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*Spiritus* is an Oral Roberts University peer-reviewed journal  
serving Spirit-empowered communities globally.

*Spiritus* ORU Journal of Theology

Vol 3, No 1 (2018)

ORU

*Spiritus*

ORU JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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# *Spiritus*

OSU JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Volume 3   Number 1   Spring 2018

*Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology*

**Volume 3   Number 1   Spring 2018**

ISSN: 2573-6345

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Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology is published semi-annually in March and September.

One-year subscriptions may be purchased at the following (2017) rates: US\$50 within USA; US\$65 to Canada and Mexico; approximately US\$80 elsewhere (adjusted, as needed, to cover shipping costs).

Subscriptions begin upon (1) release of the next issue and (2) successful deposit by Spiritus of the correct subscription rate and receipt of complete shipping information: subscriber name, full postal address, subscriber email address and telephone number (including international country code prefix). Subscribe at Spiritus Subscriptions — ORU COTM, 7777 S. Lewis Ave., Tulsa, OK 74171 USA. (Send subscription correspondence, including address changes, to the same.)

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Cover designer: ORU art student Hye Ji Byun, with assistance from Prof. Jiwon Kim and completed by Robert Bubnis of Booksetters.

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- Publishes studies from all disciplines pertaining to Spirit-empowered Christianity, from established and emerging scholars
- Emphasizes theological and cognate studies and works from and about Christianity in the Majority World
- Reviews pertinent scholarly works and some professional and popular works of merit
- Publishes scholarship to benefit especially Spirit-empowered Christian communities globally.

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# WHERE FROM HERE?

JEFFREY LAMP

With this issue of *Spiritus*, the current iteration of the journal accomplishes something that its predecessor did not: a second issue. For this, we who work on the editorial staff are grateful. It is indeed a blessing for this second step of the journey to take place as we seek to establish momentum. We are also grateful for the warm response to the relaunch issue last year. At this writing, over 130 downloads of the full issue occurred, with another 500 hard copies distributed. This has been an encouragement as we look to the future, seeking to publish significant studies that will help nurture Spirit-empowered communities around the world.

As editor, I am still “learning the ropes” of the position, including everything from the mechanics of our online submission system to big picture matters such as the articulation of the vision of the journal. One thing I have learned along the way, or rather have come to recognize more fully, is the number of scholarly journals addressed to the somewhat specialized audience of Spirit-empowered communities. Many of them have long track records of publication; to some of them I have contributed articles and reviews. In such a crowded field, I wonder what specific contribution *Spiritus* may make.

As a research vehicle of Oral Roberts University, *Spiritus* must ostensibly contribute to the fulfillment of the university’s mission “to build Holy Spirit-empowered leaders through whole person education to impact the world with God’s healing.” Clearly an academic journal has a larger audience in view than simply the student body of the university. The question remains, how does this journal fulfill the university’s mission outside of the confines of the university as it seeks to carve out its place among Spirit-empowered communities?

In order to fulfill the vision of both the journal and the university, would all articles need to be from authors who identify themselves confessionally as of one of the Spirit-empowered communities? Would

they need to self-identify as Pentecostals of one stripe or another? As of now, the editorial process has not used a confessional self-identification as a litmus test, nor do I think we should. If the journal is to help equip Spirit-empowered communities to fulfill their own missions, surely there is wisdom to glean from any stream of Christianity. But then would the studies themselves have to focus on issues and topics of special concern to Spirit-empowered communities? Need articles address that narrow band of stereotypical topics such as glossolalia, miracles, healing, etc., in other words, those typically “Pentecostal” concerns? But then, why can’t an article on topics not specifically identified as Spirit-empowered concerns be of service in equipping Spirit-empowered communities for their missions? Surely there are exegetical and theological discussions that might inform these communities even if the foci of such discussions were not addressing the particular pneumatological interests of historically Pentecostal-Charismatic communities.

As I peruse the contents of the first issue of the *Spiritus* relaunch and this second issue, I see authors whose primary confessional identification would not be with a Spirit-empowered communion. Moreover, there are articles in each issue that would not map as of stereotypical thematic interest to these communities, but surely inform them in constructive, meaningful ways. While we do indeed wish to encourage studies from Spirit-empowered authors on specifically Spirit-empowered topics, I would consider it a weakness if *Spiritus* became too myopic in its scope as to exclude constructive input from the larger Christian community.

In the previous issue I spoke of a few emphases *Spiritus* will seek to implement in its publication philosophy. One of these is the effort to publish studies of emerging scholars, those who have recently completed their graduate studies as well as those currently in pursuit of their advanced degrees. Another is a focus on the majority world, including studies addressing issues of interest to Spirit-empowered communities outside of North America and studies produced by scholars working within those contexts. As submissions for the current issue began to arrive, it soon became apparent that each of these emphases would be strongly represented in these pages.

In the final roster of articles, there are four that focus on Spirit-empowered ministry in majority world contexts, with three focusing on Africa and one on India. Interestingly, two of the articles focusing on Africa cite works of the author of the other article on Africa. Moreover, four articles were in whole or in part authored by international scholars. The authors of three of the articles are currently engaged in graduate studies, with one other author receiving his doctorate last year.

The issue opens with a study from a seasoned charismatic African scholar of Pentecostalism, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, who provides a candid assessment of the importance of Oral Roberts to the development of Pentecostalism in the African nations of Ghana and Nigeria. Asamoah-Gyadu's treatment is not a biased, blindly positive assessment; rather, it provides rather frank examples of both positive and negative influences of Oral Roberts on African Pentecostalism. This article represents another of the intentional foci of the journal, examination of the influence of Oral Roberts on the global Spirit-empowered world.

Following are two studies, one exegetical and one historical, that examine how the Spirit-empowered community has engaged two groups in the larger Christian world. ORU professor Mark Hall provides an exegetical study of the passages that are often cited in the heated discussions over the role of LGBT+ persons in the church. Hall takes as the point of departure for his discussion Paul Alexander's controversial Presidential Address at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. Hall stakes out a traditional interpretation of these passages, arguing that homosexual practice is incompatible with Christian faith and practice. It is my hope that this study will serve as an entrée into a larger discussion of how Spirit-empowered communities may engage constructively with people who identify both as LGBT+ and Christian. Next, Cletus Hull, recent Ph.D. graduate from Regent University, offers an intriguing historical study of the rise of the Charismatic renewal in a mainstream denomination, the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church). Hull surveys the rather underdeveloped pneumatology of the group's founder, Alexander Campbell, and contrasts it with that of controversial twentieth-century Disciples pastor, Don Basham, arguing that Basham's charismatic practice of ministry represents an injection of the life of the Spirit into a largely rational practice of religion in the Disciples of Christ.

The issue concludes with three contextual studies of Spirit-empowered ministry in the majority world. Alex Mayfield, graduate student at Boston University, examines the role of Pentecostal anointing in the power dynamics of African churches, arguing that the Spirit's anointing reflects mediatorial power structures that align with those of traditional African religion while at the same time offering the possibility for a break with these familiar power dynamics through the inbreaking of the Spirit that may lead to a democratization of power in African Pentecostalism. Next, Jeremy Bone and Samuel Lee, Master of Divinity and Ph.D. students, respectively, at Asbury Theological Seminary, examine the foundations and effects of the ministry of Heidi and Rolland Baker through their Mozambique-based organization, Iris Global. Bone and Lee illustrate that the profound successes of the Bakers among orphans in post-civil war Mozambique arise out of holistic ministry emphases grounded in three theological convictions: Pentecostalism, revivalism, and incarnational love. Finally, Brainerd Prince and Atula Walling examine the fruits of their ministry involvement in India. Shiksha Rath, an after-school holistic education program for children living in the Outram Lines slum of North Dehli, works among female children to provide them with opportunities to develop vocational skills and to model incarnationally before them the teachings of Jesus. Prince and Walling address the social realities of sexuality, gender, and marriage for Hindu female children in light of new life in Christ, with an eye toward exploring prospects for the development of a larger Pentecostal theology of human sexuality.

We are excited about the direction this issue has taken the journal, reflecting several of the emphases we envision for its contribution to the Spirit-empowered world. The Fall 2018 issue will be devoted to the 100th anniversary of the birth of Oral Roberts. Guest editor Wonsuk Ma is in the process of collecting several studies that reflect on the global influence Roberts had and continues to have among Spirit-empowered communities. Here *Spiritus* achieves its most distinctive contribution to this segment of the Christian world, critical examination of the work of Oral Roberts. Based on other submissions received, *Spiritus* will have a wide variety of authors and topics represented in future issues. The journal's niche among Spirit-empowered communities continues to unfold. It will be interesting to see where it goes from here.

# “YOUR MIRACLE IS ON THE WAY”

## ORAL ROBERTS AND MEDIATED PENTECOSTALISM IN AFRICA

J. KWABENA ASAMOAH-GYADU

*Spiritus* 3.1 (2018) 5–26

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**Key Words** *Roberts, miracle, seed faith, healing, evangelistic, crusades, prosperity, media, Pentecostal, charismatic, blessing, Christianity, Africa, Idahosa, Duncan-Williams, tithes, offerings*

### Abstract

Oral Roberts is perhaps the first North American Pentecostal preacher to have a truly global ministry. This article discusses his influence on Pentecostalism in Africa through the holding of evangelical healing crusades around the world and also hosting a worldwide media ministry through the use of radio, television, and the distribution of books and magazines. Through these visits and media ministry, Oral Roberts inspired and influenced many leading Pentecostal leaders in Africa, including the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa of Nigeria and Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams of Ghana. An important and enduring influence of the ministry of Oral Roberts in Africa, this article suggests, is in the theology of “Seed Faith,” founded on the principle of sowing and reaping, which was an important feature of what later became known as the prosperity gospel. In studying the ministry of Oral Roberts and its influence on the African Christian context, we have an important case study on the globalization of Christianity as a world phenomenon and its appropriation as a local stream of Christianity.



## Introduction

*T*his article is about how the ministry of Oral Roberts influenced Pentecostalism beyond the West, focusing on Africa. I first provide a very general impression of the ministry of Oral Roberts as a world-wide healing evangelist, pointing to pertinent areas in his theology and style that may be considered relevant for understanding his impact on contemporary African Pentecostalism. The article argues that although Pentecostalism in Africa is not necessarily an American import, the influence of American televangelism in the reshaping of African Pentecostal spirituality is not in doubt. My thesis is that the image of Oral Roberts looms large in Africa's Pentecostal story. The point is that in spite of whatever local content African Pentecostalism may possess, it is impossible, for example, to explain the neo-Pentecostal gospel of prosperity in Africa without reference to its North American televangelist versions. One of the key proponents was Oral Roberts. This article assesses the influence of Oral Roberts as an international Pentecostal evangelist on African Christianity.

I begin with a quotation about his ministry:

. . . from Manila, to Singapore, to Nairobi, to Santiago and Helsinki, the world of the 1970s and 1980s was saturated with the message that "something good is going to happen to you."

The gospel that found such worldwide favor was a hopeful, Christian affirmation that one is never too low to look up. God is a good God, even though all of life may seem to deny it; one should expect a miracle, particularly if more conventional means have proven ineffective. The proof of the message lay in one's direct encounter with the supernatural through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a "filling" that allows one to communicate immediately, directly, and frequently with God, bypassing intervening specialists and elites, including physicians. It was a message that had sustained the battered, defeated, poor whites (and blacks) of the South. It had offered them peace, healing, and the hope of prosperity—it offered wholeness.<sup>1</sup>

Oral Granville Roberts is a very important name in twentieth-century Pentecostalism, and the quotation above summarizes what his ministry was about and how it affected the world. He is widely known across the world for his healing ministry. Testimonies exist in Africa of Pentecostal leaders who trace their conversion and Holy Spirit experiences to his preaching. Ghana's Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, who is the pioneering founder of neo-Pentecostal or charismatic churches in Ghana, cites Oral Roberts among those who inspired his efforts, especially as a word of faith preacher, when he started Action Chapel International in the late 1970s. There is hardly a publication on Pentecostalism as a global movement or the personalities behind it that does not mention Roberts, the American faith healer, televangelist, and apostle of the Seed Faith gospel, as a key figure in its historical development. Oral Roberts made his mark through the media—both print and electronic—but also traveled to many countries as a speaker at mass evangelistic healing crusades.

