

Jesudason Baskar Jeyaraj. *1 & 2 Kings: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary*. In *Asia Bible Commentary Series*, edited by Andrew B. Spurgeon. Cambria, UK: Langham Global Library, 2022. 326 pages. \$29.99 paperback. ISBN. 978-1839730696.

1 & 2 Kings: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary by Jesudason Baskar Jeyaraj (Ph.D. University of Sheffield) is an expository contribution written with Asian Christians in mind, particularly in India. It is part of the Asia Bible Commentary series, now with twenty-one volumes across the Old and New Testaments. The series has endeavored to fill a void in Christian teaching concerning an Asian worldview and culture. Asian Christianity is a growing demographic, mainly in the Global South, and has become a foothold for the church. With that in mind, each author in the series is of Asian descent or has made considerable investment serving within the region. The intention is for each author and publication to be rooted in the Asian context and equipped to engage culturally with issues unique to the region.

Jeyaraj previously served as associate editor of the South Asia Bible Commentary (Zondervan, 2015). He is a professor of biblical studies, a published scholarly author, an ordained clergyman in the Church of South India, and currently honorary director of the Madurai Jubilee Institute, which teaches and trains Indian Christian leaders. To accommodate Indian pastors and teachers with no other access to theological library resources, he aims to simplify technical aspects of this work, including transliterations of Hebrew terminology and citations relegated to sporadic endnotes. He intends to clearly explain the material in an easily readable and narrative format that may be used devotionally, pastorally, or as a beginning text for students.

Jeyaraj's introduction is relatively brief, especially considering the character of the two volumes of Scripture it describes. Meanwhile, aligned with the above-mentioned intention, engagement with scholarship is sparse. It moves quickly through sources, authorship, dating, the message and mission, and the relationship of 1 and 2 Kings to the canonical counterparts, including 1 and 2 Chronicles and the prophetic writings. Rather than supplying a methodology, Jeyaraj identifies the relationship between governing institutions and religious institutions as a theological focus. He draws out simple but meaningful application of the principles of worship, prayer, faith, striving to understand God, and considering other faiths. A portion entitled "South Asia: Parallels and Implications" includes a portion in which Jeyaraj connects familiar aspects of Indian history with the text.

The commentary flows according to the chapters of 1 and 2 Kings. The commentator paraphrases and explains the narrative, providing comprehensive language that is accessible even to those who may be unfamiliar with the subject or who have English as a second language. There is no consistent treatment of each passage; instead, the author highlights what he deems relevant for each portion, but he does interweave details from scholarship into his narrative. Endnotes are infrequent but, at times, yield comments of interest. However, exegetical considerations are limited in terms of linguistics, grammar, and historical background.

This book's focus on an Asian perspective does not extend to including uniquely Asian interpretive ideas. Instead, interspersed throughout the text, the author contrasts aspects of the biblical story with similarities to Indian history and cultural practices. For example, transporting the Ark in 1 Kings 8 is compared with Indian temple dedication processions (111). Similarly, the pagan God Molech and Ahaz's child sacrifice in 2 Kings 16 is compared with the Indian practice of child sacrifice to the goddess Kali in the West Bengal region. This custom was stopped by Christian missionaries when India was under British rule (324). The author does not make further connections, merely noting the approximate cultural similarity. This style is consistent with the application throughout this commentary. Jeyaraj identifies parallels from a cultural, social, and political purview between the biblical text and the Asian (primarily Indian) context. However, he does not offer deep insight regarding how the text uniquely speaks to the continent.

Applications are exhortative and devotional. For example, the author closes the chapter on 2 Kings 18, saying, "In time of threat, fear, and persecution, Christians should not lose faith and hope. We should not argue or fight with neighbors who ridicule God or mock our faith in Jesus Christ; rather, we should trust that God is powerful and sovereign over all authorities, idols, and evil spirits of the world and believe that our Lord Jesus Christ can be trusted in all circumstances" (343).

In addition, Jeyaraj encourages his readers to study 1 and 2 Kings in conjunction with other Old Testament texts to observe how the prophets speak against oppressive and exploitive policies in the hope that Asians and Christians everywhere will be able to "fight against injustices in our societies and cultures" (28). This idea is a virtuous approach and exercise; however, the commentary fails to draw this out further.

The bibliography recalls thirty-five references from thirty distinct contributors, most of which originate from the West. Outside of the author's six contributions, he utilized three uniquely Asian resources, two of which are not theological, and the third comprises a chapter on child sacrifice in a volume edited by the author. The author could have

served the purpose of the publication by engaging a more comprehensive range of Asian authors, especially ones who offer a theological perspective. Nevertheless, the commentary meets the need for more Asian publications. Langham Partnership is commendable for supporting endeavors to increase the quantity and value of writings from an Asian perspective, including this commentary, which adds to that dynamic.

