work of a few called individuals, it should be seen as the collective mission of the global church.<sup>4</sup> In "Witness and Unity in 21<sup>st</sup>-century World Christianity," D.L. Robert calls the global church to unite in its apostolic calling. Instead of viewing the Western Church as the sender of missionaries and the Eastern Church as the receiver, the two spheres must realize that both parties are vital in world evangelism.<sup>5</sup> Missiology is not the study of the Western Church sending men and women to reach the east; instead, it is the study of how God is working in the church as a whole to reach the lost.

In his book *Becoming the Gospel*, Michael Gorman discusses the idea of missional hermeneutics. Missional hermeneutics is "what happens when missiologists, biblical scholars, and ecclesial leaders intentionally work together to prove the biblical text for what it says about the *missio Dei* and about our participation in it."<sup>6</sup> Missiology should ultimately be rooted in Scriptural revelation of God's plan for reaching the nations with the gospel. While God always works in new ways, scripture lays forth guidelines that should shape our practices, even today. These guidelines for biblical missiology are most extensively seen in the book of Acts, which are the guidelines from which much of Pauline missiology is established.

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<sup>4</sup> William Schumacher, "Mission across the curriculum: historical theology", *Missiology* 35 no. 4 (2007): 431-436.

<sup>5</sup> Robert D.L., "Witness and Unity in 21st-Century World Christianity", *Transformation* 30, no. 4 (2013): 243–256.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015.

## Pauline Missiology

When studying missiology based on the life of Paul, there is not a better place to start than the book of Acts. The book of Acts records how the Holy Spirit worked through the apostles and their missionary journeys to establish the local church throughout the known world. When trying to determine the missional values of the apostle Paul, why not go directly to the primary source?

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. <sup>2</sup> While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup> Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. <sup>7</sup>

In this passage, the Holy Spirit calls Barnabas and Saul to a specific mission, although it is not clearly specified of what the mission will consist. It is important to note that the mission was backed up by the approval of the local church in Antioch. Barnabas and Saul's call was both confirmed and supported by the church, which is crucial to Pauline missiology. Saul worked with and through the local church, not in isolation.

And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. <sup>8</sup>

This passage refers to one of Barnabas and Paul's first stops on their inaugural missionary journey to Antioch in Pisidia. While it initially seemed as if their ministry in Antioch would be successful, the Jewish leadership in the city caused enough uproar to drive out the missionary tandem. In the same manner of Jesus' instructions to his disciples, Barnabas and Paul

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<sup>7</sup> Acts 13: 1-3, ESV

<sup>8</sup> Acts 13: 49-52, ESV

simply moved on without a fight. From this account arises the missiological idea that “freedom from people and their responses is essential to our effectiveness with them.”<sup>9</sup> Barnabas and Paul did not take personal offense by the rejection of the people. Instead, they simply saw the uprising as a closed door and moved on to the next door the Holy Spirit opened. Perhaps, our missiological success should not simply be determined by positive responses from the people to whom are ministering. The Holy Spirit often leads us in paths contrary to the way our minds find logically effective, but we must trust that his perfect will is being established.

Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked.<sup>9</sup> He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well,<sup>10</sup> said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And he sprang up and began walking.<sup>11</sup> And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”<sup>12</sup> Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.<sup>13</sup> And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.<sup>14</sup> But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out,<sup>15</sup> “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.”<sup>10</sup>

In this account, Paul confidently tells a crippled man to walk, and the miracle occurs instantaneously. While the healing is certainly notable, what is fascinating is the response of the people of Lystra. Because of the supernatural occurrence, they drew the conclusion that Barnabas and Paul were Zeus and Hermes. Roman literature reveals that this region had myths which described Zeus and Hermes having previously arrived with the disguise of mortal men. Therefore, the people naturally concluded that this was the return of these divine gods. Barnabas and Paul rightly tried to dissuade the crowd of this conclusion by denying their divinity and

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<sup>9</sup> Lloyd John Ogilvie. *The Communicator's Commentary: Acts*. (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1983), 218.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 14: 8-15, ESV

sharing the message of the true God. However, the people could not get past the lens of their own culture. The descriptions of this event in Acts must warn us “with the danger of people fitting the Christ and Gospel we preach and teach into their own religious and cultural presuppositions, and never hearing us.”<sup>11</sup> Barnabas and Paul would not allow the Gospel to be misconstrued by the culture in which it was entering. The Gospel can enter into any culture, but it must not be fundamentally changed by that culture.

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.<sup>12</sup>

These verses come at the end of Paul and Barnabas’ time in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. Before these two missionaries moved on to their next destination, they made sure to appoint elders to oversee the well being of the churches. Paul and Barnabas were passing on the authority God had placed on their lives as carriers of the gospel to the leadership of the local church.<sup>13</sup> It is incredibly vital that missionaries do not hold on tightly to the authority which they naturally maintain as the ones who brought the good news to the locals. If they do not allow the leaders to walk out leadership in their own churches, then the stability of the churches will rise and fall with the presence and absence of the missionaries.

And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.<sup>28</sup> And they remained no little time with the disciples.<sup>14</sup>

In these verses, Paul and Barnabas followed up their first missionary journey by gathering together with those who had sent them out and reported what God had done,

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<sup>11</sup> Lloyd John Ogilvie. *The Communicator’s Commentary: Acts*. (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1983), 223.

<sup>12</sup> Acts 14: 23, ESV

<sup>13</sup> Charles Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles: In Two Volumes*. London: Clark, (2010): 687.

<sup>14</sup> Acts 14: 27-28, ESV

specifically that the Gentiles were receiving the gospel. This account is a vital because it reveals the need for missionaries to return to the place which sent them out and report of the work which they had been commissioned to do. Furthermore, the reports which missionaries bring both strengthen the church and prepare them for trials and tribulations which the sending church may face in the future. Through the accounts, the sending church can be enlightened to the reality of what God is doing around the world and be prepared to face what other churches are facing.<sup>15</sup>

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.<sup>7</sup> And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.<sup>8</sup> So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.<sup>9</sup> And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”<sup>10</sup> And when Paul<sup>[a]</sup> had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.<sup>16</sup>

These verses are crucial to the nature of Pauline missiology. Contextually, Paul had just parted ways with Barnabas, as a result of a dispute regarding Mark. Branching out with Silas and Paul’s new companion Timothy, Paul felt in his spirit that the Holy Spirit was preventing him from going into Asia and Bithynia. Instead of ignoring the prompting of the Holy Spirit and doing what was right in his own eyes, Paul refused to act outside of the will of the Spirit. In regards to this passage, one commentary says, “God was the director of the apostle and of his mission. No human beings were- God alone, to whom all must submit, must be praised or blamed for the mission.”<sup>17</sup> If God is the director, then both the praise and the blame does not fall on the missionary. This eliminates the temptation for pride to accompany those who view

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<sup>15</sup> Johannes Munck and William Albright and C.S Mann, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, (1967): 135.