Outside of the US, Oral Roberts would be considered as the Pentecostal equivalent of the conservative evangelical Billy Graham. They both traveled the world to preach Jesus and the salvation of sinners. However, whereas Graham stayed with the “born-again” message, emphasizing its eschatological dimensions of heaven and hell, Roberts’ message had a strong existential tone, laying the emphasis on divine health and wealth that is made possible through positive faith and seed-sowing or giving. The God of Oral Roberts was a God of miracles and possibilities, and religious empire building through mega ministries and structures was part of the new type of Christianity that he represented. If Graham preached the anger of God at sin and the looming reality of hellfire for sinners, Roberts talked about a God of miracles who was present in the power of the Spirit not only to forgive sin, but also to heal and make the faithful wealthy in this life. It is a message that now defines neo-Pentecostalism in Africa and that challenges the historic mission, or older, churches to look beyond their traditional preaching concerning wealth. The older, established Western mission denominations often presented wealth as one of the biggest obstacles to entrance into the Kingdom of God. In the new form of Christianity that Roberts represented, matters of sin, judgment, hell, and heaven

now lie subdued. The emphasis on existential matters meant the holiness theology of “retreat from the world” was reduced in positive faith preaching as wealth was increasingly understood as the “heritage of the true believer.”<sup>2</sup> What is projected is material blessings and empowerment for this life, and the preacher is usually the ultimate representation of the message.

## **Pentecostalism beyond the West**

Much of what will appear in this article applies to many parts of the continent, although the primary focus of this discussion for practical reasons will be the West African countries of Ghana and Nigeria. The media features quite prominently in our discussion. Ruth Marshall has written about how Pentecostals expend enormous amounts of resources on the dissemination of messages in forms that “excite and inspire, bringing technologies of modern media to bear on the issues and idioms central to popular urban culture.”<sup>3</sup> Marshall talks about how in the United States in particular “televangelism and intense mediatization of the Pentecostal message” has helped the movement impact popular culture.<sup>4</sup> To that end, Oral Roberts has not left himself without witness in Africa because his use of media in the popularization of a certain type of Pentecostal culture has been intense and immense. He may have started off as a holiness preacher, but it is for the more “mundane” side of contemporary Pentecostalism, the exercise of faith for spiritual and material breakthroughs, that Roberts retains a place in the African Christian imagination.

The sources of assessment for these reflections are the publications on African Pentecostalism that refer to Oral Roberts, personal recollections, and communication from Nigerian Pentecostal scholars who have made references to Oral Roberts in their work.<sup>5</sup> We will also refer to some of Oral Roberts’ writings. Many of them, mainly unauthorized African reprints, still circulate alongside the originals and are on sale in Ghanaian book stands and bookshops that stock popular Pentecostal material. Some oral information was also obtained from Rev. Dr. Seth Anyomi, a Ghanaian pastor, who for some time served as the Africa Director of Oral Roberts Ministries.

In the mid-1990s Harvey Cox, based on an assessment of the growth and future of Pentecostalism, wrote the book *Fire from Heaven*. He gave it the intriguing subtitle *The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century*.<sup>6</sup> I would suggest that the personalities whose ministries contributed to Pentecostal spirituality globally include many North American crusading televangelists such as T. L. Osborn and Oral Roberts. This essay makes the case that among the lot Roberts stands out for the way in which he very directly inspired and supported—including financially—Pentecostal churches in Africa, including some of the pioneers of charismatic Pentecostalism, such as the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa of Nigeria. These facts are difficult to contest because, in virtually all conversations regarding the historical links between American and African Pentecostalism, the name Oral Roberts stands out. His ministry inspired the establishment of many others around the world. His trademark message that God is a good God and that he wills to heal and prosper people is one that many still preach around the world.

## **Oral Roberts in the History of Pentecostalism**

Vinson Synan, one of the world's most distinguished historians of Pentecostalism, begins a recent article on Pentecostalism by noting that "Oral Roberts was a Pentecostal pastor from Oklahoma who gained fame as a healing evangelist, television personality, and educator."<sup>7</sup> In all three areas named, we can find connections between the ministry of Roberts and Pentecostal/charismatic churches in the world. I define Pentecostalism as any Christian movement that values, affirms, and consciously promotes the experiences of the Holy Spirit as part of normal Christian expression, in keeping with what we read especially in the Acts of the Apostles and Pauline epistles. That is exactly what Oral Roberts did. He consciously promoted the experiences of the Holy Spirit in his world evangelistic tours and media ministries. There are a number of areas in which Oral Roberts played a pioneering role in world Pentecostalism. These areas include: the organization of mass evangelistic crusades that focus on healing; the publication of popular books focusing on miracles, especially faith healing; the preaching of

what I now describe as “transactional giving,” which he referred to then as financial “sowing and reaping”; the use of modern media, especially televangelism and the distribution of books; the formation of the transnational charismatic group, the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International, which is now also a global movement; and the (in)famous neo-Pentecostal gospel of prosperity in which material things, especially wealth, became a prime indicator of God’s blessing.

Oral Roberts is described as America’s “premier televangelist” who used the proceeds of his ministry to build an accredited university “named after himself.”<sup>8</sup> Pentecostals the world over, initially suspicious of academic work because it tended to be too critical and dismissive of faith and the supernatural, have now followed the example of Roberts and own some of the best private universities. An invitation by Billy Graham, perhaps the best known American mass crusade evangelist of the twentieth century, for Roberts to join him at the 1967 World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin helped enhance the latter’s profile immensely. One of Roberts’ slogans, “your miracle is on the way,” was basically directed at the sick who were expectant of divine healing, but it was clear that he had incorporated into it the neo-Pentecostal emphasis on faith and prosperity. To that end, Roberts is credited with the creation of “Seed Faith,” which promised financial returns for those who supported his ministry.<sup>9</sup> The significance of Oral Roberts as far as the preaching of Seed Faith was concerned is that many American televangelists developed variations of that theme, including well-known names like Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, and Kenneth Hagin. It is reported that thousands of viewers of his television ministry committed themselves to practicing Seed Faith and Blessing Pacts with Oral Roberts. His ministry also circulated *Abundant Life* magazine, which carried testimonies of those for whom the Seed Faith and Blessing Pacts worked. Testimonies constitute a major avenue for the enhancement of charismatic charm in neo-Pentecostalism. The stories in *Abundant Life*, therefore, helped to increase the public profile of Oral Roberts in America and beyond. His Seed Faith theology allowed Oral Roberts to build a personal religious empire that included the City of Faith Medical Center at Oral Roberts University.

Theologically speaking, therefore, Oral Roberts is an icon of the Faith Movement, which taught that “Christians receive good fortune and good health because they had a right to expect such things from God.”<sup>10</sup> We are told that once when his view of Seed Faith seemed not to work because he lacked resources to build the City of Faith, Kenneth Hagin gave him an entire offering raised at a revival meeting.<sup>11</sup> That practice in reciprocal giving, in addition to the preaching of Seed Faith, has also developed as a subculture in neo-Pentecostal prosperity practices. Pastors simply raise faith offerings for other colleagues as a public demonstration that the principles of sowing and reaping work. In many cases, this has amounted to nothing more than reciprocal gift-giving as beneficiaries do the same for the benefactors when they preach for them. Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan Rose summarize the influence of Oral Roberts on American Pentecostalism well when they note that:

Oral Roberts, with his roots in hardscrabble Oklahoma, exemplified the origins of Pentecostal practice as it had evolved among the dispossessed, that is, the rural urban poor of the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. His genius lay in his ability to extend much the same experience of the Holy Spirit into the new blend of charismatic Pentecostalism, meeting the needs and desires of better off, more respectable worshippers.<sup>12</sup>

Oral Roberts is a leader among American Pentecostals who found biblical justification for healing in the example of Jesus and thought that in the power of the Holy Spirit diseases are healed, tumors disappear, deformities are corrected, demons of affliction are exorcised, and even the dead are raised to life.<sup>13</sup> His ministry, as we have noted, made a great impact globally. We now turn to how his preaching and spirituality helped shape the movement in Africa from the second half of the twentieth century.

## **Oral Roberts in the African Scene**

Matthews A. Ojo writes in his book, *The End-time Army: Charismatic Movements in Modern Nigeria*, that Oral Roberts was one

among a number of North American evangelists who visited Nigeria in the 1970s following Billy Graham.<sup>14</sup> The full import of the ministry of Oral Roberts for American Christianity can be found in other sources, including his official biography. For our purposes, I have selected those portions that have a direct bearing on his influence in Africa. Oral Roberts has had both direct and indirect influences on the Pentecostal/charismatic movement. Let us begin with his healing ministry. On that the entry in the *Dictionary of Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements* reads as follows:

Roberts' success in healing evangelism thrust him to the leadership of a generation of dynamic revivalists who took the message of divine healing around the world after 1947. His ecumenical crusades were instrumental in the revitalization of Pentecostalism in the post-WWII era. . . . Roberts' most significant impact on American Christianity came in 1955, when he initiated a national weekly television program that took his healing crusades inside the homes of millions who had never been exposed to the healing message. Through this program, the healing message was literally lifted from the Pentecostal subculture of American Christianity to its widest audience in history.<sup>15</sup>

Oral Roberts visited South Africa in 1955 where it was reported that his meetings attracted up to 125,000 people with his team recording more than 20,000 conversions to Christ. He visited Nigeria and Ghana too. He popularized the idea of the "healing crusade" in Africa. At the time the best known North American evangelist was Billy Graham. His evangelistic crusades followed closely the evangelical agenda of preaching the word of salvation in Christ and getting people to respond to him through altar calls. Ogbu U. Kalu specifically mentions Oral Roberts as one of the visiting evangelists that influenced the mass evangelistic healing crusades of many African preachers.<sup>16</sup> When he visited Kenya in 1968, a leader of the students' Christian fellowship working as a missionary in East Africa named his son born that year after Oral Roberts. That is what I mean by suggesting that Roberts did not leave himself without witness in Africa. The Oral Roberts healing

crusade thus amounted to a paradigm shift from the word-based type of evangelism represented by Graham. Roberts' slogan for the miracle crusades was "your miracle is on the way." Crusades under Roberts did not only dwell on preaching the word, but also encouraged families to bring their sick and afflicted to be healed.

## **Influence through Media**

Christians in sub-Saharan Africa first encountered Oral Roberts through his media ministry. Ojo discusses how prior to the 1970s, Pentecostal doctrines were largely confined to their enclaves and were thus of little influence. What led to the wider influence of Pentecostalism on Nigerian public and church life, he notes, was the influx of Pentecostal evangelists and literature from the mid-1970s. A lot of this material was sent virtually free of charge to anyone who ordered it. The thrill of being invited at the school assembly to pick up your parcel—which a lot of the times turned out to be from Oral Roberts—led to the indiscriminate ordering of these materials among primary school boys.<sup>17</sup> To put his influence in a more systematic form, first, Roberts appeared on national television stations in Ghana and Nigeria. These were not the days of media pluralism, and so without alternatives, his programs enjoyed wide viewership. Second, Roberts sent out his book publications to those who wrote to him, and in Africa one of the most popular of such publications was the book titled, *Your Miracle Is on the Way*. Third, when audiocassette tapes came into vogue, young Christians in Africa, fascinated with the then new media resource, received recordings of Oral Roberts' sermons. This was in the middle to late 1970s when a number of African evangelical movements, especially at the university level, were turning charismatic in defiance of the resistance to such charismatic experiences as speaking in tongues and the prophetic.

Today, the media has become part of the self-definition of the global Pentecostal/charismatic movement. However, in Africa, Pentecostalism as a media-driven religious phenomenon cannot be explained in terms of historical development without the story of Oral Roberts. His media ministry influenced many of the pioneering



founders of neo-Pentecostal churches in Africa, and he must be credited with the Pentecostal/charismatic theology of seed sowing in which it is believed that a person's blessing is directly related to the level of giving in tithes, offerings, and gifts "sown" in the lives and ministries of the anointed of God. The use of media, as Marshall explains, allows for the multiplication of narrative forms and the delocalization of messages.<sup>18</sup> The development of electronic storage devices, beginning with audio and video cassette tapes, made it possible for the easy circulation and distribution of Pentecostal materials across countries and among friends and family. Marshall succinctly articulates the effect of media in the development of religious culture as follows:

Born Again "communities of sentiment" are formed through Bible Study, and through reading, watching, and discussing sermons, tracts, magazines, and videos—interchanges that entail articulations and discussion not only of "correct" behavior and new regimes of personal and collective discipline, but also of new attitudes toward consumption, dress styles, aesthetics, and ways of speaking and moving. In the prosperity or new wave churches, these articulations are made with reference, often self-conscious, to a global Pentecostal community, and its perceived modes of worship, models of behavior, styles, and culture.<sup>19</sup>

In terms of its indigenous progenitors, the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa ranks highest regarding the personalities behind the emergence of the contemporary Pentecostal movement and its trendy prosperity message in Africa. Archbishop Idahosa was a protégé of Oral Roberts, and the former and his wife were both recipients of honorary doctorates from Oral Roberts University.<sup>20</sup> His encounter with Roberts' influence led to Idahosa's formation of All Nations Bible School in Benin City, Nigeria. Many contemporary Pentecostal pastors trained in that institute. Among the list from Ghana would include the Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, the pioneering founder of a charismatic church in Ghana; Bishop James Saah, also of Action Chapel International; Bishop Charles Agyinasare, founder and leader of Perez Chapel International; and Christina Doe Tetteh, founder and leader

of Solid Rock Chapel International. In Ghana Oral Roberts became known for his TV program *Abundant Life* with its catchy slogan “something good is going to happen to you.”<sup>21</sup> He was on Ghanaian television on Sunday evenings from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. In 1988, Oral Roberts visited West Africa, including Ghana. A report in the publication *West Africa* put the figure attending this crusade, held at the sports stadium in the capital Accra, at about 70,000 people. As noted earlier, a strong component of the teachings of Oral Roberts was the idea of “Seed Faith.” It was disseminated through the circulation of partners’ letters, popular publications, and his mode of televangelism. He stayed in touch with Ghanaian and Nigerian partners through customized letters, and as we have noted earlier, also through his books and the magazine *Abundant Life*.