The author's focus on the Indian context, as opposed to including other regions in Asia, is a limitation of this work. However, the vast spectrum of nations and cultures across the Asian region presents an understandable and unavoidable challenge, and each author naturally contributes from their viewpoint; therefore, Jeyaraj focuses primarily on cultural relevance to his native country. Having said this, the general editor of the series, Andrew Spurgeon, also serves in the Indian context, and this series tends to favor Indian authors. Many countries within the region remain untreated, and the series would benefit from a broader representation. Accordingly, this book would not represent a stand-alone resource in Asia, as pastors and teachers in other Asian regions must adapt applications and illustrations to fit their circumstances and culture.

This commentary meets its goals with some caveats. For instance, the current reviewer is Western in terms of culture and ethnicity (albeit a researcher in the Global South), having benefited from the socio-economic advantage of having access to multiple scholarly resources to compare and judge this commentary. In light of that, the author's goal of providing a "detailed explanation" (13) of 1 and 2 Kings will vary based on perspectives, access to resources, and familiarity with the Scripture. Jeyaraj provides a handsome summary of texts but is hardly "detailed" compared to more academic exegetical offerings.

The context of this review is restrictive in many ways. The nuance is that, in large part, this commentary targets those without competing study materials. For this purpose, it is eminently practical and comes from a credible source. However, while the commentary remarks on occasional loose parallels between the ancient setting and the Indian context, it is far from exhaustive when tying in the scriptural teaching with the Indian or Asian socio-political conditions. However, to a reader without competing resources, Jeyaraj's contribution may be pretty formative.

Students, pastors, and evangelists looking to engage in postcolonial criticism or socio-economic and political perspectives bridged from Scripture can build upon portions of this reference work as a foundation. This commentary is recommended with the reservations mentioned, as it does give the reader a communicated summary of the texts of 1 and 2

Kings, and it makes inroads in communicating the biblical text in a way that is culturally relevant to the Asian context.

Michael Blythe, Ph.D.
South African Theological Seminary

Emmanuel Kwasi Amofo. *Stand Up for the Gospel: Getting the Church Back on Track*. George, South Africa: Oasis International Publishing, 2022. xiii + 1205 pp. \$ 14.99. Paperback. ISBN: 13: 978-1-59452-851-4.

This popularized version of Emmanuel Kwasi Amofo's PhD dissertation is an exposition of Jude applied to Evangelical and especially Pentecostal churches in Africa. With unambiguous language, skillful exegesis, and vivid illustrations, Amofo applies the message of Jude to his readers in contemporary Africa and beyond. Although Amofo's application is rooted in his extensive research of African Pentecostal churches, this book is immensely valuable for the global Christian community. His insights into the biblical text and his analysis of its relevance for African churches will be beneficial to Christians everywhere and serve as a model for similar contextually based projects in Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere.

One of the great strengths of this book is its sensitivity to the African and Pentecostal contexts. Amofo writes as an insider. He grew up in Ghana and has lived and ministered for many years in Kenya. Additionally, Amofo spent considerable time interviewing key leaders of Pentecostal churches in Africa. He has also ministered widely in Anglican and Assemblies of God circles and completed his Ph.D. studies at the Pan-African Theological Seminary, an Assemblies of God institution. From this rich background, Amofo describes with clarity the worldview reflected in African Traditional Religions (ATRs), which sees "the natural world of rocks, trees, mountains, rivers" as being "inhabited by spirit beings that control every aspect of human life" (33). This worldview produces tremendous fear: "People are afraid because they are subject to the whims of spirit beings, which can do them good or harm" (33).

Amofo goes on to explain how an over-emphasis on fear of evil spirits has pushed many African churches to adopt unhealthy practices. These extremes coalesce in a fixation on the prosperity doctrine, the most prevalent false teaching found in contemporary African churches. The

prosperity gospel tends to feature Old Testament promises of material blessings for God's people; and then, on this basis, it claims that "God's mission today is to 'make [his] people rich'" (68). In response, Amofo challenges the hermeneutical foundation of this false teaching, rooted as it is in the literal application of OT promises. Amofo asserts, "we are no longer living in the times of Solomon, where God dwells in a Temple and brings the nations to one central location to worship him." Rather, we live "in the times of the apostles, where God sends us out to the nations without even an extra shirt so that we depend on the generosity of others" (Matt 10:9-10) (69). "In the NT, Jesus changes the mission strategy from 'come-see' to 'go-tell'" (68).

