

“Roland Allen’s Influence on Melvin L. Hodges’s Missiology:
Its Fruit and Significance for the Church”

A Paper Presented to the
Evangelical Missiological Society
Southeastern Regional Conference
Wake Forest, North Carolina
23 March 2012

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Introduction

There has been much written in missiology regarding how to evangelize, establish churches, and administer them. Mission organizations have wrestled with these almost as far back as the Apostle Paul, with varying results. Are new approaches needed? Maybe, but before thinking we missed the latest church growth method, let us look back briefly. Perhaps no new approaches are needed, but rather a fresh look at, and implementation of, principles from the past.

In this paper I will introduce Roland Allen (1868-1947) and Melvin L. Hodges (1909-1988), two of last century’s most notable missiologists, highlighting factors I believe influenced their missiologies. Then I will look at their ecclesiology and pneumatology pertaining to missiology, and their fruit and significance for the Church. I chose ecclesiology and pneumatology as lenses because of their fundamental role in church growth, development, and administration, as well as the fact that they are the main pillars of both men’s missiology. I will note the influence of Allen on Hodges and clarify Hodges’s views as needed.

Roland Allen

Background

Allen was born in England on 29 December 1868. He attended Bristol Grammar School, then St. John's College, Oxford on scholarship where he studied Classics and Modern History, and was awarded the Lothian Prize. Next, he attended "Leeds Clergy Training School to prepare for Holy Orders,"¹ then "was ordained and did a curacy."²

In 1895, Allen went to North China as a missionary of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel, an organization that was considered "moderately 'High Church'."³ He did language study, trained catechists, and became a district missionary. In 1903, he became ill and returned home to England, an invalid, with his wife, Mary, and their daughter, Priscilla. No longer able to officially serve overseas, Allen became the Vicar of Chalfont St. Peter parish in Buckinghamshire, resigning after holding the position for three years. His resignation letter (25 November 1907) expressed frustration with the church stating, "it has become customary for people who make no profession of believing the doctrines of the Church, or who make no profession of keeping the laws of the Church, to demand and use her offices as if they were theirs by natural inheritance."⁴ Allen recognized the Anglican Church (AC) faced a dilemma regarding the inadequacies of its formal, traditional methods.

In 1912, Allen published his first and most well-known book, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*; it contained insights and criticisms about missionary methods in use, particularly the AC's. His position was simple—the church should use missionary principles exemplified by Paul in Acts that were empowered by the Holy Spirit, not human methods. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin noted Allen's passion as, "the resubmission in each generation of the tradition of men to the Word and Spirit of God."⁵

In 1914, Allen met Sidney James Wells Clark, a prosperous businessman committed to Christian missions. Clark financed several of Allen's missionary trips later in life. Clark founded the *Survey Application Trust* "to survey the progress made by Christian missions and to spread the ideas of Roland Allen through a variety of publications and the periodical *World Dominion*."⁶

Due to Allen's critique about hypocrisy in the church and missions, he was "cut off from ordinary active service;"⁷ he then turned to what remained—theorizing and writing. During this era he struggled with the deficiency of the professional minister and missionary to effectively deal with the work of the church, most notably recorded in *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It* (1927). Allen emphasized that Jesus never chose learned individuals to lead the church—he chose "unlearned and ignorant men"⁸ (1 Corinthians 1.26-29). It was only after the church grew significantly that God placed an educated person on the scene, but Paul did not rely on earthly wisdom or eloquence—he depended on God and the preaching of the cross of Christ (1 Corinthians 1.18-31). Allen held this view the rest of his life, noting "missionary societies . . . did more harm than good."⁹

In *Voluntary Clergy* (1930), Allen argued for a return to what he believed was the godly ordination of converts—similar to how Paul ordained. Allen asserted church missionary societies fostered dependence in converts on missionaries; a grave injustice not present in Paul's methods. Allen viewed the AC's focus on examinations to determine a candidate's acceptability for ordination as a bishop did not measure a person's biblical suitability,¹⁰ asserting the knowledge needed to pass was generally unnecessary for doing real ministry.¹¹

In 1931, Allen, his wife, and daughter moved to Nairobi, Kenya. Allen held no official position but gave assistance to churches when ministers were away. He died in Nairobi on 9 June 1947. His daughter said of his closing years, "I think old age brought peace. He was content to

sit on the verandah of our Nairobi house reading the Bible and the Greek and Latin classics and helping my brother with the translation of Swahili epic poetry.”¹²

Ecclesiology

Allen’s concept of the church was unsophisticated. His study of Acts led him to a radical ecclesiology for a High Anglican priest—an indigenously planted church with a biblical foundation could grow into maturity by the Holy Spirit. He considered Paul’s churches truly indigenous and believed the secret was Paul’s recognition the churches were local and not intended to be nationally structured. Allen also recognized Paul’s profound belief and trust in the Spirit indwelling converts, and their churches, enabled Paul to establish them at once with full authority.¹³ Fundamental to Allen’s ecclesiology was his belief that, “Only a church could propagate itself, and beget Churches”¹⁴ not mission societies.

Critiquing how the AC impeded indigenous church growth, Allen drew on Paul.