## Higher Education

According to Ghanaian Pentecostal historian E. Kingsley Larbi, the influence of Oral Roberts on African Pentecostalism occurred in part through the formation of Oral Roberts University.<sup>22</sup> Classical Pentecostalism, in particular, was for many years self-identified as an anti-academic movement. There are stories in Pentecostal history of leading figures, moved by the Spirit, abandoning their studies in response to the call of God to win souls for Christ. The Pentecostal theological emphasis of “Christ as the Soon Coming King” led to an urgent attention to mission and evangelism in preparation for the *parousia*. The Pentecostal message was from the beginning very eschatological in tone and participants in the Azusa Street Revival under the leadership of William J. Seymour, for example, traveled across the US and beyond to the “ends of the earth” to win as many souls for the kingdom as the Spirit enabled them. The pursuit of higher education and wealth were denounced as worldly obstacles to entry into the kingdom of God. All that mattered in the early years of the North American revival was saving sinners from hellfire, and as some put it, they went out “to depopulate hell and populate heaven.” The eschatological agenda was evident in the preaching of the reality of heaven and hell, the futility of going after material riches, and the composition of

songs that spoke of the beauty and serenity of heaven and the suffering in hell.

When Oral Roberts started a university in Oklahoma, it broke with academic protocol in many ways. First, the building of a prayer tower in the university and the institutionalization of around the clock prayer meant a new integration of spirituality and academia in a union that the Enlightenment heritage of the West had frowned upon. Second, Oral Roberts University brought to bear on the agenda of the Pentecostal movement a new way of looking at the world through education, not just in Spirit-led theology, but also in other disciplines where it was believed that Christians were to be in control of the social institutions of the world, including economics, politics, and other areas of human concern. Third, the sort of attention that prosperity preachers started to give to things earthly automatically led to a weakening of the eschatological message associated especially with classical Pentecostalism. This is evident in the sort of prosperity theology that has come to be associated with contemporary Pentecostalism. Oral Roberts set himself an ambitious fundraising agenda to build a university that would stand as a testament to God's greatness and faithfulness and also train Spirit-filled and Spirit-led Christians as they sought to influence the world through the participation in public institutions, such as the areas of politics, economics, governance, engineering, medicine, science, and technology. The opening in 1981 of the \$250-million-dollar City of Faith Medical and Research Center is considered an apex in the ministry of Oral Roberts. The philosophy of the center was the merger of prayer and medical care in the treatment of the whole person.<sup>23</sup>

This agenda of spiritual control through education at the highest level first attracted a number of African Pentecostals to Oral Roberts University. One of them was Rev. Dr. Seth Ablorh, a medical doctor who returned to Ghana and in the early 1980s established the Manna Mission Hospital in Accra, Ghana. While still in operation as a "mission hospital," Dr. Ablorh established a Pentecostal church called Manna Ministries on the same compound as his hospital. In imitation of Oral Roberts' medical center, it combined prayer and medical practice in the treatment of patients. Oral Roberts' initiative in higher education has also inspired the establishment of Pentecostal/charismatic private

universities in contemporary Africa. These include Benson Idahosa University in Nigeria, Central University in Ghana, which belongs to the International Central Gospel Church, and Covenant University in Nigeria, owned by Living Faith Church Worldwide. The following brief from the website of Benson Idahosa University is very revealing when it comes to the influence of Oral Roberts (although he is not explicitly mentioned):

After the establishment of the Church of God Mission in the 1960's, Archbishop Benson Idahosa *received specific directions from God* to venture into the area of education . . . . By 1981, the vision of Christian Faith University (CFU), which was later renamed Benson Idahosa University, had matured in the mind of the Archbishop. . . . In 1992, Archbishop Benson Idahosa applied to the Honorable Minister of Education for a license to establish and operate a private University. Following this development, an expert team of academics and professionals was set up to prepare a feasibility report, an academic brief and develop a Master Plan for the proposed university. Operating as the Institute of Continuous Learning (ICL), the proposed University organized academic and professional programs for young students. Christian Faith University became Benson Idahosa University, and F. E. B. Idahosa became the university's second president. In February 2002, ten years after the application to start a private University, the Federal Government, acting through the National Universities Commission (NUC), graciously granted Benson Idahosa University a license to operate. The University started operating as a fully licensed institution in March 2002 with an initial student enrolment of 400, registered into two faculties (Faculty of Arts, Social Sciences, Education and Faculty of Basic and Applied Sciences).<sup>24</sup>

I have italicized the phrase “received special directions from God” in order to highlight that Oral Roberts made the same claim to justify the establishment of his university. Most significantly, Benson Idahosa made this claim around the mid-1960s; that is around the same time that

Oral Roberts University had begun. Furthermore, Benson Idahosa followed the example of Oral Roberts in renaming his university, initially called Christian Faith University, after himself.

There are many others across the West African sub-region. The establishment of universities by these new Pentecostals must, therefore, be understood as part of a deliberate mission agenda to extend evangelical influence into public space. Indeed, International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) in Ghana, which owns Central University College, is inspired by the slogan: “Raising Leaders, Shaping Vision and Influencing Society through Christ.” This is how its founder and Chancellor, Pastor Mensa Otabil, explains God’s word to humankind to “fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen 1:28). According to Otabil, “people who fill the earth are the ones who have influence.”<sup>25</sup> In the midst of many failed economic policies and corruption in Africa, the new churches focus on leadership as the key to the influence they seek to exercise in society as part of their mission. One such university is owned by Living Faith Church Worldwide, also known as Winners’ Chapel. Its founder, Bishop David O. Oyedepo, claims that God has called him to make people materially wealthy. This is very much a prosperity focus in the mode of Oral Roberts. His Covenant University, one of the most well-resourced in Nigeria today after just a little over a decade of existence, goes by the slogan, “Raising a New Generation of Leaders who will positively impact their nation, the African continent and the world at large.”

Action Chapel International, also based in Ghana, has named its new university Dominion University, a name that proverbially speaks louder than words in terms of the self-understanding of the leadership of the charismatic ministries and the mission of the churches they have established. Thus this agenda of influence fits very much into the dominion theology of the new Pentecostals and is now being expressed through their participation in and the administering of university-level education as part of a new Pentecostal mission agenda. Increasingly, the disciplines of choice in the new Pentecostal universities are management, economics, architecture, engineering, information technology, medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and education. These are disciplines and professions of local and global importance in the modern world of

commerce and in the expanding economies of Africa; these are the areas that are in demand. In an essay that focuses on new evangelical universities, Joel Carpenter refers to higher education as “one of the most striking contemporary forms of globalization.”<sup>26</sup> There are new universities arising out of movements for evangelization and spiritual renewal in many parts of the world, Carpenter observes, and any attempt to investigate the relationship between the spread of evangelical forms of Christianity in the non-Western world and the forces of globalization would do well to consider these educational movements. They are responding to global economic and political conditions, Carpenter notes, “and they are addressing local dynamics as well.”<sup>27</sup> My point is that the inspiration for this came from Oral Roberts.

## Oral Roberts’ Theological Legacy

The theology of prosperity has become one of the theological hallmarks of contemporary Pentecostalism. Although African traditional religions also focus on things to do with good health, wealth, vitality, fertility, longevity, and abundance, that is not the primary source of appeal for prosperity preaching in Africa. Most preachers of prosperity appeal to the Bible in terms of its justification, but as we have noted the human inspiration behind it includes Oral Roberts. The principles of biblical prosperity, according to popular neo-Pentecostal understanding, include sowing and reaping and positive confessions, all backed by a strong faith in the God of (im)possibilities. One of the books by Oral Roberts still circulating in Africa and from which neo-Pentecostal preachers frequently cite is titled *Seed-Faith*. The subtitle is very instructive: *Spiritual, Physical, and Financial Increase through the Power of Seed-Faith*. In it Roberts writes:

When I plant my seed to God, it becomes a driving force for me to carry out my calling, realize my destiny, and reach the God-inspired goals that I’ve set before me. Seed sown to God can bring miraculous results. I am a living testimony to the miracle of seedtime and harvest, of sowing, reaping, of giving and receiving.<sup>28</sup>

Variations of this theme reverberate from neo-Pentecostal churches throughout Africa. African Pentecostal/charismatic televangelism, except for a few cases, has been reduced to preaching about money in terms of the payments of tithes, offerings, and other forms of financial and material seeds expected to be sown for God's blessing. It is not just the fact that Oral Roberts was one of the leading advocates of this teaching that is important. Equally important is the fact that the publications bearing his name are reprints of the original versions from African, particularly Nigerian, publishers. Thus Oral Roberts may no longer be on Africa's television screens, but the principle of Seed Faith that he popularized and that informs much of what goes in the gospel of prosperity continues to circulate among Christians interested in that sort of discourse. The appeal of such material lies in the many testimonies that they contain of people claiming that the principles of sowing and reaping work. In the same book, one Alan from California testifies as follows:

I had never thought about my company tithing, but I sensed that God wanted to take my business into a new dimension of faith. Shortly after planting my first fruit check toward ORU debt, I received a contract with a profit margin greater than anything I had ever seen in my company's history. I believe this is just the beginning of the fulfillment of the vision God has for my business.<sup>29</sup>

An important and critical issue that emerges out the Seed Faith gospel is the fact that it promotes transactional giving for blessing to the neglect of a theology of pain and suffering that is very much related to the cross of Christ. It is instructive that at a time when we are revisiting the theological heritage of Oral Roberts in Africa, we are also celebrating the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's Reformation. The collection of money and the supply of prayer cloths, olive oils, blessed water, and the like that have been incorporated into African Pentecostal/charismatic prosperity discourses have their roots in the sort of presentations that people received from Oral Roberts and other practitioners of American televangelism. Consider the following comment

on how this Seed Faith gospel is translated into reality in Nigeria through the lives of those who preach it:

Suddenly the possibility of achieving private wealth through God's work seemed within reach. Many pastors now possessed fleets of luxury cars; presided over marble-tiled, air-conditioned churches, with the latest sound systems and Windows XP on the office computers; and produced weekly televangelism shows where miracles and divine healing were staged.<sup>30</sup>

The references that Marshall makes to luxurious living, televangelism, and divine healing are those things that we have associated most strongly with the ministry of Oral Roberts. It would be presumptuous to argue that everything originated from him, but the fact is that he represented the redefinition of Pentecostalism as articulated in this observation on the Nigerian versions of the movement. Additionally, Marshall makes another observation that is worth mentioning. She makes the point that scriptural citations were invoked by Nigeria's prosperity preachers to justify their material acquisitions. The use of proof-texts to support the prosperity message is something that those critical of it often cite as a concern.

Mensa Otobil's International Central Gospel Church celebrated its flagship convention, Greater Works, in July 2017. As with most neo-Pentecostal programs organized especially by the megachurches, it was heavily advertised in any imaginable media platform. The program was also very heavily patronized with numbers ranging from 20,000 to 30,000 adults attending the weeklong program at Ghana's Independence Square. The preachers were also internationally known neo-Pentecostals, including Matthew Ashimolowo from London. Unfortunately, more than a month after the program, what the general public was talking about was not the impressive and motivational sermons that came from the preachers. Television, radio, internet, and social media conversations centered on how one of the speakers had offered God's grace for sale by asking participants, during fundraising, to sow seeds ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. All this was supposed to be in US dollars, and people asked why God did not know that Ghana's



currency was the cedi. I heard many asking, “Why is God asking us to give him dollars in Ghana?” The commentaries did not stop there as some questioned whether the poor could be blessed since they do not have that sort of money. The truth, though, is that in Ghana, it is only the *nouveau riche* who can realistically afford such financial seed. The other thing that people questioned was the theological basis for grading the financial seeds according to the amount sown, that is, why does God not bless those who give \$5,000 more than those who give \$1,000? These are questions that have come up in other contexts, too, but the point is that in the principle of seed-sowing, we have been given a legacy that does not stand up to theological scrutiny in the light of the grace of God as far as his blessings are concerned.

