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Deprivation and Western Pentecostalism Revisited: The Case of 'Classical' Pentecostalism

Abstract

This article is the first of two which endeavour to explore the link between the Pentecostal movement in Western societies (here Pentecostalism in the USA and Britain is discussed) and the theme of deprivation. While extant literature establishes such a link, scholars have often approached the field of study from rather distinctive perspectives and emphasize different aspects of Pentecostalism in dealing with a wide range of deprivations. In this article I overview the major contribution of writers from various disciplines, including sociologist, historians and theologians, to our understanding of so-called 'classical' Pentecostalism. Many such works show how the relationship with deprivation is a complex and varying one and intimately bound up with an appeal to distinct social groups. The second paper will attempt the same enterprise with reference to the neo-Pentecostal movement that arose in the 1960s. The second article will also offer a broad critique of this approach, although an ongoing critique is also included in this first article.

Introduction

This paper will show that numerous studies, from those of the period of the emergence of classical pentecostalism to recent times, have established a high degree of correlation between 'classical' Pentecostalism and its appeal to specific social groups. Moreover, these studies have largely correlated a relationship between Pentecostal beliefs and practices with the felt deprivations of these collectives. The sectarian characteristics of early Pentecostalism and the beliefs that emphasize a spiritual elitism, millenarianism and holiness all appear to have had an attraction to sections of the poor, downtrodden, and socially marginalized. In succinct terms, sectarianism, typified by the elementary Pentecostal movement, has long constituted a form of organization offering a 'religious' status denied in wider society, while accompanying doctrines articulated the needs of individuals and expressed their hope for a better world with the anticipated Second Coming of Christ.

The link between Pentecostalism and deprivation, however, is a good deal more complicated than this simple overview may suggest. Partly this is because the broad connection between religion and deprivation is a complex one, and partly because the term 'deprivation' is itself a multi-faceted concept from a socio-psychological point of view. This paper therefore commences with a brief overview of sociological perspectives exploring the relationship between religion and deprivation and thus allows a wide framework from which to proceed in our discussion of classical

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Pentecostalism. The bulk of the paper which follows after the conceptual framework will consider some of the evidence that establishes a relationship between Pentecostalism and deprivation. The paper looks at selected and representative extant literature, ranging from early contributions that focused upon the origins and spread of the movement, to those that have been concerned with accounting for its popularity in the West among distinct social groups including particular classes and ethnic groups.¹ No one contribution can hope to capture the diversity of practice, the differing theological interpretations by participants, and the national and regional differences of Pentecostalism. This paper, then, is largely limited to a discussion of the USA and Britain and the conclusions drawn will necessarily be broad. At the same time the paper recognizes that what might be called the 'deprivation paradigm' is merely one approach to understanding the socio-cultural nature of Pentecostalism and that alternative and divergent perspectives have been formulated. While there is insufficient space to consider them in detail, a few such perspectives will be utilized in the second article by way of a critique of the rather determinist range deprivation theories. In offering a brief critique, I will range wider and considered evidence of the movement in its global application.

The Theme of Deprivation in the Sociology of Religion

The theme of deprivation in the Sociology of Religion is a major but extremely varied one. The starting point is possibly Karl Marx's contribution. Marx's work in establishing a link between religion and deprivation (in his rather scattered references) is well-known. Deprivation results from social class relations. This brings a rather restricted definition of deprivation. For Marx, deprivation was a purely economic phenomenon. Either one owns the means of economic production or does not, and one could be said to be deprived if belonging to the latter.

Marx's work, however, was also embedded in deeper philosophical assumptions. For Marx, religion is a reflection of a society in which man sees himself as the essentially determined rather than as determining agent, where the characteristics of man are projected onto a supernatural realm in an elevated and exaggerated form. Moreover, from a generalized approach, religion for Marx has proved to be an expression of alienation in class-divided societies. It is at one and the same time a tool for the manipulation and oppression of the subordinate class in society and, simultaneously, an expression of resignation and consolation (Marx 1957). It is the 'universal ground for consolation' or, in Marx's famous words, 'the opium of the people'. Religion makes a virtue out of suffering and provides the hope of a better future in heaven or some equivalent supernatural realm. Marx was convinced that all religions, and perhaps millenarian expressions more so than most, were opiate-like, fantastical, and likely to preclude the possibility of the realization of any real, practical, concrete political aims. They constituted, in short, a non-political cul-de-sac.

Adding to Marx's account was the work of his co-writer Fredrick Engels. The latter's unique contribution focused upon the millenarian aspects of religion. Millenarianism, as Engels explored with the movement centred around Thomas Muntzer during the peasant war in Germany in the Middle Ages, is a unique expression of deprivation (Engels 1965) but may constitute an incipient political movement arising from class antagonism and exploitive socio-economic and political relationships. Engels, therefore, goes further than Marx in that emerging religions,

such as early Christianity, not only provide examples of a latent form of socialism, but could precipitate real political change that attempts to overcome deprivation. Such themes have been developed by other commentators perhaps most notably Hobsbawm (1971) and Worsley (1970). Here the accent is on the positive contribution of millenarianism to the development of realistic political movements among the lower classes in endeavouring to change their worldly circumstances in the here and now.

Max Weber came to his account of the link between religion and deprivation through his general theory of the relationship between material and ideal interests. In doing so, he extends the link between religion and deprivation beyond merely economic and material circumstances although these remain important variables. In his classic work on the social psychology of world religion, Weber considers the conception of the relationship between material and ideal interests and between both of these interests and religious ideas. For Weber, it was not ideas, but material and ideal interests which directly govern human life. Yet, very often it is 'world images' which have created the 'ideas' through which humans determine their actions by way of such interests (Weber 1970,80). Weber subsequently goes on to establish a fairly complex relationship between ideas and interests which can work out in a variety of ways in different social circumstances. Broadly speaking, however, we can say that no set of ideas will have any impact unless they somehow match the interest of a significant social group. For the most part, ideas will not appeal if too much as variance with material interests but it is certainly possible that in specific circumstances individuals will espouse a set of ideas which meet their ideal interests but may to some degree conflict with their material concerns.

How, for Weber, this all links with the theme of deprivation is a complex issue. Deprivation is not necessarily associated with the poor and downtrodden but the worldviews and material interests of distinct social strata among which social class may be only one possibility. In this context Weber develops the notion of *relative deprivation*. This subjective element allows individuals in a similar social situation to perceive themselves as not achieving the rewards of wealth and honour that they deserve. The distinctive aspect of relative deprivation, according to Weber, is that it is culturally and historically specific - defined in relation to the standards of a particular society at a particular time. Moreover, that such deprivation is not merely economic but linked to status and whatever a society regards as significant and worthwhile possessing. How a given social group responds to a perceived deprivation may be influenced by pre-existing worldviews or constructed anew out of the confluence between material and ideal interests. If the events and facts of this life and world seem to threaten the meaning of a person's existence, that is, if they provide a motive for seeking some kind of salvation the individual can either attempt to escape from the world or endeavour to find a mode of adjusting to it and of accepting it. Escape from the world is referred to by Weber as an other-worldly orientation, while the adjustment to the world he refers to as an inner-worldly orientation. The latter Weber calls 'asceticism' and the former 'mysticism'.

Deprivation and Sectarianism

In his broader work, Weber had commenced a sociological analysis of a distinct form of religious organization, namely the sect. The inevitable routinization of charisma within religious tradition meant that at times sectarian division might occur

and even generate new religious traditions (as had Christianity in developing as a sect out of Judaism). The sect becomes a break-away group of adherents who seek to take the religion back to its perceived 'true' origins by way of beliefs, practices and life-styles. As schismatic groups, sects prefer to present themselves to the world as something older, seceding from a tradition which has drifted into apostasy, and hence not as an entirely new phenomenon. In Christianity, this has often been accompanied with claims to be restoring the early Church with an emphasis on simplicity of worship, with no ritual or set form of service, since it is envisaged as a return to first century practice.

Theories of sectarianism were developed by others, notably Niebuhr (1928) who argued that sects tended to attract marginalized members of society. For such individuals, the sect brought a new status and, often through millenarian themes, stressed a new set of values in conflict with the world, attacking injustices, and embracing the hope for the imminent return of Christ. In turn, the sect is denounced by the established churches as heretical, extremist and unrepresentative. The characteristics of a sect, according to Niebuhr, include: a fairly small and well-integrated membership which is instructed to withdraw from the outside world in a kind of other-worldly asceticism; an association with the lowest social strata - especially so with those opposed to the social and economic status quo; members are expected to be deeply committed to beliefs and demonstrate that commitment - they join voluntarily as adults rather than being socialized into the sect; organizational aspects are less evident than churches and denominations since there is the absence of a hierarchy of paid officials or priesthood; and a rejection of the world and the values of mainstream society. In addition, sects believe that they have a monopoly of the truth or at least superior beliefs. In many cases some particular beliefs are often stressed and held to be a badge of a self-assigned elite status and help constitute the boundaries with other religious communities.