<sup>16</sup> Acts 16: 6-10, ESV

<sup>17</sup> Johannes Munck and William Albright and C.S Mann, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, (1967): 157.

themselves as the director of missional efforts and safeguards a missionary from placing unnecessary blame on themselves when a door is closed. Thankfully, the Spirit not only closed doors, but he also opened the door for Paul to be the first person to take the gospel into Europe. Pauline missiology is defined by not only refraining from action when the Spirit wills, but also by being willing to walk into new territory when the doors are opened. Both patience and a pioneering spirit are key ingredients in the effectiveness of Paul's ministry.

<sup>16</sup> As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." <sup>18</sup> And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. <sup>18</sup>

These verses are vital to an understanding of a Pauline approach to dealing with evil spirits. The Greek phrase which Luke used to describe the spirit of the slave girl was "Echousan pneuma puthona." This phrase can be translated as "a spirit of python" which refers to "the god Apollo who was supposedly embodied in a snake at Delphi." <sup>19</sup> The important concept to note is that the demonic activity of the enemy was to discredit the work of Paul by attaching his name to that of fortune telling. Paul's response should be noted. He rebuked the evil spirit and cast it out in Jesus name. Paul recognized the authority he had over the powers of darkness, and used this authority with boldness. Pauline missiology relies on the power of the name Jesus to thwart demonic activity and disrupt the strongholds of the enemy in communities. Such activities will often upset the economic and political climates of a community, but Paul clearly had no concern for the problems that would arise as a result. In fact, further reading in the book of Acts reveals

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<sup>18</sup> Acts 16: 16-18, ESV

<sup>19</sup> Lloyd John Ogilvie. *The Communicator's Commentary: Acts*. (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1983), 248.

that Paul's ability to stay calm in the midst of opposition gave him the ability to leave the city on his own terms.

<sup>35</sup> But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." <sup>36</sup> And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore, come out now and go in peace." <sup>37</sup> But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." <sup>38</sup> The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. <sup>39</sup> So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. <sup>40</sup> So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed. <sup>20</sup>

The important principle of Pauline missiology which can be seen in this passage is the importance of leaving a good name for the gospel. Due to the injustice which was served to Paul, he had every right to bring charges against the magistrates. However, that was not the goal of Paul. Instead, he simply wanted to encourage the new believers and depart in peace. Paul's patience and calmness allowed him gain respect and power within the community. Paul did not want to cause problems for the new believers within Philippi. If he had brought charges against the magistrates, the believers would have certainly been hassled long after Paul left. Pauline missiology seeks the welfare of the local believers who will continue to dwell in a community long after the missionary is gone. Paul had every right to declare justice, but he cared more about the standing of the local believers with the government than his own justice. <sup>21</sup>

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Acts 16: 35-40, ESV

<sup>21</sup> Stanley Horton, *The Book of Acts*: (Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub. House, 1981), 199.

<sup>22</sup> Acts 17: 1-2, ESV

In Thessalonica, Paul reveals another important aspect of his missiology. Luke remarks that it was Paul's custom to visit the synagogue and reason from the scriptures. When ministering to the Jews, Paul understood how important it was to use the Hebrew scriptures. The Jews would have regarded the scriptures with great value, and such focus on the Messianic prophecies within the scriptures would have resonated with them.<sup>23</sup> When ministering in Athens, Paul is seen using an example of the unknown god to make a point. While the method of ministry changes, the message is always focused on proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah, as seen in verse 3. Pauline missiology is sensitive to the context in which the gospel is being shared, but it never compromises on its central truth. If a mission's movement sacrifices the proclamation of the message of Christ, it loses its very purpose.

<sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.<sup>23</sup> For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you."<sup>24</sup>

As referred to earlier, Paul used a pagan practice to point to a biblical truth. The common person of Athens would likely have had very little knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures. Therefore, it would have been quite ineffective to focus all of his attention on showing the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, as he did with the Jews in the synagogue. Pauline missiology recognizes the value of knowing the cultural context in which the gospel is being preached. Often, a cultural context requires a usage of pagan ideas and even poetry, as seen in later in the

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<sup>23</sup> Stanley Horton, *The Book of Acts*: (Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub. House, 1981), 202.

<sup>24</sup> Acts 17: 22-23, ESV

passage. Paul recognizes that truth exists in the secular world, but this truth is only partial, and must only be used if it points to the truth of scripture. <sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. <sup>21</sup> But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus. <sup>26</sup>

While these verses may seem insignificant, they speak of a crucial principle. Paul recognized that he must submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit if he wanted his ministry to be fruitful. If he would have promised that he would return to Corinth, he would not have been recognizing the possibility that the Holy Spirit could lead him in another direction. Pauline missiology submits to the leading of the Holy Spirit in all things. If a missionary makes an emphatic promise that he will return to a place, he fails to recognize that only the Holy Spirit knows what is in his will. Missionaries must remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and make sure that their interactions with communities are in line with this reality.

<sup>8</sup> And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. <sup>9</sup> But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.<sup>[a]</sup> This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. <sup>27</sup>

In these verses, Paul is seen moving on after the Jews repeatedly hardened their hearts to the gospel. Paul did not see this initial failure as a sign to leave the city; instead, he persisted and moved to a lecture hall which was home to the philosopher Tyrannus. Paul’s daily teaching in this hall reportedly led to the gospel reaching all of Asia. “There is no evidence that Paul himself left the city of Ephesus during this period. Yet, it is evidence that the seven churches of Asia

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<sup>25</sup> Stanley Horton, *The Book of Acts*: (Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub. House, 1981), 208.