St. Paul distrusted elaborate systems of religious ceremonial, and grasped fundamental principles with an unhesitating faith in the power of the Holy Ghost to apply them to his hearers . . . It was inevitable that methods which were the natural outcome of the mind of St. Paul should appear as dangerous to us as they appeared to the Jewish Christians of his own day.¹⁵

Allen understood Paul trusted Jesus to protect the churches he founded and the Spirit to guide them, therefore he was convinced missionaries and sending agencies should remove their presence and influence quickly.¹⁶

Allen saw the undeniable connection of the Spirit with the Church and the change the Spirit brought in believers’ lives. He asserted, “the Church . . . should be the most clear revelation of the Spirit. Christians . . . must show some change.”¹⁷ When converts live out this change in community as *the Church*, “which is a living body in the place and in which the Spirit resides” neighbors will notice and begin “to question the cause.”¹⁸ One distinction of Paul’s

training methods for the Church—“His converts became missionaries,”¹⁹ which begs the question—what do *our* converts become?

Allen observed four things in Paul that were needed to establish a church, “and only four.”²⁰

- 1) A tradition or elementary Creed,
- 2) the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion,
- 3) Orders,
- 4) the Holy Scriptures.

Allen asserted converts needed to be trained to understand and practice these four pillars; then missionaries could be confident like Paul who “left them to work them out for themselves as a body”²¹ with periodic fellowship, encouragement, rebuke, and instruction.

Allen believed God’s Church needed:²²

- 1) a beginning
- 2) to be organized on the apostolic model
- 3) to be a place where leaders were produced capable of leading the larger movement one day
- 4) The Gospel preached
- 5) dependence on the Holy Spirit
- 6) to take responsibility for themselves
- 7) to be a place that “sent out missionaries”

Allen’s ecclesiology, while simple in theory, was not easy to manifest. A disappointing fact is he never implemented his ideas, only postulated them and foretold they would come into their own around “1960.”²³

Pneumatology

Allen was convinced the Spirit’s presence in converts was the *cause* of their growth, the *impetus* for their missional fervor, and the *strength* that enabled them to face life’s challenges.

The Purpose of the Spirit's Indwelling

Salvation

Allen believed the Spirit entered a person at the initial point of conversion²⁴ to convert “the heathen”²⁵ but also actively pursued the lost noting, “the Holy Spirit Who is the Spirit which desires and strives after the salvation of men.”²⁶

Maturing Believers

When Allen rebuked the AC's use of “activities” to teach converts instead of relying on the Spirit, he revealed part of his pneumatology emphasizing the Spirit, “is He who creates leaders, it is He who enlightens, it is He who uplifts, it is He who teaches men to ‘live’.”²⁷

Mission-Empowerment

Allen asserted the Spirit's coming “at Pentecost was the coming of a missionary Spirit; that . . . stirred in the hearts of the disciples of Christ a great desire to impart that which they had received.”²⁸ Allen viewed the Spirit's primary role was energizer for Gospel proclamation. His study of Acts revealed the Spirit not only illuminated truth about Jesus to the apostles but birthed in them “a profound conviction that men needed Christ. . . . the preaching of the gospel was of such vital importance to men that no pains or penalties could be allowed to postpone it.”²⁹

Allen cited Paul's work in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia³⁰ as examples where the Spirit's indwelling caused believers to be “zealous in propagating the faith, and apparently needed no exhortation on the subject.”³¹

Expressing Charity

Allen understood charity not merely in monetary terms but more as expressions of compassion.³² He recognized charity “as taught by Christ and His apostles, and as practised by them, was something quite new in the history of the world.”³³ Steeped in a multi-culture that

was inhospitable to people not born of aristocracy, wealth, or religious nobility, Jesus, Paul, and their followers, transformed by the Spirit, seized opportunities to reveal God's "grace and loving-kindness,"³⁴ a natural outgrowth of Christian maturity.³⁵

Allen noted several examples of charity demonstrated by "the early Church" were "its support of widows and orphans, its tender care for the sick, the infirm and disabled, its gentle consideration for slaves, its constant help afforded to prisoners and those afflicted by great calamities."³⁶

Providing Believers Divine Strength and Guidance

Illustrating the Spirit's ability to lead and fulfill God's purposes, Allen stated Paul's journeys were "guided by the Holy Ghost to a successful issue."³⁷ Addressing the spiritual condition of "Eastern converts" and the Spirit's ability to lead them, Allen asserted that they did not need to depend on foreign missionaries since "they have the Holy Ghost to strengthen *and to guide them* [italics mine]."³⁸ Further, he rebuked those in authority stating, "The Holy Ghost is given to Christians that He may guide them, and that they may learn His power to guide them, not that they may be stupidly obedient to the voice of authority."³⁹

Melvin Lyle Hodges

Background

Hodges's parents were initially Methodist but left after their introduction into Pentecostalism. Hodges came to faith in Christ as a child and "testified to Spirit baptism at age ten with the evidence of speaking in tongues,"⁴⁰ (Acts 1.8; 2.4) and subsequently felt called of God to missions. He was reared in a minister's home; his father taught him Greek as a child. Since becoming Pentecostals, Hodges's parents "believed in the 'faith principle': confidence that in response to prayer, God would supply their spiritual, physical, and financial needs. Thus,

expectant faith distinguished the home environment and influenced Melvin's spiritual formation."⁴¹