In another book, *When You See the Invisible You Can Do the Impossible*, Oral Roberts talks about a theme that is also central to neo-Pentecostalism. It is a stream of Christianity that, as we have sought to point out, talks very much of success, positives, and possibilities. In that book he writes:

It was the awakening of my life and ministry from the rut of limitation I had allowed myself to fall into, when after my conversion God had given me His unmistakable call to preach His gospel, to take His healing power to my generation, and someday to build Him a university.<sup>31</sup>

All this Oral Roberts carried out faithfully. How much of it was attributable to divine mandate and how much to sheer ambition, we may never know. What we know is that apart from his own failures, there are a number of other preachers, like Jim Bakker of the PTL Club, who became casualties of the religious empire building ministries that Oral Roberts exemplified. Eventually, Jim Bakker failed and was jailed for fraud. On his release, he confessed that he had preached a gospel that in many cases was self-serving. He poured out his confessions and apologies in the book, *I Was Wrong*.<sup>32</sup> It will suffice to quote part of Jim Bakker’s opening words for our purposes:

For most of my life, I believed that my understanding of God and how He wants us to live was not only correct but worth

exporting to the world. One reason I have risked putting my heart into print is to tell you that my previous philosophy of life, out of which my attitudes and actions flowed, was fundamentally flawed. . . . God does promise that He will never leave us or forsake us, no matter what trial or pain we must go through . . . whether it be loss or reputation, loss of position or power, financial calamity, addiction, separation, divorce or imprisonment . . . . The mistakes I made are still being perpetuated in ministries, churches, businesses, marriages, and families.<sup>33</sup>

This sounds like an indictment on a message that may have been a blessing to many, but people seldom take into account of the experiences of those who have believed it but have been hurt by it because health and material prosperity did not come the way they had been taught. Most importantly those who preach this sort of gospel, following its proponents like Oral Roberts, do not share their failures and help their hearers make theological sense out of why things do not always work even after following all the principles suggested. In a continent like Africa, with its endemic poverty, corruption at the highest level of governance, and broken medical and economic systems, there is needless suffering. Faith in God is the only hope that people may have, so when they pray “give us our daily bread,” they mean it literally. Helping such people come out of the quagmires of life inflicted on them by those who wield power may be the best way to help them. Unfortunately, preachers exploit the same vulnerable people with principles of sowing and reaping that many have practiced for years without the expected results, keeping the cycle of poverty running by blaming insufficient tithes and offerings and demons for the unworkable principles that they are taught.

### **Concluding Assessment: Oral Roberts and the Pentecostal Heritage in Africa**

Pentecostalism in Africa cannot be assessed in totally negative terms because there are credible testimonies of people who have experienced empowerment inspired by the motivational messages first formulated by

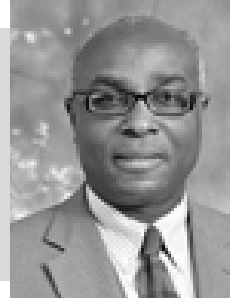
people like Oral Roberts and disseminated by modern media across the globe. To that end, I share Nimi Wariboko's submission that "regardless of what we think of the excesses and malfeasance of some of the wealth-and-health gospel preachers, Nigerian Pentecostal preachers have crafted a theology of hope to deal with the exigencies of everyday existence, to imaginatively transform dire socioeconomic conditions of ordinary Nigerians and to offer their followers a robust sense of dignity."<sup>34</sup> African scholars of Pentecostalism have often felt frustrated by the fact that in spite of their protestations and hard evidence in local initiatives, the presence of the movement in Africa has often been attributed to its North American influence. There are some who are unwilling to countenance the fact that, historically speaking, we cannot attribute all forms of Pentecostalism in Africa to the evangelistic efforts of the Azusa Street Revival of 1906. It is the title of the book *Exporting the American Gospel* that, for instance, led the African Pentecostal scholar Ogbu Kalu to write:

This is a stupendous claim that assumes that all the protagonists in the non-American Pentecostal and Charismatic movements trace their genealogy to Azusa Street and merely adopted and adapted the spirituality without paying due deference to the origin. . . . The most benign response is that the storyline ignores the clues from different regions that that same Holy Spirit started the process by manifesting itself to believers all over the whole inhabited earth without deference to any single geographical source.<sup>35</sup>

Whatever protestations we may have concerning the North American role in the rise of Pentecostalism in Africa, the effects of people like Oral Roberts in reshaping the nature of African Pentecostal discourses, theologies, and practices cannot be denied. There were pictorial images of Ghana's Nicholas Duncan-Williams and Oral Roberts when he visited Ghana in the early 1980s. We have also talked about an East African naming his son after Roberts. He inspired the African Pentecostal interest in the establishment of universities and was certainly a model in terms of the way media, in general, and televangelism,

in particular, are used by Pentecostals. One of the most enduring legacies of Oral Roberts in Africa is his influence on the preaching of prosperity messages, especially the formulaic theologies of sowing and reaping. This legacy, however, leaves more questions than answers regarding the workings of the grace of God. Oral Roberts will remain a historical figure of great importance in the development of world Pentecostalism, including its African versions.

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# A HISTORICAL AND HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH TO THE VICE-LISTS

A PAULINE PERSPECTIVE  
CONCERNING HOMOSEXUALITY  
AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

MARK R. HALL

*Spiritus* 3.1 (2018) 27–46  
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**Key Words** *homosexuality, vice lists, virtue lists, μαλακοί, ἀρσενοκοῖται, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:9-10, idolatry*

## Abstract

The subject of homosexuality is controversial in the Church, even among Pentecostals; consequently, there has arisen a need for a historical and hermeneutical examination of the topic, especially in the Pauline corpus. The vice lists of ancient literature along with the ones in the Pauline epistles provide insight into the apostle's understanding of their purpose and function. Of the ones where Paul lists sexual sins, three specifically mention homosexuality: Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, and 1 Timothy 1:9–10. This article discusses Paul's understanding of the connection between homosexuality and idolatry and provides an in-depth analysis of the Greek words *μαλακοί* and *ἀρσενοκοῖται*. It concludes by emphasizing the Pauline response to overcoming the vices he enumerates: follow the Spirit.

## Setting the Stage: The Importance of the Subject

Paul Nathan Alexander, in his presidential address presented to the Society for Pentecostal Studies in 2013, entitled “Raced, Gendered, Faithed, and Sexed,” discusses “constructions of race and white supremacy, diversities of religious faith, and constructions of genders and sexes together with the concomitant ongoing inequalities for females and limitations on discourse regarding LGBT+ realities.”<sup>1</sup> Particularly, he points out the various views of the Pentecostal Churches concerning a Christian approach toward homosexuality and argues for inclusive understanding and dialog.<sup>2</sup> Alexander concludes, “I am hopeful we can thrive as a society even as we argue civilly and charitably about biblical, theological, ethical, historical, philosophical, practical, ecumenical, missional, and cultural perspectives regarding LGBT+ realities both within and beyond the pentecostalisms we experience and study.”<sup>3</sup>

Certainly, dialog on any subject is to be welcomed. However, it is imperative that both doctrine and praxis emerge out of a proper historical and hermeneutical perspective. A valid and appropriate Pentecostal hermeneutic<sup>4</sup> is one that treasures Scripture and seeks a correct Spirit-inspired textual interpretation. To do anything else is to do violence to the Biblical text and to create a culture of scholarly eisegesis. What has been happening in recent scholarly pursuits is the placing of a filter over Scripture that ignores tried and true exegetical methodologies—ones that enlighten and enliven the text, that create space for revelation as inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that support interpretations grounded in Scripture. Gordon Fee, a premier Pentecostal scholar, and Douglas Stuart explain:

The aim of good interpretation is simple: to get at the “plain meaning of the text.” And the most important ingredient one brings to this task is enlightened common sense. The test of good interpretation is that it makes good sense of the text. Correct interpretation, therefore, brings relief to the mind as well as a prick or prod to the heart.<sup>5</sup>

Nowhere has this departure from truth and solid Biblical interpretation become more apparent than in the Church. Societal influences and the loud cacophony of voices advocating for special interests have replaced the reasoned and proven foundation of Scripture. Without rightly divided Scripture (2 Tim 2:15, NKJV), incorrect teaching and doctrine arise in the Church. A Spirit-empowered path leads to a more satisfactory and intentional interpretation of the Bible, especially regarding the treatment of homosexuality in the works of the Apostle Paul.

## **Paul's Vice Lists Compared to Other Ancient Literature**

Paul's epistles advocate righteous living, and he promotes this specifically through his ethical catalogs. By presenting virtue<sup>6</sup> and vice<sup>7</sup> lists in his letters, Paul clearly demarcates the means by which the believer is to live a holy life—one pleasing to God—itemizing what is to be shunned and what is to be embraced. According to J. D. Charles, “vice and virtue lists in the NT function paraenetically [as moral exhortations] in different contexts. They may be used for the purpose of antithesis (e.g., Gal 5:19–23 and Jas 3:13–18), contrast (e.g., Titus 3:1–7), instruction (e.g., 2 Pet 1:5–7) or polemics (e.g., 1 Tim 1:9–10; 6:3–5; 2 Tim 3:2–5).”<sup>8</sup> “Common in ancient literature,”<sup>9</sup> vice lists are “a literary form widespread in secular moral writings as well as in the NT”<sup>10</sup>—including the twenty-one “vices” listed in Romans 1:29–31 and the twelve “vices” listed in 1 Clement 35:5 and “even longer lists in Philo and in other writings.”<sup>11</sup> In the Pauline corpus, there are at least three of these passages that mention sexual sins, especially condemning homosexuality: Romans 1:26–27 (A.D. 57–58), 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 (A.D. 53–58), and 1 Timothy 1:9–10 (A.D. 61–66). As Paul delineates these iniquities and admonishes believers to reject them, he advocates they walk a Spirit-filled life.

Various vice lists exist outside of the New Testament, for example, in the Wisdom of Solomon, the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1 Clement, and the Didache. Similarities to the Pauline passages are apparent. In Wisdom of Solomon 14:23–26 (ca. 50 B.C.), the author mentions “unnatural lust” and “murder” (Rom 1:26–27, 29), “adultery” and “theft” (1 Cor 6:9–10), and “murder” and “perjury” (1 Tim 1:9–10):



For while they practice either child sacrifices or occult mysteries,  
 or frenzied carousing in exotic rites,  
 They no longer respect either lives or purity of marriage;  
 but they either waylay and kill each other, or aggrieve each other  
 by adultery.  
 And all is confusion—blood and *murder*, *theft* and guile,  
 corruption, faithlessness, turmoil, *perjury*,  
 Disturbance of good people, neglect of gratitude,  
 besmirching of souls, *unnatural lust*,  
 disorder in marriage, *adultery* and shamelessness.<sup>12</sup>

The Dead Sea Scrolls also contain examples of vice lists as seen in “The Community Rule” (ca. 150 B.C.):

But the ways of the spirit of falsehood are these: *greed*, and *slackness in the search for righteousness*, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty and *abundant evil*, ill-temper and much folly and brazen insolence, *abominable deeds (committed) in a spirit of lust*, and ways of lewdness in the service of uncleanness, a blaspheming tongue, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart, so that man walks in all the ways of darkness and guile. (1 QS 4:9-11)<sup>13</sup>

The vices mentioned in this DSS passage that are common to the Pauline corpus are “greed, and slackness in the search for righteousness,” “abundant evil,” and “abominable deeds (committed) in a spirit of lust.” For example, Paul categorizes some of these sins as “being filled with all unrighteousness,” “greed,” “inventors of evil,” and a description of unnatural lusts in Romans 1:26–32.<sup>14</sup> First Clement 35:5 (ca. A.D. 100) also incorporates vice lists, admonishing believers to cast off iniquities:

But how shall this be, dearly beloved? If our mind be fixed through faith towards God; if we seek out those things which are well pleasing and acceptable unto Him; if we accomplish such things as beseem His faultless will, and follow the way of truth, casting off from ourselves *all unrighteousness* and iniquity,

covetousness, *strifes*, malignities and *deceits*, whisperings and backbitings, *hatred of God*, pride and *arrogance*, vainglory and inhospitality.<sup>15</sup>

The vice lists in the Pauline corpus mention “all unrighteousness,” “strife,” “deceit,” “haters of God,” “arrogant,” “gossips,” and “slanders” (“whisperings” and “backbitings,” 1 Clement) (Rom 1:29–31). Of course, Clement is familiar with Romans since he quotes from the book.

