

Martin William Mittelstadt, *Reading Luke-Acts in the Pentecostal Tradition* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), paperback, xiv + 218 pp., ISBN: 9780981965178, US\$ 14.95.

This volume is a first of its kind. Although Pentecostal scholarship has focused on the exploration of Luke-Acts, as expected due to these New Testament books' influence on the experience of the Holy Spirit, there is no title written on how Pentecostals have been involved in the investigation of Lukan writings. *Reading Luke-Acts in the Pentecostal Tradition* bridges this gap in Pentecostal academy and the study of Luke-Acts as a whole. The scope of Martin William Mittelstadt's work starts with Azusa Street and concludes with current Pentecostal contributions to the interpretation of Luke-Acts. While mainline Protestants have the proclivity to illuminate the writings of the New Testament through the lenses of the Apostle Paul, Classical Pentecostals view their encounter of the Spirit as biblically based on Luke-Acts. A full book should be devoted to how Pentecostals interpret their experience in relationship with the New Testament, especially the Acts of the Apostles.

Mittelstadt introduces the development and the trajectory of Pentecostal scholarship. The response of Pentecostals to James Dunn's *Baptism in the Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* is the start of serious Pentecostal academic reflection about their experience based on Luke-Acts (3-4). The pioneering studies of Gordon Fee, Roger Stronstad, Howard Ervin and James Shelton responded to the Evangelical critique of the Pentecostal distinctive doctrines (4). The author surveys the development and status of scholarship in Luke-Acts in the twentieth century (7-11). He also gives trails of Pentecostal theology with the notion that Luke-Acts will certainly play a significant part in any path that academic Pentecostals will pursue in their studies (11-16). The result of Mittelstadt's presentation of the information that he gathers, as well as his interpretation of this data, seems to be predictable and inevitable because of the Pentecostal movement's limited reliance on Luke-Acts for their experience of Spirit baptism.

Four chapters are devoted to the "History and Trajectory of Pentecostal Contributions to Luke-Acts Research." Mittelstadt uses the

first chapter to present the pre-Dunn's publication of *Baptism in the Spirit* (see 18-45). It covers Charles Parham and Azusa Street's interpretation of the Pentecostal experience down to the Pentecostal pioneers and apologists during the pre-1970 period. He further includes the "new issue" that gave birth to "Jesus Only" doctrine. The historicity of Luke-Acts was upheld by Pentecostal pioneers as well as the evidential tongues. The expositions of the pioneers on baptism in the Spirit are more for preaching and devotionals. The preservation of the Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues as initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit continued to develop based on the study of the patterns in the Acts of the Apostles. The first, second and third generations of Pentecostals never compromised tongues as biblical evidence.

Chapter two deals with the Pentecostal scholars' interactions with James Dunn as they get involved in serious historical-critical scholarship. The Dunn factor is unavoidable. This is clearly notable as Mittelstadt evaluates the responses of Fee, Stronstad, Ervin, Shelton, Menzies and Turner to Dunn and the academic status of the research in Luke-Acts (49-63). The author also views that there are three persistent questions about the Pentecostal experience and scholarly endeavor. The first is cessationism of tongues and the miraculous (64-68). The second is the lasting justification of the experience of Spirit baptism (68-77). And third is the legitimate methodology of interpreting the Pentecostal experience in the Bible (77-79). These issues debated within the context of Evangelicalism and the challenges brought by Dunn will continue to get attention among Pentecostal thinkers. However, Mittelstadt correctly asserts that current "new paradigms" and "postmodern shift" open up a methodological fit for them (80).

Mittelstadt brings to the front Pentecostal scholarship's attention to literary criticism in the study of Luke-Acts in the following chapter (see 81-113). In other words, he sees how Pentecostal thinkers are now liberated from historical-critical methodology of Evangelicals. The academic quest of Pentecostals is now going into new territory as they are now "out of the shadows" of the Evangelical emphasis on the historicity of the Bible. The use of narratology is becoming extensive among Pentecostal scholars. The use of Luke-Acts in reading the missions endeavor of Pentecostals receives help from a narrative approach to the Bible. Healing and exorcism, women in ministry, spiritual development and even oneness theology are being influenced

by literary studies and narrative criticism. The belief that Acts is a normative text and the basis of a biblical paradigm suited the Pentecostal pursuit of using a literary approach to articulate their faith and experience. The conversation between science and religion is opened up by the narrative theology that Pentecostal thinkers are now employing.

The fourth chapter itemizes the other academic interests of Pentecostals. They are consistent in using Luke-Acts in their study. Because the Pentecostal experience is exclusively anchored in the Lukan writings, Pentecostals cannot depart from what Luke and Acts have to say to the issues of social justice and sound ethics, making peace and understanding suffering, persecution and ecumenism, as well as interreligious dialogue and the postmodern age in a global context (see 115-149). Pentecostals have not shown any hesitancy in stretching the boundaries of doctrine and practice. Through their innovations and insights, Pentecostal thinkers bring with them new answers to old questions of life that are once again ringing in a postmodern worldwide milieu. The capability of Pentecostal faith and practice to survive in a different context in the contemporary setting is due to the adaptability and flexibility of understanding what the Holy Spirit is doing. The Spirit of God can go wherever he wills as the wind blows wherever it wills.

The last section of the volume describes the current status of research in Luke-Acts (see 150 ff). Without a doubt, Pentecostals will continue to contribute to the study of the Lukan writings. Pentecostal scholarship holds a lot of promise in the academic pursuit of Luke-Acts. There are openings for Pentecostals to do research on healing and the miraculous in the context of social transformation. The identity of Pentecostals within the framework of global Christianity is becoming its charismatic face (152). Other matters, such as socio-economic issues and race-immigration displacements, could also be addressed using the Luke-Acts narrative. World politics and interreligious dialogue can also receive comments from Pentecostal thinkers using the lenses of Luke-Acts. In other words, there are so many new possibilities for Pentecostal studies in the global context of the world today.

Mittelstadt also furnishes an epilogue, "A Not So Final Word," emphasizing the open-ended necessity of dialogue where Pentecostals participate. He believes that "Meanings born in dialogue should never

be finalized, that is, ended once for all” (163). He also provides an appendix for useful commentaries and pastoral tools for Pentecostals (165-169). His bibliography is extensive, and the indices are helpful to easily navigate the book to locate topics or passages that are of interest to the reader. In general, this volume meets the expectation of the reviewer. It provides a comprehensive coverage of the Pentecostal scholarship in Luke-Acts. Its usefulness as a tool is exceptional.

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