Hodges married Lois Myrtle Crews in 1928, and was ordained by the General Council of the Assemblies of God-USA (GCAG-USA) in 1929,⁴² marking the start of his official ministry as an evangelist. He pastored in Colorado, was chosen to be the District Youth Director, and served as a presbyter of the Rocky Mountain District (1933-1935). In 1935, Noel Perkin, AG Missionary Secretary, visited Hodges;⁴³ Perkin "strongly encouraged Hodges to read Allen's books, a recommendation he was making to all the missionaries."⁴⁴

Hodges received missionary appointment to Central America in 1935; he arrived in El Salvador in 1936 and did Bible institute teaching. Here he encountered another Anglican's influence, Alice E. Luce, indirectly, that impacted his missiology. Luce had been baptized "with the Holy Ghost as in Acts 2:4."⁴⁵ She resigned from the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) in 1914 and became an ordained GCAG-USA missionary in 1915.⁴⁶ Even though she had read Allen (1912) and, along with others, dismissed him as "somewhat visionary and unpractical," she confessed "that book first opened my eyes to the diametrical distinction between our methods of working and those of the New Testament."⁴⁷ Since coming into Pentecost she acknowledged Allen impacted her understanding of how mission should be done—apostolically.⁴⁸ McGee noted, by her ordination "she saw the value of Allen's views and used them to shape the denomination's mission statement adopted six years later; thus, she became the first missiologist of stature in the Assemblies of God."⁴⁹ During Hodges's ten months in El Salvador he saw the fruit of Allen's teachings implemented by missionary Ralph D. Williams, "an understudy of Alice E. Luce."⁵⁰

Hodges began serving in Nicaragua on 29 January 1937.⁵¹ He served as General Superintendent of the Pentecostal churches; while in Matagalpa, he “traveled extensively to survey the churches.”⁵² In Nicaragua, Hodges recognized “the need for workers” and “made a training program one of his main projects. Nicaragua Bible Institute was opened in 1937 with six young men enrolled. . . . students receive practical experience as evangelists and pastors under the guidance of missionaries and national leaders.”⁵³

Hodges helped some existing Nicaraguan churches move toward more indigenous church principles (ICPs), noting these native Christians “decided to withdraw financial help from five of the more established assemblies in order to open new fields.”⁵⁴ Application of Spirit-empowered ICPs resulted in all Nicaraguan AG churches and national offices being held by nationals by 1962.⁵⁵

Hodges returned to the USA in 1944, and in 1948 he “became founding editor of *Missionary Forum*, an in-house journal for missionaries.”⁵⁶ He used it as a platform to address issues he deemed needful, at times criticizing the GCAG-USA. One understands Hodges’s commitment to ICPs from McGee’s comments regarding the *Missionary Forum*’s inaugural issue:

[Hodges] published “As Others See Us,” excerpts from a letter written by an Indian churchman who queried, “Are we right in concluding that the same age-old idea which makes the missionary the supreme dictator over a work for which he happens to find the money is also held by the Assemblies of God missionaries?” Furthermore, “The entire mission system is based on this unscriptural ground which has produced a set of spoon-fed workers . . . spiritually and financially crippled.” Designed to startle his readership awake to the changes needed for the times, he printed the article with Perkin’s blessing. In this and other publications, Hodges came down firmly on the side of the developing churches, leading the charge against the old colonial approach to mission.⁵⁷

Hodges completed his last term as a formal missionary (1950-1953), then became Field Director for Latin America and the West Indies (1954-1973).⁵⁸ In 1974, he received an honorary

doctorate from Northwest University of the AG then became a professor in missions at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS); in 1986 he was honored as professor emeritus. He died in Springfield, Missouri on 25 February 1988.

Ecclesiology

In *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission: A Pentecostal Perspective* (1977), Hodges introduced the foundation of his ecclesiology and missiology stating, “the Holy Scriptures provide our basis for the theology of the Church and its mission.”⁵⁹ He reminds for Pentecostals, “the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God whether we believe it or not and whether we understand it or not.”⁶⁰

Hodges’s Pentecostal ecclesiology was Trinitarian; he asserted “the Church is produced by the work of the Holy Spirit and enjoys a special place in the purpose of God under the headship of Christ.”⁶¹ Hodges taught, “The Church is a select company of people ‘called out of the masses’ for worship, service, and witness . . . (Acts 15:14).”⁶² His beliefs that the Holy Spirit produces the Church, and the Bible is God’s inspired written word led Hodges to the conviction, “individuals are made members of the Church only by the work of the Holy Spirit, and membership in the true Church depends on the individual’s personal relationship to Christ.”⁶³

Hodges understood a significant part of the Church’s identity is mission, which he understood threefold. The Church:

- 1) “is called to serve God and worship Him (John 4:23-25; Acts 13:2).”
- 2) “has a ministry to its own members. . . . to exercise their gifts to edify one another and show loving concern for the other members (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:16).”
- 3) “has a ministry to the world to present the gospel of Christ (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8).”⁶⁴

Hodges envisioned the “Church’s mission of evangelism” (3 above) as “a cycle” of five parts flowing from one to the other:

- 1) “the *presence* of Christians in the world is a witness to unbelievers (Matthew 5:13-16).”
- 2) “the *proclamation* of the good news (Luke 24:46-48; Mark 16:15-16)”
- 3) “the *persuasion* of men and women to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior (2 Corinthians 5:11; Acts 26:28, 29).”
- 4) “*participation* in the body of Christ . . . manifested in edification of fellow believers, service, and good works (Galatians 6:8, 9; Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 4:16).”
- 5) “The new convert completes the cycle by taking part in the proclamation of the gospel, so the Church becomes truly *self-propagating* [italics above his].”⁶⁵

Hodges understood the Church would *propagate* until the final judgment by God.