<sup>26</sup> Acts 18: 20-21, ESV

<sup>27</sup> Acts 19: 8-10, ESV

mentioned in the book of Revelation were founded at this time.”<sup>28</sup> This phenomenon could fit the following explanation: “The joy of new converts must have been contagious. Wherever they went and they told about what had happened to them. Paul could not have reached the whole province in two years even if he had walked the length and breadth of the area talking to everyone he met. Instead he preached daily, and those who were won to Christ multiplied his ministry.”<sup>29</sup> This principle is vital to Pauline missiology. Ultimately, it is local believers who are the most effective in reaching a region with the gospel. Paul recognized that his ministry was limited to his physical presence. Therefore, he faithfully proclaimed the gospel in the hub city of Ephesus, and allowed the new converts to reach their own hometowns. Pauline missiology recognizes that the gospel is most effectively spread when local believers are empowered to take the gospel to their own people. If a missionary does not seek to multiply his ministry through the local believers, his ministry will be narrow and isolated.

You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia,<sup>19</sup> serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;<sup>20</sup> how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,<sup>21</sup> testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>[c]</sup><sup>22</sup> And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by<sup>[d]</sup> the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there,<sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.<sup>24</sup> But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.<sup>25</sup> And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.<sup>26</sup> Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all,<sup>27</sup> for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.<sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God,<sup>[e]</sup> which he obtained with his own blood.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Stanley Horton, *The Book of Acts*: (Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub. House, 1981), 225.

<sup>29</sup> Lloyd John Ogilvie. *The Communicator's Commentary: Acts*. (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1983), 277.

<sup>30</sup> Acts 20: 18-30, ESV

These verses, spoken by Paul to the elders in Ephesus, are filled with key mission's principles. Initially, it stands out how devoted Paul was to being apart of the community he was reaching. Paul says he "lived among you" the whole time. While this seems like a basic principle, it can be a temptation for missionaries to separate their ministry from their home life. There can be a tendency for a community of expatriates of to develop and isolate themselves from the everyday lives of the locals. However, Paul understood that if he wanted his message to be received, he had to show the local people that he cared about them enough to walk through life with them. Moreover, Paul emphasizes how he did not compromise on preaching the full truth of the gospel, regardless of the consequences which faced him. Neither social pressure from the Jews or physical beatings from the Gentiles could shake his message.<sup>31</sup> On the mission field, it is vital that the gospel is never compromised in order to make the message more appealing to the locals. Paul continues by revealing how much weight he placed on the leading of the Holy Spirit, even if such leading would lead to his own death. Stanley Horton says, "On no account did he make his life valuable to himself in comparison with finishing his run, accomplishing the ministry which he received from the Lord Jesus, giving serious witness to the good news of the grace of God."<sup>32</sup> When on the mission field, it is vital for missionaries to place the will of the Spirit over their own desire of comfort, ambition, and even safety. Pauline missiology is fully sacrificial. The goal of bringing the good news to the lost must take precedence over our fleshly desires. Lastly, Paul gives full ownership of the church he planted to the local leaders he had set in place. Horton says, "Paul expected the elders to shepherd the church as the assembly of God. The chief duty of the shepherd was to lead the sheep to food and water. The elders thus needed to

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<sup>31</sup> Stanley Horton, *The Book of Acts*: (Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub. House, 1981), 238.

<sup>32</sup> Stanley Horton, *The Book of Acts*: (Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub. House, 1981), 238.

have the Christ-given, Spirit-anointed, Spirit-gifted ministry of pastor and teacher.”<sup>33</sup> When a missionary pioneers a ministry from the ground up, it can become incredibly difficult for them to hand the reigns off to local leaders. However, Paul understood that this was the only way for the ministry to continue to multiply. Paul did not leave the leaders unequipped, instead, he challenged and reminded them that they were appointed by the Holy Spirit. He also reminded them that their chief duty was to care and protect the flock. In doing so, Paul ensured that the good work which he began would continue well after he was gone.

<sup>30</sup> He lived there two whole years at his own expense,<sup>[g]</sup> and welcomed all who came to him,<sup>31</sup> proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.<sup>34</sup>

In the final words of the book of Acts, the last days of Paul’s life are described. In reference to these verses, Ogilvie says, “Paul was receptive to all inquirers, preached the kingdom of God, proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ with confidence, and was given freedom.”<sup>35</sup> Even while in house arrest at the end of his life, Paul never forgot that his mission was to proclaim the good news to all who would listen. To Paul, mission was not simply an assignment, but it was at the very core of his being. Paul’s missionary duties did not waver with his circumstances or context. Instead, he embodied his calling.

As Luke recorded the missionary journeys in the book of Acts, he captured the heart of Paul’s mission’s theology. The following points summarize the theology which can be derived from the key passages discussed: calling should be confirmed by both the Holy Spirit and the local church, people’s rejection of the gospel does not automatically indicate that the work is in

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>34</sup> Acts 28: 30-31, ESV

<sup>35</sup> Lloyd John Ogilvie. *The Communicator’s Commentary: Acts*. (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1983), 361.

vain, the core gospel message can not be compromised to fit the culture it is engaging, local leaders should be empowered to take charge of a ministry which is pioneered by a foreign missionary, missionaries must submit to the leading and will of the Holy Spirit, missionaries should walk with authority against all powers of darkness which try to thwart their mission, missionaries must do everything within their power to leave a good name for the gospel when passing through a region, the message of the gospel should be presented with sensitivity to the culture in which it is being presented, a missionary should be immersed in the culture in which he is ministering, local leaders must be empowered to take the gospel back to their own region, missionaries must not isolate themselves or elevate themselves about the locals they are living among, social pressure or physical threats must not alter the gospel message, missionaries must be willing to lay everything on the line for the sake of the gospel, and the calling of a missionary must be at the very core of their being, not just an assignment.

