

BOOK REVIEWS

The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel. Edited by Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus, and Douglas Peterson. Irvine, CA: Regnum, 1999. xvii + 406 pp., \$24.95, paper.

This book is the result of a conference in Costa Rica (1996) devoted to a selection of issues emerging from the globalization of what some have called the New Reformation, a movement which represents over one fourth of the world's Christians. It is somewhat similar in style to the earlier *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*,¹ being a collection of essays built around pre-selected themes. Here, the editors and conference organizers come from the disciplines of social ethics (Dempster) and missiology (Klaus and Peterson). The immensity and diversity of the Pentecostal movement and its burgeoning offspring, the international charismatic renewal (not considered in this volume), afford a wide possibility for scholarly consideration. Those topics chosen here reflect the concerns and interests of the conveners and are grouped into three categories: Changing Paradigms in Pentecostal Scholarly Reflection, Pentecostalism as a Global Culture, and Issues Facing Pentecostalism in a Postmodern World.

As a short review cannot give due consideration to all the contributions, perhaps it is appropriate to focus on some of the highlights and lowlights in an effort to provide an overall perspective of the volume. In the first category, Changing Paradigms, Wonsuk Ma writes on "Biblical Studies in the Pentecostal Tradition: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" (52-69). Noting that people in the Third World are more open to the supernatural world enunciated in the scripture, Ma points out, "The Pentecostal movement has long treasured Scripture. These 'people of the Book' have not questioned the authority of the written word" (54), citing some of the scholarly books and journals produced in the tradition. Use of biblical narrative is widespread and Ma seems to side with the critical interpretative methods that emphasize the legitimacy of employing narrative for doctrine and practice: "Though the use of narrative for constructive theological work and doctrinal formulation has been criticized from both within and without, narratives are still viewed by Pentecostals not only as an effective but also as an authentic means of communicating traditions and truths" (62). Therefore, one may appropriately mention that the negative criticism of using Luke's narrative to establish what Luke expects believers to pray for and what Luke expects God to do in answer to prayer is negative criticism that

¹ Ed., Karla Poewe (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994).

misunderstands Luke as having only strictly historical motives, not theological motives. This is primarily because Lukan characters who bear witness to Jesus also pray and receive the Lukan gift of the Holy Spirit. It is virtually the same position that Calvin finally adopted toward Luke-Acts, amended (recently by some) with the corollary that all the Pauline spiritual gifts are for today. It is still a cessationist, non-Lukan position which has been long protected in the Reformed tradition and by others overly deferent to that tradition.²

Further, to suggest, as does Ma, that the immediacy of God's word in the scripture has been a long held Pentecostal value, even before the "postmodern" concept caught on in American social sciences, seems to imply that an intuitive reading of the scripture is somehow assisted by postmodernism. This brings us to *exactly what is meant by "postmodernism,"* which is nowhere in this volume cogently defined or critiqued. This is the fault of the editors who have assumed at the Costa Rica symposium that such a notion is well-accepted and understood, and hence contributors had no need to interact with the term in a critical fashion when they employed it. This lapse by the editors resulted in a lack of precision and an overly deferential treatment given the notion by some of the contributors. In Ma's case this oversight is thankfully very minor indeed. The tenor of Ma's Pentecostal insights resonates much better with those of D. J. Hesselgrave,³ insofar as Pentecostal missiologists could well "devote less time and effort to the erection of theological systems...and give more attention to the kind of biblical theology that will arrest the minds and change the hearts of people of various religions and cultures," than with the ephemeral philosophical theories of postmodernism.⁴ Ma's assessment that "given their revivalist identities, Pentecostals believed they had a call to bring a spiritual dimension to the institutionalized church world" (63) is fair. The implication is that Pentecostals today believe this, but their methods may be different. It is still true however that such zeal arouses hostility as well

² Cf. Paul Elbert, "Spirit, Scripture and Theology through a Lukan Lens: A Review Article," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13 (1998), pp. 55-75; Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology*, JPTSup 16 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), pp. 13-34.

³ "Third Millennium Missiology and the Use of Egyptian Gold," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42 (1999), pp. 577-89 (589),

⁴ A useful assessment of such theories is provided by Matthew S. Clark, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics: The Challenge of Relating to [Post]-Modern Literary Theory," *The Spirit & Church* 2/1 (2000), pp. 67-93.

as reception, given that the Pentecostal's evangelization is another person's proselytism. Ma concludes soundly that the healthy existence and continued development of Pentecostal scholarship lies in its ability to provide "solid biblical foundations which preserve and revitalize Pentecostal uniqueness" (64).