Pneumatology

Hodges’s pneumatology was consistent with the GCAG-USA. His writings demonstrated the necessity of the Spirit’s *active* presence in the Church, and explained how the Spirit is involved in every aspect of a Christian’s life.

The Holy Spirit is the divine agent of God the Father and God the Son in carrying out the divine purpose. All of God’s work in men is done through the agency of the Holy Spirit. We are “born . . . of the Spirit” (John 3:5) and, . . . regeneration would be impossible without His work (Titus 3:5). He forms the Church (1 Corinthians 12:13), produces the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23), empowers for service (Acts 1:8), and gives special enduements of grace (gifts) to make effective the ministry of each member of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12:4-8).⁶⁶

Hodges, having witnessed Pentecostal believers enthusiastically win converts and plant churches, was convinced method without Spirit-empowerment was insufficient. He asserted, “New Testament Christians received such an enduement of power, such an inflow of divine life, that their doubts, fears, and inertia were swept aside. They ‘went everywhere’ testifying of the resurrection of Christ.”⁶⁷ He proclaimed Pentecostals were exceptionally equipped for the indigenous task:

The genius of the Pentecostal movement is uniquely suited to the indigenous church method. We have witnessed thousands of “indigenous” churches spring into existence in the homeland as a result of Pentecostal outpourings since the turn of the century. Pentecostal outpourings, whether in the homeland or abroad, have always produced converts with flaming zeal and sacrificial spirit.⁶⁸

Hodges believed for “indigenous church ministry” to succeed, missionaries must not only teach how the Spirit works but also flow in the Spirit’s powerful workings themselves and bring nationals into the same relationship.⁶⁹

Theological Contrasts

Ecclesiology

Allen held a very high view of the sacraments (water baptism, Holy Communion, and ordination) and their function in the church. He believed converts received the Spirit in *fullness* at conversion, being empowered to witness in the Spirit’s power at the outset of their newfound faith. Allen maintained that only ordained ministers could perform the sacraments, which required a bishop to confer these rights onto a national.

Hodges only used “sacraments” to describe Water Baptism and The Lord’s Supper.⁷⁰ While Hodges accepted missionaries needed to baptize initial converts, he “did not consider it an essential part of his missionary ministry (1 Cor. 1:14-17).”⁷¹ Hodges viewed ordination as important but not essential for administering sacraments, believing “all recognized pastors should be allowed to baptize their converts and administer the Lord’s Supper (in cooperation with the official board);”⁷² for the missionary to administer them once national workers were available served to “only weaken the indigenous church and belittle the workers in the eyes of their countrymen.”⁷³

Both Allen and Hodges placed high value on churches being indigenous. However, Allen’s approach of turning over leadership as soon as possible to properly trained laity differed slightly from Hodges whose goal was not only to develop “pastors for local congregations, but leaders for every ministry that the church will need.”⁷⁴ Hodges believed missionaries were needed to help establish Bible schools to prepare nationals to lead all churches, Bible schools,

and national offices; he asserted this was essential to not limit Church growth to a few local assemblies. He was also aware overstaying missionaries would impede indigenous growth.⁷⁵

Pneumatology

While Allen's pneumatology lacked a detailed expression of the Holy Spirit's *charismata* (1 Corinthians 12.7-11), Hodges understood the role and person of the Spirit more broadly. Hodges believed, as Allen, Christians received the Spirit at conversion, but as a Pentecostal he believed the *fullness* of the Spirit was manifested in God's second work of grace called the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (Joel 2.28-29; Acts 1.8; 2.4, 17-18), evidenced by *glossolalia* (Acts 2.4, 11); a subject Allen does not explore. Allen connects the "gift of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the gospel to those outside the Church,"⁷⁶ but does not elaborate on the empowerment of the Spirit (Luke 24.45-49; Acts 1.4-5, 8; 2.1-21; 4.8-12), the miraculous (Mark 16.20; Acts 2.42-43; 4.8-12), or other spiritual giftings that build up the church (1 Corinthians 12.1-31), elements fundamental to the Spirit's presence in Pentecostal pneumatology.

Allen appeared to accept his denomination's lack of Spirit-manifestations as normative and resigned to the notion that if the Spirit's power was not manifest God's mission could still succeed because "we have powers sufficient to . . ."

