

# Pentecostal currents and individual mobility

## Visiting church services in Stockholm County

The classification of Pentecostal currents and organizations has been widely debated within Pentecostal studies. In contemporary Sweden, the disintegration of historically important boundaries (denominational, practical and theological), as well as increased mobility between Pentecostal organizations, illustrates that the issue deserves further attention. If many of the old boundaries are being suspended, how may we distinguish between different Pentecostal varieties, and what role do such differences play for today's mobile practitioners? The present article, which consists of a case study of Stockholm County, approaches the matter from a Bourdieu-influenced perspective, where differences are understood in terms of *habitus*. The study draws upon fieldwork in 16 congregations, carried out between 2009 and 2013, and concludes that three variations of the *habitus* can in fact be distinguished in the Pentecostal movement of Stockholm County; low key, grand and informal. The differences between these forms in fact impacts upon patterns of mobility among individual Pentecostals; most prefer congregations of the same variety, even though there are examples of practitioners who visit other forms of organizations as well.

THE GLOBAL PENTECOSTAL<sup>1</sup> landscape encompasses a variety of organizations, and the question of their classification has been widely debated (see Anderson 2010). In Sweden, the issue has not received the same attention, although developments during the last 20 years have made it an urgent matter. During this period, many previously important boundaries with

1 Pentecostalism is used as an umbrella term, referring to all organizations that embrace the charismatic gifts.

regard to organization and orientation have been blurred or dissolved: fusions of denominations have resulted in new and heterogeneous entities, and theological differences have become less distinct than they used to be. Faith theology, for instance, which used to indicate attachment to the Faith Movement<sup>2</sup> has to some extent spread to other institutions. Moreover, denominational labels seem to be of little significance for today's mobile practitioners, who regularly visit, or even affiliate with, a variety of organizations (Moberg 2013a: 187–8).

The disintegration of earlier borders and increased mobility together pose several challenges to the study of contemporary Pentecostalism, and it is important that we create new methods that allow us both to locate current differences and study the ways in which new boundaries are being formed. In the present article, which is a case study of Pentecostal practices in Stockholm County, one such attempt is made. Focussing on the Sunday service, a gathering that is essential in terms of identity manifestation (Ammerman 1998: 84), the study addresses the following questions: Which differences in practice can be detected amongst the congregations? To what extent are they affected by the organization's age, background, and demographic composition? How (if so) do these differences affect individual mobility?

The study is based upon material gathered from sixteen congregations between 2009 and 2013 and

2 The faith movement is both a movement and a network of organizations. In order to distinguish between the two, the first letters are capitalized (the Faith Movement) when referring the network, while low case letters (the faith movement) are used when reference is given to the movement.

includes notes from observations and conversations with leaders and approximately 300 churchgoers, and electronic material such as homepages. A portion of the material was collected in connection with my PhD project, but the major part was gathered within the framework of a project funded by the Institute for Pentecostal Studies (IPS), in which various aspects of contemporary Swedish Pentecostalism were explored. To some extent, the set-up of the latter project has affected my selection of congregations. While my initial aim was to include a broad scope of organizations with reference to their history, demography, theology and denominational/network affiliation, specific organizations that were researched by other scholars – such as migrant churches – have unfortunately been given less attention.<sup>3</sup>

### **Pentecostalism in Stockholm County**

Due to historical and contemporary developments, the Pentecostal landscape in Stockholm County – an expanding region that includes the capital city, its suburbs and neighbouring cities – has become highly heterogeneous. Pentecostalism took root in Sweden in the early twentieth century, mainly within Baptist free church denominations.<sup>4</sup> After struggles within the Baptist Union of Sweden, congregations influenced by the new movement left and formed the Pentecostal Alliance of Independent Churches (Pingst – fria församlingar i samverkan, henceforth the PAIC), which is today the largest Pentecostal network in the country. Another important institutional body is the denomination Interact (Evangeliska frikyrkan), which is the result of the 1997 amalgamation of the Free Baptist Union, the Örebro Mission, and the Sanctification Union – denominations that embraced the early Pentecostal movement without becoming parts of the PAIC. Both the PAIC and Interact are represented by a number of Stockholm congregations. One of the most influential is the Philadelphia Congregation (Filadelfiaförsamlingen), which dates back to 1910.<sup>5</sup> Presently, it numbers

5,700 members and has its main locations in central Stockholm. The City Church (Citykyrkan) and the Södermalm Church (Södermalmskyrkan), the latter with over 1,200 members, are also among the oldest – created in 1936 and 1927 respectively. Even though they vary considerably in their practices, all three are affiliated with the PAIC, as are several congregations in neighbouring cities and suburbs (*Pingströrelsens årsbok* 2013). Among the Interact congregations are the Söderhöjd Church (Söderhöjdskyrkan), created as early as 1883, the Cross Church (Korskyrkan), the Elim Church Stockholm (Elimkyrkan Stockholm) and Skogås' Christian Home Congregation (Skogås kristna hemförsamling) (Interact's homepage 2013).