Amofo acknowledges that Africans are susceptible to the prosperity message due to the lingering influences of the ATR worldview. As a result, prosperity-oriented churches often feature "loud and lengthy prayers" (167) and the use of "objects one might call talismans to get their healing or deliverance or breakthrough" (149). This leads to an unhealthy focus on the authority of church leaders. By over-emphasizing "the fearful power of demons and overcomplicating the deliverance process, leaders keep people dependent on them for protection and security" (147).

According to Amofo, the antidote for this unhealthy syncretism is a renewed emphasis on the gospel. "When we put our faith in what [Jesus] did for us on the cross, we can stand before God, free" from fear, shame, and guilt (39). Rather than focusing on the power of malignant spiritual forces, we need to reassure people that Christ is more powerful. "Our churches need to proclaim that we have been redeemed, forgiven, born again, and delivered from Satan's power by God's work through Christ" (36). The result will be life changing. As Amofo notes, "Many Christians in Africa testify that when they submitted their lives to Christ, they moved from their earlier fear of evil spirits to the peace that comes from a relationship with God through Christ" (88).

Amofo helpfully points out how Western presentations of the gospel that focused on "sin in terms of...individual guilt" (36) did not address the intensely felt needs of many Africans. Nevertheless, Amofo argues for sound biblical perspective. Sin has "damaged our relationships with God, others, and ourselves" and thus sin causes us "to feel fear, shame, and guilt" (37). So, Amofo suggests that "the church in Africa needs a balanced view of the gospel," one that addresses fear and shame as well as guilt. Amofo correctly emphasizes that the gospel deals with all three of these problems that plague humanity: fear, shame, and guilt (36-39).

Amofo insists that a return to the gospel, by definition, will redirect our focus toward repentance and the Lordship of Christ. Amofo sees contemporary relevance in Jude's rebuke of false teachers in his day,

who “wanted Christ to meet their needs without telling them what to do” (71). Amofo draws apt parallels between these false teachers and those in African churches who “recite the name of Jesus as a kind of talisman that we should expect to bring us good fortune.” By misusing Jesus’ name in this way, “we ask him to submit to us and our will. But Christ is our Lord.... It is we who must submit to him and his Word” (73).

Finally, a return to the gospel will help us view our lives considering eternity and God’s redemptive plan. Although Amofo speaks of the African context, here he illuminates a problem that characterizes most Evangelical and Pentecostal churches around the globe: “Many of our churches today rarely teach about the Second Coming of Christ.” The reason for this lacuna is not hard to find: our “focus is on church members pursuing a perfect life of health and wealth in the here and now in this fallen world” (172). Sadly, the prosperity doctrine “encourages churchgoers to happily settle for the best this world can give them” (172). While there is a certain truth to the notion that God delights to bless our lives in every way (Gen 1:27-31; Rev 21:3-4; 22:1-5), it is important to recognize that he blesses us so that we might engage in his great mission (not simply for our personal well-being) and, when we do, in this age persecution is the inevitable result (2 Tim 3:12). Indeed, any theology that fails to recognize that spiritual growth comes, in part, through suffering is seriously deficient (Rom 5:1-5). Our experience of persecution and pain more broadly is the natural consequence of our location in redemptive history: we live in between the first and second coming of Christ. Thus, Amofo wisely affirms that presently we only experience in part the impact of God’s blessing and reign. Yet, this African brother’s fine exposition of Jude also reminds us that “by building [ourselves] up in [our] most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,” we can remain “in God’s love as [we] wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring [us] to eternal life” (Jude 20-21). Indeed, our Lord can keep us from “stumbling and to present [us] before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy” (Jude 24 NIV 2011).

Pentecostals may be disappointed with Amofo’s analysis of Jude 20. He fails to note that the language Jude uses here, “pray in the Holy Spirit,” parallels closely Paul’s usage in 1 Corinthians 14:15-16 and Ephesians 6:18. Thus, as Towner and Harvey observe, “there is a strong consensus that here Jude means prayer in a Spirit-given tongue (glossolalia)” (Harvey and Towner, *Jude*, 225). Additionally, some may point to the powerful presence of the kingdom of God in Jesus and wonder if the NT approach is better summarized with the phrase, “show and tell” rather than “go and tell” (many thanks to Bob Stefan, who suggested this phrase). Nevertheless, Amofo, with good reason,

chooses to focus on the urgency of our mission and the central issue: the need for the church to get back on track by faithfully proclaiming the “good news”—a message that has been handed down to us through the ages. Amofo’s intentions are clear, and, like the epistle of Jude, I am confident that this book can encourage readers to stand up for the gospel.