If we no longer possess his [Paul's] power we still possess the Spirit which inspired him. We have powers enough whereby to let the Spirit shine forth. We have powers sufficient to gather hearers; we have powers sufficient to demonstrate the Divine Presence of the Spirit of God with us; we have powers sufficient to assure inquirers of the superiority of Christianity to all heathen religions; we have powers sufficient to illustrate in act the character of our religion, its salvation and its love, if only we will use our powers to reveal the Spirit. One day we shall perhaps recover the early faith in miracles. Meanwhile, we cannot say that the absence of miracles puts an impassable gulf between the first century and today, or renders the apostolic method inapplicable to our missions.⁷⁷

It appears he rationalized the decline of the Spirit's miraculous power (in his experience) to build the Church and adopted the position human power as "sufficient," which contradicted his

critique of the AC. If the Spirit's empowering presence was fundamental to Paul's methods as Allen argued, is the Spirit's same presence not needed to expand and grow the Church today? It is difficult to grasp how Allen could so easily explain away the need of the Spirit's miracles for the Church due to its lack in his experience, especially after prolifically writing about it. By relegating the Spirit only to conversion, Allen neutered the power for modern churches that was demonstrated in the Early Church.

Influence of Roland Allen on Melvin L. Hodges

Two major factors influenced Hodges's missiology. One was his understanding that in the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit earlier in the century (at the Azusa Street Mission from 9 April 1906-1909), "New Testament Christianity had been restored with apostolic power for evangelism" leading "Pentecostals to scrutinize church expansion in the Book of Acts" and closely identify "themselves with first-century Christians, who anticipated Christ's return."⁷⁸

The other significant influence in Hodges's missiology was Allen's books. When Hodges affirmed the need for self-governance in "even in the newest church"⁷⁹ stating, "We believe we are not far from the apostolic pattern in providing leadership among the converts early in the life of the local church,"⁸⁰ he substantiated his position with a quote from Allen (1962).⁸¹

While giving details about his pneumatological missiology, Hodges gave a clue about Allen's influence.

Christ had given the disciples the Great Commission. . . . they were to preach the gospel to all the nations and the power of the Holy Spirit would come upon them for this purpose. The missionary endeavor of preaching the gospel to the whole world could not be carried out simply as loyal obedience to the commands of Jesus. The apostles and early Christians needed an inward impulse—they must become co-laborers with God and find an inward compulsion for the fulfilling of this command. This dynamic for world evangelism came on the Day of Pentecost. Roland Allen said:

Acts does not begin with “the Lord Jesus said go”; but with “ye shall receive power and ye shall be witnesses.” St. Luke fixes our attention *not on an external voice but upon an internal Spirit* [italics ours].”⁸²

Hodges further noted Allen’s value citing his view, “The Spirit given to the apostles is thus seen as to have created in them an internal necessity to preach the gospel.”⁸³

Noting Allen’s ideas could be usable by the faith-oriented Pentecostals McGee observed his “expositions on the Pauline pattern in missions appeared to accord well with Pentecostal interpretations of the Book of Acts, perspectives referred to by many as indigenous church principles or the ‘three selfs’: . . . mission churches should be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating.”⁸⁴ Recognizing the influence of Allen on Hodges, McGee stated, “His [Hodges’s] missiological insights were strongly molded by the writings of Roland Allen.”⁸⁵ Writing on the significance of Hodges’s *The Indigenous Church* (1953), McGee penned, “This was the first book on missiology published by a Pentecostal and reflects the principles of Allen, Hodges’s expertise in building indigenous churches in Central America, and his Pentecostal pneumatology.”⁸⁶

Hodges’s use of Allen confirms he was aware of Allen’s ideas and had read some, if not all, of his works, although when he drew on Allen he did so critically through a Pentecostal lens.

Key Missiological Fruit and Its Significance for the Church

Roland Allen’s Contributions

The Spirit Matures Converts

One significant contribution was Allen’s conviction the Holy Spirit could mature indigenous churches without foreign management as in Acts. Allen asserted Paul “believed . . . in his converts” since the Spirit indwelt them and “he believed in the Holy Ghost in them.”⁸⁷

The Spirit Gives Direction Particularly Related to Mission

Another contribution of Allen came from his study of Acts which revealed the Spirit was actively involved in directing the apostles (Acts 2.5-13; 7.5; 11.20-21; 13.2, 9, 46, 52; 15.28; 16.6-9; 21.4, 11)⁸⁸ and even the “Council of Jerusalem” (Acts 15.28).⁸⁹

Greater Indigenization Requires Less Foreign Involvement

Allen’s faith and trust in God and the Spirit’s ability to oversee, grow, and protect modern churches in the same manner as in Acts inspired Allen’s belief that mission churches actually grow when they are administered by national believers—as soon as possible.⁹⁰ Allen’s conviction that missionaries must move from paternalism to trusting God to empower and equip the Church to mature has born much fruit as applied by Hodges in AGWM (see below).

Dependence on the Spirit is Enough to Lead, Energize, and Equip Converts for Evangelism

Allen’s stress on the Spirit being essential for evangelism may not have been new for Anglicans, but his emphasis on the Spirit as pivotal in equipping and energizing converts to spread the Gospel conflicted with his peers’ pneumatology. Allen believed “All who received the Spirit . . . truly obeyed the command to go into all the world, for they all possessed a Spirit which impelled them to desire the world-wide manifestation of Christ.”⁹¹ Allen realized only if converts were indwelt with the Holy Spirit could they succeed in building the Church.

