

Estrelida Alexander and Amos Yong, eds., *Philip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 104, ed. K.C. Hanson, C.M. Collier and D. C. Spinks (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications/Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), paperback, viii + 251 pp., ISBN: 13: 978-1-55635-832-6, US\$ 27.00.

It must be admitted that there is “a history of suppression” of the “ministry of Spirit-empowered women.” (1) *Philip's Daughters: Women in Pentecostal-Charismatic Leadership* presents before the contemporary church life the necessary questions that are nevertheless to be resolved concerning the total involvement, with the same level of treatment, of Christian women in ministerial service and church leadership. However, there are no answers in this volume to provide decisive answers to the remaining issues about the position of women in Christian ministry. (14) This anthology calls for the equal opportunity and complete participation of women in the church leadership. The approaches employed by the contributors are culturally diverse and multiethnic as well as methodologically varied and interdisciplinary. Estrelida Alexander and Amos Yong brought together twelve different academic papers about women in the spiritual revival movement. These papers were collected from the three weekend symposium during the school year 2006-2007. (vii, 8) The meetings were held at the School of Divinity of Regent University. The twelve presentations came from biblical, theological, missiological, historical, sociological and anthropological fields of inquiry. The essays though are divided into two major parts, the historical perspectives and the biblical/theological perspectives. There are six essays for each part. A preface to the book is written by Yong while an introduction to the articles is given by Alexander.

Part one begins with a title “Wesleyan/Holiness and Pentecostal Women Preachers: Pentecost as the Pattern for Primitivism” by Susie C. Stanley. (19-37) She essentially claims that the Wesleyan/Holiness view of women in ministry is favorable due to “the doctrinal emphasis on sanctification.” (19) Hence, she sees that it is the Wesleyan/Holiness openness to female preachers that is responsible for the big quantity of Pentecostal women who became active in the ministry. She poses an insightful historiographical notion in her treatise that if the source of Pentecostal believers is more from the mainline Protestant churches, there would be a lot of women Pentecostal ministers. Stanley features the work and the call of selected Pentecostal women whose backgrounds were from the

Wesleyan/Holiness tradition. In other words, the author sees that, historically speaking, the Wesleyan/Holiness foundation of many of the Pentecostals provides a theological reason for the tolerance of the women preachers. (37)

The second article in the historical perspectives section is given by David G. Roebuck, “‘Cause He’s My Chief Employer’: Hearing Women’s Voices in a Classical Pentecostal Denomination,” that explores the Bible as the basis for responding to the call of preaching the gospel. (38-60) It is an interesting piece. The thrust of this essay is the view that the commanding basis of women preachers is the Word of God. Biblical interpretation is shaped by both the societal values and spiritual sensitivities. The Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) denominational context provides the tension between the human culture and the Holy Spirit. Roebuck investigated printed materials supplied by lady ministers as well as oral conversations in his interview with them to have a better understanding of Spirit, Word and culture as used by these Pentecostal women. The writer concludes that the Church of God was “historically open to women preaching but not to women in leadership roles.” (57) Moreover, he maintains that female preachers in this Classical Pentecostal denomination “now have more rights as ministers, [but] their exclusion from the ministerial rank of bishop continues to prevent those rights from being translated into leadership opportunities.” (60)

Karen Kossie-Chernyshev brings forth the succeeding essay naming it “Looking Beyond the Pulpit: Social Ministries and African-American Pentecostal-Charismatic Women in Leadership.” (61-73) Using the Church of God in Christ Pentecostal group, she provides an outline of African-American Pentecostal women’s involvement with social ministry from its early history. (63-68) Furthermore, she highlights the black Charismatic ministries that more recently participated in civic engagement. (68-72) Kossie-Chernyshev observes that from early on the pulpit ministry and the leadership role in African-American Pentecostal denominations are highly contested. This is an important sociological factor for the female gender to express leadership in other ways. And so, although African-American Pentecostal women may not have the privilege to be ordained in the ministry, they still preoccupy themselves with social ministry. Their vision in social engagement should not be overlooked as an expression of their leadership roles and capabilities to serve in the ministry. This kind of service should be seen as spiritual leadership of black Pentecostal women at its finest.

