

Samuel Lee, *A New Kind of Pentecostalism: Promoting Dialogue for Change* (Amsterdam: Foundation University Press, 2016). vi + 127pp. \$16.99 paperback.

Dr. Samuel Lee fulfills many roles. He is a pastor, sociologist, human rights activist, author and public speaker. In this informative and practical book, Lee is also manifestly and unashamedly, Pentecostal. In his Pentecostal zeal, however, he observed that some things were out of balance. He notes that the miraculous draws a lot of attention in contrast to education and integrity. Lee's concern is that Pentecostalism "needs new ways to approach the intriguing, perplexing, and multidimensional complexity of our world" (iv), hence his purpose for writing. In 127 pages, he writes for "everyone who has a passion for Pentecostalism and who are concerned about the current day condition of Pentecostalism" (vi).

Lee's book is divided into three parts as follows: Part One: The Desire for Balance, Part Two: Rethinking Theology and Part Three: Promoting Change.

There are fourteen chapters with each beginning with a quotation from a well-known figure. Lee observes how many in Pentecostalism have shifted into the area of experience and feeling. Such a shift has led many sincere believers to fall prey to being manipulated by a preacher and even passing judgment on a church service. He states that the 1906 Pentecostal revival was mainly experiential as opposed to theological and as Peter concluded the day of Pentecost with a strong, sound theological sermon, so a deeper understanding of the Scriptures combined with the experience of the Holy Spirit is necessary to counteract the growing emotionalism in the church.

The trait of exaggerating is a characteristic with particular reference to numbers and claims of miracles and healings. Lee rightly states that an exaggeration is a form of lying and therefore violates one of the Ten Commandments, namely not bearing false witness. It might have been helpful though if, additionally, he cited the appropriate Scripture reference.

Following on from exaggerated claims, Lee observes that a "performance-virus" has infected Western Pentecostalism whose symptoms are church membership counts, the size of church buildings and the preacher's performance and tithing (13). Again the author's honesty shines through together with his insightfulness in reminding the reader that Christians need to remember that they are first and foremost, human beings.

Surprisingly, the author devotes just four pages to chapter four, which addresses "Miracles, Signs & Wonders." It is the shortest chapter

in the book and yet Pentecostals are known for their belief and expectation of such phenomena. He rightly exposes that many people can become individualistic in their experience of the miraculous and so stresses the importance of seeing such in the context of an expression of God's love. Lee exposes two areas which exploit the miraculous, namely that of commercial gain through Christian books and television, and also through "witchcraft" where prayers are offered by Christians to God for marriage break-ups and even the death of enemies.

He concludes Part One in highlighting the trait of idolizing preachers and ministries and after summarizing, counsels the reader to approach Part Two with an open mind as the content may intimidate some.

Lee rightly points out that "religions of all types attempt to divide people" (43) and they require submission to their rules and contrasts how Jesus was different. However, he omits the mention of repentance in this context and leaves Jesus' words about adultery unqualified. By his admission, Lee is an advocate of "classical marriage" and its values but believes Pentecostals should not "create a judgmental atmosphere if our young generation makes such choices" in case they are "forced either to leave the church or to become hypocrites and lead secret lives" (46). It perhaps might have been helpful if he added a qualification which teaches that cohabitation is sin and damages one's testimony.

As a book about Pentecostalism, surprisingly only six pages are devoted to a chapter about the Holy Spirit. In this chapter, Lee introduces the concept of "Pneuma centrism" and admits his guilt of succumbing to it. However, he shows concern and provides practical wisdom as to a way forward away from Pneuma centrism while constructively criticizing Pentecostals and Pentecostalism.

Regarding interpreting Scripture, Lee rightly asserts that people can be inconsistent in their bible interpretation and states that he reads the Bible "only through the eyes of Jesus Christ" (66). Given this, however, Lee could be perceived as not advocating interpreting the Bible in its context/genre in the light of Christ. While offering useful insights into difficult Scriptures through examining them in the Aramaic text, he perhaps is deviating from the theme of the book. Also, there is a consensus that disputes the premise that the New Testament was written in Aramaic and then translated into Greek.

In chapter eleven, he gives an excellent explanation of culture, but perhaps digresses from the emphasis on Pentecostalism as the material is relevant and applicable to all Christians irrespective of their denominational background. The suggestion of rethinking vocabulary together with practical examples is something everyone could adapt to assist in promoting change. He concludes the book with a summary of

the material and with a "tentative statement of faith" which could be true of believers who don't identify themselves as Pentecostals.

Lee succeeds in fulfilling the book's purpose, but one could argue that the "new kind of Pentecostalism" he espouses isn't new, albeit new to many believers and churches. Not all Pentecostals have fallen prey to the excesses and errors mentioned, so this new kind of Pentecostalism is not new to them. It would have been helpful if he defined the term "carpet-time"(6) and perhaps reworded the statement that if Jesus was on earth today that "He would maintain fellowship with a Muslim" (35). Evidence perhaps should have been provided to substantiate the claim that "some European countries plan to forbid pastors and clergy to pray for the sick due to unreality about healing"(9).

In summary, Lee is insightful, practical and honest which together with interspersed testimony provides a pastoral perspective to his writing. Overall this is a very readable and relevant book which makes a contribution to challenge both Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike.

Reviewed by Mark Anderson