In my time overseas I discovered some ACs had become more open to the fullness of the Spirit, recognizing the need for the Spirit’s empowering presence for witness, ministry, and growth (e.g., the *Alpha Course* founded by Nicky Gumbel). One example is St. John’s-St. Margaret AC in Singapore; they have a weekly healing service that some may think fits better in a traditionally Pentecostal church.⁹² They also have aggressive evangelism and missionary

programs. I found that ACs who are more open to the Spirit's Pentecostal fullness tend to be more zealous to reach the lost in their communities and beyond.

Melvin L. Hodges's Contributions

Hodges is credited with the legacy of re-shaping GCAG-USA missions to indigenization at a time when other Pentecostals organizations were moving toward a colonialism structure (e.g., the Church of God—Cleveland). During Hodges's era, "forces within Pentecostalism were currently at work to return overseas missions to a paternalistic approach,"⁹³ therefore his seminal work (1953, 1971, 1976) was divinely timed. Gailyn Van Rheenen, mission scholar, noted Hodges's view that paternalism breeds, "anemic mission churches that are not allowed to grow naturally in the soils in which they were planted."⁹⁴

Indigenous Missions Depending on the Spirit and Good Training of Believers Will Produce Self-Supporting, Self-Propagating, and Self-Administering National Churches

Hodges was a "dedicated learner" who was so convinced ICPs worked that he taught "how a local congregation could become self-sufficient and a beachhead for evangelism in the power of the Holy Spirit."⁹⁵ Hodges understood it was essential to foster "*a sense of responsibility* on the part of the converts [italics his]"⁹⁶ for their church and their roles in it for the three-self principles to work. Hodges was passionate that indigenous churches be the goal because he believed "the church of Jesus Christ in China, in Latin America or in Africa, is not, or should not be, a branch of the church in America. It must be a church in its own right. We should plant the gospel seed and cultivate it in such a way that it will produce the Chinese or African church."⁹⁷ His understanding of the three-selfs coupled with his Pentecostal pneumatology caused him to focus on growing self-reliant, Spirit-filled national churches that developed into national denominations, independent of foreign oversight, fulfilling God's vision.

Present-day fruit of Hodges's missiology is evidenced in its continued use in AGWM-USA and AG's continued global growth. According to Margaret Hill, AGWM-USA Research Analyst, 2010 statistics revealed there are approximately 151 countries with indigenous GCAG.⁹⁸ Each GCAG operates autonomously; when they initiate a request, the AGWM-USA works in partnership to help them achieve their stated goals of reaching their nations for Christ. Hill's research also found there were 2,066 missionaries and 674 associates serving overseas, with 61,069,727 church members overseas, and 3,030,944 in the USA.⁹⁹ She also noted, "AGWM has missionary personnel currently serving in 241 countries, territories, and provinces, which is an increase of 17.6 percent from 2011."¹⁰⁰

Another significant missiological implication of Hodges's is seen in the establishment of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF) (formerly the World Pentecostal Assemblies of God Fellowship) on August 15, 1989. This was only possible due to the GCAG-USA's implementation of Hodges's ICPs which birthed many indigenous GCAG globally. WAGF was established as a "fraternal fellowship" of indigenous AG presence "to pursue the fulfillment of our Lord's command to evangelize the lost in the shortest possible time, . . . by encouraging and assisting one another, promoting harmonious relationships, and seeking the most effective means of its accomplishment under the dynamic leadership of the Holy Spirit."¹⁰¹ Along with its initial purpose, in 1993 WAGF created "the World Assemblies of God Relief and Development Agency (WAGRA)" which serves as "a mechanism through which members of the AG family who were in need might be aided by other members with abundance."¹⁰² WAGF also "provide[s] a unified global voice to advocate for AG members experiencing persecution."¹⁰³ According to Hill, there were 217 countries and territories in the WAGF.¹⁰⁴ Table 1 displays

regional data on global indigenous AG presence along with AGWM-USA missionaries and associates.

Table 1. AGWM Worldwide Assemblies of God Family by Region Countries, Territories, and Provinces: 253¹⁰⁵

	Europe	Eurasia	Northern Asia	Latin America/ Caribbean	Africa	Asia Pacific
AG Constituents	1,852,401 [†]	2,302,226 [†]	§	29,207,805 [†]	16,599,208 [†]	5,717,736 [†]
AG Churches	10,379 [†]	19,640 [†]		211,087 [†]	67,825 [†]	29,484 [†]
AG Ministers	14,083 [†]	21,632 [†]		191,742 [†]	70,442 [†]	29,371 [†]
Missionaries and Associates	441	426	213*	579	390	350

(Source: *Assemblies of God World Missions, Research Analyst* (Statistics on AGWM Worldwide Assemblies of God Family) (Based on Calendar Year Ending 2010))

[†]As of December 31, 2010

§The AG constituents, churches and ministers stats are not available due to the sensitive nature of the region.

*International Partners are included in this total.

Bible Schools and Training Centers Facilitate Believers' Maturity and National Church Growth

Hodges believed Bible schools were indispensable tools to educate and train national believers so they could grow into a national movement. Part Hodges's missiological significance is understood because in 2010 there were "a total of 1,123 bible schools and 984 extension programs"¹⁰⁶ globally. These education centers are key to the explosive growth of the indigenous AG worldwide.