A captivating discourse concerning “Sanctified Saints—Impure Prophetesses: A Cross-Cultural Reflection on Gender and Power in Two Afro-Christian Spirit-Privileging Churches” by Deidre Helen Crumbley, comes up as the fourth presentation. (74-94) Her discourse asks a bipartite query: “How might socio-cultural legacy, leadership, and institutional complexity inform the antithetical gender practices of the case study churches, and what strategies might this suggest for addressing women’s leadership in other spirit-privileging churches?” (92) The anthropological approach of Crumbley utilizes ethnography to accomplish the research. The two case studies that she did are Aladura Yoruba’s church in West Africa known as the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) and an African American church in an inner city called the Church of Prayer Seventh Day (COPSD). Crumbley observes that on the one hand, CCC curtails the opportunity for the ladies to preach and serve in the altar areas during their menstruation. (81) On the other hand, the women in COPSD can be involved in the ceremonial and the political leadership as well as the doctrinal and the organizational matters. (see 81-92)

The next paper is by Gastón Espinosa, “‘Third Class Soldiers’: A History of Hispanic Pentecostal Clergywomen in the Assemblies of God,” who surveys the resistance of the Latino Pentecostals to ordain ladies into the clergy. (95-111) He starts his essay quoting a letter written by Aimee García Cortese on July 11, 1958 pleading with J. Roswell Flower that she should be ordained by the Spanish Eastern District according to the constitution of the Assemblies of God. (95) Using this portion of the original, emotional letter of a female Latina preacher, who was later ordained in 1962, the author narrates how from an early period, the Assemblies of God was open for women in the ministry. (98-108) Nevertheless, the Latin districts of the Assemblies of God made it difficult for female pastors to be ordained. Furthermore, the prophetic and the priestly ministries in the Latin districts have become a source of conflict in the minister’s home, especially if both the husband and the wife are in the ministry. (108) Thus, Espinosa concludes with a challenge to an attitudinal change: “If the leaders of the Latino Pentecostal denominations in the U.S. cannot find a way to accommodate women’s voices in a more meaningful way in the near future, they may find themselves in conflict with the prophetic voices of their daughters—women not unlike Aimee Garcia Cortese.” (111)

Last but not the least contribution in the historical perspectives part of the volume is the “Leadership Attitudes and the Ministry of Single

Women in Assembly of God Missions” of Barbara L. Cavaness. (112-130) She insinuates in this essay that: “Proactive efforts to open more leadership roles to women and correct inequalities and restrictive attitudes were recommended to the AG World Missions division.” (129) The whole article of Cavaness demonstrates how the earliest of Pentecostal frontrunners inspired and enabled female ministers when the first experience of Spirit outpouring brought much enthusiasm but then later partiality against them became even an acknowledged attitude. She observes how Parham and Seymour were open to women preachers. (114-122) Nonetheless, as the excitement of the Pentecostal revival faded she points out that in the Assemblies of God World Missions, as a case in point, single female missionaries grew fewer in number due to “‘limiting’ historical events/documents,” “mixed theological messages in publications,” and “restrictive leadership attitudes.” (123) For Cavaness the reason is more of leadership “values” than the formalization of missions. (123)

Part two, first of all, presents Janet Everts Powers’ “Pentecostalism 101: Your Daughters Shall Prophesy” as the seventh treatise. (133-151) In her theologically argued presentation, the author maintains that the Pentecostal view of Spirit baptism was advanced by a lady minister, Phoebe Palmer, from the holiness movement. (133ff.) Pentecostalism appears to have overlooked the thrust of Palmer’s teaching which is the empowering of women. When a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit, he or she, whether he is a son or she is a daughter, is straightway enabled to prophesy. (see 136-139) The first Pentecostals followed Palmer and authorized Spirit baptized females to be entirely authorized preachers. (139) Parham added to Palmer’s Spirit baptism view that tongues is the initial evidence of the experience. And Seymour, through the Azusa Street experience, extended this teaching across the globe. (133-134) It is unfortunate though that E. N. Bell among the Pentecostals and J. R. Rice among the Fundamentalists resisted the ordination of women. (141-143) Subsequently, the Charismatic Movement’s view of prophecy diminished female’s prophetic ministry. (143-145) And presently, the likes of Wayne Grudem, who became a prominent intellectual in the Association of Vineyard Churches and independent charismatic groups, contests women’s ordination. (145-149) Hence, “Pentecostalism 101” challenges Pentecostals to go back to the theology of the “prophethood of all believers.” (149-151)

The following article is entitled “‘You’ve Got a Right to the Tree of Life’: The Biblical Foundations of an Empowered Attitude among Black Women in the Sanctified Church” by Cheryl Townsend Gilkes

which provides a sociological study of the role of the Bible in African American religious experience. (152-169) The writer points out that the contribution of the black churches to Pentecostalism is “the centrality of the Bible” (154) and “the Bible became a speakerly text—a Talking Book.” (155) The theme of Exodus in their spirituals as well as women in Scriptures in their tunes show their roots in biblical religion. The African Americans brought three gifts to America: “the gift of labor, the gift of song, and the gift of Spirit.” (157) Black women participated well in the Azusa Street outpouring of the Spirit. Black roots of Pentecostalism cannot be adequately understood apart from the motif of African slavery in America. (passim) The females in the African American congregations get inspiration from the women of the Bible in challenging men-dominated Christianity.