Robert P. Menzies, Ph.D.
University of Aberdeen, Scotland
Director of the Asian Center for Pentecostal Theology



Frank D. Macchia. *Tongues of Fire: A Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith, Word & Spirit: Pentecostal Investigations in Theology and History*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2023. 458 pp. + xx pp. \$52 paperback. ISBN. 978-1-6667-3022-7.

Through this summation of his life’s work (ix), Assemblies of God theologian Frank Macchia argues throughout his 2023 *Tongues of Fire: A Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* precisely what its title infers. Namely, that Christian theology is, always was and will always be—the combustible effect of Pentecost (xvii-xix, 31)! Especially insofar as it derives from the infinite diversities of global cultural-linguistic phenomena of Pentecost (xviii, 63, 227) our primal purpose through Christian theologizing, is to understand the saving meaning that the “tongues of fire at Pentecost” signifies (xviii-xix, 4, 227, 247, 342, 407).

Thus, particularly in its formal scholarly forms, our purpose through the labor of theology, is to understand and answer the primal question that Pentecost evokes: “‘What does this mean?’ (Acts 2:12)” (xviii). Macchia therefore argues throughout this one-volume systematic theology of Christian faith, that from the horizon of Christ’s outpouring of the Holy Spirit from the Father (xix, 5, 14-15, 31, 145, 284), our purpose in systematic theology is to construct as a faithful, coherent, and relevant discourse for church life and mission (9-10)—the saving “wonders of God” (3-4, 197, 227, 257) that Christianity historically confesses (xviii-xix, 3-4, 13-16). Macchia thus vitally exemplifies how we can construct systematic theologies in ways fully emerging from and reflecting Pentecostal tradition (xix, 9, 14-16, 24-25), while ecumenically engaged and serviceable to the broader Christian tradition (24-25). Yet just as the tongues of fire signify an inexhaustible “overload of prophetic communication” that human language(s) can never fully conceptualize (xvii-xviii, 3-4), so also Macchia stresses—theology as

a human discourse on God's free self-disclosure always functions as an "impossible possibility" (3, 6) we gratefully yet dutifully speak as God's people in Christ elected for the saving cosmic aims of divine disclosure (7-9, 29, 321-322, 340).

To the best of my knowledge, other than his 2023 briefer version titled, *Introduction to Theology: Declaring the Wonders of God* (Baker Academic), Macchia's *Tongues of Fire* is the second contemporary-era, single-volume systematic theology reputedly published from a Classical Pentecostal perspective. Apart from Amos Yong's 2014 book, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Baylor University Press), *Tongues of Fire* signifies a watershed threshold in Pentecostal studies that throughout the first two and a half decades of the 21st century has been publishing a widening corpus of constructive theologies. But notwithstanding this work and Yong's 2014 work, predominately comprising these publications are monographs or edited volumes devoted to either a main theological topic/doctrine of Christian faith or topics more specifically associated with Pentecostal spirituality such as pneumatology, Spirit baptism and glossolalia. This is coupled with more specific theological areas such as theological methods, worship/liturgical theology, and political/public theologies.

Macchia has meanwhile well positioned himself at this era's forefront via his earlier monographs in the areas of pneumatology (*Baptized in the Spirit*, 2006 [through which he explicated his long-sustained proffering of the Pentecostal Spirit baptism metaphor as a guiding lens for Pentecostal theologizing]), justification (*Justified in the Spirit*, 2010), Christology (*Jesus the Spirit Baptizer*, 2018) and ecclesiology (*The Spirit-Baptized Church*, 2020) (31). As his magnum opus, this book thus summarily climaxes his published life's work while including substantially new reflections, particularly in the areas of defining theology while surveying its contemporary developments, God (theology proper) and eschatology (ix, xix). Let me thus stress that in view of both my preceding and foregoing reflections, this erudite exposition of Christian belief presently functions as the definitive ground-breaking exemplar for all ongoing forays in Pentecostal systematic theology. This I argue is its most vital contribution to the broader field of systematic/constructive theology across Christian tradition and more specifically, Pentecostal theological studies.