Another fine study in the Changing Paradigms zone, also potentially useful to Evangelicals as well, is by Jackie David Johns, "Yielding to the Spirit: The Dynamics of a Pentecostal Model of Praxis" (70-84). Johns is unfairly criticized as the pastoral Bultmann by a dialogue partner, José Míguez Bonino, the "Dean of Protestant Theology of Latin America" (7), in his "Changing Paradigms: A Response" (120). With respect to this ongoing dialogue, it is doubtful that glossolalic utterance should be understood as a "sacrament" (121). Rather, it is better understood (the following understandings not being at all exhaustive) as symbolizing "the 'groans' too deep for words (Rom 8:26) among the people of God, bringing them into solidarity with suffering humanity—even the entire suffering creation (Rom 8)—in order to struggle toward their redemption and liberation."⁵

Perhaps the highlight of this volume accentuates what should be an *unchanging paradigm*, rather than a "changing paradigm." Echoing William Seymour's call of trying to get people saved, L. Grant McClung, Jr. calls attention to the christocentric confession of Pentecostal missiology in his "'Try to Get People Saved': Revisiting the Paradigm of Urgent Pentecostal Missiology" (30-51). McClung envisions the Lord allowing us to extend his work into the next (now this) century so that global Pentecostalism, along with an interdependent partnership with all Great Commission Christians, will be characterized by the vision printed in *The Apostolic Faith* (1906), page one: "The real revival is only started, as God has been working with His children mostly getting them through to Pentecost, and laying the foundation for a mighty wave of salvation among the unconverted."

In the second category, Pentecostalism as a Global Culture, Edward L. Cleary, in his "Latin American Pentecostalism" (131-150), concludes, "...being grounded in experience has important consequences. In a profound sense, neither institution nor any other person mediates in a Pentecostal person's conversion to God. No formal rite (not even baptism) is required.... The testimony and fervor of the person shows the faith of the Pentecostal person. The Pentecostal movement does not

⁵ So Frank D. Macchia, "The Struggle for Global Witness," in the same volume, p. 18.

require more than this testimony for one to be accepted as a convert and participant in services” (144).

In this global culture arena we are also offered a little-known (in the West) overview, much to be recommended, by Ivan M. Satyavrata, the principal of the Southern Asia Bible College in Bangalore, India, entitled “Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism as a Global Culture: A South Asian View” (201-221). Satyavrata thinks that one of the main reasons for the appeal and success of the Pentecostal movement is that ordinary people “whose participation in discourse is limited and constrained by the formalization of orthodox rites...find themselves enfranchised within a fundamentalist setting” (216), where they are engaged, heard, and given support. South Asian Pentecostalism has been marked by “simplicity with a reliance on spontaneity and the spoken word appropriate to the non-literal mind-set,” by the “perpetuation of an oral tradition through preaching, testimonies and personal ministry” (210). Satyavrata’s study is now complemented by Stanley M. Burgess.⁶

Pentecostals never had a *Sola Scriptura* mentality, a mentality linked not to an idea found in *Scriptura* but doctrinally linked to the expunging of the Lukan gift of the Holy Spirit from *Scriptura*. This expunging is further linked in the Reformed/Evangelical paradigm with the additional truncation of Pauline gifts whose supernatural function would threaten liturgical control. In this paradigm experience described by NT texts is minimized to sustain two primary ends: that grace may supposedly be sacramentally transmitted via the clergy *and/or* experiential examples from the scripture may not be used to teach, even if NT writers suggest otherwise. Yet such suggestion by NT writers was not enough, proof was required, while no proof was required by those protecting the established positions of Lukan cessationism and Pauline truncation. Supernaturalist expectations were denigrated as outside the paradigm. Examples of belief in the earthly Jesus were redescribed as “receiving Jesus as your personal Savior,” whereas examples of “receiving the Spirit” or similar language was relegated to the status of permanent total eclipse. NT language obviously drafted out of experience was either ignored or made consistent with contemporary non-experience. Reinterpretations consistent with expunged texts dictated ecclesiastical deportment and what became known as cessationism was vigorously defended. Protectors of the Reformed/Evangelical paradigm did not bother to inquire whether

⁶ “Pentecostalism in India: An Overview,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4:1 (2001), pp. 85-98.

their dogma was consistent with the rhetorical tradition of examples and precedents so prevalent in the biblical world.