In order to accurately discover the heart of Pauline missiology, it is additionally helpful to study the works of various scholars. Such scholars have tried to discover the heart and methodology which made Paul's missions movement so successful. Before proceeding, it is important to remember that our human efforts to create a successful mission's movement are greatly limited. Kim Kristen reminds readers that only the Holy Spirit knows and determines the next great movement of the church. We must not become prideful in our own wisdom or ability to spread the gospel in our might.<sup>36</sup> With that being said, we must do our part in effectively partnering with the work of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>36</sup> Kirsteen Kim, "Mission's Changing Landscape: Global Flows and Christian Movements", *International Review of Mission* 100, no. 2 (2011): 244-267.

In Wim Dreyer's article "The Amazing Growth of the Early Church", he proposes five factors which fueled the rapid growth of the early church. One of these factors was the commitment to apostolic mission.<sup>37</sup> Apostolic ministry was marked by the idea that a missionary would be sent out into a region in which there was no foundation of the gospel. Paul, perhaps the most influential of all the apostles in global evangelism, continually stated that he did not desire to build on the foundation another man had laid before him. This commitment ensured that the movement of the gospel would spread to every region in the Roman Empire which had no foundation of the church.

The Apostle Paul is the focus of the missional movements in the book of Acts. These movements are centered around his three missionary journeys. Luke, a disciple of Jesus, is responsible for writing both the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. This two-volume narrative shows the natural progression of how the mandate of Christ to evangelize the world was implemented. Prior to the resurrection, the ministry of Jesus moved towards Jerusalem. After the resurrection, the gospel spread out from Jerusalem. Eddie Germiquet expounds on this reality in his article "Luke's Journey Narrative: A Literary Gateway of the Missionary Church in Acts." One of his theories for the results of the mission of the church was the inclusion of those who had been cast out from community.<sup>38</sup> Paul's unique calling to reach the gentiles aligns beautifully with this reality. God used Paul to bring the gentiles into the family of Israel through the work of Christ on the cross.

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<sup>37</sup> Wim Dreyer, "The Amazing Growth of the Early Church." *HTS Theological Studies* 68, no. 1 (2012): 1-7.

<sup>38</sup> Eddie Germiquet, "Luke's Journey Narrative: A Literary Gateway of the Missionary Church in Acts", *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 103, no. (2010): 16-29.

One of the chief strategies which Paul follows in his missionary journeys is his commitment to focusing his ministry on urban regions. While this may seem insensitive to the working of the Holy Spirit, it was actually the Holy Spirit that led Paul to these urban regions. Often, Paul would have one plan in mind, and the Holy Spirit would redirect him.<sup>39</sup> By laying the foundation of the gospel in urban regions, Paul was able to reach entire regions. Urban centers were filled with people from all over the region. By establishing churches in cities, the gospel would naturally be taken back to people's place of origin. In fact, David Killingray, in his article "Passing on the Gospel", proposes the idea that missionaries only play a minor role in the evangelizing of a region. Killingray focuses on missionary efforts in Africa, and reveals that while missionaries claim only minor results, the church has exploded. This leads to a conclusion that most of the church growth can be accredited to the work of local people.<sup>40</sup> This is a key aspect of Pauline missiology, for he always raised up local leaders and equipped them to take ownership of the advancement of the gospel in their region.

While it is clear that Paul focused on raising up national leaders, we must discover how exactly he reached national people. In his article "Rethinking missiology in relation to indigenous peoples' life-struggle," Jojo Fung proposes that effective evangelization of indigenous people must be approached in the context of mission being a counter-cultural action. While we can certainly try to redeem certain aspects of a culture, we have to remember the power in the counter-cultural nature of the gospel.<sup>41</sup> Paul exemplified this counter-cultural

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<sup>39</sup> Muthuphei Mutavhatsindi, "The Preliminary Urban Missionary Outreach of the Apostle Paul as Referred to in Acts 13-14." *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1 (January 2017): 110.

<sup>40</sup> David Killingray, "Passing on the Gospel: Indigenous Mission in Africa." *Transformation* 28, no. 2 (2011): 93-102.

<sup>41</sup> Jojo Fung, "Rethinking Missiology in Relation to Indigenous Peoples' Life-Struggle", *Mission Studies* 20, no. 1 (2003): 29-56.

attitude in the way he approached mission. Often Paul would go into a city and turn the city upside down through his bold preaching and the miracles which followed his preaching. He would also speak against evil practices in cities, which often upset the financial stability of the city. These counter-cultural actions often led to riots and beatings for Paul; however, they also led to great success in conversion of national people.

These counter-cultural actions often led to the ultimate sacrifice for the apostles. Paul was eventually beheaded in Rome for his commitment to his mission. This commitment to the mission despite the sacrifice is a key aspect of Pauline missiology. Andrew Finch touches on this idea, by comparing the similar results to martyrdom in the Roman Empire and in modern day Korea. In both cases, martyrdom greatly increased the effectiveness of mission. In fact, it was not until martyrdom began to occur in Korea that the church actually took a foothold in society.

<sup>42</sup> Paul and his fellow ministers were willing to lay down their lives for the mission they preached. Such passion and sacrifice was a key dynamic in their ministry. This ultimate commitment to the gospel must be a part of our missiology.

Postmodern thought has been engrained in every aspect of our society in the twenty-first century. In the church, the furthest extent of postmodern thought, or relativism, could lead to a rejection of many of the beliefs that have been universally true in Evangelical Christianity. Edward Mackenzie proposes that Paul's writings in Galatians can help critique the conclusion of postmodernism. At the center of his conclusions is Paul's missiological commitment for a call to conversion. We must be steadfast that our mission is ultimately to bring the lost to a saving

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<sup>42</sup> Andrew Finch, "The 'Blood of the Martyrs' and the Growth of Catholicism in late Chosŏn Korea", *Historical Research* 88, no. 242 (November 2015): 674-692.

knowledge of Jesus Christ.<sup>43</sup> If we allow the extreme end of postmodern thought to overwhelm our missiology, we may lose this core commitment.

While we look to Paul and his writings as our chief source for biblical missiology, we must remember that the success of the early church was a collective effort. God used individuals like Paul to advance the gospel, but he also used many other means. In fact, Paul was simply a partner in the mission that God was accomplishing through local churches, individuals, and other apostles throughout the Roman Empire.<sup>44</sup> No one man is responsible for spreading the gospel in a region. Instead, we are partners with the Holy Spirit and the work he is doing through anyone who is willing to answer the call.