Another detailed vice list occurs in the Didache 5:1 (A.D. 50–120):

But the Way of Death is this: First of all, it is wicked and full of cursing, *murders*, *adulteries*, lusts, *fornications*, *thefts*, *idolatries*, witchcrafts, charms, robberies, false witness, hypocrisies, a double heart, fraud, pride, malice, stubbornness, covetousness, foul speech, jealousy, impudence, haughtiness, boastfulness.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the specific vices Paul notes in the lists above as well as general categories for others (e.g., lusts) are also reflected here in the Didache.

### **Paul’s Vice Lists Mentioning Homosexuality (Especially Romans 1)**

Paul’s use of vice lists in Romans 1:29–31, Galatians 5:19–21, 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, and 2 Corinthians 12:21–21 hearkens back to a “moral tradition from the OT and Judaism especially from Deuteronomy,” not just reflecting Greek or Hellenistic moral writings.<sup>17</sup> Anthony Thiselton notes, “[W]hat most scholars call ‘the vice catalogue’ is better interpreted in terms of the Deuteronomic covenant identity and convenient obligations.”<sup>18</sup> He rightly observes,

Evidence of similar patterns of style and parenetic catalogues within the NT . . . owe more to a common *catechetical Sitz im Leben* than to the hellenistic settings. . . . *If the background is catechetical, this transforms the significance of such a “list” into guidelines explicit for teaching on the nature of the Christian life.*<sup>19</sup>

In other words, Paul's epistolary vice lists reflect instructions the apostle gives to the Church, by which he establishes a moral framework based on the Old Testament upon which he commands believers to live righteously. In fact, Brian Rosner concludes that "the Scriptures were an indispensable and formative source for 1 Cor. 6:1–11." He asserts that Paul "showed himself to have Scriptural structures of thought, such as the notion that identity must inform behavior."<sup>20</sup>

In three of his vice lists, Romans 1:26–27, 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, and 1 Timothy 1:9–10, Paul condemns homosexuality. In Romans 1:26–27, Paul notes the effects of these "unnatural relations."

For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions (disgraceful passions) (πάθη ἀτιμίας); for their women exchanged the natural function (φυσικὴν χρῆσιν) for that which is unnatural (unnatural relations) (τὴν παρὰ φύσιν), and in the same way (ὁμοίως) also the men abandoned the natural function (φυσικὴν χρῆσιν) of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another (they were inflamed in their lust for one another) (ἐξεκαύθησαν ἐν τῇ ὁρέξει αὐτῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους), men with men committing indecent acts (τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην κατεργαζόμενοι) and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error (the penalty . . . of their [idolatrous] perversion) (τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν . . . τῆς πλάνης).<sup>21</sup>

In the NASB, the Greek words φυσικὴν χρῆσιν (from χρῆσις) are translated "natural function" and τὴν παρὰ φύσιν (from φύσις) as "that which is unnatural."<sup>22</sup> The definition of χρῆσις is the "state of intimate involvement w[ith] a pers[on], relations, function, esp[ecially] of sexual intercourse"<sup>23</sup> and φύσις means "the regular or established order of things, nature," with τὴν παρὰ φύσιν translated as "one contrary to nature"<sup>24</sup> or "what is against nature."<sup>25</sup> In order to move the understanding of this verse from the individual and his or her personal culpability to a broader, more palatable interpretation that encompasses the book of Romans as a whole, Eugene F. Rogers asserts that Paul is here discussing Gentiles. He connects this verse to Romans 11:24 where the same Greek words appear and asserts that "God is acting contrary to

nature” because he is grafting the Gentiles to the Church. He maintains that “Paul’s sex-talk is about something else: ethnic stereotype transformed into another proclamation of the gospel. It is our own Gentile salvation that we misunderstand, if we mis-hear how Paul reclaims the language of sexual stereotype for his purpose.”<sup>26</sup> This lays the groundwork for Rogers’ argument that Scripture does not forbid same sex couples, and therefore the Church should embrace them.

A cursory examination of the text calls Rogers’ view into question. Romans 1:27 is connected with the verse before it with the Greek word *ὁμοίως*, which can be translated “likewise” or “in the same way.” Here Paul demonstrates that the “disgraceful passions” that cause women to participate in the “unnatural relations” of homosexuality are also responsible for “men committing indecent acts.” Douglas Moo observes, “Homosexuality among ‘males,’ [ἄρσενες, the same word used in the Septuagint when homosexuality is prohibited, Lev. 18:22; 20:13] like that among ‘females,’ is characterized as a departure from nature, . . . the natural order.” Moo continues,

Paul uses strong language to characterize male homosexuality: “they burned [ἐξεκαύθησαν from *ἐκκαίω*, a *hapax legomenon*, but has been used in writings apart from the NT to mean the ‘kindling’ of sin] in their desire [ὀρέξει, another *hapax legomenon*] for one another, men with men doing that which is shameful [τὴν ἀσχημοσύνην, used here and in Revelation 16:15, with ‘closest parallels in intertestamental Judaism’] and receiving in themselves the just penalty [ἀντιμισθίαν, ‘a payment in place of,’ here meaning ‘penalty’] that was necessary for their error.”<sup>27</sup>

Moo asserts that Paul believes this “penalty” “was necessary” because “God could not allow his created order to be so violated without there being a just punishment.”<sup>28</sup>

In Romans 1:24, 26, and 28, Paul acknowledges God as being active in His response to those who decide to follow this path of immorality. The Greek words *παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεός*—can be translated “God gave them over,”<sup>29</sup> “God gave them up,”<sup>30</sup> or “God handed them over.”<sup>31</sup> John Chrysostom, who according to C. E. B. Cranfield

is “specially strong in exposition of the explicitly ethical sections”<sup>32</sup> of Paul, understands this Greek word as God withdrawing His presence from the idolaters, thus allowing them to keep committing wrong and to dive even deeper into sin. He writes:

He “gave them up,” here is, let them alone. For as he that hath the command in an army, if upon the battle lying heavy upon him he retreat and go away, gives up his soldiers to the enemies not by thrusting them himself, but by stripping them of his own assistance; thus too did God leave those that were not minded to receive what cometh from Him, but were the first to bound off from Him, though Himself having wholly fulfilled His own part . . . . They perverted to the opposite what they had received.<sup>33</sup>

For Chrysostom, the one committing the sin is responsible for its consequences, not God. Frederic Louis Godet presents the following analogy:

The word *gave over* does not signify that God *impelled* them to evil, to punish the evil which they had already committed. The holiness of God is opposed to such a sense, and to *give over* is not to *impel*. On the other hand, it is impossible to stop short at the idea of a simple *permission*: “God let them give themselves over to evil.” God was not purely passive in the terrible development of Gentile corruption. Wherein did His action consist? He positively withdrew His hand; He ceased to hold the boat as it was dragged by the current of the river.<sup>34</sup>

However, Douglas Moo argues that these explanations place God in too passive of a role; he believes the Greek word demands that God acts more intentionally: “God does not simply let the boat go—he gives it a push downstream. Like a judge who hands over a prisoner to the punishment his crime has earned, God hands over the sinner to the terrible cycle of ever-increasing sin.”<sup>35</sup> As Everett F. Harrison and Donald A. Hagner observe concerning Romans 1:26–27: “‘God gave them over’ again to immorality, with emphasis on perversion in sexual relations. The sequence Paul follows—idolatry, then immorality—raises the

connection between the two. . . . Sinning against God results in their sinning against their own nature.”<sup>36</sup>

## **The Connection Between Homosexuality and Idolatry**

Earlier in Romans 1, Paul connects sexual sins to idolatry: “Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them” (Rom. 1:22–24). Paul shows here that “sexual sin, specifically homosexuality, is the product of idolatry.”<sup>37</sup> This connection between idolatry and fornication, a common one in Jewish literature, is also made in Wisdom of Solomon,<sup>38</sup> “For the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them was the corruption of life” (14:12, RSV), and “For the worship of idols not to be named is the beginning and cause and end of every evil” (14:27, RSV).<sup>39</sup> Idolatry inevitably leads to participation in the sin that it promotes: “In return for their foolish and wicked thoughts, which led them astray to worship irrational serpents and worthless animals, thou didst send upon them a multitude of irrational creatures to punish them, that they might learn that one is punished by the very things by which he sins” (Wisd 11:15–16, RSV).<sup>40</sup> These passages are reminiscent of the sin of the Israelites in worshipping the golden calf Aaron fashioned when Moses was in the presence of God receiving the Ten Commandments, an example of “idolatry [as] the source of immorality”<sup>41</sup>: “So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings [before the idol of the golden calf that Aaron made for them], and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play [participating in pagan orgies to celebrate their newfound god]” (Exod 32:6). Indeed, Paul believed that sexual immorality, especially homosexuality, displayed the highest rejection of God’s moral order. According to Richard Longenecker,

Likewise important for understanding Paul's rationale in highlighting homosexuality when explicating the connection between idolatry and immorality is the fact that Paul viewed homosexuality as the most obvious result of humanity's failure to respond appropriately to God's revelation in creation. For though it was often asserted by those who practiced it that homosexuality was "natural"—even, as argued both then and today, a legitimate feature of divine creation—Paul viewed such a claim as in direct opposition to the moral order established by God in creation, where only in marriage do a man and a woman "become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).<sup>42</sup>

According to Paul, this sexual aberration is the direct result of worshiping some other god. J. A. Fitzmyer observes,

Thus pagan idolatry has become the "big lie," and pagans have no excuse; their godlessness and wickedness have made them objects of divine wrath. Second, the condition of pagan humanity results from the moral degradation to which their idolatry has brought them: to the craving of their hearts for impurity. Their idolatry has led to moral perversion: sexual excess (1:24, 26a) and homosexual activity (1:26b–27).<sup>43</sup>

In "The Testament of Naphtali, the Eighth Son of Jacob and Bilhah," the author discusses how both Sodom and the Watchers "changed the order of nature," which resulted in severe judgment from the Lord, a clear corollary to Romans 1.

Be ye, therefore, not eager to corrupt your doings through covetousness or with vain words to beguile your souls; because if ye keep silence in purity of heart, ye shall understand how to hold fast the will of God, and to cast away the will of Beliar. Sun and moon and stars change not their order; so do ye also change not the law of God in the disorderliness of your doings. The Gentiles went astray, and forsook the Lord, and changed their order, and obeyed stocks and stones, spirits of deceit. But ye shall not be so, my children, recognizing in the firmament, in the earth,

and in the sea, and in all created things, the Lord Who made all things, that ye become not as Sodom, which changed the order of nature. In like manner the Watchers also changed the order of their nature, whom the Lord cursed at the flood, on whose account He made the earth without inhabitant and fruitless. (3:1–5)<sup>44</sup>

Anthony Thiselton also concludes, “What is clear from the connection between 1 Cor 6:9 and Rom 1:26–29 and their OT backgrounds is Paul’s endorsement of the view that idolatry, i.e., placing human autonomy to construct one’s values above covenant commitments to God, leads to a collapse of moral values in a kind of domino effect.”<sup>45</sup> This emphasis would explain Paul’s focus on homosexuality. Thomas Schreiner queries, “Why does Paul focus on homosexual relations, especially since it receives little attention elsewhere in his writings (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10)?” Schreiner sees both homosexuality and idolatry as unnatural:

Idolatry is “unnatural” in the sense that it is contrary to God’s intention for human beings. To worship corruptible animals and human beings instead of the incorruptible God is to turn the created order upside down. In the sexual sphere the mirror image of this “unnatural” choice of idolatry is homosexuality. . . . Human beings were intended to have sexual relations with those of the opposite sex. Just as idolatry is a violation and perversion of what God intended, so too homosexual relations are contrary to what God planned when he created man and woman.<sup>46</sup>

For Paul, the connection between the two is axiomatic.

