

Ivan Satyavrata, *Pentecostals and the Poor: Reflections from the Indian Context* with foreword by Byron Klaus. Baguio City: APTS Press, 2017. 74 pp.

This book was written as a product of the author's theological reflection of Pentecostal social engagement among the poor. This book is comprised of four chapters that were originally presented as papers during the General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Theological Association (APTA) in Changmai, Thailand in 2011. Ivan Satyavrata is qualified as an author to write this book because of the author's ministry immersion in the "flesh and blood" struggle of Indian people and his long theological journey as a Pentecostal scholar. As a Pentecostal scholar, he wrestled with two important questions in the area of social engagement: the interplay of evangelism and social concern that is both faithful to the biblical tradition and mission engagement, and Satyavrata interrogates whether there is distinctive element in Pentecostal leadership training that impact leadership development (vii). Byron Klaus, in the foreword of the book, positively summarizes the content of the book by saying that it has "a missiological focus, it is contextually dynamic, it exhibits contemporary awareness, it demonstrates biblical and theological rootedness and it affirms the vitality of Pentecostal life" (x).

The first chapter of the book is devoted to the Pentecostal tradition of social engagement. Satyavrata argued that for Pentecostals to frame a theology of social engagement among the poor, one has to revisit the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (2) as the foundational basis of Pentecostal traditioning. For Satyavrata, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) was the driving force and the "engine" that fueled the emergence of Pentecostalism and its mission endeavors. The result of the growth of Indian Pentecostalism was a very good case of the impact of this Pentecostal traditioning. Satyavrata acknowledged Pentecostal scholars like Simon Chan and John Carpenter who first argued the importance of the traditioning process within Pentecostals, but Satyavrata argued that Pentecostal traditioning is multi-faceted and it cannot be confined to one tradition (8). Adopting the "pilgrim principle" of Andrew Walls, Satyavrata challenged Pentecostals from various traditions to identify their roots and connect themselves to historic Christianity. Satyavrata put forth the discussion that the experience of early Pentecostals provides a normative principle for the theology and practice of faith community, and thus, it provides an "adequate support within historical sources of the Pentecostal movement for a Pentecostal 'tradition' of social engagement" (9). Ivan provides evidence of his argument that Pentecostal tradition of social engagement has been obvious in the work of early pioneers of Pentecostals beginning from the work Charles Parham to William Seymour to the work of Pandita Ramabai of the

Mukti revival in India. Ivan supports his argument by using the scholarly works of Cecil Robeck, Douglas Petersen, Melvin Hodges and Miller and Yamamori to demonstrate that Pentecostals have a legitimate practice of social engagement (12, 14, 18).

Chapter two examines the Pentecostal understanding of mission from biblical perspectives. Satyavrata pointed out that although Pentecostal mission was not fully acknowledged and developed in the middle of the twentieth century, the phenomenological growth of Pentecostal movement has created a wide interest in studying Pentecostal mission. But the concept of mission according to Satyavrata is overwhelming (20). Therefore, to understand a biblical theology of mission, two important theological themes need to be examined to enable Pentecostals to frame their Pentecostal theology of mission. The starting point is to examine “the life and ministry of Jesus and to view the Church as the continuing mission of Jesus” (21). Satyavrata acknowledged the “already” and “not yet” reality of the Kingdom of God on earth, and that the words and deeds of Jesus clearly express the mission of Jesus and his Kingdom. After his resurrection, Jesus commanded his disciples to extend the rule of the Kingdom of God by proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God (23). Here, Satyavrata challenges Pentecostals to capture the holistic implications of Christ’s redemptive work and to become better disciples and citizens as an expression of the rule of the Kingdom of God on earth. The church as an empowered community of the Holy Spirit and as the continuing expression of Jesus’ mission is another theological theme that Pentecostals need to fully develop (25). The Holy Spirit was not only understood as the giver of life but as an agent of empowering the church to actualize the mission of Jesus expressed in intercession, reconciliation, and social transformation. The Spirit is on the task of empowering the church to bring the rule of the Kingdom of God on earth by destroying the work of Satan (28-32). Rejecting the concept of mission as a human enterprise, Satyavrata challenges Pentecostals to be committed to the *Missio Dei* of God and cooperate, continue, and complete the mission of Christ on earth (33).

Satyavrata continued to argue in the third chapter of his book that the success of the Pentecostal movement depends on its outreaches for those living in the lower strata of the society. Although Pentecostals, in general, are doers rather than reflective thinkers, Satyavrata raises some prominent reasons why Pentecostals did not develop a fuller theology of social engagement. Pentecostals tend to be more pessimistic than liberals with respect to their eschatology and apolitical strand, their affinity to Evangelical conviction and their “other worldly” mentality that prioritize the salvation of the soul (39). This perspective, along with the negative influence of the prosperity gospel and the tension between the relationship of evangelism and social concern, has contributed to the late development of the theology of social engagement (40). Satyavrata

therefore proposes three strategies that outline Pentecostal theology of social engagement; First, a biblical theology that is rooted in social ethics; (43) Second, a historically attested social conscience, (48) and third, a socially transforming spirituality (50). These three proposals will empower Pentecostals to be at the cutting edge of Christian mission.

Finally, in chapter four, Satyavrata made an appeal to Pentecostal theological educators to steward the legacy that was handed down by the early Pentecostals (57-58). To effectively ensure the shaping of Pentecostal church and mission in the twenty first century, Satyavrata offered four insightful recommendations about the shape and form of theological education: a theological education (TE) that serves all the people, (60) a vocationally diversified TE that includes every level of leadership and ministry in the Body of Christ, (62-63) a TE that equips the church in mission for effective verbal and social witness, (66-67) and a TE that effects holistic transformation for the whole person (68-69). Satyavrata concludes his book by recognizing the important role of “church leaders, laymen and grassroots practitioners to initiate this radical movement of change” (73-74).

Satyavrata’s critical analysis on the role of Pentecostals in empowering the lives of the poor was rooted and built-up from the minds of seasoned scholars and practitioners in the field of mission. His scholarly research and up-to-date perspective inform Pentecostals the way we do the mission of Jesus among the poor. Satyavrata, as a grassroots practitioner was well-informed about the social issues that people were facing. Poverty is indeed a major problem in Asia. Therefore, this book is an excellent working document that informs Pentecostals in the Asia Pacific region on how they should frame their theology and mission in serving the poor people in Asia.

I wish, however, that Satyavrata would have provided cases of actual social engagement of Pentecostals to show that there are increasing and growing models of social engagement by Pentecostals. Reviewing literatures that describes the theology and mission of Pentecostals is not enough to convince Christian readers that Pentecostals are indeed doing social engagement. This book must be corroborated with reports, case studies, and stories of actual social engagement of Pentecostal churches. This was, I think, a weakness of this book. But overall, the book is an excellent resource for Pentecostal leaders, laymen, and practitioners who are interested in serving the poor in Asia.

Reviewed by Joel Tejado