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<sup>43</sup> Edward Mackenzie, "Mission and the Emerging Church: Pauline Reflections on a New Kind of Missiology", *Missiology* 40, no. 3 (July 2012): 315-328.

<sup>44</sup> Christoph Stenschke, "Mission in the Book of Acts: Mission of the Church." *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 103, no. 1 (2010): 66-78.

### **Assemblies of God Missiology**

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Azusa street led to the largest missionary endeavor since the early church. Men and women who were apart of this movement believed that God had poured out his Spirit so that they would have the power to evangelize the world before the return of Christ. This belief that the return of Christ was imminent led to an unprecedented urgency that they carried with them. Gary McGee offers four reasons for the incredible success of Pentecostal missions, specifically within the Assemblies of God. Those reasons are the following: the belief that signs and wonders would follow the proclamation of the gospel, the planting of New Testament style churches, the training of national leaders, and the support of home churches.<sup>45</sup> These core foundational models for missiology are what made Pentecostal missions so successful. All of these foundations are rooted in the book of Acts. Signs and wonders constantly followed the proclamation of the gospel. Churches were planted with the expectation that they would regenerate in their region. The apostles always trained and raised up national leaders to take ownership of the work of the gospel. Home churches, such as the church in Jerusalem and Antioch, provided support and oversight for the apostles. The beauty of the early Assemblies of God missionary efforts was not that they had discovered a new, innovative way to spread the gospel. Instead, they simply returned to the scripture and practice of Pauline missiology.

One of the most effective aspects of early Pentecostal missions was the reliance the leaders placed on the workings of the Holy Spirit. However, Malcolm Black argues that the Pentecostal church lost much of its apostolic approach to missiology due to institutionalization,

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<sup>45</sup> Gary McGee, "Assemblies of God Overseas Missions: Foundations for Recent Growth", *Missiology* 16, no. 4 (October 1988): 427-437.

bureaucracy, over organization, and too strong a commitment to tradition.<sup>46</sup> It is a natural progression for a movement to become institutionalized as the vastness of an organization grows. While institutionalization can lead to increased efficiency, it can also limit the ability for the Holy Spirit to act as a guiding force. Instead of local leaders making decisions which best fit how the Spirit is moving in their community, overseers at the home base begin gaining more and more power. This can be justified for financial and organizational purposes; however, removing the autonomy of the national leaders and missionaries on the field stifles a movement.

Pentecostal mission's efforts have certainly made a widespread impact on the global church. While institutionalization may have had negative effects on the missional efforts, Pentecostal groups are still growing in large amounts annually. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen proposes that the Pentecostal community must make intentional efforts to connect itself with the body of Christ as a whole. In doing so, Pentecostal leaders can ensure that the success they have seen on the mission field will become solidified.<sup>47</sup> By working in partnership with non-Pentecostals, the body of Christ is unified and strengthened. Pauline missiology was never focused on rivalry or the exaltation of one man's ministry. Instead, Pauline missiology was centered around the collective efforts of every church and disciple to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Within the Pentecostal movement, the Assemblies of God (abbreviated as AG) has a rich history of missions endeavors. Upon the conclusion of the first ever General Council of the Assemblies of God in 1914, the denomination had 27 missionaries. While this may seem like an

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<sup>46</sup> Malcolm Black and Christopher Pepler, "Retaining an Apostolic Approach to Church Life." *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary*, no. 5 (2008): 39–65.

<sup>47</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, "Pentecostal Theology of Mission in the Making." *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 25, no. 2 (2004): 167–176.

unimpressive number, it actually reveals the emphasis that the AG placed on missions from its beginnings, as there were only a few hundred ministers in total. The organization, however, began and continued in a state of disorder for over a decade. Despite this reality, these missionaries were committed to planting national style churches and contrasted the tendency for foreign mission's programs to be centered around a famous personality.<sup>48</sup>

Gary McGee recognizes four distinct groups of missionaries which were a part of these beginning years of AG missional efforts. The first group consisted of missionaries who quickly went on the field due to an urgency they felt to see the lost saved before the return of Christ. However, their lack of strategy, training, financial support, and cultural awareness led to a high rate of missionaries returning back home quickly. The second group consisted of missionaries who still lacked the vital training, yet their faithfulness to the calling yielded them success on the field. The third group consisted of veteran missionaries who, after receiving Spirit Baptism, switched over from other missionary agencies to the AG. These men and women provided much needed stability to an organization which was young and disorganized. The fourth group consisted of the few missionaries who actually had formal training, although the Bible institutes of the time had very little missional specific classes.<sup>49</sup> The percentage of missionaries leaving the field rapidly declined after the AG officially established its Foreign Missions Department in 1919. However, many of these early missionaries were "rugged individualists who often remained skeptical of growing organizational structures at home."<sup>50</sup> While these individuals

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<sup>48</sup> Gary B. McGee, *"This Gospel-- Shall Be Preached": A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions: 1914-1959*, (1984): 85.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-87.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

viewed organizational structure as an opposition to the leading of the Spirit, a decrease of missionaries leaving the field was certainly a positive aspect of systemization.

Despite the formation of the Foreign Missions Department, many of the early missionaries went on the field without the approval or financial support of the organization. Gary McGee says, “Some missionaries thought Christ’s return was so imminent that they never expected to see the United States again once they had left.”<sup>51</sup> McGee then goes on to give example after example of missionaries who spent decades on the field without returning home for furlough. These brave men and women reported that the prayer support of those at home was far more valuable to them than financial support. However, missionaries did indeed find financial support through a small salary from the Foreign Missions Department and through publishing their needs for funds in various journals.

One of the key theological views which spurred on the AG mission’s movement was the belief that Christ would not return until every people group on earth was reached. Therefore, this placed the burden of responsibility on the church. Grace Agar, an early AG missionary to China said, “our going will hasten the Coming of Christ. He is waiting for a people to be gathered for Himself out of the world. We can help gather them out and thus hasten His Coming. The longer he delays, the more people will be born and they are being born faster than they are being saved.”<sup>52</sup> Therefore, these early AG missionaries went out with a sense of urgency and expectancy. Part of this expectancy was a belief that signs and wonders would follow the preaching of the gospel, as is recorded about the apostles’ ministry in scripture. This New

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 95.