As a systematic theology, the flow of Macchia's book naturally explicates its main arguments. Thus, closely mirroring the structure of his briefer *Introduction to Theology* text, he explicates the main topics of Christian theology (God [theology proper], Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology) through the trinitarian narrative

that structures the patristic-formulated creeds of Christian faith (xix-xx, 15, 31). Hence, the book's fifteen chapters fall within its six parts: 1. "Tasks of Theology" (chs. 1-3); 2. "God" (chs. 4-7); 3. "Christ" (chs. 8-9); 4. "Holy Spirit" (chs. 10-11); 5. "Church" (chs. 12-13); and 6. "Final Purpose" (chs. 14-15). Aptly describing a vital argument running throughout his book is the title of its second chapter, "Towards a Theology of the Third Article." For as the preceding analysis already implies, Macchia is indeed proffering throughout significant examples on how a Pentecostal systematic theology can and should methodically foster the broader 20th-early 21st century historically corrective, ecumenical shift towards "third article" theology (14-15, 31-32, 61-62).

Now let us recall that the phrase "first article" refers to the Father's role within the confession of faith that the Apostle and Nicene Creeds first narrate, then the Son and thirdly the Holy Spirit (31). Yet as Macchia well clarifies, catalysts within this movement have not at all sought to undermine this narrative structure, but rather to justifiably correct the pneumatological deficit that Western Christianity (in contrast to Eastern Orthodoxy) has historically suffered consequential to the patristic churches' grappling with its encountered Christological controversies and heresies (31-32). Macchia thus thematically explicates his doctrine of God as, "The God of Pentecost who abundantly loves and overflows in freedom" (xix). He then expounds Christology as the story of the Son who through incarnation bore the Holy Spirit for overcoming our baptism in fire that he consequently may pour out this promised Spirit on all creation. Thus, his pneumatology stresses the Spirit's role in the Son's redemptive mission toward righting humanity and creation. He follows this with an ecclesiology focusing on the mission of the Spirit-baptized church for expanding the boundaries of election in Christ (322-332), coupled with an exposition on its defining marks and practices. As the final creedal article, eschatology thus climaxes the book, stressing through Christ's return, the eschatological transformation of creation into the dwelling place of God's Spirit as the hope of Christian faith (xix-xx, 378, 423). Thus, the whole book points back to Macchia's thesis regarding the triune being of God (ch. 6 "The Trinity"): that the Spirit outpouring at Pentecost is God's "climatic act" towards creation ensuring its eventual transformation into the new creation (145).

Following the same sequential structure of Macchia's briefer Introduction to Theology book, this work's main strength lies in how Macchia has again squarely grounded this exposition directly onto the Apostle's Creed, thus effectively showing how a Pentecostal systematic theology squarely fits on historic Christian confession and trinitarian spirituality. Four other notable strengths are firstly, how

Macchia explores the major theological methods and issues foremost characterizing the contextual challenges of Christian theologizing within the modern era and thus especially pertinent towards “third article” and hence Pentecostal theologizing (chs. 1-3). Second, how he surveys the past half-centuries’ ecumenical debates and forays towards the meaning of Spirit baptism (chs. 9-11).

Third, how in ways richly drawing from his Barthian-rooted theological formation, Macchia constructs an ecclesiological-framed theology of election I find insightfully resonant with Pentecostal theistic experience. Namely, not as “timeless decree” (322) but as “divine self-determination” (327) that issues forth the Father’s inclusive embrace and Spirit impartation to responsive humanity through his election of Christ for our reconciliation (326-327; thus, defining the “mission of the Spirit” as “the expanding boundary of election in the direction of eschatological fullness;” 328, 332). Finally, a fourth other vital strength of this work lies in how Macchia empathically discusses and critically advises ongoing theological construction responsive to typical Pentecostal “end-time” beliefs (e.g., “rapture,” “millennium,” etc.; 377-381, 402-413). He does this by stressing eschatology (eschatological hope) not as singularly about present history’s end or life after death but as far more broadly, “this-worldly” oriented towards the therapeutic remaking of creation (377-379) according to God’s original aim for its destiny as the temple of his Spirit (377-378, 390-391, 401, 423) and our missional role towards this aim (399-400).

If I must address one weakness to this ground-breaking work, I would frame it as rather naturally limited coverage of its topics that Macchia has far more extensively explicated throughout his preceding works. Notwithstanding its length at 458 pages, I would thus stress this book’s role as a survey into a far broader and I feel more compelling discourse within Pentecostal theological studies I would therefore describe as, Macchian theology. Most positively then, this book provides us an imperative initiation within Pentecostal scholarship into the theological vision of seemingly, our era’s front-running systematic theologian. Second to note is that whereas Macchia’s *Introduction to Theology* functions as an entry-level, concise resource into systematic theology from a Pentecostal perspective, this book foundationally complements it, as again—the first comprehensively constructed, one-volume systematic theology specifically written for and within Pentecostal tradition. Yet in manners that correspondingly adds its value as an ecumenically reaching discourse for the broader Christian church. Thus, Macchia has well-crafted a Pentecostal exposition of Christian faith that wonderfully helps

us join the greater chorus sung throughout the Christian church as one more, yet vital voice, among its manifold “tongues of Pentecost!”