### **The Greek Words *μαλακοί* and *ἀρσενικοῖται***

Two other passages where Paul mentions homosexuality in his vice lists are 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 and 1 Timothy 1:9–10:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (*μαλακοί*), nor



homosexuals (ἀρσενικοῖται), nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor 6:9–10)

. . . Law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals (ἀρσενικοίταις) and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching. (1 Tim 1:9–10)

The Greek word *μαλακοί* has been translated variously as “effeminate” (“by perversion”), “homosexuals,” “catamites,” and “male prostitutes.” Further analysis of the word reveals that the word can mean “males who are penetrated sexually by males”<sup>47</sup> or “being passive in a same sex relationship, *effeminate* esp. of *catamites*, of men and boys who are sodomized by other males in such a relationship.” The translation “male prostitutes” is considered by some scholars as “too narrow a rendering and ‘sexual pervert’ . . . is too broad.”<sup>48</sup> The word *μαλακός* also has the connotation of softness, and for Philo means to change “the male nature to the female, becoming guilty of ‘unmanliness’ . . . and ‘effeminacy’”: “The male becomes ‘womanish.’”<sup>49</sup> Philo writes that “another evil . . . has made its way among and been let loose upon cities, namely, the love of boys . . . which sin is a subject of boasting not only to those who practise it,” but also to those who “are not ashamed to devote their constant study and endeavours to the task of changing their manly character into an effeminate one.”<sup>50</sup> Gordon Fee asserts that *μαλακός* was “a pejorative epithet for men who were ‘soft’ or ‘effeminate,’ most likely referring to the younger, ‘passive’ partner in a pederastic relationship—the most common form of homosexuality in the Greco-Roman world” and believes the best translation of the word is “‘male prostitute’ (in the sense of ‘effeminate call-boy’).”<sup>51</sup>

The Greek word *ἀρσενικοῖται* that occurs in both 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 1 Timothy 1:10 “is a compound of ‘male’ and ‘intercourse.’”<sup>52</sup> It can be translated as follows: “homosexuals,” “abusers of themselves with mankind,” “sodomites,” “those who participate in homosexuality,” “male homosexuals,” “those who practice homosexuality,” “males who sexually

penetrate males,”<sup>53</sup> and “lying with men.”<sup>54</sup> The word can be defined as “a male who engages in sexual activity w[ith] a pers[on] of his own sex, *pederast*” — “one who assumes the dominant role in same-sex activity.”<sup>55</sup> Paul’s condemnation of same-sex conduct “cannot be satisfactorily explained on the basis of alleged temple prostitution . . . or limited to contract w[ith] boys for homoerotic service.”<sup>56</sup> The word “does not refer . . . only to sex with young boys or to male homosexual prostitutes, but simply to homosexuality itself”<sup>57</sup>; “it denotes, unequivocally, the activity of male homosexuality.”<sup>58</sup> Some translate *μαλακοί* and *ἀρσενοκοῖται* together in 1 Corinthians 6:9 as “men who practice homosexuality,” “men who have sex with men,” and “sexual pervert(s)” because they believe the words refer to the “passive and active participants in homosexual acts.”<sup>59</sup>

Some scholars have argued that homosexuality is not condemned by the New Testament. John Boswell asserts, “It is . . . quite clear that nothing in the Bible would have categorically precluded homosexual relations among early Christians. . . . The word ‘homosexual’ does not occur in the Bible.”<sup>60</sup> He argues that *μαλακοί* has often been translated “masturbation” and that the proper translation of *ἀρσενοκοῖται* is “male prostitute.”<sup>61</sup> Robin Scroggs believes the former word should be understood as an “effeminate call-boy,” and the latter as the one “who hires him on occasion to satisfy his sexual desires.”<sup>62</sup> Dale Martin takes umbrage at *ἀρσενοκοῖται* meaning homosexual “perversion” and asserts that *μαλακοί* should be translated as “effeminate,” someone who attracts male and female lovers. He sees modern translations as purposefully reinterpreting the text, avoiding historical context and inserting cultural stereotypes that are biased against the gay community.<sup>63</sup> None of these authors believes that Paul forbids homosexuality in general. However, Robert Gagnon counters this understanding of the Pauline texts by translating *μαλακοί*, “literally . . . ‘the soft ones’” as “effeminate males who play the sexual role of females” and *ἀρσενοκοῖται*, “literally . . . ‘male-bedders’ as ‘males who take other males to bed.’”<sup>64</sup> In his in-depth analysis of these Greek words, he demonstrates effectively their homosexual connotations.

Gordon Fee points out that this is the “first appearance [of *ἀρσενοκοῖται*] in preserved literature, and subsequent authors are reluctant to use it, especially when describing homosexual activity.”<sup>65</sup> Since

the Greek word does not appear before Paul's use, it seems likely that Paul has probably coined the term ἀρσενοκοῖται from the LXX ἄρσενος κοίτην (Lev 20:13),<sup>66</sup> demonstrating his knowledge and acceptance of the condemnation of the act of homosexuality in the Mosaic writings. The passages in the Septuagint are Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13: "And thou shalt not lie (κοιμηθήσῃ—lit., 'go to bed'<sup>67</sup>) (κοίτην—lit., 'in a marriage bed'<sup>68</sup>) with a man as with a woman, for it is an abomination" (Lev 18:22, LXX)<sup>69</sup>; "And whoever shall lie (κοιμηθῇ—lit., 'should have bedded') with a male (ἄρσενος κοίτην—lit., 'as the marriage bed') as with a woman, they have both wrought abomination; let them die the death, they are guilty" (Lev 20:13, LXX).<sup>70</sup> The Old Testament clearly indicates that "lying with a male is a general concept describing 'every kind of homosexual intercourse,' not simply male prostitution or sexual relations with youth."<sup>71</sup>

Even though certain types of homosexual behavior were acceptable in the Greek world of Paul's time, "Hellenistic Jewish texts are unanimous in condemning them and treat them and idolatry as the most obvious examples of Gentile moral depravity. Not surprisingly, Paul shares this Jewish aversion to idolatry and homosexual acts."<sup>72</sup> Paul's echoing of the Leviticus passages demonstrates that he views "homosexuality as a deviation from the Mosaic moral code."<sup>73</sup> Paul uses the Greek word ἀρσενοκοίταις as "a broad term that cannot be confined to specific instances of homosexual activity such as male prostitution or pederasty." In the language of the Old Testament "lying with a 'male' (a very general term) is proscribed and relates to 'every kind of male-male intercourse.'" The Old Testament forbids "every type of homosexual intercourse (including a consensual one), not just male prostitution or intercourse with youths." While Paul's emphasis is "on homosexual acts, he would hardly have considered 'celibate' homosexual relationships as legitimate; for this would be to exchange a man's 'natural' function for what is 'unnatural.'"<sup>74</sup> As Richard Longenecker observes, "Paul's attitude toward homosexual behavior could hardly be more adversely expressed. For he condemns it totally—as did also all Jews and all Jewish Christians of his day."<sup>75</sup>

## The Pauline Response: Walking by the Spirit

Paul's desire is that Christians overcome the sins listed in his vice lists, not embrace them. Even so, believers are not expected to resist these vices on their own. After his vice list in Galatians 5:19–21, Paul asserts that Christ-followers are to leave sin behind: “Now those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:24), and he encourages them to live righteously through the power of the Holy Spirit: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk [στοιχῶμεν] by the Spirit” (Gal 5:25). The Greek word *στοιχῶμεν* (from *στοιχέω*) means “to be in line with a pers[on] or thing considered as standard for one's conduct, *hold to, agree with, follow, conform*.”<sup>76</sup> It can be translated “*follow the Spirit*.”<sup>77</sup>

Believers' bodies—temples inhabited by the Holy Spirit—are commanded to “flee immorality,” for Paul, writing to the Christians in Corinth, teaches “that you are not your own,” “for you have been bought with a price” (1 Cor 6:18–20). According to Anthony Thiselton, the basis for Paul's vice lists in 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, “is not Stoic or Jewish ethics, but Christian identity as temples of the Holy Spirit (6:19) redeemed at cost to belong to Christ as his (6:20). ‘You are not your own’ (6:19b) is as far from Stoic autonomy as can be imagined.”<sup>78</sup> This forsaking of sin rather than its justification is a central Pauline doctrine, and as Robert Gagnon proclaims,

[T]he good news is that God is on the side of believers in sparing no effort to transform them into the image of Jesus. God both empowers believers by means of the Spirit, and motivates them through God's unprecedented accomplishment of redemption in Christ and the hope of a magnificent salvation yet to be revealed. The God who once manifested wrath against those who turned to idols by handing them over to their shameful passions has now handed them over to the life-giving, transformative power of the Spirit of Christ.<sup>79</sup>

Paul commands that Christians are to “glorify God in [their] body” (1 Cor 6:20). The Holy Spirit indwells and empowers the believer and provides for victory over iniquity and shows the way toward redemption.



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## Notes

- 1 Paul Nathan Alexander, “Presidential Address 2013: Raced, Gendered, Faithed, and Sexed,” *Pneuma* 35 (2013), 319.
- 2 Alexander, “Presidential Address,” 343–44.
- 3 Alexander, “Presidential Address,” 344.
- 4 The pursuit of a distinctive Pentecostal (or Spirit-empowered) hermeneutic has been a key feature of much twentieth and twenty-first century Pentecostal scholarship, ranging all the way from Gordon D. Fee’s “genre hermeneutic” (“Hermeneutics and Historical Precedent—A Major Problem in Pentecostal Hermeneutics,” in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, ed. Russell P. Spittler [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976], 118–132; “Acts—The Problem of Historical Precedent,” in *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1982], 87–102; and Gordon D. Fee, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Issue of Separability and Subsequence” *Pneuma* 7.2 [1985]: 87–99) to Howard M. Ervin’s “pneumatic and epistemological hermeneutic” (Howard M. Ervin, “Hermeneutics: A Pentecostal Option,” *Pneuma* 3.2 [1981]: 11–25. Reprinted with slight alterations under the same title in *Essays on Apostolic Themes: Studies in Honor of Howard M. Ervin*, ed. Paul Elbert [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985], 23–35.) to William W. Menzies’ “holistic hermeneutic” (“The Methodology of Pentecostal Theology: An Essay on Hermeneutics,” in *Essays on Apostolic Themes*, 1–14). A good article outlining the development of the Pentecostal hermeneutic is by Roger Stronstad (“Trends in Pentecostal Studies,” *Enrichment Journal*, 2018, n.p., [http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/top/month\\_holyspirit.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/top/month_holyspirit.cfm) [23 March 2018]). More recently, Craig Keener has proposed a more traditional approach of Word and Spirit in connection to the Pentecostal experience (*Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016]) along with more interactive models like Kenneth J. Archer (*A Pentecostal Hermeneutic: Spirit, Scripture, and Community* [New York: T & T Clark International, 2004]) and Amos Yong (*Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002]), who both emphasize a triadic engagement of the Word, the Spirit, and the community.
- 5 Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 18.

- 6 J. D. Charles cites thirteen New Testament virtue lists: 2 Corinthians 6:6-8; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:32; 5:9; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:12; 1 Timothy 4:12; 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:10; James 3:17; 1 Peter 3:8; and 2 Peter 1:5-7, omitting 1 Corinthians 13, because “it concerns the theological virtues and contains particular features of the ethical catalog.” J. D. Charles, “Virtue and Vice Lists,” *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), cranfordville.com, PDF, 5.
- 7 J. D. Charles (“Virture and Vice Lists,” 5) cites twenty-three New Testament vice lists, twenty-one found in epistles: Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21-22; Romans 1:29-31; 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:10-11; 6:9-10; 2 Corinthians 6:9-10; 12:20-21; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:31; 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5, 8; 1 Timothy 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 3:2-5; Titus 3:3; James 3:15; 1 Peter 2:1; 4:3, 15; Revelation 9:21; 21:8; 22:15.
- 8 Charles, “Virtue and Vice Lists,” 6.
- 9 Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 410.
- 10 Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 118.
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- 15 “First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,” trans. J. B. Lightfoot, *Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry*, 1990, n.p., <https://carm.org/first-epistle-clement-corinthians> (12 March 2018), italics added.
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- 21 Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text, The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 217. Translations in parentheses are from Longenecker.
- 22 All Greek references are from *The Greek New Testament*, 4th rev. ed., Barbara and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlos M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).

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# THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE MISSING FINGER

COMPARING THE PNEUMATOLOGIES  
OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL  
AND DON BASHAM

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*Spiritus* 3.1 (2018) 47–63  
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**Key Words** *pneumatology, Alexander Campbell, Don Basham, tongues, Spirit, renewal theology*

## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to reveal the initial development of the teaching on the Holy Spirit in the life of Alexander Campbell, founder of the movement named the Disciples of Christ.<sup>1</sup> Campbell's pneumatology must be placed within the context of American history in the nineteenth century. Beginning with the influence of the Cane Ridge Revival and millennialism on his theology, his pneumatology led to a deficient view of the work of the Spirit through the denomination's history. However, in the charismatic renewal of the twentieth century, Don Basham stood boldly against the rationalistic atmosphere of his church and became well-known for his teachings on the charismatic experience of the Spirit. Though the two people appear theologically different, the thesis of the article is that the operation of the Holy Spirit in Basham's theology reveals an added dimension to assist in the Spirit-filled growth of the successive churches of Campbell's movement.