Testament model was promoted as early as 1915, but was not clearly defined until the General Council of 1921. The six points that emerged from that council are summarized as follows:

1. Missionaries, the Foreign Mission Committee, and home constituencies should all equally work together to support a ministry.
2. A Pauline example of strategically working in unreached regions should be followed.
3. The goal should be to establish self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing native churches.
4. A common fund should be established through which a committee can distribute funds to the poor based on need.
5. Native workers must receive their own personal calling and no funds should be directly sent to them. Instead, the missionaries should handle all funds; and if the missionary thinks it is wise to support a native worker, the missionary should also take strides to train the worker to become self-supporting.
6. The Foreign Missions Committee should define standards to test potential missionary candidates.

McGee remarks, “The ideal towards which the missions program would strive reflects the practical concerns of the leadership, observation about apostolic and ecclesiastical practices in New Testament times, and the widespread impact of writers, such as Nevius and Allen, supporting the establishment of indigenous churches on the mission field.”<sup>53</sup> The council concluded by stating that these principles are simply a goal which missionaries should strive to work towards.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 95-97.

While the planting of indigenous churches was certainly the focus of early AG missionaries, it was impossible for these missionaries to overlook the incredible suffering which was rampant on the fields where they served. As a result, charitable ministries sprung up, but they were prompted by the leading of the Spirit and personal compassion, not institutional strategy. Without substantial funding from their sending churches, these ministries were born of the sheer willpower and decisiveness of the missionaries.<sup>54</sup>

As indigenous churches matured and created leadership structures, they generally developed a democratic or congregational church structure. “To the missionaries, this approach represented the New Testament model for church organization,” as “the combined judgment of a large number of Spirit-filled people is more likely to provide an indication of God’s will than is the judgment of any individual.”<sup>55</sup> This structure not only resembled that of the New Testament church, but also the AG churches in America in the early years of the Pentecostal movement.

As the 1950’s came around, the AG sought to clarify its missional strategies. Arguably the most significant work which accomplished this goal was *The Indigenous Church* by Melvin Hodges. Hodges stated, “New Testament preaching and practice will produce a New Testament church in any place where the gospel is preached.”<sup>56</sup> This furthered the idea that New Testament principles can translate into any culture. Moreover, Hodges honed in on “three selfs” which help indigenous churches become self-sufficient. The first “self,” self-government, was previously established with the concept of congregational style church government. The second, self-propagation, promoted the idea that the desire for the indigenous church to grow should flow

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 150.

from the heart of the missionary to the heart of the locals. The third, self-support, came from the idea that missionaries should empower indigenous churches to take on the responsibility of supporting their needs of their churches and reaching out to meet the needs of their community.

In the 1960s and 70s, “the need for advanced theological and missiological training in the Assemblies of God became increasingly apparent.”<sup>57</sup> As a result, the Assemblies of God established the Assemblies of God Graduate School in 1973. This institution “represented a milestone in the development of higher education within the denomination and in the level of missiological training available.”<sup>58</sup> Perhaps, this also represented the Assemblies of God World Missions (abbreviated as AGWM) department turning from a grassroots movement to an institutionalized body. With that being said, the graduate school helped “to establish a focal point for the various levels of missionary education and training, thus producing a totally integrated concept of missionary preparation in the Assemblies of God.”<sup>59</sup> This level of theological and practical preparation certainly contrasts the accounts of AG missionaries going onto the field ill-equipped in the early years of the AG foundation. As a result of this specialized training and greater care for missionary families, “By 1977 the Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions ranked as one of the major and most successful contemporary Protestant mission agency.”<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Gary B. McGee, *"This Gospel-- Shall Be Preached": A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions: 1959-Present*, (1984): 150.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>59</sup> Assemblies of God Graduate School, *Bulletin*, 1974-1975, pp. 10-11.

<sup>60</sup> Gary B. McGee, *"This Gospel-- Shall Be Preached": A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions: 1959-Present*, (1984): 186.

By the 1980s, “modern Pentecostalism reached worldwide proportions.”<sup>61</sup> This movement which began in obscurity, “reportedly accounted for the largest family of Protestant Christians in the world.”<sup>62</sup> Pentecostals now demanded respect from the Protestant community around the world. Despite this new recognition, McGee argues that the Assemblies of God kept their mission the same, “steering away from neo-universalism advocated by some Christians and the priority of social justice championed by others.”<sup>63</sup> Instead, the AGWM stayed focused on the following four motivations: love for Christ, obedience to the Great Commission, saving men and women from hell, and compassion for the suffering. David Godwin critiqued an overemphasis on evangelism by writing, “we are not interested merely in getting the gospel to men.... Until the converts become participants in the body of Christ, our mission is not complete.”<sup>64</sup> Therefore, the AG was challenged to not only focus on evangelism, but discipleship training which “has resulted in the herculean efforts of missionaries to establish Sunday schools and Bible institutes, write curricular materials and training books, create correspondence programs, and utilize media communications.”<sup>65</sup> It is vital that evangelistic efforts are held in partnership with follow-up programs which disciple the new converts in order for lasting change to come to a community.

As the 1980s came to a close, the relationships between indigenous churches and churches stateside began to change. Due to the maturity of national churches who had been established for decades, “the times called for an end to paternalism... and a recognition that the

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 210.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>64</sup> David Goodwin, “Evangelism: A Matter of Life and Death,” *Mountain Movers*, March 1988, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> Gary B. McGee, *“This Gospel-- Shall Be Preached”: A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions: 1959-Present*, (1984): 213.

sending agency and the national churches were ‘partners’ in mission.”<sup>66</sup> With that being said, paternalism is a deep rooted culture which cannot be eliminated simply with words. Missionary Jim Grams remarked, “Personal kingdoms are still being built. National brethren are still being offended and becoming disillusioned.”<sup>67</sup> While paternalism is clearly condemned by the AGWM, it is a problem which will have to be readdressed with each generation of missionaries.