Historically, Pentecostals rejected the ethos of the above thumbnail sketch, which admittedly overlooks positive contributions made by the Reformed/Evangelical traditions within the confines of their paradigm. Nevertheless, by and large the intellectual world of Christian scholarship, with the exception of a few historians, dismissed the Pentecostals. This is gradually changing due to demographics, but there remains stout resistance to breaking out of old traditions and envisioning a new global Reformation, a new Pentecost. And Pentecostals, flattered by a little unaccustomed acceptance, may accommodatingly give up their vision.

Until just recently scholarship took little interest in experience as a factor in interpretation, but Pentecostal scholarship always tried to incorporate experience, both christological and pneumatological, with interpretation of texts esteemed trustworthy and reliable. Hence, it is not surprising to find in this book occasional illustrations of a more biblical approach than the *Sola Scriptura* of the Reformed/Evangelical paradigm, illustrations wherein it is declared, "Pentecostal emphasis on experience is of great value and must never be compromised" (with Satyavrata, 215). This conclusion is similar to that of Julie Ma, "Pentecostal Challenges in East and South-East Asia" (183-202), who encourages the churches to develop leadership skills crucial to the needs of this region while preventing "post-Pentecostalism" from entering into a dictionary (201). Ma notes that "power evangelism is what the Pentecostals are known for as signs and wonders are revealed through the power of the Holy Spirit, and Pentecostals take these phenomena as a biblical pattern (e.g., Acts 3:1-2; 16:14-15; Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 2:4, 5). Pentecostals should not be tempted to conform to their established Evangelical neighbors. They must remain faithful to their distinctiveness to be effective to their mission and calling" (199). However, one must equally observe that the powerful pattern established in Luke-Acts (Luke 11:2-13; 24:49; Acts 1:4, 5, 8, 14; 2:4; 9:17) is a pattern that *precedes and underpins* the pattern of power evangelism in the lives of Peter and Paul cited by Ma. There is no need for authentic Pentecostalism to be compromised or become a fading memory. This needs not occur in a world that accepts rationalism as a dominant virtue, reflected by the worldview of non-Christian scholars in the humanities both past and present, or in a broader intellectual world that admits the existence of God to be an attractive speculation now that evidence for the origin and fine tuning of the cosmos is so spectacular.

In the third section, Issues Facing Pentecostalism in a Postmodern World, the unsubstantiated assumption that the world in which we evangelize is somehow delineated by “postmodernism” is uncritically accepted without adequate definition. To make such a claim for the *world* without clarification of the implications it raises is staggering. It might have been observed, for example, that the postmodern concept can be viewed as a superficial theory, replete with moral arrogance, originating in French word games and taken over willy-nilly by some scholars in English and Religion departments in America. The theory often denies the intentionality of the authors, denigrates meaning of texts, applauds relativism, and is definitely detached from the great liberal arts in the natural sciences. A minority of insular scholars, ones in a tiny minority in academia who identify with these views, often denounce the creation of wealth and the scientific method, while enjoying the benefits thereof, and are currently perceived by many as undermining the undergraduate underpinnings of the disciplines they inhabit (like English and Religion), as well as some of the social sciences. These insular scholars might learn about religion in an age of science (not about religion crafted in a “postmodern” era) or about science apologetics, which is currently demonstrating how experimental findings in modern science are supportive of the non-rational, of the existence of God, and of the possibility for divine interaction with physical reality. And scholars overly enamored by the philosophical ruminations and gratuitous characterizations of postmodernism might do well to peruse the mainstream approaches, for example, by John Polkinghorne.⁷ Pentecostals in particular would do better to begin to correctly understand reality in the present world in the logic of premodernity.⁸ Then, they might go on to incorporate a historical appreciation of science and engineering in a more balanced characterization of the real world. To assume, *carte blanche*, that Pentecostal mission occurs in a “postmodern” world is to circumscribe Pentecostalism with an ill-defined, ill-fitting and astonishingly unperceptive concept, one that is unnecessarily limiting and highly questionable.⁹

⁷ *Belief in God in an Age of Science and Faith, Science and Understanding* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998 and 2000, respectively).

⁸ So too for his agenda, William A. Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge between Science and Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999), pp. 44-48.