Later Pentecostal movements have influenced existing organizations and spawned new ones. In the 1960s, the emergence of the Maranata movement within the PAIC resulted in an internal split, where some congregations left the network, including the Maranata Congregation in Stockholm (Maranataförsamlingen i Stockholm). In the 1980s the faith movement, a prosperity gospel movement with strong charismatic expressions, swept across Sweden. Both the Södermalm Church and the Märsta Pentecostal Congregation (Märsta pingstförsamling) absorbed the movement and joined the Faith Movement network, and in 1986 The Ark (Arken) was created. Not only were Faith Movement organizations founded during this period: the independent Centre Church (Centrumkyrkan), which presently has over 700 members, was instituted in 1986 (see the Centre Church's homepage 2013). A few years later, in 1992, Vineyard Stockholm was created (see Vineyard Stockholm's homepage 2013). The 1990s also witnessed the birth of other congregations, such as the New Life Church in 1993 and the Thomas Church (Tomaskyrkan) in 1996, many of which joined Interact.

Pentecostal organizations – many with ties to international networks – have mushroomed in the new millennium, even if many have quickly dissolved again, or merged with others. A chain of events that fuelled this development was the rise and fall of the mega-church oriented Karisma Centre, a faith gospel oriented institution which was active at the turn of the century. As it faced bankruptcy and was dissolved in 2005, several congregations arose from its ashes, among them the Peter Church (Petruskyrkan), which later fused with United Stockholm, and the Passion Church, which became the Hillsong Church

3 An account of the congregations is provided in the references list.

4 The term 'free church denomination' refers to state-independent religious bodies founded in the wake of various revivalist movements in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

5 See Alvarsson's article in this issue.

Stockholm. The latter has in fact become a large and influential organization that numbers 1,500 members (*Pingströrelsens årsbok* 2013) and in 2013, the Hope Church (previously the Märsta Pentecostal Congregation), became part of the Hillsong Church and took the name Hillsong Stockholm North (Hillsong Stockholm norra). Other recent additions are the Source of Power (Kraftkällan), the SOS Church (2009), the Stockholm Calvary Chapel, United Stockholm and ethnic minority congregations such as the Nigerian-based Christ Embassy Sweden (see Malmström 2013: 75–8). The Pentecostal landscape is also transforming in other ways. In the last five years the independent SOS Church and United Stockholm, along with the globally connected Stockholm Hillsong Church and previous Faith Movement organizations Hillsong Stockholm North and the Södermalm Church, have all gathered under the PAIC's umbrella – a development that has made the network increasingly heterogeneous.

It is difficult to tell how many Pentecostals live in the Stockholm area, since they are lumped together with other free church members in statistics studies. According to data from 2010, 1.3 per cent of the residents are members of the mainline free church denominations (Skog 2010: 59–63). Those figures include non-Pentecostal denominations as well as the PAIC and Interact, whereas the Faith Movement and independent organizations are excluded. It is equally difficult to assess whether the number of Pentecostals remains stable or is increasing: while there appears to be a small growth in absolute numbers, the region *per se* is expanding (the result of urbanization and increased global mobility) and it is unlikely that the number of Pentecostals is increasing in terms of percentage of the entire population. Concerning the people who make up the organizations, some are converts, but the vast majority have been brought up in Pentecostal circles or in the broader free church milieu. Among the younger practitioners, many have moved to the region from other parts of the country (leaving their previous congregations) in pursuit of an occupation or education.

### Tracing clusters of habits in a local field

Many scholars who have categorized Pentecostal varieties have approached the matter historically, either following denominational lines or identifying distinct Pentecostal 'waves', such as the 'classic'

revival of the early twentieth century; the 'charismatic movement' in the historical churches that was initiated in the 1960s; and the third neo-Pentecostal wave that emerged in the late 1970s (see Anderson 2010: 16–20). Such classifications have not evaded criticism: especially the last category (neo-Pentecostalism) has been called into question. Cornelis van der Laan (2010: 204–5; cf. Miller and Yamamori 2007: 3) for one, considers it too vague, since it encompasses very diverse organizations and movements. With reference to neo-Pentecostalism, the issue of similarities and differences has been further disputed. Basically, it is possible to detect two different positions: the first is represented by a group of scholars who suggest that it looks mainly the same all over the world (Lindhardt 2011: 19–21; cf. Ritzer 1996), while another emphasizes indigenization and hybridization (Anderson 2010). While those emphasizing global similarities have a point, this approach is not very useful in a local and difference-oriented study such as this. Looking at contemporary congregations in light of their denominational history is not very helpful either: attention is not only turned away from variations within denominations, but also from broader movements within the Pentecostal milieu. However, historical perspectives should not be discarded. Even though the study takes off from the identification of contemporary dissimilarities, these are in turn viewed in light of larger, historical, Pentecostal waves.