Monte Lee Rice, Ph.D.
Independent Scholar in Singapore



Joshua Iyadurai. *Social Research Methods: For Students and Scholars of Theology and Religious Studies*. Chennai, India: Marina Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Religion, 2023. 268 pp. \$33 paperback; \$29.99 kindle. ISBN. 978-93-5620-482-9.

Joshua Iyadurai, founder, and director of the Marina Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Religion (Chennai, India), offers scholars of theology and religion a valuable resource for research through the textbook, *Social Research Methods*. As a social scientist and theological educator, Iyadurai recognized the need for a pedagogical textbook containing tools, components, and qualities needed to properly utilize social scientific methods in theological or religious studies research (xxvii). Recognizing the turn to developing contextual theologies, and the increasing appreciation for interdisciplinarity, the author, not only advocates for the proper use of social scientific research methods, but also provides a comprehensive textbook for both students and educators.

Iyadurai presents his textbook in nine parts; the first two of which focus on the basic components of scholarly research. Chapters three to six elaborate social research from its different philosophies and designs to the specific methodologies involved in each design. Chapters seven to eight provides guidance in research writing whether for a report, dissertation, or thesis. The last chapter discusses the role of supervisors and dissertation/thesis examiners. Iyadurai also includes a glossary, a comprehensive bibliography, and indexes for the entire textbook.

The turn to contextual theologies is a global phenomenon that started in the late 1960s. As globalization progressed, scholars, especially those from the Majority World, have increasingly recognized the need for lived theologies. With this shift comes the need for scholars to properly study grounded realities and social worlds. The tools, however, for this complex task involve the use of social sciences, a field in which many theological and religious scholars are untrained. Iyadurai contends that theologians must learn the rigors of social research to properly incorporate contextual realities, experiences, and the like into the theological undertaking (xxvi).

The author begins with the basics: determining the research topic and doing a literature review. Chapter one begins with choosing the right topic. He emphasizes not just the interest one has in a topic but also its relevance to the production of relevant knowledge (4, 6). Iyadurai contends that research, especially theological research, must not be confined in the discourse of knowledge per se, but in the articulation of knowledge that enhances human lives and religious faith (6). With this he connects the important contribution of social research methods to theological/religious research since it offers tools needed to address the social context and to enlighten academic and lay readers (5, 6).

Chapter two focuses on conducting literature reviews. If the topic and its attendant questions direct research paths, literature reviews situate the study in the academic field, provide data for warrants, and help build up arguments (21). Iyadurai emphasizes the vital importance of literature reviews as it effectively sets the stage for the research (23). A method the author suggests in conducting literature reviews is the SQ4R method (survey, question, read, recall, review) (27). The SQ4R method is attributed to educational psychologist, Francis P. Robinson, who developed said method to improve students' reading comprehension (27). Iyadurai, however, does not stop with reading comprehension. He also pushes for the analysis and synthesis of reviewed data for researchers to develop a "holistic understanding of current knowledge" (34).

The middle chapters of the textbook, chapters three to six, discuss strategies, paradigms, and designs of social research methods. These chapters are full of content from various textbooks written on the field of social research. The author approaches the discussion in a clear and organized manner. First, he discusses the interdisciplinary nature of social research, and carefully details the philosophies behind each design. He then discusses the three main social research methods: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods research. Iyadurai presents most of the pertinent information in plain language, one that beginner students can easily understand. He also critically organizes information and steps based on his experience as both researcher and educator. His desire to educate and guide reverberates clearly in these chapters.

Moreover, the last two chapters, chapters eight and nine, reflect his meticulousness in research writing and educating. Chapter nine discusses the actual writing of the research; he includes all the elements needed in a good research paper or thesis. Perhaps this is where Iyadurai's book differs from other books. He offers a discussion on how theological frameworks or religious perspectives work in conjunction with social research. Not many textbooks delve into this topic. Iyadurai's discussion clarifies confusions for beginner and intermediate level researchers

foraying into interdisciplinary theological/religious research. He has included all the possible areas that can cause confusion for socio-theological and socio-religious researchers.

Finally, Iyadurai offers a chapter on how educators and advanced level researchers can supervise other students or scholars. Again, not many textbooks consider adding a chapter on supervising research. The author is unique in his attempt to include all pertinent discussions that can improve the field of socio-theological and socio-religious research from conducting the research, to writing the report, and to supervising others. Most considerate are the rubrics the author provides in assessing quality research outputs both in general terms and according to the research design. One can see the author's desire to educate comprehensively and clarify areas of confusion in the field of social research, especially for students, scholars, and educators of theology and/or religious studies.