The focus of the AG has always been “the evangelization of the lost before the return of Christ”<sup>68</sup> However, the last few decades have seen more of an emphasis on ministries of compassion. This emphasis is perhaps most clearly exemplified in the Calcutta Mission of Mercy, founded by Mark Buntain. Buntain began his ministry in Calcutta through evangelism and planting a local church; however, he was deeply impacted by an encounter with a young person who said, “give us something for our hungry stomachs; then you can give us something for our hungry souls.”<sup>69</sup> This striking remark along with the Bengali famine of 1964 led Mark and his wife Huldah to focus their ministry on the physical needs of those around them. What began with simple food kitchens, eventually led to the “only full-scale hospital ever sponsored by the denomination,” a massive 6-story building which shows the depth of commitment the AG is making to meet the physical needs of those to whom they are ministering. This focus on compassion ministries can be summarized by the former General Superintendent of the AG,

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>67</sup> Jim Grams, “Poorly Kept Secrets: Reflections of a Former Missionary,” *Agora 2* (Winter 1979), p. 13.

<sup>68</sup> Gary B. McGee, *"This Gospel-- Shall Be Preached": A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions: 1959-Present*, (1984): 249.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 251.

Thomas Zimmerman, who said, “We must show them that we love them enough to care about their present suffering.”<sup>70</sup>

When asked in an email correspondence about the relationship between church planting and compassion ministries, Greg Mundis, the current executive director of AGWM, said, “Our mission statement, which was formed by our forbearers and updated in language in recent years, is encapsulated in four words: *reach, plant, train, and serve*. The concepts represented are not silos or stand-alone, but rather are integrated. Practically, this means every missionary should at some point have engaged in all four elements of the statement. The ultimate goal is planting the church where it does not yet exist. If serving (compassion outreach) can be a catalyst for church planting, so be it. If reaching (evangelism) can be a catalyst, so be it. If an established church can serve the community in compassion outreach, so be it. The bottom line is we always strive to maintain our mission’s comprehensive and integrated character.”<sup>71</sup> According to Mundis, church planting and compassion ministries do not conflict. However, he did make it clear that church planting is the ultimate goal.

As the twenty-first century approached, a growing number of missionaries from third world countries which had been evangelized by the West began to arise. Moreover, “the population center of Christianity is gradually shifting to the Southern Hemisphere.”<sup>72</sup> The implications of such a movement are endless for both the global church the approach of AG missionary endeavors. Gary McGee recognizes the following 5 implications: more rapid and

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<sup>70</sup> Thomas Zimmerman, “Our People Are Dying in Biafra,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, 18 August 1969, pp. 17,

<sup>71</sup> Greg Mundis, email message to author, April 13, 2018.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

effective evangelism, a dispelling of the image that Christianity is a Western religion, an increased understanding about the nature of the church, an enhancement of the comprehension of the riches of the gospel, and a challenge to Western Christians to discover the power of God anew.<sup>73</sup> When asked how the AGWM can improve today in the twenty-first century, Mundis said, “We could improve by doing even better in our practical application of the indigenous principle—ensuring we do not foster dependency on us, the sending U.S. mission, in those churches we establish throughout the world.” If Assemblies of God truly recognizes these changing dynamics and responds adequately, the church will be more equipped than ever to fulfill the Great Commission.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>74</sup> Greg Mundis, email message to author, April 13, 2018.

## **Comparative Analysis of Pauline Missiology and Assemblies of God Missiology**

Certainly, there are a plethora of similarities and differences between the missiology of the Apostle Paul and the missiology of the Assemblies of God throughout its history. However, based on the research done in this paper, there are a few commonalities and deviations which especially stand out.

The first similarity, which the research from chapters two and three reveals, is a similar commitment to the raising up and training of local leaders. The Apostle Paul always established local leaders to take over the churches he established before he moved on to his next location. As seen in the history of the Assemblies of God mission's movement, this was certainly a focus. The AG needs to be careful to not allow paternalism, which has sometimes crept into certain ministries, to become a cultural norm.

The second similarity is the principle of being sent out onto the field with the backing of the local church. Barnabas and Paul, before going on their first missionary journey, were confirmed by the leaders. By calling them out and laying their hands on them, the local church leaders provided spiritual coverage for Barnabas and Paul. Since the foundation of the Assemblies of God, their missionaries have been deeply connected to local churches. Instead of going out on their own whims, they went with the spiritual and financial backing of churches. This is a vital aspect of Pauline missiology, and the AG has seen great fruit from keeping this model.

The third similarity is an expectation that signs and wonders would accompany the preaching of the gospel. Moreover, both the Apostle Paul and early AG missionaries understood the power they had over the powers of darkness. Paul not only expected God to validate his

message by doing the miraculous, but he also eagerly attacked the spiritual strongholds in the societies he visited. This was done within the context of sensitivity to cultural dynamics, and also with a conviction that the darkness within a culture is not to be tolerated. For example, Paul cast out the demon of the slave girl, even though he knew that this would upset the financial climate of the city. Early AG missionaries went out believing that the gospel would be spread as the miraculous testified to the validity of their message. Their child-like faith in the impossible created opportunities for the gospel to take hold of the darkest of cultures.

The first notable difference is the issue of institutionalization. The Apostle Paul clearly followed the leading of the Holy Spirit in his ministry. A perfect example of this concept is when Paul traveled to Macedonia solely on the beckoning of a man in a vision asking him to come. Such a reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit marked the early AG missionaries, who often went on the field with little or no means to return. These brave souls defied logic and believed that if the Lord called, he would provide. While AG missionaries today do, by no means, lack these same qualities, their context for going onto the field is drastically different. Where early AG missionaries were forced to rely solely on faith and a word from God to lead them, missionaries today are brought into a highly organized, institutionalized system which often predetermines strategy and mission. Institutionalization is natural and mostly unavoidable, with definite benefits, but certain aspects contrast the Pauline reliance on the leading of the Holy Spirit. The AG must challenge the institutional tendency to take away freedom from the individual mission, as this is vital to Spirit-led missions.