My study is inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's discussion of the *habitus* and theories of ritual practice and materiality. According to Bourdieu (1977: 78–83), identity consists not only of cognitive aspects, but of enduring 'clusters of habits' as well. These habits (which entail bodily dispositions, tastes, 'distastes', and specific understandings of the world and our place within it) are said to be shared by social groups (or classes) whose members are socialized into them from an early age. Bourdieu refers to these clusters as 'habitus'. Another central aspect of his thinking (Bourdieu 1993) is the notion of *the field* in which the habitus is formed, which he sees as a sociological whole, where actors struggle for symbolic capital. Bourdieu's theories have been criticized on several grounds: the validity of his claim that the habitus is given 'once and for all' and that it remains stable has been disputed by Thomas Csordas (1994: 249) and Saba Mahmood (2005: 138). Agreeing with this critique, I make no such assumptions. Leaving

Bourdieu's theories of struggle for symbolic capital aside, I borrow his concept of *the field* and understand Pentecostal Stockholm to be such a field, inhabited by different organizations and individuals. Further, Bourdieu's understanding of identity as anchored in the body and aesthetics is useful. Following this line of thought, my study focuses on variations in *interior design* (primarily furnishing), *dress codes*, *greetings*, *musical performance* and the *practice of the charismatic gifts*. It also makes use of his discussion of 'clusters of habits,' by observing how various acts and preferences assemble in the congregations.

Additionally, connections between embodied action and material dimensions are considered. Here I am greatly indebted to the scholars of materiality Colleen McDannell (1995), Webb Keane (2007) and Birgit Meyer (2012) and share their understanding that engagement with material surroundings contributes to the shaping of peoples' embodied repertoires and attitudes. I also draw inspiration from the work of the ritual theoretician Catherine Bell (1992: 74, 219). Wishing to broaden the category of ritual, she stresses the fluid boundaries between ritualized practice and other forms of action, and regards 'ritual' as a feature that can be incorporated into any human activity, and to greater or lesser degrees. When describing how this quality is introduced into

other types of action she uses the term 'ritualization.' According to Bell (*ibid.* 74, 91–3) ritualization involves varied strategies which have the effect of separating out certain activities from those of everyday life and elevating them to a privileged position. In keeping with Bell, I understand greetings, musical performances and the practice of charismatic gifts as instances of ritualization, and use her reasoning concerning greater or lesser degrees of ritualization to highlight and analyse differences in practice and their impact on mobility.

### Interior design

Despite the congregations' individual characteristics, some broader trends can be detected in the interior design of the church buildings. Firstly, there are those that look more or less as one would expect: the service is conducted from a stage at the front, with some empty space below. The rest of the room is furnished with rows of pews that are broken up by an aisle that leads up to the stage. This formation, which is reminiscent of that of the older (non-Pentecostal) free churches, is common in congregations dating back to the first half of the twentieth century and which have resided in the same building for a long time. Two examples are the Philadelphia Congregation, which

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Philadelphia Church, Stockholm, before 1944.



moved into its premises in 1930, and the City Church which did so in 1940. Still, this particular design is not exclusive to PAIC congregations, but exists in the considerably younger Centre Church as well as in the Cross Church, although the latter has replaced the benches with stuffed chairs. These congregations tend to be dominated by middle-aged and older practitioners, tending towards the middle class, and there is an over-representation of women. On my visits, the oldest practitioners were found in the Philadelphia Congregation, while the Centre Church and the City Church attracted more middle-aged visitors.<sup>6</sup>

In his study of the Swedish Word of Life, Simon Coleman (2000: 152–7) points out that Faith Movement organizations prefer large, sparsely decorated, industrial buildings located outside the cities where they reside, which he understands to be a manifestation of their ambition to grow. In present-day Stockholm, the 'warehouse style' described by Coleman can be found in the current and previous Faith Movement groups The Ark and Hillsong North Stockholm, but features of it have also been taken up by the recently instituted SOS Church and the Hillsong Church Stockholm – organizations that lack direct connections to the Faith Movement, but subscribe to some version of faith theology. As in Coleman's study, such congregations have generally chosen venues that are well suited for mass meetings, and can accommodate several hundred churchgoers or more. In front of the high stage in the main hall is a large empty space, and the visitors are seated in rows of chairs with some space in between. By contrast with the Centre Church and the others described above, several wide aisles lead up to the stage. There are naturally slight differences among congregations that manifest such features, some of which are the result of their history. When the Södermalm Church joined the Faith Movement in the 1980s, the organization already deployed large premises in central Stockholm, and possibly the building itself – with its large, dome-shaped inner room, stage at the bottom and rows of seats at different levels – set limits for further rearrangements. Concerning visitors to these organizations, they tend to be more mixed, regarding gender, class and ethnicity. Age-wise, middle-aged

6 Since it is impossible to determine if all visitors are in fact members, I use the terms 'churchgoers', 'visitors' or 'participants' in cases where I am not certain that they are formal members.