Overall, the textbook is a fine contribution to the field of socio-theological and socio-religious research. In recent times, there has been a strong move for the development of theologies and religious studies relevant to socio-cultural contexts. These studies should not be mere copies of Western studies, but ones that are cognizant of lived realities in the milieu of its target audience. Since social contexts and living realities matter in the development of such research, theologians and religious researchers in locations like Asia are encouraged to utilize social scientific research methods and be more interdisciplinary in their approach. Iyadurai, an Asian theologian and educator himself, offers this textbook as an excellent contribution for this undertaking.

Some may comment that the textbook is overly comprehensive. However, as an Asian theologian and educator myself, I have seen the same issues that spurred Iyadurai to write such a book. Asian researchers and educators are not trained in social research. The idea of interdisciplinarity is also quite new. There is much ignorance, confusion, and helplessness amongst researchers in integrating theology or religious studies and social research. This book, written in a student-friendly manner and offering a one-stop monograph for pertinent information on this field is a much-needed textbook.

I highly recommend this textbook to students, scholars, and educators in theological seminaries, Christian colleges, and research institutes. Iyadurai's *Social Research* is an appropriate primary textbook for graduate and postgraduate level courses on research methods. It contains pertinent information needed to train scholars of theology and religion in one comprehensive and unambiguous textbook. It also offers guidance for educators, scholars, and doctoral supervisors on how to tutor, supervise and examine academic research; something that

most research textbooks do not offer. Finally, a textbook that integrates theological and/or religious studies research methods with social scientific research methods supports the development of dialectical and contextual theologies worldwide.

Lora Angeline E. Timenia, M.Th.
Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Philippines



Stephen Félix-Jäger. *Renewal Worship: A Theology of Pentecostal Doxology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022). 234 pp. \$22.64 paperback; \$21.51 Kindle. ISBN. 9781514000154.

In his recent monograph *Renewal Worship: A Theology of Pentecostal Doxology*, Steven Félix-Jäger delves into the various aspects of Spirit-centered worship biblically, theologically, and practically. Felix-Jäger is the Chair of Worship Arts & Media at Life Pacific University, a Foursquare university in Southern California. As a Pentecostal theologian, he often traverses current conversations regarding worship, the arts, aesthetics, Pentecostal faith, and culture. This recent work portrays his desire to expand the Pentecostal academic groundwork regarding worship. To accomplish this task, he takes the reader on a journey through the basics of Pentecostal underpinnings as he sorts through the why, what, who, and how of Renewal Worship.

This book overviews the Pentecostal theology of worship with a biblical, cultural, and community focus. It is divided into two sections: Profiling Renewal Worship and Renewal Worship in Context. His first section defines Renewal Worship as a practical “theology of abundance” (14) which is pneumatic in nature, reciprocally relational with God (15), and musically expressed (15). The second section delves into the theological understanding of practicing communities within Renewal Worship, especially globally (17). The book is capped by a small Subject Index and a Scripture Index, always useful tools for the searching scholar.

Felix-Jäger sets out by narrowing the term “Renewal Worship” to represent a “direct, experiential encounter of the Spirit” (31). In his first chapter, he creates a space for Pentecostal worship arts theologically as he analyzes the Pentecostal view of pouring out presence, eschatological focus, sacraments, and healing. He describes a biblically based theological method which he uses to portray the “method” in which Pentecostals view, portray, and practice their beliefs. This is not the standard methodology in which a book or paper may be structured,

but rather an outline describing how Pentecostals read and interpret Scripture. Here, he relays the Pentecostal perspective of the biblical interpretation (24) and he “clarif[ies] how theological claims are made” (35), both of which greatly influence worship in the Pentecostal church. Here, he sets the scene for the importance of his study.

In chapter two, he jumps full force into explaining what he terms as a theology of abundance, which he compares to the prosperity gospel. He demonstrates the depth of this concept, which “allows believers to see God’s blessings in all things . . . [and in turn] reciprocate this blessing to God and others through action and proclamation” (91). In essence, God is the object of worship, while the Spirit is the abundant overflow of God’s gift in worship, and in all things. Chapter three focuses on the human response within worship. He addresses the aesthetic aspect of this relational encounter, stating that, “When musical worship also engages other art forms (visual art, drama, spoken word, video, etc.), it creates an even more potent space for aesthetic spiritual formation . . . that encourages solidarity as worshipers sing, pray, sway, clap, dance, and shout together” (99-100). He describes this response in worship as a holistic and whole-body experience (114-5). Within this chapter, he portrays the arts as a part of worship, engaging the divine through reciprocal and relational expressions of praise. This subject of the arts is a much-needed discussion regarding Pentecostal worship, and could be developed further.