## Introduction

This article is a comparison of pneumatologies between a founder of an indigenous Christian movement, named the Disciples of Christ, and a pastor who lived during the time of the charismatic renewal of the church. I will begin by exploring the development of teaching on the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Alexander Campbell, placing his pneumatology within the context of American church history in the nineteenth century. His weak pneumatology led to a deficient view of the work of the Spirit through the denomination's history, though he was surrounded by the influences of the Cane Ridge Revival and millennialism. However, within the charismatic renewal of the twentieth century, Don Basham, a pastor in the Disciples of Christ denomination, stood boldly against the rationalistic atmosphere of his church and became well-known for his teachings on deliverance and casting out demons. The initial section of the article contains the early history of Campbell's pneumatology. The second part unpacks the charismatic work in a Campbellite pastor, Don Basham. Though the two men were theologically different, the thesis of the article remains that the operation of the Holy Spirit is the amputated element of Campbell's theology that renewed Don Basham's ministry. Consequently, the renewal movement of the twentieth century, led by pastors such as Don Basham, brought the experience of Spirit baptism to the mainline Protestant churches.

The indigenous growth of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in America has a remarkable background and history. As Alexander Campbell searched for a way to end partisan bickering among Presbyterians in Scotland, his company of Christians became one of the largest church movements in American history. As Kevin Ranaghan wrote in his journalistic description of the movement, "one type of revival movement, called Campbellite, stressed the word of God well enough, but the word as understood and interpreted by 'good common sense.' From the somewhat more rationalistic revival emerged the Disciples of Christ in the north and the Christian Church in the south."<sup>2</sup> However, because the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) had a diluted pneumatology, the Spirit's presence was submerged in the past 180 years, limiting revival and renewal in its members.

## Cane Ridge Revival

To describe the milieu surrounding Alexander Campbell's arrival to America, a description of the presence and power of the Spirit in the Cane Ridge Revival must be advanced. In August of 1801, in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, one of the spontaneous renewal movements in early American history occurred. Disciples historian, Leroy Garrett, wrote that "the revival at Cane Ridge was as ecumenical as anything that had ever happened on the frontier, which was commonly marked with sectarian bigotry."<sup>3</sup> Though living in Ireland at the time as a youth, Alexander Campbell was later drawn to the revival's inclusive style because of its openness to all Christian sects. However, he was not impressed by the emotionalism. At Cane Ridge, Paul K. Conkin remarked, "they knew that to become a Christian a person had to endure an arduous conversion, experience the depths of human despair and desolation, in order to gain a joy and happiness that approached beatitude."<sup>4</sup> Though Campbell did not embrace this fashion of the Spirit's move, the rolling hills of Kentucky in the early 1800s presented a glimpse of the future Pentecostal churches.

Cane Ridge became known for its unusual manifestations of the Spirit. Though many churches were calm and quiet places of reflection, this experience was diametrically different. Leroy Garrett recorded in *The Stone-Campbell Movement* a graphic description of the exercises manifested at Cane Ridge:

They consisted of laughing and singing, the jerks, falling and even screaming and barking. The falling and screaming would sometimes go together, leaving the subject as if he were dead. The jerks were mostly a head movement, which sometimes agitated the whole body. Some people became amazingly acrobatic, for they would stand in one place and jerk backwards and forward with their head almost touching the ground . . . witnesses would see people on hands and knees in the woods, making the noise with uplifted hands, and would report that "they barked up trees like dogs."<sup>5</sup>

This event was a Pentecostal experience before Azusa Street was a reality. C. Dwight Dorrough, in *The Bible Belt Mystique*, added that “persons were very often favored with visions and heavenly singing.”<sup>6</sup> This early nineteenth-century worship was a precursor to what the twentieth century would encounter with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Yet, Alexander Campbell, an Enlightenment rationalist and devout reader of the intellectual philosopher John Locke, never incorporated emotional worship into his church.

Cane Ridge was a preview of the Spirit’s coming with ecstatic speech and experiences as a freedom was released on the American frontier. In addition, “the confusing erosion of basic Calvinistic doctrines and the emergence of such new institutions as the camp meeting”<sup>7</sup> were accepted. Thus, Cane Ridge was a precursor to the future Azusa Street outpouring.

As Romans 8:26 affirms, “the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.”<sup>8</sup> Though the barking and jerking seemed eccentric, the Spirit’s anointing may have fallen on a crowd without the knowledge of how to display the manifestations. Paul Conkin noted, “the forms of ‘miraculous’ speech, the holy laughter or sounds from deep within the body, took a form other than glossalia.”<sup>9</sup> The Cane Ridge revival paved the way for future holiness worship with singing, shouting, and prophetic words. Conkin adds, “these revival techniques involved new rituals—new hymns and new modes of singing them, lay exhortation and personal pleading with identified sinners.”<sup>10</sup> Certainly, Cane Ridge fertilized not only the holiness movements of the 1800s, but also the Pentecostal revival of the twentieth century.

This seminal event was a missed opportunity for Alexander Campbell. Though he deserted his Presbyterian and Calvinistic background, he never abandoned the approach of rational thinking in his religion. His theology not only truncated the Spirit’s work but also created an atmosphere that subordinated the role of pneumatology in the life of Disciples churches. As a result, the Disciples of Christ congregations contained few reports of such experiences in their 180-year history. However, a future Spirit-filled minister, Don Basham, would

claim, like Cane Ridge, that demons and evil spirits came out of his church members with shrieks and jerks. The miraculous manifestations at Cane Ridge would eventually come to fruition in the Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal of the mainline churches.

The churches moved by the Holy Spirit with the light that they received. As Conkin acknowledged, Cane Ridge was “a taste for ecstasy. The third person of the Trinity gained precedence. People felt the power and received the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>11</sup> Though Alexander Campbell was not a proponent of emotional religion (as his counterpart in the movement, Barton Stone, remained),<sup>12</sup> Cane Ridge set the stage for his church to grow. Stone, however, attended the revival and believed the miracles called people to accept Jesus as the Christ.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the ecumenical nature of Cane Ridge typified Campbell’s lifetime goal of envisioning Christians to become one (John 17:21). Because of Cane Ridge, for one brief moment, a glorious millennium seemed imminent. Christ’s kingdom had descended upon the earth and many people believed America was on the path of Christ’s second coming.

## **Millennialism in America**

As the nineteenth century progressed, Protestant Christianity in America manifested an increase of belief in the millennial kingdom. The word “millennial” came from the 1000-year reign of Christ described in the apocalyptic book of Revelation. Revelation 20:1–4 reads:

And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

Thus, the teaching of millennialism had its origin. In the 1800s the idea caught fire and a belief that the world was getting better transpired.

Anthony Hoekema aptly remarked, “as the millennium became a reality, Christian principles of belief and conduct will be the accepted standards for nations, and individuals. The social, economic, political and cultural life of mankind will be vastly improved. This golden age of spiritual prosperity will last for a long period of time.”<sup>14</sup> Alexander Campbell, a visionary frontier man, was of the belief that humankind was progressing to a higher level. Reason and philosophy could dissipate old societal problems. The *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* states that “Campbell along with others Americans, believed that in America, with God’s help, Christians would eradicate earthly problems and usher in the millennial age.”<sup>15</sup> This idea was his dream and goal. Douglas Foster observed, “in his earlier years Campbell actually believed that a millennial reign of peace and righteousness was in the offing, including a united church in America at its center. He saw his movement as a harbinger to that end.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, the name of his magazine was the *Millennial Harbinger*. He “saw the *Millennial Harbinger* as key to the dissemination of ideas that would usher in the millennial reign of God.”<sup>17</sup> His circular discussed the contemporary topics of his day such as slavery, education, the advancement of women, and anti-Catholic debates. In essence, the journal promoted his religious ideas and the cooperation he believed possible among the many Christian factions. His interests centered on social ills more than pneumatology. All the same, Campbell is an American success story. He enjoyed his life because of the optimism of his millennial views and founded Bethany College in Bethany, West Virginia. He was a trail blazer in his own right and the movement named the Campbellites became renowned for its emphasis on holy communion and immersion baptism. We will now investigate Campbell’s pneumatology.

## **Alexander Campbell and the Holy Spirit**

There is not a considerable amount of information on Alexander Campbell’s pneumatology. However, his premier systematic theology, *The Christian System*, contained brief thoughts on his portrait of the Spirit. He believed that the Holy Spirit “was GOD, the Word of God, and the Spirit of God.”<sup>18</sup> An old Campbellite maxim was *where the*

*Bible speaks, we speak, and where the Bible is silent, we are silent*; therefore, Campbell did not use the word “Trinity” in his theological jargon because the utterance was not identified in the Bible. However, he did have a sense of the Spirit in his writing. He confirmed that “the Spirit is said to do, and to have done, all that God does and all that God has done.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, his references to the Holy Spirit are few in comparison to Jesus, the Son of God.

Though he was not in the vein of holiness churches, he penned that the Holy Spirit “is designated as the immediate author and agent of the new creation, and of the holiness of Christians.”<sup>20</sup> He continues that the Holy Spirit is “the Advocate, the Sanctifier, and the Comforter of Christ’s body—the church.”<sup>21</sup> Campbell trusted that the Holy Spirit would unveil the Scriptures in his Bethany, West Virginia, study and open people’s lives to a new sense of oneness in the body of Christ. In short, he believed in the Spirit, though he had sparse thoughts about the third person of the Trinity.

Campbell’s belief system was enamored with the millennial teachings of the day. As previously noted, his published writings, the *Millennial Harbinger*, bear the name of the movement that dominated the eighteenth century, namely, millennialism. Furthermore, his interest in intellectual pursuits and debates caused him rarely to speak about the Holy Spirit. This lack of emphasis on the Spirit laid the foundation for a weak pneumatology for over a century in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Garrison remarked, “taken by itself, the phrase, ‘gift of the Holy Spirit,’ had a rather vague meaning.”<sup>22</sup> His analytical method of Bible study and worship created the cerebral personality of his churches. Garrison continues, “Campbell contended that in conversion the influence of the Spirit came only through the word. His basic concept was his Lockean sensationalism, as when he said that ‘our first argument in proof of our proposition, shall be drawn from the *constitution of the human mind*.’”<sup>23</sup> Thus, the millennial kingdom was to come, not with dynamic emotion, but rather with an intellectual pursuit of reason.



## Acts 2:38, the Five-Finger Exercise, and the Holy Spirit

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) originated on the American frontier in the early 1830s. Its mission was born from a passion for Christian unity among the diversity of an expanding America. Walter Scott, a fiery evangelist who traveled to numerous rural churches, presented a simple plan of salvation using his five fingers and Acts 2:38. Interestingly, Campbell embraced Scott as an evangelist he could trust. Though Campbell was a rationalist, Scott was his emotional sidekick. One of Scott's well-known sermons consisted of an easy way to recall the plan of salvation. He called it "The Five-Finger Exercise." The words of the apostle Peter in Acts 2:38 became the basis of his strategy: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Thus, Scott created a memorable message with five points—repentance, faith, baptism, forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit. Garrett noted that "the plan has undergone some interesting alterations. Some who honor the five steps have them arranged: hearing, faith, repentance, confession and baptism."<sup>24</sup> In this five-step plan of salvation "Campbell also, in 1831, gives Scott credit for 'restoring the Ancient Gospel' in the fall of 1827 by arranging the several items involved as faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life."<sup>25</sup> Winfred Garrison and Alfred DeGroot document in *The Disciples of Christ, A History*:

Scott's specific purpose was to show that preachers try to produce belief in the Messiahship of Jesus by presenting the evidence, instead of trying to induce a mystical state variously called an "assurance of pardon," or "assurance that Christ died for me," by emotional techniques, vivid pictures of the fate of the damned, and wrestling to win the miraculous action of the Holy Spirit to bestow saving faith on a mourner already "convicted of sin."<sup>26</sup>

Campbell had a unique opportunity to revive the Spirit's work in his ministry; however, he emphasized baptism to the exclusion of the other

points. The missing finger of the Holy Spirit is the lost piece of his theology. If Campbell had embraced the Spirit at this moment in the ministry of Walter Scott, he may have created a far more Spirit-filled church than the one existing today.

As a result, former Bethany College President D. Duane Cummings observed “in the twentieth century a great silence settled upon the Disciples search for meaning of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>27</sup> Just as the Spirit was silent for 400 years from the last Old Testament prophet Malachi until John the Baptist appeared, similarly, the lack of a strong pneumatology with the Campbellites created a vacuum of the Spirit’s presence and power in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In the history of the Disciples of Christ, the lost years were painfully obvious. An initial, deficient pneumatology created a church with little emphasis on the Holy Spirit. Without acknowledgment of the Spirit’s operation, there resulted a movement built upon reason rather than a strong Spirit-filled foundation.