Pentecostals make up the backbone of former and present Faith Movement churches, while Hillsong Stockholm and the SOS Church (described below) are primarily visited by practitioners aged between 20 and 35.

Many congregations founded in the 1990s onwards (often centrally located) have developed an alternative style in furnishing, and I was told that Vineyard Stockholm introduced the concept, which has been taken up and developed in new directions by other actors. In Vineyard, which resides in a relatively small building, practitioners are seated in rows of chairs below a relatively low stage. To the (stage) left, however, is a section furnished with several small coffee tables, where the churchgoers socialize during the services' half-time coffee break. The small tables not only create a seemingly informal, café-style atmosphere but (in contrast with benches and chairs) they also physically locate practitioners in a way that enables face-to-face interactions. When the New Life Church was created in 1993, the leaders decided to adopt this model – including the coffee break – although the rows of chairs were abandoned and the visitors were seated around coffee tables throughout the whole service. Over the last five or ten years other organizations have tapped into the trend and added to the informal and café-style design, introducing comfortable seats and mood lighting, and some groups in fact rent locations which are otherwise used for leisure time activities. When I visited the Calvary Chapel the practitioners gathered in a small café, which was dotted with small tables surrounded by sofas and/or upholstered chairs, and the almost darkened room was lit up with candles and loft spotlights. Discussing the décor with one of the women, she expressed an appreciation of the 'intimate and relaxed interior', which she contrasted with 'the large, anonymous, faith-movement style' that became influential in the 1980s. Not only have the new organizations implemented this style: a few years ago, the considerably older Söderhöjd Church decided to replace their benches with rows of chairs, only to exchange them for the characteristic coffee tables. At this point, they also created a 'cosy corner' to the left of the stage, with cushions placed before a small cross.

United Stockholm and the Hillsong Church present interesting cases, since they combine aspects of the 'warehouse style' with informal and cosy elements. The former prefers large gatherings and rents build-



Södermalm Church, Stockholm, 2010.

### Dressing up for church?

With the establishment of the PAIC in the 1930s dress and hairstyles became central traits of identity. Both men and women were called upon to dress properly, but extra emphasis was put on women's bodies, meaning that 'fancy dress' – short hairstyles and loose hair – were branded as 'worldly', so that they started covering the hair during services. In the 1970s however, the Jesus Movement within the PAIC contributed to a relaxation of such codes (Alvarsson 2007: 347–58) and today, clothing is rarely seen as being connected to moral conduct – with the exception of Maranata congregations where women stick to the old habits. However, it is possible to detect variations in dress among the churches, which, as we'll see below, corresponds to each congregation's venue design.

ings that can house many people. At the time of my visits, the group gathered in the 'Göta källare' nightclub, a two-storeyed building with the main room on the lower floor. During the service that room was divided and turned into a foyer and a main room, where the sermon was held. The latter already had a large stage, in front of which organizers placed folding chairs in the same manner as in Faith Movement organizations. The foyer on the other hand, where visitors mingled and drank coffee prior to and after the service, was transformed into a lounge-like place illuminated by spotlights. United Stockholm, which rented a theatre, had made similar arrangements: the service was led from the theatre's stage, while the building's many small rooms were used for mingling before and after the service. Interestingly, attitudes to the size differs in these two organizations. Whereas Hillsongers seem to appreciate the large-scale concept, United practitioners emphasized that they had no ambitions to become 'big and anonymous' and that they would split if they became 'too big'.

As regards membership, practitioners in organizations with informally-inclined and cosy interiors tend to be aged between 20 and 40 and middle-class oriented, although there are variations. The youngest practitioners today, however, are active in the newly-founded Hillsong, SOS and United churches.

In congregations furnished with benches and rows of chairs churchgoers normally dress up, albeit in somewhat different ways. In the Philadelphia Congregation (similar habits were observed in the Centre Church and the City Church), which exemplifies the former, men either wore a full suit (sometimes with a tie), trousers and a formal jacket, or settled for trousers and a formal shirt. Combined with a short haircut, a clean shave or a small, well-groomed beard, they gave a neat and formal impression. The same discreet formality was embodied by women who wore a skirt suit or trousers, blouse, and a jacket – generally together with shoulder-length hair (younger women preferred long hair), low-heeled shoes, discreet make-up and jewellery. To some degree habits vary with age, with Pentecostals under 30 being more laid-back, even if some dress considerably more formally than their secular contemporaries. In the City Church, where preferences in dress are similar to those of the Philadelphia Congregation, I encountered men in their early twenties who sported formal shirts and pullovers.