The ninth essay by Cheryl Bridges Johns is provocatively designated as “Spirited Vestments: Or, Why the Anointing Is Not Enough” where she theologically assessed the hierarchy of the persons in the Trinity that became a theological basis for the subordination of women in the work of the Lord. (170-184) For the author, although the Pentecostals may not openly subdue females because of Joel’s prophecy of men and women receiving the Spirit, the theology starts and ends in the prophetic role of women. The ecclesiastical practice is that “priestly functions of pastoral and denominational leadership are likely reserved for men.” (170-171) And so there is a tension between the prophetic and the priestly role of men and women in the church. Female Spirit baptized ministers should be in prophetic roles but the males should be in charge of the priestly headship. The essay gives a theological model for a fresh relational understanding of human relationships based on the Trinity. It reviews the idea of God’s image in male and female. (174ff., 179-183, 184 )

Pamela Holmes subsequently authors “The Spirit, Nature and Canadian Pentecostal Women: A Conversation with Critical Theory.” (185-202) Here she looks at the decreasing participation of the ladies in the Canadian Pentecostal setting even though they were important participants from the very beginning of the movement. She employs the perceptions advanced by the Critical Theory of Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno to the problems encountered by women in Canadian Pentecostalism. (187-193) The author also surveys the theological reflections of Canadian Pentecostal women in the ministry. (193-198) Holmes argues that Pentecostalism carries the character and the language of crucial concepts and spiritual exercises that bring liberating capability for the female in the ministry. (200-202) The

livable actuality and the viable structure of Pentecostal experience could bring the necessary counter-revolution for women ministers to be fully integrated in a revolutionized Pentecostal movement.

“Changing Images: Women in Asian Pentecostalism” is the eleventh paper in the collection written by Julie C. Ma. (203-214) Her article traces the images of the female gender in the biblical setting where their affirmation is developed (204-206) and the contemporary world where openness to acknowledge the competence of women to take leadership positions is emerging. (206-210) Hence, this improvement of women leading in present society shows the maturing public consciousness of women who can be leaders where such positions have not been traditionally esteemed or even allowed, like in Korea. Ma has a challenge for the Asian Pentecostal churches in particular, and the Christian world in general, to observe the transformation of the societal view on women in leadership and come up with avenues to modify their mindset and custom about women in ministry. (see 210-214)

Frederick L. Ware completes the volume with “Spiritual Egalitarianism, Ecclesial Pragmatism, and the Status of Women in Ordained Ministry” wherein he depicts that Pentecostal ideals were left to conform to the conventional norms. (215-233) Ware sees a clash between “spiritual egalitarianism” which is a Pentecostal theological belief with “ecclesial pragmatism” which is a typical cultural adaptation. (215-217) The conflict’s victim is her. Seymour tolerated female involvement in Azusa Street but he “later retracted his initial openness to women in ministry and church leadership.” (218) Ware explores a black Pentecostal body known as the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). (see 217-229) He traces the inequality of opportunities for women, the ordination policy and the real praxis of the denomination, as well as the biblical understanding of the female and the hierarchical attitude of the leadership in COGIC. He argues that the early Pentecostal “theological tradition” would nullify any opposition for women’s ordination. (229-231) He also argues that Pentecostal core values should shape the current ethical standard, which entails a total ministerial credit for women. (232)

Alexander and Yong gather together significant articles that critically seek to illumine the current understanding of women’s encounters of and influence in the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. These essays are welcome contributions to the debate about the female in the ministry. The gathering and ordering of the essays according to their themes and contributions are also to be commended. It is a well

edited anthology. The collection of writings that they put together exhibits the tension in Pentecostalism about what the Bible says concerning women in ministry and what society informs about females as secondary. The contributing writers in this collection also cross-reference each other to enhance the arguments of their essays. Moreover, the high quality of the research given to the production of the articles reflects on the important contribution of this book to the concept of the “prophethood of all believers” who are Spirit baptized, which obviously includes women, and therefore the female gender must be equal with the male gender in all the aspects of Spirit ordained Christian ministry. *Philip’s Daughters* is a highly recommended book to be read by Pentecostal ministers, men and women alike, particularly those that are in leadership positions in their denomination. This title brings an immense challenge to those who are still resisting the clergy ordination and the leadership role that women could avail since they also receive their call from God who poured out the Holy Spirit to the sons and the daughters, to the male servants and female servants, in order that they may all prophesy.

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