Post-Weber and Niebuhr, the link between sectarian membership and deprivation has been an important and enduring dimension of the study of sects. In earlier sociological work, deprivation usually meant poverty and social marginalization. However, in accounting for the rise of sectarian type groups, the work of those such as Glock (1958) and Wilson (1961) have proved influential. The latter shows that Niebuhr's thesis that the sect, from a sociological point of view, is the expression of economic deprivation, is a statement which applies primarily to the circumstances of North America. Wilson argues that it is not economic deprivation alone which is decisive, nor does every deprivation lead to an outward protest of one form or another. Only a deprivation which is a matter of conscious experience leads to protest in any meaningful sense. And this does not necessarily mean that the deprivation is real. It may be the only one which is felt. What is decisive is not the deprivation itself, but the feeling of deprivation. The function of sects lies in the overcoming of this feeling of deprivation which may be that of status contradiction, loneliness, poverty, sickness, racial discrimination, speech and language difficulties, handicaps of character and so on, and is not important in the first instance whether the deprivation is really overcome or merely allayed, as it were by an opiate.

Glock defines deprivation as 'any and all ways an *individual* or group may be, or feel disadvantaged in comparison either to other individuals or groups or to an internalized set of standards' (Glock 1958, 27). He thus stretches the notion of deprivation to understand how sects in various ways provide a channel through

which their members are able to transcend their feelings of deprivation by replacing them with feelings of religious privilege. Sect members no longer compare themselves in terms of their relatively lower economic position but by way of their superior religious status. The principal forms of perceived deprivation are as follows. Firstly, *economic deprivation* - a subjective criteria by which people feel themselves underprivileged in terms of the distribution of income. Secondly, *social deprivation* - underprivileged in whatever society regards as important such as prestige or power. Thirdly, *organismic deprivation* - levels of mental or physical health not matching up to society's standards. Fourthly, *ethical deprivation* - when the individual feels that the dominant values of society no longer provide a meaningful way by which to conduct life and a desire to find another set of values. Fifthly, *psychic deprivation* - which results from a consequence of severe and unresolved social deprivation. The individual is not necessarily missing the material advantages of life but has been denied its psychic rewards.

Where these above conditions exist, according to Glock, the organizational structure to overcome deprivation may be religious or secular. Religious and religio-magical resolutions are more likely to occur where the nature of the deprivation is inaccurately perceived or where those experiencing the deprivation are not in a position to work directly at eliminating the causes. The resolution is likely to be secular under conditions where deprivation is correctly assessed by those experiencing it and they have the power to deal with it directly. Religious resolutions, then, are likely to *compensate* for feelings of deprivation rather than to eliminate its causes. However, sects may bring resolutions as effectively as secular ones in the case of ethical and psychic deprivation. Different sects appear to cluster around distinct deprivations. For example, organismic deprivation may attract ideas about new forms of healing. Some sects are also longer lived than others. Those dealing with merely ethical deprivation, for instance, tend to have a rather short duration.

These varied and contrasting theories, for numerous commentators, appeared to offer a way forward to our understanding of the link between classical Pentecostalism and deprivation. To them were added a perceived distinct form of deprivation akin to Durkheim's concept of 'anomie' - a form of deprivation which appears regularly in the literature and which is usually associated with some form of social dysfunction.

According to Durkheim anomie is present when social controls are weak, when the moral obligations which constrain individuals and regulate their behaviour are not sufficiently strong to function effectively. He saw a number of indications of anomie in late nineteenth-century society, in particular high rates of suicide, marital break-up and industrial society. Such behaviour indicates a breakdown of normative control. Industrial society tends to produce anomie for the following reasons. It is characterized by rapid social change which disrupt the norms governing behaviour. In Durkheim's elegant phrasing, 'The scale is upset; but a new scale cannot be immediately improvised. Time is required for the public conscience to reclassify men and things' (Durkheim 1970, 297-325).

The way that the concept of anomie is used in relation to religious groups, notably, Pentecostalism, is as a form of moral deficiency or deprivation. It is close to Glock's notions of *ethical or psychic deprivation* discussed above, but is frequently translated as 'social dislocation'. The function of the religious sect, so it

is argued, is to create or sustain a new order in times of rapid social, cultural and economic change. As far as Pentecostalism is concerned, sociologists and historians alike have seen the movement as originating and spreading in a particular time and place, and essentially a product of anomic conditions generated by industrialization, economic fluctuation and urbanization, and frequently associated with migrant groups. Pentecostalism brought a strict moralism, absolute values, and certainty in a world of uncertainty.

Pentecostalism and the Theme of Deprivation

Pentecostalism is generally held to be the fastest growing expression of Christianity.² Its prolific spread, throughout the various strands of the movement, is one that has continued for near-on a century. There are various explanations advanced to account for its remarkable dissemination and popularity. Perhaps the most common theme however, at least in the first few decades of emergence, was the interpretation of the link between economic deprivation and Pentecostalism. In the 1970s and 1980s this approach was particularly popular, while the theme still continues to inform more recent accounts of the spread of the global movement into Third World countries if only as one part of the explanation for its proliferation (for example, Cox 1994; Martin 1990).

Even non-Marxist interpretations have tended to see Pentecostalism as representing a popularized, form of Christianity which provides for the needs of the impoverished masses. This it has allegedly achieved by offering an other-worldly compensation. In different ways, it has granted psychological, and sometimes practical help to the poor, those on the fringes of society, and those who perceived themselves as relatively deprived. Above all, it establishes means of social and psychological survival since it provides participation, mutual support, emotional release, and a sense of identity and dignity for a vast range of social groups.

A key contention is that the person who is converted to a sect, typified by classical Pentecostalism, should not be considered only in his or her moral or psychological isolation; it is also necessary to understand how s/he is involved in an entire context that could be called the socio-theological. These socio-theological structures, so it has been frequently argued, embody new roles which the convert assumes as well as the theological motivations which the religious collectivity inspires in him/her.

Pentecostalism is understood to be noteworthy because of its theological flexibility which, in more practical terms, allows for the wide appeal of the movement in offering solutions to both individual and collective predicaments and largely explains why this unique strand of Christianity can deal with a wide variety of deprivations. In this way the theological flexibility and associated practices of Pentecostalism appeal to numerous and very different social groups. The emphasis upon spiritual experience, speaking in tongues, prophecy and miracles etc, has frequently rendered the theology open to re-interpretation. In turn, this has allowed Pentecostalism to be enculturated in very different global cultural contexts ranging from those of the developed West, to the underdeveloped societies of various parts of the Third World (Cox 1994, 213).

There is little doubt that the great bulk of the allegiance to the rapidly spreading Pentecostal movement can be found among the impoverished masses of Third World countries - particularly Latin America and those parts of Africa once subject to Western colonial rule. Put succinctly, Pentecostalism, responds to the spiritual,

physical and psychological needs of people in an extraordinary variety of social settings (Martin 1990). It provides, in the words of Hollenweger, 'islands of humanity' (Hollenweger 1972, 457). For the poor it establishes a sense of community, relative economic security, and through congregations provides practical care when they are sick, as well as basic educational opportunities. Concluding his survey of Third World Pentecostalism, Hollenweger insisted that it establishes a substitute society away from the sufferings of the world. In his sociological assessment he suggests that on a global scale and cross-culturally

'The belief and practice of the Pentecostal movement provides help for people who live on the fringes of society' 'the function' 'is to restore the power of expression to people without identity and powers of speech, and to heal them from the terror of the loss of speech.' (Hollenweger 1972, 459).

Deprivation and Religion - A Cautionary Note

It is evident that a relationship between Pentecostalism and deprivation has been established by a fair few commentators. Pentecostalism is shown in the literature, from the foundation of the movement to its growth and expansion on a global scale, to appeal to different social groups and with different forms of deprivation. However, there is no straightforward correlation. There are clear social trends and countervailing forces at work which complicate the picture of deprivation, while sectarian formation is only one possible outcome of the social processes involved.

Certainly, not all commentators are happy with the assumption that there is a clear link between deprivation and religion. The counter argument is that deprivation theorizing is beset by the weakness of unexamined assumption (Hoge & Carroll 1978; McNamara & St. George 1978). The wide contention is that there needs to be a compelling test of these theories which require measures of subjective feeling. Do the socially and economically deprived who also happen to have a religious commitment really *feel* deprived? Most of the research that has been conducted tends to rely on objective measurements of social class or status, such as education, occupation or income, with the assumption that these are associated with subjective feelings of deprivation. Indeed an awareness of *felt deprivation* is crucial to an adequate understanding of deprivation's relationship to religion. In other words it is one thing to be in an alleged 'state of deprivation', quite another to assume the 'deprived' actually view themselves in this way.

This, and the second paper on neo-Pentecostalism, presents an *overview* of how concepts of deprivation have been applied to Pentecostalism. It is not so concerned with offering a critique or exploring other explanations or sources of analysis that either replace or complement theories of deprivation. That said, it is important to flag up the dangers of single explanations and their tendency to argue within the limits of unsophisticated, unidimensional sociology or historical interpretation. The danger of an 'overview' is that it may appear to stand as a remote and objectifying gaze that is likely to result in validating their limited perspectives instead of underlining their discrepancies and weaknesses at the expense of rival approaches.

Deprivation theories tend to offer a blanket explanations for *all* religious activity, no matter of what religion, cultural backdrop, and insist that all religion is explainable on a social and psychological level by felt inadequacies and 'needs'.