Visitors to 'warehouse-featured' organizations favour more lavish apparel, which reflects the theological emphasis on worldly success (cf. Coleman 2000: 150–1). In the Södermalm Church and The Ark, men wore suits or formal shirts together with neat haircuts (a shaved head was acceptable), a clean shave or a short goatee beard. Women, in turn, wore

contemporary skirt suits or trousers, a blouse and often a jacket on top, and occasionally a dress and a jacket. In contrast with their more discreet counterparts described above, they preferred carefully arranged hairstyles (short but feminine, or long hair); heavier make-up and larger pieces of jewellery; and often high heels. Similar customs exist in congregations that share warehouse-style features, such as the SOS Church and the Hillsong Church. However, practitioners in those organizations also draw inspiration from contemporary youth fashion. Hillsong women, for instance, appear in either dresses or skirts or in tight jeans and a shirt, quite heavy make-up, well-prepared coiffure and high heels; while men combine youthful casual styles with more 'proper' features such as jeans, but with a formal jacket on top of a t-shirt. Evidently, many put a lot of effort into dressing up for the service, and as I complimented a Hillsong woman on her looks, she gave me a broad smile and explained that she liked fashion, emphasizing that 'one doesn't have to look dull because one is a Christian.'

Visitors to 'coffee table congregations', in contrast, have made a radical break with the tradition of dressing up for church. In the Calvary Chapel, Vineyard Stockholm and the New Life Church, both men and women sport comfortable and informal outfits such as jeans and a t-shirt. Few women wear a dress or a skirt; most use little or no make-up and jewellery, and prefer low-heeled shoes or sneakers. The men, in turn, are not particularly neat when it comes to hairstyles; many do not shave on a daily basis and some have long hair. In a way, this laid-back style can be understood as a reaction not only to formal dress in general, but to the faith movement's emphasis on looks in particular. In fact, a few Vineyard men and women have explicitly distanced themselves from 'extravagant faith-movement fashion'. Hillsong also became a target for criticism, and women especially referred to the organization as 'the church of the good looking'.

### Greeting the faithful

Historically, members of the PAIC congregations have hailed each other with the phrases 'God's peace' or 'peace', often followed by the address 'brother' or 'sister'. From what I have observed, 'peace' is not *the* standard greeting phrase in any contemporary group, but exists in organizations with many elderly

and middle-aged members. Churchgoers in the City, Centre and Philadelphia churches often greeted each other with a firm handshake and a mild smile, adding a 'peace' or, more commonly, a mundane 'good morning'. Younger practitioners in these organizations were, however, more comfortable with hugging each other and simply saying 'hi', as were a few of those over 40. This latter, more laid-back routine, is standard in informally-inclined congregations. During my time conducting fieldwork, I was given many opportunities to observe how, on spotting each other, they would display broad smiles (with wide open eyes), extending hugs and saying 'hi'. In Vineyard and the New Life Church I also heard the old 'peace' greeting being used quite ironically, in combination with contemporary slang. A Vineyard man in his early thirties, for instance, greeted a female companion with the phrase: 'howdy sister' (*tjena syster*). If hugs and handshakes dominate two different segments of the Pentecostal field, they coexist in many of the congregations which are characterized by the 'warehouse style'. Concerning facial expressions, practitioners there present some distinct features – exhibiting broader smiles and more intense eye contact than those in other congregations. Naturally, there are variations, and as a general rule, newly-established institutions composed of young Pentecostals (i.e., the SOS Church and Hillsong) are more hug-oriented than those which were created (or transformed) in the 1980s.

### Musical performance

Music in the Pentecostal churches has changed considerably since the early twentieth century. The breakthrough of the Jesus movement in the 1970s led to a general acceptance of contemporary instruments in many of the older organizations, and a decade later, devotional music was popularized by the faith movement. In most of the current organizations, devotional music and modern-day instruments (drums, bass and electric guitars) coexist alongside older songs and instruments, and the music is led from the stage by a group of musicians (often referred to as the 'worship team'). This being said, there are nevertheless substantial differences when it comes to the selections of songs and instruments, as well as the employment of technology, and not least, the ritualized movements that accompany singing.

The City Church, the Philadelphia Congregation,



the Centre Church and the Cross Church all combine devotional music with Swedish psalms. To some extent, preferences are informed by history and organizational affiliation; the Philadelphia Congregation includes songs from the collection *Segertoner* ('Tunes of Victory'), authored by its 'founding father' Lewi Pethrus (1884–1974) while the independent Centre Church makes selections from an ecumenical psalm book which is used by several of the free churches. As the singing is initiated, the churchgoers get to their feet and start to move discreetly sideways, mostly without raising their hands – with the Philadelphia Congregation having the lowest 'arm-raising frequency'.