Chapter four begins the second part of the book in which he reconciles the push and pull of victory and suffering (120), structure and spontaneity (126), triumph and lament (130), and most crucially the “formational power of the Word and the deconstructive power of the sanctifying Spirit” (120). These tensions create a “flow” of unity within “the elements of worship for a cohesive experience” (141). This particular chapter beautifully depicts the dynamic tensions within *Renewal Worship* and the passion they can create in a worship setting. Chapter five addresses the prophetic function within the Bible and the church, as a spiritual gift and as a social function. Within worship, this prophetic, or presence, aspect of worship is essentially “God’s response to our response” (168). The words and the worship are God-directed, often bringing edification, blessing (156), and transformation for the individual and the community (162). His insight in portraying the prophetic to worship is insightful and not always broached by theologians. This chapter is a welcomed addition to the discourse on Pentecostal worship.

Chapter six extends *Renewal Worship* globally through reconciliation. He portrays a link in the formative unity that came about

through Pentecost (179) as well as the unity that took place during the Azusa Street Revival (184). Both of these instances reflect a “universal outpour, which is the very substance of renewal worship” (187). Within this engagement of local and global, he discusses three key models regarding worship: reproduction, contextualization, and indigenization. With no one model standing as better or worse, each of these methods portray one or a combination of possible adaptations which, he observes, cultures use in their worship as they interact with the global community of worship. These models feel a bit limited in their approach, yet he is moving into the missiological aspects of worship at this point, and this area may not be his strong suit.

Felix-Jäger concludes his monograph with what he refers to as a “postlude,” in which he encourages the dialogue to continue, just as the closing music of a service follows the attendee out of the church and into the streets (210). In the final pages, he sums up his discourse and ends with restating his doxologies from the end of each chapter as he summarizes each section. These combined doxologies have been fittingly made into a song, referenced at the end of the book.

Throughout this book, one apparent theme that he reiterates is his discussion from chapter one, that renewal worship is relational, reciprocal, and responsive. He uses this founding thought in each chapter to further develop his theological discussion. Overall, this book is very theologically focused, with a splattering of contemporary songs throughout. Within each chapter, he explains several theological aspects of the Pentecostal faith and then he reintroduces the main topic of worship, filling in and shaping the concept of worship with deeper and more constructive insight as he goes. In order to adequately accomplish this, he goes above and beyond in his explanations and reasonings, leading from a great many various theological foundations in order to mold a fully-fledged Pentecostal theology of worship. Some of his theological discourse feels excessive at times, yet this undergirds his main points, and the various attitudes and aspects of worship become clear through his multi-faceted approach. It actually reads as if he is slowly developing a 3-D depiction of renewal worship that the reader may visibly see and understand. It is fascinating that within each chapter, he uses published songs to illustrate his points. These songs are often well-known, and they make his points relevant and tangible. This addition is a great asset to the over-all relatability of the book.

In his discourse, he makes some bold assertions and strong criticisms. He seems quick to point out the flaws of pastors or ministries (78), yet also quick to instruct worship pastors regarding worship (146). In his explication of abundance theology, he compares it to the prosperity

message. Through this process, his specific example of Gloria Copeland's writings felt a bit singled-out, dated, and not necessary (78), especially since so many other current examples are available. In addition, at times it appears Jäger is not always ecumenical in his approach; nevertheless, he does not hide the Pentecostal position, and is clear when describing the reasoning behind his theological stances.

It is obvious that Felix-Jäger has a heart to see worship initiate unity within the church. This book is a good read for anyone who needs to get their footing on the basics of Pentecostal theology and worship. It sets a middle-of-the-ground tone for Pentecostal theology, allowing for clarity in the why, what, who, and how's of Pentecostal worship. Since its scope is such a broad field, including Charismatic/Pentecostal worshipping communities worldwide, he does a great job navigating through the diverse nature of this field of study. At one point, he also pinpoints the understanding that "the arts represent our highest forms of human expression" (107) and must be encouraged and protected. Here, he becomes an advocate for the artists of worshipping communities, in which liturgical arts are not a goal in and of themselves, yet rather "are acts of worship that glorify God and draw people into the presence of God" (108). His explicated support of worshipping artists is greatly appreciated. Overall, this was an excellent theological discourse, and a solid foundational study regarding Pentecostal worship.

Tabitha Marie Turpin, M.A. Bib Lit,
Oral Roberts University, Tulsa