This becomes most obvious perhaps in the simple assertion by at least some commentators in the field that classical Pentecostalism primarily derives from the lower socio-economic strata with clear material needs (the poor, the urban migrant etc) and, as we shall see in my second paper, the rise of neo-Pentecostalism is concentrated among the emerging middle-class sectors of Western societies which are interpreted as having, by way of contrast, post-material and emotional needs. These become ready templates to apply to a variety of sub-divisions within the broad classical-neo divide whether they are appropriate or not.

The rather deterministic picture advanced by many commentators seeking a link between deprivation and religion has certainly been questioned in the context of Pentecostalism. Warnings of the need to embrace a more balanced approach come from those such as Arthur Paris (1982) who reject mainline structuralist perspectives in favour of the 'meaning' put forward by actors related to their religious belief and practice. In speaking of black Pentecostalism in the Southern states of the USA, Paris insists on the simple *religious* basis of analysis for how people behave (in and out of church) allowing for human action in terms of meaning. Pentecostalism is what the actors say it is, and not primarily as a response to prevailing social conditions. The view of Paris represents a more than cautionary note in assuming a link between Pentecostalism and deprivation. This paper, however, does not attempt to settle the argument either way. It merely seeks to overview a representative sample of the literature that espouses such a view. Nonetheless, at the end of my second paper I will restate objections to the determinism inherent in deprivation theories and briefly outline alternative approaches.

The Emergence of Classical Pentecostalism

There is no attempt here to trace, in detail, a history of the origins and early developments of Pentecostalism from its roots in the Azusa Street revival³ and subsequent spread both sides of the Atlantic. It is difficult to fully understand its attraction, but the humble mission on Azusa Street, which generally serves as the mythological origins of the movement, attracted (by way of international press coverage) hundreds and then thousands of people from all over the USA and abroad. Pilgrims and recent migrants carried the message of the Pentecostal movement back to their hometowns with evangelical fervour.

The emergent movement, however, was soon exposed to criticisms by both liberal and conservative Christian constituencies who pointed to its undue emphasis on emotion, enthusiasm and crude theology. These tendencies were perceived as linked to the movement's adherents who came from among the poorest, least-educated classes and which Anderson (1980, 76) described as the 'scum' of society - 'habitual drunkards, veteran gamblers and even immoral women and infidels'. Moreover, the striking thing about the Azusa Street revival was the lack of racial separation. Blacks, whites, Mexicans and Asians joined in revival together and constituted, in the words of Harvey Cox, 'the despised and rejected of the earth' (Cox 1994, 60). In speaking of the revival in Los Angeles, Cox states

'For many, the City of Angels was already what it would become in the scripts of noir film writers two generations later, a sunset boulevard of broken dreams. The contest between rival visions of the meaning of human life was

about to begin. Religiously speaking, the city - teeming with frustrated, disillusioned refugees from the south and midwest, who had brought with them their revivalist and Holiness pieties - was tinder ready to burn.’
(Cox 1994, 56-7)

In order to understand the attraction of early Pentecostalism to such social groups, it is necessary to take a step backwards. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the new structure of industrial society itself undoubtedly facilitated the emergence of the movement. With an apparent increase in class prejudice, the poor naturally became open to ‘radical’ and oppositionist movements. Here, orthodox Marxist interpretations of the movement have a strong appeal. Anderson (1980), for example, identified the emergent Pentecostalism as being, in a sense, a class movement of the poor and uneducated. It is Anderson who provides us with one of the first poignant descriptions of its origins and spread among the poor and marginalized in the USA. The leadership of the early Pentecostal movement came from various social classes and races, but the great bulk of the rank and file were either black or derived from the poor white urban working-class. Common experience of economic deprivation and social dislocation was the initial background. The followers of the movement did not in general care very much for worldly pursuits, but preferred to direct all their energy towards a specifically religious life and hope of the millennium to come.

Further evidence comes from the introduction to a one-page account of what Bloch-Hoell calls the ‘Sociological Aspect’ of early Pentecostalism. He quotes the minister attending a meeting of overseers of the Church of God (Cleveland) in Birmingham, Alabama in 1915, who said of the early founders of the Pentecostal Movement (Block-Hoell is quoting the Minutes of the Church of God, 1964, p.15.)

‘The greater percent of these men were poor and from the humble walks of life. Many were common laborers and farmers, with very limited education, and there were few of them who ever thought of receiving a salary.... Small local churches were established, usually on poor streets, out of town on isolated roads, or in some building that was hard to rent for anything else.’
(Bloch-Hoell 1964, 172)

On the other side of the Atlantic, Pentecostalism had its roots in the Welsh Revival and displayed its own distinct social backdrop about the same time as the Azusa Street Revival. Here, Hollenweger suggests that there was what he calls ‘a striking example of the compensation for a disadvantage’ which religious experiences provided in the revival of Wales and was not, in his analysis, traced specifically to a social class but a precise geographical area (Hollenweger 1972, 461). The Celtic people of Wales were at a disadvantage with regard to the rest of Britain because of the lack of communications, on economic grounds, and because of their Welsh culture and language. Hollenweger states

‘In the revival in Wales their disadvantages were transformed into advantages. Their services were characterized by hours of

singing in harmony in Welsh, a decline in the role of the sermon, prayer in concert by the congregation, interjections, an emphasis on the experience of the baptism of the Spirit and the guidance of the Spirit, and hwyl, the typically Welsh phenomenon of a gradually rising intonation on the part of an emotional orator.'

Pentecostalism Post-World War I

Further social strains in the USA were brought about in the early decades of the twentieth century as industrialization expanded its dominance in the economic spheres and agriculture lost its prominence. These changes saw the emergence of blacks as a competing economic group with poor, southern whites, and increasingly after World War One, with poor northern whites. Such social groups were not just the fodder of Pentecostalism but, according to numerous writers, provided the channels by which it was spread. For the decades to come after the initial revival, recruitment was largely through networks of relatives and it was such kinship ties which proved to be most important among the lower socio-economic levels (Gerlach & Hine 1970, 30-31).

Writing up to the period of the mid-30s in the USA, Anderson (1980) notes that Pentecostalism had fragmented into a bewildering assortment of sects. Anderson had conducted exhaustive research in the obscure Pentecostal records of the decades after the Azusa Street revival. He develops three themes. First, he provides an account of the growth and fragmentation of American Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century. By 1910 the initial revival had abated and a period of 'internal dissension and institutionalization' followed. Pentecostalism experienced countless schisms, including major doctrinal divisions over the relationship of sanctification, Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the doctrine of the Trinity. Anderson then cogently describes the debates and ties each schism to the diverse theological and class and ethnic backgrounds of Pentecostals. Secondly, he examines the class origins of Pentecostalism and concludes that for successive decades 'The Pentecostal faithful were everywhere drawn from the humbler orders of society' (Anderson, 1980, 114).

To be sure, Anderson does not argue simply that economic deprivation alone accounted for the rise of Pentecostalism, but he does emphasize that Pentecostalism grew in the context of poverty. He bolsters his interpretation with a chapter of his work based on the life stories of forty-five Pentecostal leaders. The composite preacher that emerges was poor, ill-educated, and often burdened with personal problems and a tragic past. Most seemed to be trapped in the 'limbo between working and middle class' (Anderson 1980,108). Finally, Anderson notes the content of the Pentecostal message - the early revival was primarily millenarian, viewing the Baptism in the Spirit as a sign of the Second Coming (Anderson 1980,222). He also describes the conservative and reactionary social content of the Pentecostal movement - intent to reject the world not change it - a 'passive acquiescence to a world they hated and wished to escape' (Anderson 1980, 222).

In defence of the view of those like Anderson there is little doubt that a sizable rump of Pentecostals in the advanced industrial societies of the West continued, at least until the Second World War, to have been constituted by marginalized and impoverished white social groups and largely black ethnic enclaves. Such a tendency has frequently led to the conjecture that this distinctive form of Christianity amounts to a sectarian, other-worldly religiosity which provides the erstwhile function in

furnishing a compensation for the desperately poor, socially deprived and excluded of the Western nations. ⁴

At this point it is necessary to say a little more about how, in most of the relevant literature, that deprivation is believed to link with the sectarian nature of early Pentecostalism. There is no denying many of the sectarian characteristics of classical Pentecostalism. At the beginning of the twentieth century the emerging movement drew boundaries with what was regarded as nominal and established Christianity. Traditional churches were denounced as too worldly and even labelled as satanic. Pentecostalism insisted that its members withdrew from the world behind boundaries of purity. The dogma that believers should speak in 'tongues' added to perceptions of its authenticity and elitist structure. The attraction of Pentecostalism over established religion was evident. For instance, according to Charles S. Snyder Jr. (1964,4), many of the poor and marginalized were lost to the Presbyterian Church, not for theological reasons, but because their 'educational and social disadvantages have eliminated them from Presbyterian membership for many generations'.