English devotional music has a dominant position in organizations which were founded (or transformed) from the 1980s onwards, although musical performances differ in other respects. In the SOS Church, the Södermalm Church, the Hillsong Church Stockholm and The Ark, the songs are fast and catchy, and the lyrics often include words like 'victory' and 'growth' (cf. Hovi 2011: 130). The act of worship is led by a team of skilled musicians and the volume is rather loud, thanks to sophisticated sound systems. To engage the visitors, lyrics and/or representations of the worship team are displayed on big monitors above the stage. In the Hillsong Church, which is famed for its galvanizing, pop-oriented music, high-speed video clips of the worship team combined with lyrics and a flashing spotlight are standard, and on a few occasions, a smoke machine has been used during worship. As a rule, visitors to these congregations raise both arms simultaneously while moving sideways; some access the area in front of the stage via the wide aisles, where they engage in energetic dancing. A practice specific to The Ark and Source of Power, which ought to be mentioned, is the 'flag dance', which means that visitors may pick up a textile flag and dance with it in front of the stage – an opportunity seized by only a few on the occasions of my visits. Regarding Source of Power, the congregation has taken up a series of Old Testament practices, including the use of *shofar* during worship, which sets it apart from other congregations I visited.

In the informally-inclined New Life Church, the Söderhöjd Church, Vineyard and the Calvary Chapel, the pace and volume of the devotional music is more muted; lyrics are focussed on atonement and God's love, and technological equipment is not used to the same extent. Singing together, the participants

rise and engage in the characteristic swaying from side to side; many raise either both arms, or one arm only, but rarely as high as is done in The Ark, or the SOS or Södermalm churches.

### Practising the gifts of the spirit

Practice of the charismatic gifts varies considerably in terms of frequency and intensity, which becomes evident if one compares Source of Power, The Ark, the SOS Church and the Södermalm Church – where glossolalia, healing and prophecy are standard practices during the Sunday service – with the Centre Church and the Philadelphia Congregation, where they are more or less absent. As a rule of thumb, the 'warehouse-style' churches practise the gifts of the spirit on a large scale, even though such expressions are more toned down than they were in the Faith Movement during the 1980s. Often, leaders make explicit calls to the visitors to speak in tongues in unison. Healing sessions are arranged on the same grand scale, where the interior design enables large groups of people to relocate simultaneously. In The Ark, Pastor Gunnar Bergling called forward approximately 30 people for healing. Those receiving the call got to their feet and strolled through the aisles to reach the area in front of the stage, where they formed a half circle. After anointing his hands with oil, Bergling positioned himself in front of them, and started to pray a for a few seconds over each person, putting his hands on each person's shoulder or head. On receiving the prayer, the practitioners either staggered but remained standing, or fell down, and were then caught by two assisting members.

The Calvary Chapel, Vineyard Stockholm and the New Life Church can be said to represent a middle way; the charismatic gifts are practised, but not on a large scale. In the latter two, prophetic utterances and small-scale healing sessions took place during the service and I overheard a few visitors speaking in tongues. In the New Life Church, I heard such utterances in connection with worship, but they were neither prompted nor discouraged by leading figures. On the discursive level, both leaders and churchgoers tended to contrast their own routines with the perceived 'evangelical tendencies' (meaning non-charismatic) of the Philadelphia and Centre churches, on the one hand, and the 'mass-produced' charismatic expressions of the prosperity-oriented churches on the other.



### Low key, grand and informal currents

The material preferences and ritual practices studied herein tend to group in certain ways, forming what can be seen as three distinct clusters of habits. I believe it is helpful to understand them as three currents, referred to as *low key*, *grand* and *informal* Pentecostalism, which cut across the local field and inter-denominational boundaries. Many organizations lean on one specific current, but there also those that draw on features from different ones. The low-key current is characterized by 'traditional' venues with rows of pews, formal and discreet dress and greeting habits, low levels of bodily engagement during musical performances and few charismatic expressions. This current runs particularly strongly in the Centre Church, the Philadelphia Congregation and the City Church. The grand variety consists of features such as large venues designed for synchronized movements of large numbers of churchgoers; formal and lavish clothing; professionalized devotional practices (skilled musicians and sophisticated sound systems) during which practitioners simultaneously lift both arms; and large-scale charismatic expressions. This current is predominant in the Södermalm Church, Source of Power, The Ark and the SOS Church, but some of its elements (such as furnishings and devotional styles) can also be found in the Hillsong Church and Stockholm United. Specific features of the informal current are venues designed for small-scale interactions, such as the provision of coffee tables and cosy features such as cushions and mood lighting, laid-back greetings (hugs) and apparel, moderately embodied engagement during worship and practice of the charismatic gifts. Vineyard Stockholm, the Söderhöjd Church, the New Life Church and the Calvary Chapel all manifest features typical of this current, but greeting patterns, the emphasis on cosiness and the interaction-oriented furnishings also exist in the SOS Church, the Hillsong Church and United Stockholm.

Attending to the ritual dimensions, the three currents not only consist of a diverse range of ritualized acts (handshakes vs. hugs), but they differ in terms of levels of ritualization. Looking through the lens of Bell's thinking at the forms of embodied engagement during worship, as well as the expressions on the faces of the practitioners during greetings, and the expressions of the charismatic gifts, it is possible to see how the embodied repertoires are quite alike, but that they differ in terms of intensity and frequency.