The Church Must Communicate the Gospel by Word and Deed, with Salvation from Sin Given Primacy

Byron D. Klaus, AGTS President, affirmed Hodges was "Arguably the most celebrated missiologist in Assemblies of God, . . . usually associated with the planting and development of indigenous churches."¹⁰⁷ Yet, Klaus also noted Hodges understood the importance of ministering to the whole person stating, "Hodges was fond of saying, 'People are not souls with ears'."¹⁰⁸

Hodges asserted missionaries, as God's emissaries, "must manifest the love of God and help, as he is able, those around him. God expects us to give a practical manifestation of the love of God."¹⁰⁹ Even though Hodges did whatever possible to care for the social concerns of people, he put primary importance on the "spiritual need of men" noting this opened the door for other types of ministry that also demonstrated God's love.

It is evident that evangelicals do have concern for the whole man. Nevertheless, the spiritual need of men is given primary importance as this opens the way to all else. Evangelicals consider their task to be communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ both by proclamation and by deed, thus letting their light so shine that men see their good works and be drawn to Christ (cf. Matthew 5:16).¹¹⁰

It is interesting to note Hodges's belief that proclaiming freedom in Christ led to opportunities for social ministry to the whole person is converse to many modern approaches. This holistic ministry is deeply embedded in GCAG-USA mission *praxis*. The GCAG-USA has nine ministries listed in its Compassion category; four have an international focus (CompassionLink, Convoy of Hope, Global AIDS Partnership, and HealthCare Ministries). As an example, HealthCare Ministries (HCM), AGWM-USA's international medical outreach, has ministered in "86 countries in the last 25 years."¹¹¹ They partner with an AG missionary and the national church "to offer free medical care to those in need."¹¹²

The Indigenous Pentecostal Church Continues Global Growth

In *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2012*, researcher Eileen W. Linder ranked GCAG-USA 9th largest religious body in the USA for a second year in a row. The GCAG-USA listed 3,030,944 members, posting an increase of 3.99 percent over the previous year.¹¹³ Studying the data revealed the GCAG-USA had the fastest growth among the ten largest US religious bodies. Linder stated, "Four of the 25 largest churches are Pentecostal in belief and practice. . . . Strong figures from the Assemblies of God, and a big jump in the Pentecostal

Assemblies of the World . . . might suggest a continuing increase in total adherents to Pentecostal Groups.”¹¹⁴

Conclusion

Although Allen and Hodges came from entirely different theological worlds, they both sought direction from God to benefit the *missio Dei*. Both men had compassion and love for the lost, love for the Church, and confidence in God’s sovereignty. Even though they did not understand the Holy Spirit exactly the same, it is amazing that as they studied Acts they came to similar understandings about God’s ability to grow and mature the *Corpus Christi* with limited foreign oversight if the Holy Spirit was trusted and allowed to work. As a Pentecostal missiologist having studied Acts, Hodges extended Allen’s thinking, and embraced the model birthed by the *fullness* of the Spirit in Acts.

Hodges was listened to by his peers and denomination, and facilitated essential changes to bring about a move forward in the study and practice of missiology. Understanding the positive influence Allen had on Hodges and its significant impact on the GCAG-USA, it is regrettable that one can only speculate about the impact Allen could have had for God’s Kingdom through the AC had they listened to him during his lifetime.

If modern ACs and other traditionally non-Pentecostal churches could embrace 1) Allen’s understanding that mission churches need to be indigenous, 2) Allen’s view that the Holy Spirit not programs grows the Church, and 3) how Hodges extended Allen’s thinking, which greatly impacted GCAG-USA missions, then perhaps the growth seen in Acts could occur in all churches today. Understanding Allen is a great beginning but Luce followed by Hodges must be the next steps if we, the Church, are going to transform our world for Christ as the Early Church did—by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I ask, *Is it possible for us to extend Allen’s and*

Hodges's missiologies with an even clearer understanding of Scripture and the fullness of the Holy Spirit so God can build his Church in greater measure in our lifetime? If the goal of missions is to build a New Testament Church, we must embrace the *fullness* of the Spirit and allow the Spirit to infuse, permeate, transform, and empower our missiology; otherwise we will end up with the powerless ecclesial forms Allen struggled against and Hodges steered away from. Therefore, I believe Hodges's Pentecostal missiology warrant exploration by missiologists and practitioners to increase, deepen, and enhance lasting dynamic Church growth.

¹ Roland Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit: Selected Writings of Roland Allen*, ed. David M. Paton (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960), ix.

² Roland Allen, David M. Paton, and Charles H. Long, *The Compulsion of the Spirit: A Roland Allen Reader* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), vii.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 126.

⁵ Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes Which Hinder It*, 1st American ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962; reprint, 1984), ii.

⁶ Allen, Paton, and Long, *The Compulsion of the Spirit*, vii.

⁷ Priscilla M. Allen, "Roland Allen: A Prophet for This Age," *The Living Church*, (1986): 10.

⁸ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion*, 156-157.

⁹ P. Allen, "Roland Allen," 11.

¹⁰ Roland Allen, *Voluntary Clergy* (London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1923), 13-14.

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

¹² P. Allen, "Roland Allen," 11.

¹³ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, American ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1962; reprint, London: World Dominion Press, 1930, 1949, 1956. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972.), vii.