In withdrawing from the world Pentecostalism appeared to oppose the changes brought by modernity. As an ultra-conservative mode of Christianity, Pentecostalism in the West displayed a 'born-again' spiritual elitism which informed its sectarianism and was discernibly in conflict with the world. Historically it was resistant to all that was modern, displayed an emphasis on biblical inerrancy, regarded itself as reflecting the will of God in a more advanced and dynamic form, and frequently brought the espousal of Adventist longings which prophesized a futuristic kingdom of God (Wilson 1967).

Niebuhr identified the reasons for the rise of Pentecostal churches as the rejection of the intellectual and liturgical fixed services of the traditional church, and a preference for a spontaneous form of worship, quite often of a primitive kind (Niebuhr 1929, 30). The function of Pentecostalism was in recapturing a sense of security through religious revival, a sectarian withdrawal from this world, and an escape into a distinct form of millenarian and where speaking in tongues could be interpreted as the cry of the downtrodden proletariat (Anderson 1980). The political component in changing the social circumstances of adherents was however conspicuously missing and there tended to be over-simplified judgements on political matters, much being derived from a biblical absolute moralism, which were largely void of political activism.

A further factor was that the movement isolated itself from the influences of the dominant social structure (Gerlach 1970; Gerlach & Hine 1970). Thus, appeals by Pentecostal preachers and ministers, who lacked the university-trained scholarly theology, to 'come out from the world and be separate' had a practical impact. It allowed ministers to control and interpret the events that influenced the life of their congregations. In addition, the leaders of the early Pentecostal movement offered alternative explanations of social conditions primarily because of their own isolation from the dominant intellectual accounts. According to Burgess and McGee (1995, 797), many such explanations were intended to dismiss commonly understood wisdom and at the same time, make sense of the relative deprivation of adherents to the Pentecostal movement while non-adherents seemed to experience relative prosperity. The non-political activism of the first Pentecostals, as poor urban residents, resulted from the experience of the uncomfortable reality that they were outside of the political process and thus had no faith in a political solution to their

problems. At the same time they had little or no organizational expertise: they did not possess the means to effect changes in the political systems even if they so desired. The leaders of the movement had a somewhat limited social and professional experience (being drawn from the rank and file) and thus had to formulate alternative interpretations of social events. Defined as a unique religious experience given by God to those he deemed worthy, it gave the Pentecostals a reason to feel that they had a greater degree of spirituality than other religious groups. Evidence of this was that some Pentecostal groups called themselves 'Full Gospel' after the earlier Holiness factions, implying that others who were not Pentecostal had less than the total biblical revelation.

Social Dislocation

As stipulated above, another interpretation of the emergence of sects generally suggests that they arise and respond to the problems of a particular form of deprivation that is not necessarily social class or economically based. Rather, it is a psycho-social form of social dislocation which is more akin to Durkheim's concept of anomie or 'normlessness'. Sociologists frequently use the social dislocation model in explaining the appeal of social movements within complex modern societies and this is exemplified when Hadley Cantril prefaces his well-known study with the statement that 'social movements flourish when the times are out of joint' (Cantril 1941, 47).

Quebedeaux, (1982, 25), among other commentators, speaks of the emergence of early Pentecostalism in this context. Pentecostalism was essentially connected with the rootlessness engendered by the processes of industrialization and mass immigration to the USA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The sudden change in milieu - from Europe to America, from country to city life - led almost inevitably to social and political rootlessness.

Revivalist movements, so the argument goes, are spontaneous attempts by common people to deal constructively with these stresses and trails. In this respect the Pentecostal movement was in line with many others which had developed over a long period of time in the USA and displayed a correlation with the anomic conditions caused by dramatic economic fluctuation and which produced periods of alternating rising expectation and disappointment on the one hand, and the effects of geographical migration on the other (Boisen 1939). Many immigrants had social and religious needs related to providing a sense of community and belonging. At the same time a fundamentalist form of religion offered strong values and a rigid belief system and brought certainty in a time of uncertainty and ambiguity. In short, numerous immigrants who hitherto may have, for the most part, had their religious needs unsatisfactorily met by the static and ineffectual established mainline churches, plausibly have them more readily dealt with by an enthusiastic form of Christianity represented by Pentecostalism. Typical of this way of thinking is Poblete and O'Dea's (1960) analyses of the response of Puerto Rican migrants in New York to the Pentecostal Movement as a function of the Durkheimian concept of anomie resulting from disruption of family and village structures. They note but do not attempt to explain the fact that Pentecostalism spreads in rural Puerto Rican communities where traditional family and village patterns provided social organization and solidarity.

A more well-known account of social dislocation was developed by Holt (1940) who considered the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal denominations and sects in the south-eastern states of the USA in and around cities such as Birmingham, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville. The largest of these groups, the Assemblies of God, increased from 11,000 members in 1916 to 148,043 in 1936, and to around 200,000 members in 1940. As Holt (1940) showed, the Holiness/Pentecostal movement spread rapidly among rural people who had migrated to urban environments. Holt's general hypothesis was as follows.

Firstly, this religious movement was largely the natural product of the social disorganization and cultural conflict which attended the over-rapid urbanward migration and concomitant urbanization of an intensely rural population, and among other things, religiously fundamentalist inclinations.

Secondly, for Holt, the movement was typically a social movement in that it was an attempt on the part of certain groups experiencing acute social maladjustment to recapture their sense of security through religious revival and reform. Sectarian Pentecostalism is essentially a product of dissident lower-class groups. The highly emotional and personalistic modes of religious expression were held to be partly a function of the low level of education and lack of intellectual sophistication.

Thirdly, this attempt at social readjustment and reintegration tended to be reactionary and reformist rather than revolutionary or constructive in character, and did not promise to help eradicate the maladjustment which brought it forth. Holt maintains that Pentecostal beliefs and ethics were drawn from a disintegrated rural agricultural tradition. However, they were successful in inspiring hope and a type of behaviour in individuals which potentially raised their individual or group status above that of their class. Finally, the growth of these sects comprised a religious movement which was definitely regional and primarily 'southern' in character.

The basic point, for Holt, is that the moving of poor rural populations to an urban environment engenders a 'cultural shock'. Such a 'shock' is characterized by a loosening of mores from a strict social control; a 'liberation' of the individual from his/her social group; an increasing impersonalism as against personal character of the rural environment; an extending mobility as contrasted with old stability and isolation; a vast disruption of personal and occupational habits and status; and the disruption of social ties in terms of individual isolation from previously secure and durable ties. The state of disorganization exists when a conflict of standards arises and new standards take root. Typically newcomers are poor with low incomes who become acutely aware of their lack of status. The need for a stable personality and firm status is provided by Holiness and Pentecostal groups representing the old standards and modes of behaviour. This, of course, explains why Pentecostalism at the time appeared to be socially conservative and, in the phrase now frequently associated with fundamentalist groups, were 'neo-traditionalists'.

Gerrard (1975) comes to similar conclusions. The Holiness movement had grown in the 1930s as a response to those within Pentecostalism who reacted against its increasing bureaucratization and perceived worldliness in the time honoured sect-church process. The designation 'Holiness movement' refers generically to dozens of sect-like groups that, in turn, gave rise to thousands of churches particularly over the USA and millions of members who strove to achieve spiritual perfection through strong emotional experience allegedly inspired by the beliefs and practices of

primitive Christianity with speaking in tongues as a frequent part of their religious experience.⁵

At the same time, however, the Holiness movement had a discernible social base. Almost all Holiness churches originated as lower-class sects or as sects of newly ascending social classes in evangelical congregations established in scriptural opposition to the formalism of the dominant traditional churches. Each social class developed a kind of Holiness church that was congenial to its life-style.

Gerrard provides the example of the Southern Appalachian people, particularly small-town and open-country dwellers, who take their religion extremely seriously and frequently in one form or another of fundamentalism. Holiness churches of the poor in the past appeared to be holding their own in this region and were even springing up in the Northern cities when there were substantial settlements of rural migrants from the Southern Appalachian region. Gerrard attributes the attraction to the precarious nature of physical survival and the loneliness and emotional starvation of social life in the scattered settlements.

The problem for Gerrard and other commentators of his ilk is in explaining the viability of the Holiness churches of the stationary poor, when the level of living has been raised considerably and isolation has been greatly reduced by an improving environment, mass communication, consolidated schools, and other innovations embodying urban values. It would seem that the rural Holiness churches were viable because they served to alleviate anxieties generated by status deprivation, guilt and illness and because they supplied recreation in areas of the region where recreational facilities were scarce. Yet, according to Gerrard, it is not so much biological deprivation associated with low economic status that bothers the poor as much as status deprivation. Increased contact with urban standards of achievement and success had developed a new awareness of social and cultural advantages they do not possess.

This analysis suggests that self-esteem based on the egalitarianism of the rural tradition of the poor is shaken, and strong feelings of social inadequacy emerge. In the religious fellowship of their church people experience an enhanced sense of personal worth and dignity. They enjoy status security as one of God's elect. These are people who have been reared in a culture of guilt and thus tend to interpret their present misfortunes and occasional moral lapses as signs of being unworthy of the affection and approval of their primary 'we' group. In accordance with their religious beliefs, guilt means 'sin', the disapproval of a righteous God, the collective representation of the most important values of their group. In the religious fellowship of the Holiness church they experience conversion and sanctification, they are reconciled with their group - their God - and they gain the psychological poise to carry on in the face of the trials and stresses of their existence at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid. It follows that a political non-activism is retained. The Holiness movement championed conversion as the way to overcome social distress. Social problems were seen exclusively as the product of individual sins, amongst which the cinema and alcohol play the greatest part. At the time, in more practical terms, there was a great deal of illness among the poor, and medical facilities were scarce and inaccessible. Especially the older poor suffered from a wide variety of physical ailments. Participation in religious services of the Holiness churches, particularly the faith-healing rituals, enabled them to ignore or to minimize their ailments.