Organizations which lean towards more low-key forms manifest the lowest levels; the informal ones hold a middle position, while congregations oriented towards the grand forms exhibit the highest levels of ritualization. From the perspective of material theory, it is further possible to see how furnishings facilitate different patterns of communication and ritual action; small tables bring people face to face and invite interactions; steady pews restrict mobility; and large, open spaces and broad aisles enable large-scale relocations of people (mentioned above) and intense embodied expressions.

### Pentecostal waves and generations

How do the three currents relate to the history and demography of the congregations that manifest them? Apparently, many of the organizations that exemplify low-key features were instituted in the first half of the twentieth century, while those embodying (or combining) grand and informal currents were established, or underwent transformations, from the 1980s onwards. I would like to return to the discussion of Pentecostal waves, and view the contemporary currents in light of influences from one or several such waves. From this perspective, many of the organizations inclining to low-key expressions are grounded in the 'original' Pentecostal wave of the early twentieth century, which has gradually become institutionalized; they were influenced by the Jesus movement and adopted the devotional music which was borne on the 'health and wealth wave'. The grand-oriented organizations are firmly grounded in this latter wave, which was introduced into Sweden by the faith movement in the 1980s, through which devotional music spread out to large sections of the Pentecostal field. Evidently, the appearance of new waves and their particular features may result in both the adoption of their practices and counter reactions. The reserved expressions during musical performances in many of the low-key organizations, I was told, are a direct response to those of the Faith Movement. In the Philadelphia Congregation, practitioners ceased to raise their hands while singing, as the Word of Life and the Södermalm Church (the latter leaving the PAIC) had made the synchronized raising of both hands their hallmark.

It is possible to discern a third, informal wave, in which the informally-inclined congregations are rooted. In his study of the 'new paradigm churches,'

Donald E. Miller (1997: 11–16) has illustrated how the Calvary Chapel, the Vineyard Christian Fellowship and the Hope Chapel, all of which were created in the United States in the 1960s, are characterized by an informality of venue design, clothing, and greetings. Seeing these organizations as agents carrying this third wave, they have evidently impacted, and continue to affect, the Stockholm field.<sup>7</sup> The Jesus movement of the 1970s can be seen as an early expression of this, although it affected the PAIC rather than resulting in new organizations. It was not until the 1990s, in the wake of the faith movement, that this wave became institutionalized. As in Miller's study, a local Vineyard congregation (Vineyard Stockholm) became vital for introducing and furthering informal and small-scale interaction models, such as the small-table model. At least in Stockholm County, the popularity of small-scale communication, informal habits and cosiness seems to be a reaction to the 'warehouse style' carried by the faith movement. Yet, as the establishment of the Hillsong and SOS churches illustrates, features of the broader health and wealth wave have not completely gone out of fashion; organizations created in the new millennium have tended to combine them with informal wave elements.

A closer look at demography gives important clues as to how the currents distribute in the field, also within congregations. Gender does not seem to play any significant role in this respect, but the membership of the low-key and informally-oriented organizations tends to be slightly more middle-class in aspect. Age, however, is a key factor, and I would argue that the three currents to great extent are carried by different generations, and that the age composition of the congregations is vital for determining their practice. The membership of (or at least visitors to) the low-key congregations is usually older than that of other organizations, with many being between 50 and 80 years of age. The grand-inclined groups do not have that many older members – the majority seem to be middle-aged – and the informal and 'grand-informal' organizations are composed of practitioners aged between 20 and 40. It is possible

7 Although beyond the scope of this study, there is an ongoing 'intimisation' of the Pentecostal field, detectable in relationship courses, sermons, as well as in the increasingly popular (small-scale) house groups (Moberg 2013b).

to argue that the habits and preferences of each current reflect those of the various age groups. Much like their secular counterparts, middle-aged and older Pentecostals, who make up the backbone of the low-key and grand congregations, prefer formal wear and greetings, whereas the younger (informal) generations have grown up during a period of a relaxation of dress codes and greetings (see Moberg 2013a: 29–33). As suggested earlier, the currents may also intersect congregations – especially in organizations with a broad age-span – where younger affiliates deviate from the habits of older members by adopting casual apparel and greetings.

### **Mobility and the habitus**

It is often stated that modernity has brought about increased opportunities for choosing one's way of life, in accordance with individual preferences (see Giddens 1991). Personal taste is doubtless a vital consideration for Stockholm Pentecostals, and many approach congregations as consumers – visiting and joining those they find appealing. However, the fact that most have been brought up in similar organizations illustrates that upbringing also informs their religious choices. With reference to mobility, people of both sexes, regardless of class background, tend to be equally mobile. Again, age is important; older practitioners are generally more faithful to 'their' congregations (and denominations), while middle-aged Pentecostals are more comfortable with mobility. Yet, the phenomenon is most widespread among those born in the late 1970s onwards – particularly amongst those recently settled in the area, who lack previous ties to local groups.