¹⁴ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion*, 119.

¹⁵ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 6-7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vii, 6-7, 9, 152-153.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 93.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² These are drawn from Allen's *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* (1962), 18-42, 124, 156; *Missionary Methods* (1962), vii, 62-77; "Reform of the Ministry" (1968), 53.

²³ Allen, Paton, and Long, *The Compulsion of the Spirit*, viii.

²⁴ Roland Allen, *Missionary Principles* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1913), 37.

²⁵ Roland Allen, *Missionary Survey as an Aid to Intelligent Co-Operation in Foreign Missions*, ed. Josephine Paolucci and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team Produced by Ted Garvin ((London: London Missionary Society, Original edition, 1920), 2009. Kindle eBook), 72.

²⁶ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion*, 144.

²⁷ Allen, *Mission Activities*, 14.

²⁸ Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, 59.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁰ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 3.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

³² *Ibid.*, 45.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Allen, *Mission Activities*, 22.

³⁶ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 46.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁴⁰ Gary B. McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22, no. 1 (1998): 20.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Gary B. McGee, *People of the Spirit: The Assemblies of God* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 2004; reprint, 2nd 2008), 406.

⁴³ McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 20-21.

⁴⁴ McGee, *People of the Spirit*, 407.

⁴⁵ Alice E. Luce, "Paul's Missionary Methods [Part 1 of 3]," *The Pentecostal Evangel: A Family and Missionary Paper, Official Organ of the Assemblies of God*, January 8, 1921, 6.

⁴⁶ McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 21.

⁴⁷ Luce, 6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 21.

⁵⁰ McGee, *People of the Spirit*, 407.

⁵¹ Melvin L. Hodges, "New Move into Nicaragua," *The Pentecostal Evangel: Not By Might, Nor By Power, But By My Spirit, Saith The Lord*, April 24, 1937, 9.

⁵² McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 21.

⁵³ Christine Carmichael, "Nicaragua: Land of Indigenous Churches," *The Pentecostal Evangel: Not By Might, Nor By Power, But By My Spirit, Saith The Lord*, January 28, 1962, 25-26.

⁵⁴ Melvin L. Hodges, "Great Sacrifice in Nicaragua," *The Pentecostal Evangel: Not By Might, Nor By Power, But By My Spirit, Saith The Lord*, January 31, 1942, 11.

⁵⁵ Carmichael, 26.

⁵⁶ McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 22.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Gary B. McGee, "Hodges, Melvin Lyle," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999; reprint, 1999), 296.

⁵⁹ Melvin L. Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 15.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 17.

⁶¹ Ibid., 51.

⁶² Ibid., 54.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 77.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁷ Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church: A Complete Handbook on How to Grow Young Churches* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1976), 132.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 133.

⁷⁰ Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 29-30.

⁷¹ Ibid., 30.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 69.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 33.

⁷⁶ Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, 18.

⁷⁷ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 48.

⁷⁸ McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 21.

⁷⁹ Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 32.

⁸⁰ Ibid., note.

⁸¹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 84. Quoted in Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 32 [note].

⁸² Hodges, *A Theology of the Church*, 34-35.

⁸³ Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, 27. Quoted in Hodges, *A Theology of the Church*, 32 [note].

⁸⁴ McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 21.

⁸⁵ Gary B. McGee, "Hodges, Melvin Lyle," in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 403.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 149.

⁸⁸ Allen, *The Ministry of the Spirit*, 18-20.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 19.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 48.

⁹¹ Ibid., 60.

⁹² St John's-St Margaret's Church, "Healing Service ", St John's-St Margaret's Church <http://www.sjsm.org.sg/index.php/ministries/missions-a-outreach-division/healing-service> (accessed March 15 2012).

⁹³ McGee, "Hodges, Melvin Lyle," 1998, 404.

⁹⁴ Gailyn Van Rheezen, "MR #13: Money and Mi\$\$ion\$ (Revisited): Combating Paternalism", *Missiology.org* <http://www.missiology.org/?p=247> (accessed March 21, 2012).

⁹⁵ McGee, "The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges," 23.

⁹⁶ Hodges, *The Indigenous Church*, 17.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁹⁸ Margaret Hill, March 12, 2012, email message to author.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Hill, March 23, 2012, email message to author.

¹⁰¹ William Molenaar, "The World Assemblies of God Fellowship: United in the Missionary Spirit," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 31, no. 100 (March 2011): 45.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Hill, March 12, 2012.

¹⁰⁵ *AGWM Current Facts & Trends*, (Springfield: Assemblies of God World Missions, 2012).

¹⁰⁶ Hill, March 12, 2012.

¹⁰⁷ Byron D. Klaus, "Compassion Rooted in the Gospel That Transforms," *Enrichment Journal-Online* 2004, no. Spring (2004).
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¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Hodges, *A Theology of the Church*, 103.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 105.

¹¹¹ HealthCare Ministries, General Council of the Assemblies of God.
<http://www.healthcareministries.org/about-us> (accessed March 15 2012).

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Eileen W. Linder, *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 2012*, ed. National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, 80 ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012), Online Press Release, March 20, 2012,
<http://www.nccusa.org/news/120209yearbook2012.html> (accessed March 23, 2012).

¹¹⁴ Ibid.