⁹ Regarding the potentially infectious nature of this world-characterization (which I believe is a mischaracterization), see William W. Menzies and Robert P. Menzies, “Hermeneutics: Jumping Off the Postmodern Bandwagon,” in *Spirit*

An apparent adherent of such an insular worldview is Gerald T. Sheppard, "Pentecostals, Globalization, and Postmodern Hermeneutics: Implications for the Politics of Scriptural Interpretation" (289-312). Pentecostalism is not a movement which arrives and is sustained from heaven, rather it should find "the real presence of the Holy Spirit" in the history of institutions (290). Sheppard thinks that the "humanities" have adopted postmodern theory since 1960, an overblown claim. He blithely ignores the larger and more influential scientific/engineering academy and suggests, wrongly in my view, "What is at stake for the Pentecostal is the dense topic of postmodern hermeneutics" (289). I can recall that F. F. Bruce once said on his editorial page of *Evangelical Quarterly* that he got tired of being called a "fundamentalist." I think that he would have liked to know exactly what was wrong with him, instead of just being pejoratively labeled. Sheppard slams "fundamentalists," the method of "historico-grammatical exegesis," and liberal "higher criticism," but he never gives a single concrete example of how his postmodern interpretation functions on a specific passage of the scripture or on any text. Lumping "fundamentalists" with the skepticism and anti-supernatural bias of the historical-critical method is an illusionary tactic. Since Pentecostals have fundamentals when it comes to biblical texts and therefore differences of interpretation from bland Evangelicalism, differences of which they do not need to be ashamed, Sheppard might have profited from the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition of illustrating his point with a practical example. However, he appears rather enthralled by his understanding of reality as "postmodern," so perhaps any argument from example would be deemed superfluous. One will have to stretch in order to detect any "characteristic breakthrough of Pentecostal piety" (Russell Spittler, "Foreword," vii) in Sheppard's supposed implications.

Following Sheppard is a breath of fresh air, a delightful, realistic, and biblically based piece by Janet Everts Powers, "'Your Daughters Shall Prophesy': Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Empowerment of Women" (313-37). Powers' piece might be read profitably by eight categories of people: 1) those believing that the Lukan gift of the Holy Spirit was given only to the twelve apostles; 2) those who wish the Lukan gift of the Holy Spirit had been given only to the apostles; 3) those whose ecclesiastical deportment and pastoral worldview is perfectly consistent with categories one and two above; 4) those who believe that

and Power: Foundations of Pentecostal Experience (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), pp. 63-68.

there is no possibility whatever to understand 1 Tim 2:12 in the context of a Christian home in Timothy's pastoral care; 5) those who believe that Paul would have issued 1 Tim 2:12 to the patroness and deaconess Phoebe (Rom 16:1, 2); 6) those who believe that Paul addressed 1 Cor 14:1, 12, 39 only to men; 7) those who believe Paul would have issued 1 Tim 2:12 to Philip when he lodged in his house and met his daughters who were prophetesses (Acts 21:8, 9); and lastly, those who believe Paul would have conveyed 1 Tim 2:12 to Luke who later wrote for Theophilus that the gift of the Spirit was gender insensitive (Acts 2:18).

Harvey Cox, like Powers, also responds refreshingly to ideas and issues in this stodgy third section on Postmodernism by calling for a rebirth of an ethic of simplicity, of being suspicious of the things of this world, warning that we cannot serve both God and mammon (394).

The editors are to be commended for their initiative in bringing these sixteen essays on three categories and the three dialogue responses together. However, to travel comfortably with them along the road of world evangelization might mean occasionally jettisoning some excess secular baggage. A characteristic breakthrough of Pentecostal piety does exist but it is often beclouded by the insular relativistic worldview of modern sociology and philosophy departments. A biblical worldview is there, but often muted by scholarship both subservient to and unengaged in challenging stale humanistic thought and secular characterizations, thought life found encrusted in other Christian traditions. A number of these essayists might do well to be more trusting of their own instinctive Pentecostal reflections and think a little more independently from their recent academic histories and professional traditions. There is no index of the scriptures, which would account in any case for far fewer entries than those in the index of topics and names which is gratefully provided.

Paul Elbert

Julie C. Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits: Pentecostal Ministry among the Kankana-ey Tribe in the Philippines* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000), 273 pp., US \$45.95.

From reading the standard histories of missions one would hardly know that miracles and other paranormal phenomena have accompanied the advance of the gospel to non-Christian peoples from ancient times and especially in the last two centuries. However, despite the absence of such linkages in past mission studies, they are now becoming

commonplace and provide helpful insights into the contextualization of Christianity among indigenous peoples. It is in this regard that *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits* makes a valuable contribution. Julie C. Ma, an Assemblies of God missionary and professor of missiology at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio City, Philippines, focuses this Fuller Seminary School of World Mission dissertation on demonstrating the vital relationship between proclamation and the “signs and wonders” of the Holy Spirit.