The theme of deprivation also informs studies of the fringe and frequently extreme expressions of Pentecostal/Holiness. This is evident in accounts of snake-handling cults and 'holy-roller' sects. On the first count, La Barre's *They Shall Take Up Serpents* deconstructs snake-handling cults (generally disowned by mainstream Pentecostalism) which are fairly common in certain states such as southern California and Florida. La Barre sees these cults as a reaction to new cultural and economic settings, the cultural isolation of the new industrial proletariat of poor whites with their awareness of what they cannot have in economic and status terms.

Such people have a suspicion of change and novelty, experience monotonous working conditions and the blind obedience and conformity of the workplace of unskilled or semi-skilled works. La Barre spells out the link between life experience and a distinct form of religion. A life of poverty under a personal God or stern rewards and punishment is the religion of conformity taught, and dissenters of all kinds risk hellfire (La Barre 1954, 167). These social experiences are mixed with psychological explanation where snake-handling services bring a sense of control, excitement, and community to the lives of socially marginalized people.

There is another example. The term 'holy roller' is applied to certain sects which cultivate an extreme form of mysticism. 'Pentecostalism' frequently appears in their official names. Boison (1939) describes such mystical phenomena as 'abnormal manifestations': dancing, jumping, jerking, thrusting up the hands, falling on the floor and even passing into states of unconsciousness. Boison puts such ecstatic expressions of Pentecostalism in their historical place when he states that 'one of the striking phenomena of the period since the depression began is the rapid increase of eccentric forms of religion' (Boison 1939, 185). He continues: 'In all cases these cults are recruited from among the underprivileged classes'. They are distributed all over the country but appear to be strongest in Texas, California, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri and other southern states. Boison observes that those involved are underprivileged, relatively young, town or city workers, a large proportion of whom are employed in shops of factories. Rigidly fundamentalist, believers come together with some new vision, some vivid sense of the presence of the divine and where their ecstatic experiences are regarded as the actions of those of the Holy Spirit. According to Boison, these individuals have no social vision of things getting better in their lives. Hence, their religion can be essentially understood as a form of mental illness created by economic stress and social isolation. All in all, this fringe form of Pentecostalism constitutes a collective strain and a search for solutions in religious terms.

What might we conclude about the social dislocation thesis? Hine (1974) notes that the tendency of Pentecostalism is to provide a type of group involvement that is characteristic of closely-knit, supportive primary groups and is apparent even in the kinship terms frequently used between members such as 'brothers' and 'sisters'. Hine's argument that Pentecostalism spreads rapidly among migrants, the dislocated, and the displaced in any society is irrefutable. However, she goes on to point out that it also spreads successfully among life-long urbanites, particularly in the USA. Also arguing against the social disorganization model is that Pentecostalism in the USA equally flourishes in small rural communities and villages where ties have not been disrupted, and among family groups whose very solidarity is one of the primary reasons for its 'contagion'. Lack of intimate social relationships or personal ties and disrupted families are not, Hine concludes,

characteristic of Pentecostal converts. In short, the case for establishing a link between Pentecostalism and social dislocation remains unproven.

Social Inclusion

As we have recognized so far, the subject of sects is usually addressed in terms of social exclusion and deviance. However, some functionalist theorists have speculated that sects can have an altogether different role and serve to help integrate people back into society and are ultimately a source of social stability. This is not to suggest that deprivation is far from evident, only that how it is dealt with within the sectarian milieu is variable. This recognition counter-balances the assumption that Pentecostalism and other forms of Christianity necessarily bring a world-denying form of sectarianism in a Weberian sense.

In itself this argument is not new in that Niebuhr (1928) maintained, in justifying his belief that the history of Christianity was an endless cycle of Church-sect evolution, that the sect was not capable of surviving for very long. It would either adapt itself to prevailing circumstances or die. Moreover, there was the 'problem' of the second generation. In short, the second generation of adherents to the sect would generally fail to have the zeal and commitment of the first. Simultaneously, a this-worldly asceticism would bring a prosperity to later generations which would raise them out of poverty and help them feel more integrated into wider society. As the sect developed into a more worldly-orientated Church, a new sect might emerge as part of an enduring cycle.

Functionalist writers have advanced the so-called 'moral regeneration theory' which suggests that religious sects generate the process of reaffiliation with the social order and bring conforming behaviour under the influence of new social bonds. In this regard, Akers (1977) argues that persons adrift in society, lacking ties to the moral order, are strongly re-attached to the social mainstream by virtue of their recruitment into the intensely integrated moral community constituted by the sect. It may even be the case, he suggests, that the very deprivations that cause people to join sects are abated by sect membership, thus enabling people to improve their circumstances.

Some evidence for this tendency has been observable in the USA by way of contemporary Pentecostalism and this is in line with historical precedence. In North America, despite its fundamentalist trimmings, religion had always carried strong notions of self-advancement and material accomplishment (Roof 1994, 68). This was certainly true in respect of many expressions of Christianity over the last hundred and fifty years where it was frequently taught by various evangelical traditions that it was a Christian's duty to be prosperous since it was a natural outcome of a Christian life-style and glorified the gospel (Cole 1966, 169-70; Bjork 1978).

Pentecostalism, for several decades, has proved not to be excluded from these cultural characteristics. Partly, this was an unintended consequence of Pentecostalism. In this regard Benton Johnson raised the question 'Do holiness sects socialize in dominant values?' (Johnson 1961). In his article, he conjectured that certain features of Holiness religion actually socialize their members into the key values of the dominant society. Johnson's argument rested on two points: the conversion experience and the kind of life required of the convert after this experience. Proof of conversion, required of all members, consists of the 'initial sign of speaking in tongues'. From this point onward, a radical reorientation is

expected to take place in the life of the convert. Proof that this abrupt change has occurred primarily consists of a life of 'inner-worldly asceticism'. It is this asceticism which emphasizes rational, purposive, disciplined, steady predictable activity orientated towards self-direction, mastery, and positive achievement in occupational tasks. Moreover, it is asceticism which actually socializes Holiness sectarians into certain key values of the dominant society.

While acknowledging that Pentecostalism may generate a 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps' mentality, Johnson believed that there could always be discerned a form of Christianity which more systematically reflected North American culture. Pentecostalism had come to preach an ascetic self-help ethic and in doing so selectively endorsed American cultural values in as much as they were congruent with its own theology. In short, in the USA, the Pentecostals could be understood as a 'deviant' sectarian minority, nonetheless there was evidence of some cultural conformity to mainstream values.

Subsequently, Johnson's insights have been cited with approval by many sociologists of religion (for example, Yinger 1970, Hargrove 1971, Moberg 1962) and has been systematically re-examined by Dearman (1973). For the 'dominant values' of American society, Dearman chose the list of 'value belief clusterings' provided by Williams (1967, 33). These include activity and work, achievement and success, moral orientation, humanitarianism, efficiency and practicality, science and secular rationality, material progress, equality, freedom, democracy, external conformity, nationalism and patriotism, individual personality, and racism and related group superiority themes. The generalizations drawn from Dearman's study of members of the United Pentecostal Church in Oregon showed that they did not reject society's values, but selected those which they believed made the USA great; activity and work, achievement and success, moral orientation, external conformity, nationalism and patriotism. They also supported efficiency and practicality, material comfort, equality, individual personality, and perhaps, progress. But they did not endorse, by contrast, humanitarianism, freedom and racism. In sum, Johnson's hypothesis is strongly supported. Dearman suggests that traditionally the values of the lower classes did not converge with the dominant value system. However, Pentecostalism allowed a level of integration and possibly mobility for those in the lower social classes.

The proof of this thesis for Dearman was that generations of Pentecostals were themselves becoming rich, upwardly mobile, and leaving their proletarian roots behind them. This confirmed earlier findings. Indeed, in general, when we compare statements from the early years with observations from later times, we may conclude that the social standard of the Pentecostal followers has observably improved. While Pentecostalism could provide religious compensation for the poor, its outward, aggressive evangelism at times played down sacrifice, humility and poverty in favour of 'overcoming', of 'victory' and a disciplined life geared to surmounting adverse circumstances. This also had some practical relevance. Prosperity across the generations appeared to be an inevitable outcome of striving to conquer poverty through an ascetic life-style (Dearman 1974, 443).

Dearman, however, also suggests that the relationship between the ascetic Protestant sects and dominant society is not a one-way street. The aggressive, self-confident action of Pentecostals and the values which they believe American's should hold may to some degree become self-fulfilling prophecies because of their

effect on dominant society. The rapid growth of the Pentecostal group, the attraction they and similar charismatic bodies seemed to have for the young, and the spread of what looked to be a middle-class variety of Pentecostalism into the mainstream churches certainly seem possible.

