

Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xiii pp. + 302 pp., paperback, ISBN: 0-521-53280-9, UK£18.99 / US\$27.99.

Allan Anderson provides a perceptive and sympathetic documentation about the recognized fastest growing Holy Spirit movement in the world today, not only for the Christians who are from the Pentecostal and Charismatic groups but also to the larger Christian world. It is a mature work. As he mentions in the acknowledgements (viii-ix) and preface (xii-xiii) the material he gives to the readers is both academic and experiential. As a result *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* deals with the “historical contexts” and “theological emphases” of the worldwide Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. (xiii) Anderson divided his treatise into two parts. The first part, “Historical Development of Pentecostal Distinctives,” traces the circumstances and the environments where Pentecostalism’s experience of the Spirit happened. (17-183) The author in this section describes the earliest accounts of people all over the globe encountering the manifestations of the Spirit. He also depicts the growth of their spiritual understanding of this experience. Anderson goes through all the inhabitable continents of the globe sketching the developments and experiences of people from all walks of life as they come across the Spirit baptism. Adequate histories of Pentecostal Movements are described.

The next half, “Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology in Context,” articulates the different theological and religious understandings of the Spirit-filled Christians. (185-286) The writer in the second portion of his book surveys the diverse beliefs and the dividing issues among those who experienced the Holy Spirit in their lives. He also illustrates the role of the Bible among them. Anderson shows how Christian doctrines, theological training, ecumenical practice and social responsibility can unite and divide the Pentecostals and Charismatic groups. Balanced representations of the assorted theologies of Charismatic Christianity are presented. From the introductory chapter which he entitles “Identifying Pentecostals and Charismatics” (1-15) where he relates stories of different churches and their experiences until the last chapter of the book, Anderson is clear that global Pentecostalism, which is an international Charismatic form of Christianity, is an experience of religious revival through and through. It is a renewal movement. The writer interprets the history

and theology of the Pentecostals and Charismatics, then and now, from the perspective of plurality. He employs complete names of people, the exact names of local churches and denominations as well as the important dates and significant events to make his crucial points and arguments valid and compelling as he evaluates the history and theology of Pentecostalism.

The central thesis of this book is that the Christian renewal that the Holy Spirit brought into the church was various from the beginning. (9-15) Allan Anderson style of presentation of materials in his book is typical of a Pentecostal preacher. He starts with stories. He shares his own experiences with the churches in Seoul (the largest congregation in the world, a Classical Pentecostal church!), Lagos, Birmingham and Chicago. He also retells a story of his former Ph.D. student in her experience with a Pentecostal congregation in Buenos Aires. Anderson uses his stories to represent Pentecostalism all over the world. (1-9) It is global. There is no question about it. It is a good way to start his book. Diversity is observable in the stories. They certainly make the claim of "Global Charismatic Christianity," the subtitle of the book, substantially acceptable to both sympathetic and unsympathetic readers. As Anderson unveils his global knowledge of Pentecostalism, he argues that a definition of Pentecostalism cannot be prescribed. It can only be described. A theological definition cannot be sufficient. Western categories would not be adequate to understand the manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the Majority World. For him, a designation of what is popularly known as Pentecostal and Charismatic should be inclusive. A definition of Pentecostalism should be pluralistic in nature. It must be within the parameter of the common experience of Christians all over the globe that claims an encounter with the manifestations of the Spirit of God. This encounter brings a religious renewal. The author is hesitant to exclude many indigenous Spirit revival groups in the Majority World.

Corollary to his inclusive approach to Charismatic Christianity is his criticism of scholars and authors in Pentecostal-Charismatic studies who are using the more inclusive statistics wrongly to show the growth of the Classical Pentecostals and the Charismatic Renewals. Anderson also removes the center of Pentecostal and Charismatic phenomenon from North America. He informs the reader about the occurrences of Pentecostal revival from other continents. (63-143) These genuine encounters with the manifestations of the Holy Spirit predate the Azusa Street Pentecostal experience. They cannot be directly connected with the North American renewal movements. The

main contribution of Anderson's research is the serious consideration of the Pentecostal-Charismatic phenomenon in the Majority World. Accordingly, he is dislocating the epicenter of Pentecostalism from Azusa Street. The articulation of Anderson's views is timely. At this point of the fast contemporary growth rate and necessary formation of the Spirit-filled congregations in the world, a mature reflection and interpretation of the Pentecostal tradition is constructive. This book indeed is a welcome contribution for the contemporary understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit on the inhabited earth. The author has shown a wide knowledge of Charismatic Christianity in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He was able to put so much information in a succinct presentation. The reader joins him in his travelling narrative. In other words, Anderson demonstrates that he knows what he is talking about and that he is an authority in Pentecostal studies. He is also very entertaining.

The scope of *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* is sufficient and acceptable in representation of *Global Charismatic Christianity*. This book, although meant to be an introductory material for Pentecostal-Charismatic studies, goes beyond the expectation of the reviewer. It is comprehensive in coverage, from the experience of "Charismata in the Early Church" (19ff.) until "The Writing of Pentecostal History" (166ff.), Anderson surveys the variety of Christian understandings of the Spirit baptism and the spiritual gifts. While he uses sources that analyze the Pentecostal renewal in terms of social science, he also emphasizes the religious nature of the growth of the Spirit-filled believers. The author accepts the widely held view among western historians and scholars that the subsequent Protestant revivals after the Reformation era in Europe (23-25) as well as the holiness and healing movements in North America (25-33) are forerunners of the Pentecostal experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Azusa Street. The reviewer also appreciates Anderson's perceptive view that although Charles Parham who developed the North American Classical Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of Spirit baptism (33-35), his one time student William Seymour of the Azusa Street revival departed from the doctrine later in his life. (39ff.) Moreover, he points out that speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the Spirit baptism is not a universal Pentecostal or Charismatic doctrine, then or now. (*passim*) Anderson's reconstruction and interpretation of the Holy Spirit's manifestations in North America are generally sound. He is honest with his description of events and personalities involved in controversies.

The reviewer is convinced by Anderson that intercontinental Holy Spirit encounters that cannot be directly linked to and much earlier than the Azusa Street experience plays the role of precursors for worldwide spread of Pentecostalism. Anderson is to be followed when he states: "Although at first predominantly a northern movement, the stage was set for the coming of new Pentecost to spread across the world in the new (twentieth) century." (38) Furthermore, this volume is a recommendable textbook for Pentecostal-Charismatic theology. The second half of the book is a comprehensive survey of the theology of those who claim to be Spirit-filled believers. Anderson talks about the pneumatology and soteriology (187-205), the eschatology and missiology (206-260.) as well as the bibliology and hermeneutics (225-242) of this revival movement. Important discussions on the attitude of Pentecostals and Charismatics on scholarly undertaking (243-249), ecumenical endeavor (249-260) and social responsibility (261-278) are also covered by the author (243-278). Finally, he carefully gives his thoughts about the prospect of diverse Pentecostalisms within the globalized Holy Spirit movements and the worldwide current religious force that they produce. Anderson's final two sentences in his book are so profound and convinces the reviewer that this title is worth reading: "So at least for the foreseeable future, the continued vitality of Charismatic Christianity is probably assured. The whole Christian church may be thankful that this is the case, for it may mean the salvation of Christianity itself in the next century from decline and eventual oblivion." (286)

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