Now available in book form, it is included in the series: Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity, published by Peter Lang. The dissertation has five parts: history of Christian missions among the Kankana-ey tribe in the northern Philippines, including that of the Assemblies of God (U.S.A.); an anthropological perspective on tribal religious practices; a biblical reflection on “power encounters” in the scripture; an ethnological examination of Kankana-ey Christian faith; and a comparative theological analysis of the latter with traditional classical Pentecostal practices, followed by a general conclusion. Ma based her research on historical sources, travels in the territory, extensive interviews, and biblical and theological reflection. She successfully defends her thesis that to understand the evangelization of this people group, one must see the impact of physical healings and other miraculous happenings in response to prayer as fundamental to their acceptance of the Christian faith.

In analyzing the success of Assemblies of God missions in this region of the Philippines, Ma finds commonalities between the worldviews of the animistic Kankana-eyes and Pentecostals. “The similarities are evident in many areas,” she writes, “For instance, [they]...also believe that their gods have power to bless and curse while Pentecostals...also believe that God blesses and provides for the needs of His children.” The latter extends beyond the rational to a person’s physical well being. For this connection and reviving the memory of Elva Vanderbout, the first Pentecostal missionary to the Kankana-ey, Ma’s work deserves high commendation.

Two other observations merit attention: First, Ma assumes that the Kankana-ey made a clean break with their animistic past when they encountered the power of the Holy Spirit and accepted the gospel message. While she firmly demonstrates dramatic changes in their beliefs and behavior, one wonders if any animistic elements have remained in their thinking and worship that are in fact incompatible with western Christian—in this case Assemblies of God—doctrine and practice. Has the break always been as neat as she suggests? On the other hand, have

the Kankana-ey discovered biblical insights that could benefit western Pentecostals? Second, in several places in the dissertation, especially in the conclusion, Ma loses objectivity with the subject and becomes an active proponent. Nevertheless, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirit* represents a solid contribution to contemporary mission studies.

Gary B. McGee

Mark Hutchinson, *Pellegrini: An Italian Protestant Community in Sydney 1958–1998*. Australasian Pentecostal Studies Journal Supplemental Series no. 1. Sydney: Australasian Pentecostal Studies, 1999. x + 304 pp. ISBN 1 86408 544 4, paper, AUD\$29.95.

Rarely does it take me that long to read a book. Granted, circumstances kept me from staying with it, but what prompted me to come back to Mark Hutchison's chronicle of an Italian Pentecostal emigrant church in Australia? May be it is the many narratives told, the testimonials cited and the letters quoted that spark the reader's interest and begs the question, "What will happen next?"

This book, however, is not a novel. As I read through its pages I changed my point of view several times. I wondered if this would not be of interest to a sociologist of religion, to a missionary strategist, to a historian, or to a pastor. Here is why I think this book is of value to all of the above.

Let us first look at it from a historical point of view. Mark Hutchinson begins his research not on "day one" in Sydney, but digs back to the roots of these emigrants. Where did these people come from? What were they doing? What conditioned them to leave their home land? Where does their faith come in? What was their religious context prior to emigration? The author has done a good job at answering these and related questions. Any student of European Pentecostalism in general, and Italian Pentecostalism in particular is well advised to read there first few chapters of "Pellegrini." Hutchinson, for instance, documents the impressions of a woman when she first attends a post-war Pentecostal worship service in Messina, Sicily, or he ponders the role of Protestantism in Southern Italy.

Secondly, the sociologist of religion will find it interesting to compare the situation of various emigrant groups in Australia in the 1950s. What differentiates Italian Pentecostals from Roman Catholic Italians living in Australia? What did the mix of culture and religion

produce? What consequences did the official policy of discouraging assimilation of migrant communities with the established body of Australians in the 1950s have? To put it differently, Hutchinson describes what it meant to those “pilgrims” to suffer injustice and hardship in a country that had hoped to be the promised land, how their faith helped them to look beyond their distress and react with a sense of purpose.

The missionary strategist might be more interested how the work among these Italians grew. What influence missions boards had, where they failed and what could have been avoided if communication would have been business like (clear, to the point, and in the interest of the parties involved). As a matter of fact chapters 3-5 tell a tragic story how some pastors had to struggle and were hindered in their ministry, because solidarity did not materialize. The Italian Pentecostal work in Australia is a good example of what happens if missionary work is not coordinated.

Finally, we come to the pastor’s interest. Mark Hutchinson describes with rare frankness what churches torn by clan formation, prophetic legalism and traditionalism can end up with. But the author does not stop there. On the positive side of things, he tells us the story of the importance of youth work in the life of the churches as a whole, and particularly, in a bi-lingual/bi-cultural context. He has illustrated the promising prospects that youth work held among the Italian migrant communities he describes. Hutchinson’s 304-page-book is a fine example how an individual can do self-critical, but at the same time constructive research in a particular context of Pentecostalism.