Black Pentecostalism

So far the themes discussed have been clearly systematic by way of discussing various forms of deprivation although particular examples, such as the Holiness Movement have been focused on. Here I use a distinct example to show how commentators have applied theories of deprivation to a unique expression of Pentecostalism and its link to a discrete social group – largely, in the British context. The example offered is black Pentecostalism which serves as a test case of the significance of deprivation since its membership can be said to be doubly deprived in terms of both social class and ethnicity.

Black Pentecostalism is a broad yet divergent strand within the classical Pentecostal movement⁶ and presents a stark counterpoint by which to further discuss a number of the themes overviewed so far. Some of the above themes are present, notably that of relative deprivation, as are notable aspirations towards certain aspects of social inclusion. This is not to say, however, that the movement fails to display its own distinguishing features. In this regard, Kalilombe (1997) singles out two characteristics of black Pentecostalism that are unique. Firstly, that of seeking to meet the specific needs of poor and marginalized blacks in a global and comprehensive way. Secondly, that of being an aggressive missionary outreach rather than an inward-looking and exclusive fellowship. On the second score, few can doubt the evangelizing zeal of the great majority of black Pentecostal churches. Certainly, in the case of Britain at least, from the 1950s, the creative role of Caribbean and African sects, so it was hoped by the leadership, would one day break through to the white population and perhaps affect the course of Church history in a unique, positive and dramatic way.

The first characteristic, however, is the more complex and the link between the needs of black communities and the distinctive world of black Pentecostalism has proved to be a significant and enduring theme for a number of academic writers over several decades. Partly, this is because it has displayed itself as a segment of Pentecostalism that has evolved and been transformed on both sides of the Atlantic since the emergence of the broad movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. While numerous commentators have established a relationship between black Pentecostalism and various forms of deprivation, others have flagged up its complexity or even played down the correlation. The evidence is worth considering at length.

Pentecostalism did not simply evolve to cater for the needs of the black constituency. However, historically speaking, it can be argued that, to a degree, the late nineteenth century black Holiness movement – a movement born in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery – helped forge the rise of Pentecostalism. The Holiness movement encompassed those black religious groups whose leadership, for the most part, developed primarily from established mainline black Protestant denominations between 1885-1916. From 1911, a Holiness revival, which fed into the Pentecostal movement, flourished among blacks in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee.

The Holiness movement was born at a time when the civil and social situation of black people in America had bottomed out into what Logan (1965) calls the 'nadir' of the race. Mob violence and lynchings were on an upward curve in the South, and the black population lived on the thin edge of terror for their lives. It was also a time of economic dislocation in which survival in the economy of Southern agriculture was very tenuous indeed. A south-to-north migration begun. Some of the blacks that moved transferred their church membership to the established mainline denominations, but many found the churches scarcely attuned to their needs. Under slavery the only forms of voluntary association permitted were religious in nature. Since the time of slavery, sects provided magico-religious solutions to problems, not just of being a slave but the disturbed social organization generated by the institution of slavery. Abolition of slavery did not prevent a feeling of deprivation because economic reward and social status were low and similar religious manifestations, via the Holiness movement, were plausibly a way of dealing with them.

The exact contribution of black revivalists around the time of the birth of Pentecostalism is much debated and the assertion that Pentecostalism in its modern formulation had its beginning in a 'black Church in Los Angeles' has also been vigorously contested among the historians of the movement. But however that debate is decided, it is at least indisputable that the so-called Azusa Street Revival of 1906-08 gave impetus to a religious phenomenon that has spread throughout the world and it is generally conceded that W.J.Seymour, a black Holiness preacher, was the initiator and principal leader of that revival in its earliest months.

As the Pentecostal movement took off, it was quite predictable that many blacks would abandon the traditional churches for the congregations born of revival and which were particularly suited to provide 'a kind of spiritual and religious structure in the midst of a bewildering new environment' (Jones 1975, 152). Pentecostal sects went on to provide a fresh set of values, helped establish a new self-respect, offered the promise of the hereafter, and embraced a messianic dimension that appealed to poor and powerless blacks. In rejecting the world, sect members claimed to transcend and be superior to it. Hence, such churches were puritan in orientation - smoking, drinking and fornication were most strongly condemned and to a lesser extent the cinema and dancing. These were the values of the world that were perceived as hateful to God, whereas Christian ones please him. Black Pentecostals then, had God on their side.

One of the most important characteristics of early Pentecostalism was the lack of segregation along racial lines. Nonetheless, beginning in 1907, blacks and whites in the movement gradually began to separate. Between 1912-1914, some missions and many congregations had become entirely black (Quebedeaux 1983, 29). Since the time of this racial segregation black congregations have displayed distinctive hallmarks, as well as notable similarities with the white denominations and churches. Certainly after the World War I, there were to be discerned various differences between black and white classical Pentecostals including less emphasis on glossolalia, church government which tended to be Episcopalian rather than congregational in structure, where the role of women was often more significant although ordination was generally denied, and a greater church involvement in social action (Tinney 1980).

In the early decades the black Pentecostal constituency was essentially lower-class and continued to be so while the background of the white Pentecostals changed.

There had been a certain amount of upward social mobility for many poor whites, particularly in urban areas, as educational and occupational opportunities were made available to them. Thus the image of the socially deprived Pentecostal believer of the 1920s and 1930s has changed since World War II. There remains a lower-class white constituency among Pentecostals, but many have entered the 'good life' of suburbia. Fewer blacks, Pentecostal or non-Pentecostal, had such opportunities, as segregation and discrimination continued to be evident in American society (Poloma 1982, 20). In more recent times proportionately more blacks in the USA are Pentecostal than are whites, and black Pentecostal churches outnumber white ones, both in the number of denominations and in the size of congregations.

The growth and spread of black Pentecostalism throughout the USA took on new levels from 1940 to 1950 with the mass migration of blacks from the rural South to the mid-western and northern states. In the 1960s the movement continued to spread in the USA and internationally. However, for the most part, the black churches were not part of the white, middle-class dominated charismatic movement (Poloma 1982, 18).

As the black movement expanded during these decades it became clear that in a religious sense it was an antidote to and a critique of the failure of established church bodies to adequately minister to the personal and religious needs of the new black urban dwellers in the USA. Although there was a considerable number of large black Pentecostal congregations, they tended to be the exception rather than the rule. The bulk of them have remained comparatively small and thus retained an intimate character which lends identity, dignity, and a sense of self-affirmation to the victims of the impersonal urban culture in which blacks found themselves. Moreover, since most of these congregations have been 'preached out', that is, they were organized and grew under the aegis of their founder-pastor, the personal attention which the members received was re-enforced and provided a sense of belonging to persons who otherwise might not feel that they belonged to anything. This ministry to individuals reflected both a pastoral concern on the part of the pastor and a prudential, political stratagem calculated to ensure the financial health and stability of the population (Jones 1975, 158).

Churches in the USA developed to become the only institutions black communities belonged to and controlled by the people to which access is not proscribed on the basis of social, economic, or political considerations. As such they have always been the primary arena in which leadership, charisma, or other talents, gifts, ambitions, and graces could find expressions. Allen (1993/4) notes how these were churches which often provided practical support through divine healing which appealed to black populations and the evidence is that these were precisely those in greatest need, that is, subject to a lower life expectancy, poverty, certain chronic disease categories, poor diet, inadequate medical care, and lack of health insurance

Pentecostalism's appeal to black communities in the West informed many academic accounts in the 1960s and 70s on both sides of the Atlantic (Calley 1962; Hill 1971). The dominant approach maintained that the black Pentecostal sect represented a deliberate attempt to create an ethnic enclave, to engender group solidarity, and to construct a refuge from wider society. In short, they denote a lack of integration into mainstream society by marginalized black minorities. In doing so the key characteristics of the sect were often clearly discernible. Black Pentecostalism seemed to display a theological orientation which tended to conceptualize both a

present and future hope of deliverance from the conditions of this world which often meant a means of coping with economic exploitation and widespread discrimination. Rather than confront white-dominated society, the theology of these churches tended to embrace, in the words of Cope, an 'other worldly, idealistic mode of operation' (Cope 1984, 13).

Politically, the black movement was often passive but did provide liberating resistance and struggle that enabled the victims of racism to defend themselves. Indeed, since the nineteenth century black churches had played a central role in demanding equal rights for black people and in the development of Pan Africanism. In doing so, they transcended the political inactivity exhibited in the great bulk of white Pentecostal churches. Indeed, the political awakening in the large black Pentecostal movement in the USA is of great importance. For several decades it has posed a whole series of questions about the political relevance of the gospel. These churches regard political involvement and picketing as a gift of the Holy Spirit. In practical terms they have organized job training centres and lower income housing, not only for their own members but for those who need it. Thus, it is understandable that such black Pentecostals are not satisfied with the feeble attempts of white Pentecostals in America to understand social and political commitment as the task of individuals and not of churches.