Mobility exists in a variety of forms. Members of one organization will often attend meetings in others, but there are also those who change formal affiliations (sometimes several times), are members of different congregations simultaneously, or who visit multiple institutions without becoming members of any of them. It has been indicated throughout this presentation that Pentecostals identify with the ritual practice and material design of the institution of which they are members. Additionally, many identify with one or another current and distance themselves from others – which affects (and creates boundaries in relation to) movements within the field. In most cases, Pentecostals visit or join organizations similar to those of which they are already members. For



Hillsong Church, Stockholm.

instance, it is possible to speak of an ‘informal sphere’, where Vineyard Stockholm and New Life Church members attend services and other activities in each other’s churches. I also encountered Söderhöjd Church members at New Life Church events, and, during its years of existence, the Thomas Church (Tomaskyrkan) – an interactive organization that exhibited several informal features but also included practices from Orthodox and other liturgical traditions – attracted both Vineyard and New Life members. Likewise, when the Calvary Chapel was instituted in 2007, a handful of New Life members joined the new group. There are similar movements between low-key inclined congregations, and I encountered Philadelphia Congregation members in the Centre Church and vice-versa. Visiting grand-oriented organizations, in turn, I came across and heard of members of the Södermalm Church who frequented The Ark, and of SOS Church affiliates who visited the Södermalm Church. The younger membership of the latter was also known for dropping by at the demographically younger (a grand-informal combination) Hillsong Church Stockholm.

However, identification with one current does not fully determine practitioners’ movements within the field. Typically, those involving themselves with organizations that materialize some other current favour those with higher levels of ritualization. For

instance, I encountered former Centre Church affiliates who had joined the New Life Church; encountered members of United Stockholm, the City Church and the Centre Church who had, or knew fellow congregants who had, attended healing meetings arranged by The Ark; and young Philadelphia Congregation members who visited the Hillsong Church Stockholm. It is worth noting that patterns for temporary visits and formal re-affiliations differ somewhat. In the former case, differences between the ‘home congregation’ and the other organizations visited are often greater (from low-key to grand institutions), and those making the visits speak of them in complimentary terms, explaining that they seek certain features that they miss in their usual congregation. Some state that they seek more intense ‘spiritual kicks’, or that they are motivated by specific purposes, such as the wish to be healed – in which case some turn to The Ark’s famed healing centre. When changing formal membership, by contrast, movements are generally of smaller dimensions: people rarely leave low-key groups in favour of grand-featured ones, but may change membership from low-key to informal (or mixed current) congregations. Re-affiliations where practitioners move in the opposite direction – from organizations with higher levels of ritualization to those with lower levels – are not equally common, which is perhaps not surprising given the



fact that many temporary visits in the other direction are motivated by the wish to have more intense experiences. However, I did encounter a few people who had left grand-oriented organizations to become members of low-key or informally-inclined ones. In those cases, the practitioners had completely abandoned the 'grand sphere' and depicted it in negative terms: as being spiritually excessive and potentially unsound.<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusions

This study has sought to identify new ways of pinpointing differences in Stockholm County's Pentecostal landscape, and investigated how such variations influence practitioners' movements between such institutions. Inspiration has been drawn from Bourdieu's theories of the habitus, and attention paid to dress codes, interior design, greeting styles, musical performances and the practice of the charismatic gifts. I conclude that three distinct currents, or variations of the local Pentecostal habitus, can be delineated under the terms *low-key*, *grand* and *informal* Pentecostalism. These currents, which intersect denominational boundaries, have their basis in three different global Pentecostal waves. Congregations tend to manifest one of them, even though there are examples of congregations which combine features from different currents. To a large extent, memberships of the three are differentiated according to generations: the oldest Pentecostals are found in the low-key inclined congregations; middle-aged practitioners make up the largest age group in many of the grand-featured organizations; while informally-inclined institutions and those mixing informal and grand features consist of people aged between 20 and 40. Occasionally, the currents cut across congregations, with younger Pentecostals in low-key or grand organizations acting and dressing more like those (of the same age) in the informal groups. Identification with one or another current also influences which

8 While this study concerns mobility between Pentecostal organizations, some people move in wider circles and visit Catholic and Orthodox services (see Moberg 2013a: 190–1). It would be interesting to study further this form of mobility, and in particular Pentecostals who leave their organizations to become members of The Church of Sweden (the former state church) or non-Pentecostal free church denomination.

congregations the practitioners visit or join. In most cases, they prefer those manifesting features of the same current, even though they may also seek alternative experiences in other institutions. Although the results cannot be generalized outside the immediate context, I hope that this article may inspire further studies of present-day differences, historical change and mobility – also in the global Pentecostal landscape. ■

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