Another potential deficit between Pauline Missiology and Assemblies of God missiology is the balance between culturally-sensitive and counter-cultural ministry. The story of Paul using the idol to the unknown God in Athens has been, rightfully so, used as an argument for a

culturally sensitive gospel presentation. While such a focus can certainly keep doors open that could have been immediately shut if the gospel was presented in a manner which offended the culture, this focus can be taken too far. Research in chapter two touched on the affects that postmodern thought has had on missions. Postmodern thought is an integral part of our society, and the Assemblies of God must recognize its affects. In light of this reality, the AG must be careful that the fluid nature of modern worldviews does not diminish the counter-cultural nature of the gospel. Paul was intentional about challenging certain demonic and immoral strongholds which had built themselves up in the societies he entered. In the research in chapters three, the counter-cultural nature of the gospel appeared far more frequently in early AG practices, but far less frequently in modern practices. An over-tolerance of culture can lead to an acceptance of practices with which the gospel cannot coexist. The AG must remain grounded in the fullness of the gospel, despite the cultural clashes which may arise.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of missiology is establishing a church planting model. When asked “Should the early church be used as a model by which modern day churches should follow,” Greg Mundis, said, “The short answer is no. The Early Church, as I understand the question, did not have all the writings of the apostles to guide in its formation. Early Church members were in a unique pioneering and developing context. In some ways, they were a sect of Judaism. They needed persecution to go about the business of Acts 1:8—Christ’s last command—and divine intervention to realize the gospel was not just for the Jew. Our modern-day church model should be biblical in character and principle, while indigenous in expression.”

<sup>75</sup> According to Mundis, the church today is more equipped to cultivate a healthy church

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<sup>75</sup> Greg Mundis, email message to author, April 13, 2018.

environment, as the church today has access to the full cannon of scripture and a more progressive revelation. However, many of the passages from the book of Acts in chapter two point to the idea that Acts is filled with accounts of how the Holy Spirit led Paul into sound ministry. Therefore, Acts should not be seen as just an account of the actions of Paul and the Apostles, but it should be viewed as a detailed description of how the Holy Spirit works to establish the church. Moreover, if the truth of the Holy Spirit is unchanging, then truth from the acts of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts should be the basis for the formation of our church structures and cultures. To clarify, this argument is not based around a romantic view of the early church, but rather, a recognition that the Holy Spirit indeed inspired the author of Acts in order to reveal truth.

When asked if the AGWM bases their missiological principles from the life of the Apostle Paul, Greg Mundis responded saying, “Our missiology, while influenced heavily by the apostle Paul, is based on *missio dei*. It encompasses the whole Bible, from Old to New Testament. It is about God reaching out to redeem men and women from their fallen state and leave a viable witness (the Church) wherever people accept the message of salvation.”<sup>76</sup> Therefore, while the AGWM values the influence of the Apostle Paul as a missiological influence, there are many other factors which are influential, such as other biblical texts and God’s revelation. However, if the same Holy Spirit speaks from Old to New Testament, then there should be no necessity for distinguishing between scriptural influence. However, if the church expresses a revelation which contradicts the inspiration found in Pauline or OT writings, a potential for problematic theology arises.

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<sup>76</sup> Greg Mundis, email message to author, April 13, 2018.

An aspect of Pauline missiology which could be seen as contrasting with AG missiology is the handling of funds. Paul was committed to entering communities with nothing to offer except the power of the gospel. He did not bring vast financial resources, but believed that the gospel could transform a community. This can also be seen, perhaps more importantly, in Jesus' command to his disciples to take nothing with them when they went to share the message that the kingdom of God was at hand. While Jesus nor Paul had an overly negative view of money itself, they understood how finances can "muddy the waters" of building the church, as people could naturally make connections between financial benefits and joining the church. As the AG has grown both organizationally and in their financial stability, missionaries are going onto the field with increasingly larger budgets, as seen in chapter three. As a result, there may be less reliance on the Holy Spirit to provide for needs, and a tendency to build ministries that are falsely propped up by finances, rather than spiritual dynamics. Such conditions are not explicit, as each situation is certainly unique. While one missionary desperately needs funds to get a ministry off the ground, another missionary could unintentionally create a culture of dependence on foreign funds. The key aspect is whether or not finances become a crutch for allowing a ministry to be centered around the idea that the gospel is sufficient to save, transform, and redeem. In regards to compassion ministries, a reliance on foreign funds can be a crutch for the generosity of the national church. It can be difficult to foster generosity in the national church when foreign funds are being poured in at a rate which makes the giving of the national church seem minimal. Paul did not discourage compassion ministries, but instead, he challenged the local churches he established to create a culture of generosity and compassion within their own community. The AG must be careful to not create cultures of dependence on the mission field, which limit generosity from the national people and take the focus of the gospel off the gospel itself.

McGee recognizes four forces which have historically hindered progress in the fulfillment of the Great Commission through AG missionaries. These forces are the following: lack of strategy, the founding of charitable institutions which mitigated frontline evangelism on particular fields, programs and administrative responsibilities which have kept missionaries far from direct involvement in evangelism, and the avoidance of certain sectors of populations due to their hostility to Christian witness.<sup>77</sup>

The following principle, while in keeping with AG missiology, did not appear in AG mission's practices as seen in the research presented in chapter three: Paul recognized that local people are the most effective evangelists. This is part of the reason why Paul focused on urban ministry, which can be seen in AG mission's practices. As Paul evangelized urban people, he strategically knew that they would eventually return back to their home towns and villages to bring the gospel to places he could not reach on his own. Moreover, he actually believed that they had a greater ability to reach their own people than he did. This can be specifically seen when Paul is described as having reached all of Asia through his teaching in the hall of Tyrannus. Through creating disciples in Ephesus, Paul was able to make a far wider impact than he could have by traveling around Asia. In the research in chapter 3, there seems to be a focus on the equipping of the missionary over the equipping of the national leaders. Assemblies of God universities in the United States became a vital focus of the AG, but academic training for national people groups do not seem to have the same level of emphasis. If the goal is for local people to become the evangelists that will reach their own people, should they not receive the most attention for their education and training in biblical studies?

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 226.

### **Personal Reflection**

Through the process of writing this thesis, I learned a great deal about the ministry of the Apostle Paul, the various missiological methods, and the history of Assemblies of God mission practices. I hope that readers will see the similarities that I found between Pauline principles and AG practices and be encouraged to implement these in their own ministry. Moreover, I hope that readers will see the disparities I found between Pauline principles and AG mission practices, and be challenged to bridge this gap. Ultimately, if we are submitted to the will of God and the principles of Spirit-empowered missions, then nothing can stop the advancement of the Kingdom of God, even into the darkest of regions.

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