Black Immigration: The Case of Pentecostalism Britain

Britain has long had its own native black Pentecostal tradition distinct from that of the USA. In contrast to North America (while acknowledging that a small black community had been present in Britain for at least two centuries), churches such as the Assemblies of God, the Elim denomination, the New Testament Church of God, the Church of the God of Prophecy, and Church of the Living God flowered in inner-city areas where black immigrants, mostly from the Caribbean, had settled in the post-Second World War years. Some enjoyed prolific growth. For example, the New Testament Church of God, which is the oldest Pentecostal church in Britain, claimed a total membership of 10,500 (61 congregations) in 1966, rising to 20,000 in 1970. Added to these churches were a vast range of exclusively black independent churches which were largely the same in terms of theology, culture and membership.

Notions of deprivation continued to inform the literature of black churches. For instance, Clifford Hill (1963) writing in the journal *Race Today* in 1962, offered an account of Pentecostalism among Afro-Caribbean migrants in Britain in terms of the structure and function of minority group organizations under conditions of social stress in relation to wider society and, in particular, experience of social deprivation. The deprivation was not, however, necessarily economic. In dealing with an extensive range of deprivations, Hill identified several reasons for the growth of black Pentecostal churches from the time of large-scale immigration in the mid-1950s. This included the interrelated themes of dealing with racial discrimination, coping with cultural shock, in providing a sense of community and identity, and as a response to disillusionment with the established white churches. For Hill (1971/2, 233) deprivation is about ethical and status deprivation and '...has the effects of driving together in social solidarity members of the pariah group'.

Calley (1962) also denied that the deprivation experiences by black immigrants were primarily economic. He argued that the first immigrants came to Britain to

make money and to win a better standard of living for themselves and their dependents in the Caribbean. The idea was to return home at some point and not to be integrated into British society. Few black immigrants achieved the goal of returning. Sharing many of the values of the British meant that there was no major degree of hostility to white society, so that the circumstances that stimulated the growth of Pentecostal sects in the Caribbean and led people to join them always had less force in Britain than in the USA.

Mid-twentieth century Britain was not a country beset by poverty nor, relatively speaking, was the black community. Hence, black people were not forced to embrace Pentecostalism as a kind of magico-religious solution to otherwise unsolvable economic problems. Since the 1950s many Afro-Caribbeans had become economically better off, even if less prosperous than they expected to be or compared to a majority of whites. Despite higher living costs, unemployment and their over-representation in poorer-paid jobs in public utilities and industry, migration had led to a less precarious existence. Thus the establishment of Pentecostal sects cannot be attributed to economic deprivation. Hill (1971/2) points out that the great majority of Afro-Caribbeans in Britain were not suffering from economic deprivation, at least not in comparison with their economic level before emigration. In terms of relative deprivation, the comparative reference group of first generation immigrants is usually found in their home societies.

At the same time, in line with Dearman's account considered above, recent studies in Britain and the USA have tended to show that Afro-Caribbean and Afro-American congregations seemed to endorse mainstream values, and appeared to identify with the market mentality as an unintended consequence of ascetic lifestyles in the Weberian sense. While black Pentecostalism often preached an Adventist withdraw from the world among these typically politically quietist and 'respectable' working-class blacks, often with socially upward middle-class leaders, there was a puritanical self-discipline in daily life. This was frequently coupled to aspirations towards educational achievement and hard work and therefore, ultimately to relative economic success. Evidence of this in Britain is that members of Pentecostal churches were relatively prosperous and less likely to be unemployed than non-sect Afro-Caribbeans.

In this respect some familiar aspects of sect development have been evident in black Pentecostal development (Calley 1965, 7). In the first stage a loose organization is discernible, sometimes accompanied by a charismatic leader. The boundaries of the group are also clearly and vaguely defined. Pentecostalism, like older Protestant churches among black people, has grown mainly in the cities. These churches have usually prohibited their members from smoking, drinking, seeking divorce, dancing (outside of the church), and indulging in so-called 'worldly pleasures'. During this period, the rejection of the world and a refusal to compromise with it are primary values. In the second phase the leader acquires more formal organization and is replaced by an administration of competent people. The boundaries of the group become more clearly defined and though rejection of the world is the dominant ideology, it slowly loses its bite. The sect begins to compromise with Western cultural values as its members become upwardly mobile. As these groups are usually deprived, either economically or in terms of some other significant variable, a high level of dissatisfaction among such immigrants is not normally found. New Commonwealth immigrants to Britain have, however,

experienced disadvantages both in terms of ethnic and status deprivation that is essentially linked to experiences of discrimination and racism and the implications of this will now be briefly discussed.

Race Relations and Discrimination

In overviewing the significance of the experience of racism to black communities Kalilombe (1997, 318) points out that the central issue is in the securing and maintaining of power over others, a power that makes it possible to keep the dominated under control and to make things work according to the power-holding group's wishes and plans, usually in order to promote and protect its interests, advantages and privileges. Ramdin (1987, 448) focuses stringently on deprivation of blacks particularly between 1960 and 1970. It was largely one of ethnic and status deprivation resulting from discrimination, rather than economic deprivation, which had the effect of generating a social solidarity among members of a 'pariah' group. Similarly, in explaining the growth of black Pentecostalism in Britain, Hill (1971/2) put forward a direct correlation between the growth of the sects and worsening race relations of a people in a condition of 'social stress' in the context of wider society. The newcomers represented a potential threat to the local population and its accustomed way of life in poorer urban areas especially, but were acutely disadvantaged through discrimination and lack of skills.

The black Africans in Britain are even more in a position of loss of status than their Caribbean counterparts. Almost all immigrants from Africa are students, either full-time or part-time. In their homelands they were the children of the educated professional elite. In all African states education is expensive and therefore it is only within the reach of the economic privileged minority. In Britain they find that their educational status is not high; because of discrimination they are forced to live in the deprived predominantly black areas of the city and because of their skin colour they are simply classed as 'black' and therefore of low status. Like their Caribbean equivalents, the African immigrants had come to Britain only on a temporary basis: most of them had no intention of settling down as permanent residents or citizens. However, the reasonable employment opportunities which the Caribbeans had also found, meant that they prolonged their stay in the country, and have now no real cultural links with their parent's original homeland.

What of the significance of culture shock? The extant literature suggests that the unfamiliarity and hostility that many people faced in the workplaces, in the housing market and on the streets came as a great jolt to numerous Caribbeans and indeed Africans. This heightened the need for the churches to live up to expectations; to be places of welcome and of community; to be places of refuge and of strength in the face of the difficulties encountered elsewhere (Becher 1995,6). It was therefore in respect of cultural differences to which the individual must adjust - one of the move from an agricultural society to the adaptation to an urban industrialized one. This culture shock also extended to church life. The established British churches, as detailed below, failed to satisfy the religious needs of black people in Britain, due to differences in their pattern of worship in comparison with the black churches of the New Commonwealth.

Identity and Community

Several commentators have suggested that the more basic source of the disadvantage for blacks in Britain for several decades was the lack of a clear and assured self-identity. Passive resistance is not the same as willing acceptance: it means apparently accepting what is happening simply because there is no other realistic alternative, but at the same time using every possible means to protect and empower oneself. The black Pentecostal churches became places of refuge and enhanced a feeling of acceptance by God and by people of like background and common experience: they were places where people could find fulfillment, where their spiritual, social, economic and emotional needs might be met and where they could make a contribution to the needs of others. Black groups in Britain, from an early stage, had established various community organizations such as sports clubs, and welfare societies related to island of origin in the Caribbean (in African churches frequently linked to tribal groupings). In many respects the Pentecostal churches had the same purpose. In times of need, these associations performed practical support for non-members as well. Above all, they promoted solidarity and provided for the needs of those on the margins of white society (Ramdin 1987, 438-9).

Black Pentecostalism is close to the mainstream of the religious tradition in the Caribbean, and against the grain of English religion. It has continued to offer the immigrant a valid and socially acceptable form of religious expression. According to Calley (1965), writing in the 1960s, every working-class Afro-Caribbean migrant was in a sense a potential convert, and although probably only about 5 percent of Caribbeans in Britain were closely enough attached to the sects to be considered members, at least twice as many were interested enough to attend services frequently (Calley 1965, 96). It was from this fringe group that congregations hoped to recruit (what were frequently known as 'fellowshippers') (Calley 1965, 97). The ambition of leaders was to extend beyond the Afro-Caribbean community and to evangelize in the Caribbean, rather than among English people.

Caribbean sects are independent of the native tradition, and spring from West Indian roots. The immigrants brought with them such churches as the Churches of God from the Caribbean. They did this without seeking the blessing of one or other of the sect headquarters in the USA; they were not official emissaries and had no clear relationships to overseas organizations. Affiliation, if any, came later. At the same time, the different black Pentecostal churches have remained

largely peripheral to the white charismatic movement and had little to do in participating in renewal conferences and the like. Most sects maintained a close contact with the Caribbean, though not only with sect members, but families and friends. Very few towns in Britain had a population from any Caribbean territory other than Jamaica large enough to support a sect. The denser the Caribbean population the greater change that a sect was to develop. Although bringing cohesion, they were prone to sect schisms either by sect or congregation (Calley 1965, 45).

Back home, church life for Caribbeans was more than just an hour-a-week function. Rather, churches were comprehensive fellowships that bound members across various human barriers into a united new spiritual family in the name of the one faith. This bond created reciprocal duties and rights of an unconditional type whereby individuals and groups recognized one another, cared for each other, and felt responsible for one another's welfare, both spiritual and temporal. As soon as they arrived in Britain, black Christian immigrants hastened to look for Christian

congregations around them; first those of the denominations with which they were familiar back home, and if not for any other Christian community that, they were sure, would be only too anxious to receive them (Hill 1963).

In Britain, two-thirds of practicing black Christians are members of black churches, while only a third are in the historic mainline denominations. These black churches are mostly Pentecostal in doctrine and practice. In the Caribbean it is the reverse (Howard 1987, 10). Brierley's *English Church Census* in 1989 found that one in six of the Afro-Caribbean population were attending a Christian church, a higher proportion than the general population. Although a minority of black church-goers belonged to mainstream churches, the majority were attending a variety of Caribbean and African churches. Similarly, West Africans reproduced in Britain the African independent church types which in their home countries had been developed as an appropriate answer to what was lacking in the missionary-instituted churches.

The reasons why black churches are opted for are quite simple, at least in much of the literature that has been produced about them: it helps make sense of the state of 'ethnic minority' imposed on them when they came to the Britain. For one thing, the novel experience of being an ethnic minority showed up several specific needs in the black Christian community which should have been met with the resources of the general Christian fellowship of the British, but were not. Thus black Christians were led to develop their own understanding and practice of the Christian faith to meet the needs of the black believing community itself. By stressing those aspects of the common Christian message that are felt to be crucial to the black constituency, black Christianity challenged the local or 'native' Christian church traditions by showing up what was lacking or even distorted in their accustomed understanding and practice. Thus, black Christianity likes to see itself as a strictly religious (biblical) response to God's Word.

Beecher (1995) argues that there were unexpected differences and disappointments for black Christians attending British churches in the 1950s and 1960s. These fell into three main areas: church style, particular needs, and racism. The reserved, liturgical emphasis of many British churches alienated many Afro-Caribbeans. The needs for identity and community were not provided for by the white British churches. Some Caribbeans met with hostility in white churches or at least did not feel at home, marginalized as strangers. Even evangelical churches who organized foreign missions abroad practically ignored their responsibilities of a mission to blacks in their own country. The only form of Christianity with such a missionary zeal was Pentecostalism. Yet, the profound differences separating the white and black Pentecostal churches in Britain are a legacy of the bi-racial crucible in the United States, where Pentecostalism grew and fragmented along racial lines in the early years of the twentieth century. In Britain, black independent churches were a way forward. In the early 1950s there was often a history of involvement with a particular denomination 'back home'. Links would be made with the denominational leadership in order to set up branches in Britain. In other cases new organizations were established. All of these organizations fitted into a pattern which was familiar; they reflected the doctrinal positions, church teachings and social activities which came from within a black Christian heritage. By the end of the 1960s in Britain they had responded positively to racism in 'the house of God' by forming autonomous churches (Beecher 1995, 8).

Beecher notes that not all black churches in Britain were, however, Pentecostal.

For instance, the Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim, the largest of the affiliated African groups with established congregations in London and the West Midland was not Pentecostal in orientation. The African churches were also more indigenous and, unlike the Caribbean did not have a fusion of Caribbean and European Protestant culture. Pentecostalism was only one alternative. Holiness churches with their roots in the USA enjoyed a level of popularity and even more so Sabbatarianism typified by the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Less well-known were the Aladura or Spiritual Traditions represented by churches of West African origin. However, many of these churches provided the same function as their Pentecostal counterparts.⁷

Conclusion

This article has attempted to establish a link between classical Pentecostalism and deprivation as applicable to social class and ethnicity through a review of the literature that has been produced over several decades. For the most part, the relationships appear to be fairly impressively substantiated. At a macro-sociological level, the movement would seem to deal with a wide range of deprivations, but mostly those of an economic nature or related to status in its various social manifestations. Generally speaking, accounting for the origins and rapid subsequent spread of Pentecostalism throughout the USA and Western Europe involves locating the attraction of Pentecostalism to the economically deprived, marginalized and downtrodden (Tinney 1971, Ramdin 1987, Harrell 1975, Holt 1940).

There are, however, a number of broad complexities to this equation, aside to any theoretical and methodological weaknesses which might be encountered. One is the range of deprivations associated with social dislocation including such deprivations as social isolation and alienation which may have an economic origin but pan out to have different implications. For example, lack of funds may lead to an inability to pay for medical costs and where a viable option for some was the 'divine' healing offered by many Pentecostal churches.⁸ Essentially, this brings us close to Glock's notion of *organismic deprivation* - the deprivation of low standards of physical health. Alternatively, a sense of social isolation experienced by individuals may be overcome in the collective therapeutic process to be found in the Pentecostal services. A great degree of communication, never achieved in other churches, takes place in these services. For example, Pentecostal worship - which to the outside observer could describe as unstructured and unliturgical - allows anyone to express themselves with the means of speech at their disposal, most obviously glossolalia.

This article had also shown that at least some of the authors focusing on the significance of deprivation largely argue that the very deprivations which are identified with sectarianism may ultimately lead not only to the overcoming of economic and status short-comings in terms of what the sect has to offer by way of compensations, but in practical terms may raise the adherent to a greater status and material wealth by inculcating (selected) mainstream values. These variables are evident in the classical Pentecostal movement on both sides of the Atlantic. This process is perhaps likely to occur over the generations. Institutionalization erodes the over-worldly spirit and the incursion of the outside world of the second and third generation of Pentecostals whose standard of living increases undermines the emphasis on purity. Another variable is political activism which also means engaging the world. A sense of deprivation may bring a retreatist attitude towards

the world. Alternatively, as with black Pentecostalism, there may be a strong activist element.

Deprivations, as suggested by the theorists, can come in many forms and these may be associated with particular social groups. Micro-studies have attempted to show a correlation between felt deprivation and opting to join Pentecostal movements. For instance, John Kildahl (1972, 78) in his ten year study of neo-Pentecostals concluded that in nearly 90 percent of conversions a personal crisis, which he understands to constitute a form of deprivation, of some kind preceded the initial Pentecostal experience.

Religious conversion and commitment, however, is a very personal experience and in their account, Gerlach and Hine (1970) tend to reject the sociological notion that 'deprivation' of some kind is the prime reason why individuals join sectarian or enthusiastic churches or movements. They found in their research repeated examples (both among classical and neo-Pentecostals) where economic or social status deprivation is clearly non-existent, and disorganisation or maladjustment simply not observable. There is, then, contrary evidence and it urges caution in establishing simple and overgeneralized links between Pentecostalism and deprivation. If this relationship is complex, then this is even more the case in establishing a link between a range and deprivation and so-called neo-Pentecostalism which emerged in the mid-1960s. The second paper will suggest that the relationship with more recent forms (neo-Pentecostalism) is an extremely tangled one. The paper will also include a more thorough-going critique of theories of deprivation.

Endnotes

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- 1 The emphasis of this paper is on social class and black ethnic groups. The very significant relationship between Pentecostalism, deprivation and women is not considered here. This is not to deny its importance. Indeed, as Harvey Cox writes

'There can be no doubt that, for whatever reason, women have become the principal carriers of the fastest growing religious movement in the world' (Cox 1995, 137).

- 2 On a global scale Pentecostalism is one of the most successful of all contemporary religious movements. One estimate puts the number of adherents somewhere in the region of 620 million or approximately 30 percent of the entire Christian population of the world (Barrett 1988).
- 3 For a good and concise overview of the beginnings of the Pentecostal movement see chapter one of Quebedeaux (1983) and chapters one and two of Hollenweger's work (1972).
- 4 This observation has been supported by statements from both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal observers, which show that the early movement in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Canada, and Oslo was recruited among the less wealthy and least educated (Svenska Morgonbladet 1907). For example, Norwegian statistics from 1950 indicate that the Pentecostal movement in Norway was supported

more by the lower ranks of society than by the average citizen. There were very few members with an academic education, but relatively many were housewives, domestic servants, labourers and craftsmen (Official Norwegian statistics 1950).

- 5 There is a measure of disagreement concerning which religious groups the term 'holiness' should be applied to, as well as the very meaning of the term. Warburton (1969), for instance, prefers a narrow definition and application of holiness which would not include Pentecostals under its rubric. Dearman (1974) prefers a much broader application of the term. If people practice a 'holiness' way of life and if they call themselves 'holiness people' then the definition holds. Pentecostals often see themselves in these terms and this is often brought out in articles of faith.
- 6 What I have referred to as a 'new' movement of black Pentecostal churches is now evident both sides of the Atlantic (Hunt 2001). This movement is discussed in the second of these two articles.
- 7 Another alternative was the Rastafarian movement, which gave the young a sense of brotherhood and belonging, proved to be a more overtly political movement and, unlike the majority of black churches which could be co-opted into mainstream life, the Rastas of the streets remain stubbornly separate.
- 8 Pentecostals no longer use divine healing as an alternative to orthodox medical services but only to supplement them or turn to them in the case of minor illnesses (Allen & Wallis 1974).

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