## **Charismatic Renewal and Don Basham**

In the 1960s Dennis Bennett became the icon of the Spirit’s movement that was known as the charismatic renewal. The work of the Spirit operated in an ecumenical trajectory in the historic mainline Protestant denominations, including the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). One minister who became prominent and controversial was Don Basham. Attending the Campbell-based school, Phillips University, in Enid, Oklahoma, Basham was ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1955.<sup>28</sup> After receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, his traditional ministry changed. He prayed for demons to be cast out of church members. Many people believed his unconventional ministry was unbiblical. Even charismatics such as David du Plessis argued against exorcism since the cross of Christ was victorious over evil. On the other hand, Don Basham provided “an example of exorcism and the successful cure of someone who did not respond to conventional treatment.”<sup>29</sup> His authentic and genuine ministry was certainly an act of faith in an established church.

In his practical book, *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*, Basham answered relevant and honest questions for those interested about how the baptism in the Holy Spirit functioned in the Christian life. With thoughtful analysis, he describes numerous inquiries about tongues and the Spirit's work. He wrote, "this second experience of the power of God, which we call the baptism in the Holy Spirit, is given for equipping the Christian with God's power for service. It is the spiritual baptism for Jesus Himself, in which He begins to exercise His sovereign possession, control and use of us in supernatural fashion."<sup>30</sup> For Basham, Spirit baptism was the power that Jesus promised his disciples before he left the earth to reign with the Father (Acts 1:8).

Though Basham was a Disciples of Christ minister, he also believed in classical Pentecostal theology. He placed tongues as a paramount experience of the Christian and was not ashamed to announce that "speaking in tongues" should be normative for the believer. He taught that "the only clear scriptural evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues."<sup>31</sup> He did not evade the tongues experience but highlighted that Acts 2, 10, and 19 provide evidence for this theological belief. He discovered both power for service and anointing to minister over evil through the baptism. He emphatically wrote (his emphasis in capital letters), "SOMETHING IS MISSING IN YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT YET HAVE NOT SPOKEN IN TONGUES."<sup>32</sup> Thus, tongues was an essential for Christian living. Without tongues, one does not have access to God's thoughts (1 Cor 14:2). Basham proclaimed, "stated in the simplest way: man does the speaking while the Holy Spirit furnished the words."<sup>33</sup> Certainly, tongues as the initial evidence was the beginning and foundation for his ministry in exorcism and casting out demons.

A sequel to his first writing on Spirit baptism was another question and answer book titled *A Handbook on Tongues, Interpretation and Prophecy*. He specifically dealt with the spiritual gifts of tongues and interpretation in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. The premise of the book encouraged Paul's exhortation to "not quench the Spirit" (1 Thess 5:19). Additionally, he promoted the apostle's teaching to "be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Cor 14:39–40). The natural

cohort to glossalalia was interpretation of tongues. Basham remarked, “the gift of ‘interpretation of tongues’ is the companion gift to the gift of tongues. The two cannot function properly without the other.”<sup>34</sup> Through his numerous books, he related several stories of tongues and interpretation in his church ministry. Additionally, he added that prophecy is more edification than predicting the future. He wrote, “our national preoccupation with astrology, fortune-telling, spiritualism and the popularity of clairvoyants like Jean Dixon and Edgar Cayce have urged many Christians into a morbid desire to peek into the future.”<sup>35</sup> This profound revelation demonstrated both the care and balance Basham experienced in these specific spiritual gifts. As Paul penned, “anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church” (1 Cor 14:4); hence, Basham sought wise counsel in the apostle’s sage advice.

Basham’s emphasis on tongues was natural for him. He believed that one needed to step out in faith to receive the experience. Because of the rationalistic background of the Disciples of Christ, many neglected this vital gift of God. Basham wrote in *Face Up with a Miracle*, Paul “was describing a kind of prayer originating, not with the mind, but from the depths of the spirit, at a level not to be comprehended by the intellect. It was prayer ‘beyond’ reason.”<sup>36</sup> He declared, “To miss speaking in tongues is to miss God’s miraculous provision enabling you to pray with supernatural effectiveness.”<sup>37</sup> Basham’s answer to the importance of tongues was clear. He believed, “tongues seem to galvanize a spiritual expectancy and receptivity. People know they are about to hear from heaven.”<sup>38</sup> Tongues was a miraculous manifestation of humans speaking and praising God for personal edification (1 Cor 14:4).

In 1971 Don Basham authored a controversial book titled *Can a Christian Have a Demon?* An initial assumption presumed that a demon can live inside a Christian just as the Holy Spirit may. Hence, a debate over demon possession and oppression ensued. He believed that according to James 3:5–12 a Christian can have both an evil spirit and God’s Spirit. Quoting James 3:10, “out of the same mouth come praise and cursing,” he made note that both a good spirit (Holy Spirit) and an evil spirit may reside within a human being. Basham asserted that in

Acts 5:3, when Ananias and Sapphira gave their money to the church as Christians, Peter the apostle said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?” He contended that Satan was in these people at the same time they also had the Holy Spirit infilling. In addition, Basham added in Acts 8 that the Samaritans were released of evil spirits with shrieks as Luke wrote (Acts 8:7) and many Christians were not filled with the Spirit until the apostles came from Jerusalem and laid hands on them to receive Spirit baptism.<sup>39</sup> His ministry of deliverance from evil spirits was well documented. He truly believed that Satan can have a stronghold in a believer’s life. Thus, as 1 John 3:8 proclaimed, “the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” became a major emphasis in his ministry. His controversial ministry of casting out demons from known believers was questioned by many charismatics; however, he always asserted that “the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Basham’s style of deliverance ministry was both popular and controversial. He used “the term ‘deliverance,’ then to specify particularly the ministry of casting out demons.”<sup>40</sup> In 1964 he accepted the call to minister as a pastor in a Disciples of Christ church in Sharon, Pennsylvania. In his best-selling book *Deliver Us from Evil* he related with candid honesty his successes and failures with the congregation. At first, he experienced disappointment. The traditional methods of counseling did not help the people. After prolonged work with a parishioner who had cancer, her sudden death shook his faith. He reflected on this experience by writing, “I began to appraise my work in Sharon in terms of negatives, reminding myself that in a congregation of over six hundred members, only a few dozen were finding meaningful spiritual answers to their needs.”<sup>41</sup> He believed that the deliverance ministry was meant to be imparted “*in addition to*, not *in place of* prayer for healing, crucifixion of the nature.”<sup>42</sup> Basham considered this exorcism important as he wrote that one-third of “Jesus’ own ministry was given to casting out demons.”<sup>43</sup> However, the accent must stay centered on God’s greatness and power over evil. He related, “The fact that there are myriads of demons representing all kinds of bondage and torment does not mean

that all problems, illnesses or errors are caused by evil spirits.”<sup>44</sup> In short, the Holy Spirit’s presence must take preeminence and an understanding of the omnipotence of God must prevail in one’s theology.

In due course, his involvement with the “shepherding movement” was ridden with conflict. Basham and other leaders believed many charismatics were rootless and wandered from church to church, seeking the latest anointing. Pentecostal historian Vinson Synan remarked, “This ‘shepherding’ system was considered to be an answer for the thousands of charismatics who were drifting from conference to conference.”<sup>45</sup> They believed people needed a “covering” to keep them safe from evil. Others saw their expression of Christianity as controlling. This association of ministers met in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where conflict came to a head. Synan noted, “Attending this meeting were Mumford, Prince, Basham, Simpson, and Baxter from the Fort Lauderdale group, while critics such as Pat Robertson, Dennis Bennett, and others came from the other side.”<sup>46</sup> Conflict dominated the summit. Synan observed, “At one point Dennis Bennett . . . stormed out of the meeting, but by mistake stepped into a cleaning closet where he thrashed about among mops and buckets before leaving.”<sup>47</sup> In short, very little was resolved at the “shootout at Curtis Hotel”<sup>48</sup> and the movement eventually dispersed as they were shunned by major ministries, including the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International.

## Conclusion

Though Don Basham was a minister in a mainline denomination, he stepped out in faith into the realm of the Spirit for a ministry others never attained. His courage to address evil in his churches spoke of his audacity to declare that the name of Jesus was more powerful than any demon. Throughout his books, his admittance of mistakes speaks of his humility. He acknowledged his inaccurate assessments of discernment in others but continued to press forward in the power of the Spirit. Basham’s stories and experiences witness to the unpretentious Spirit-filled faith he provided his parishioners. Every story disclosed, whether about forgiveness, deliverance, or tongues, his penchant for learning. He wisely expressed in *Willing to Forgive*, “Anytime God wants to teach

us a lesson, He very seldom does it in the abstract.”<sup>49</sup> His vulnerability before his congregations exhibited a refreshing moment of authentic ministry for many parishioners.

Because there are many unknowns in the deliverance ministry, this type of service and preaching in a mainline denomination took courage. Many of his pastor friends did not believe in this experience of the Spirit. In fact, because America was dominated by Western rationalism (which Alexander Campbell embraced), the ministry of deliverance was considered suspicious. In addition, his involvement with the shepherding movement was a dark mark in his life. Because of the subsequent controversy about his union with the Fort Lauderdale Five, his ministry became less prominent. However, his boldness opened the door for Disciples churches to receive the Spirit-filled experience. D. Duane Cummins asserted, “The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in our time, therefore, encompasses both Galatia and Corinth, both Bethany and Cane Ridge. There are Disciples congregations unequivocally and sincerely committed to a charismatic faith expressed through gifts of the Holy Spirit including prophecy, speaking in tongues and healing.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, Basham’s ministry in the mainline church was not unique.

Situating the two pneumatological perspectives in dialogue, I submit that the Holy Spirit was the missing finger in the life of Disciples churches for 180 years. From the beginning, due to a weak pneumatology, the Spirit’s dynamism was muted because reason was placed over the Spirit’s work in the life of a believer. Alexander Campbell had a gateway to emphasize the Spirit through his association with Walter Scott; yet, he accepted John Locke’s rationalism as a basis for faith and living. Certainly, I believe that joining faith and reason is a balanced and historical Christian practice; however, the Enlightenment and Lockean reason remained the overarching methodology of Campbell’s theology. This created a church movement built on an overemphasis of the mind to the detriment of the Spirit. In comparison, Conkin observed that “John Wesley demonstrated that a warm, spiritual religion is as possible in a high church, liturgical tradition as within the more plain and simple style of Puritans and Presbyterians.”<sup>51</sup> Wesley, though educated and scholarly, did not allow the intellect to

become preeminent over the Spirit. Yet, Don Basham, as a trained and educated Disciples minister, appropriated a Wesleyan theology and he imagined a ministry more compatible to Cane Ridge than to the rational Campbellite religion. The Holy Spirit was the missing finger of Campbell's faith and practice that Basham recaptured. To this end, Don Basham revealed that the pneumatology of the charismatic renewal was the needed corrective to a rational mode that most mainline churches feature in the life of their congregations.

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## Notes

- 1 The roots of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) emerged in the early nineteenth century from the Second Great Awakening. In 1832 with a handshake, Barton W. Stone (The Christians) and Alexander Campbell (The Disciples of Christ) combined their respective movements to create the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) into a single ecclesial body. These leaders wanted to abandon denominational labels and employ biblical names for the followers of Jesus. Combating the destructive sectarianism that oppressed numerous churches, their motto became "Unity is our Polar Star." Throughout this article, the group may be identified as Disciples of Christ, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), or simply Disciples.
- 2 Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals* (New York: Paulist Press Deus Books, 1969), 255.
- 3 Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1994), 103.
- 4 Paul K. Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 11.
- 5 Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 104–105.
- 6 C. Dwight Dorrough, *The Bible Belt Mystique* (New York: Random House, 1962), 70.
- 7 Conkin, *Cane Ridge*, 164.
- 8 All scriptural quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984).



- 9 Conkin, *Cane Ridge*, 173.
- 10 Conkin, *Cane Ridge*, 168.
- 11 Conkin, *Cane Ridge*, 173.
- 12 Barton Stone co-founded the combined movement named the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with Alexander Campbell in 1832. Both men agreed on the key points of unity in the church and immersion baptism. Stone was present at the Cane Ridge Revival and amenable with its emotional nature; however, Campbell was less enamored by ecstatic experiences.
- 13 Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 104.
- 14 Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 175.
- 15 Douglas A. Foster et al., *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 517.
- 16 Foster, *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 116.
- 17 Foster, *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 517.
- 18 Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System* (Cincinnati: H.S. Bosworth, 1866; reprint, Salem, NH: Ayer, 1988), 24.
- 19 Campbell, *The Christian System*, 24.
- 20 Campbell, *The Christian System*, 24.
- 21 Campbell, *The Christian System*, 24.
- 21 Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ, A History* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1958), 188.
- 22 Garrison and DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ, A History*, 233. Italics original.
- 23 Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 219.
- 24 Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 218.
- 25 Garrison and DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ, A History*, 184.
- 26 D. Duane Cummins, *A Handbook for Today's Disciples in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St. Louis: CBP Press, 1974), 25.
- 27 Stanley M. Burgess, Gary B. McGee, and Patrick H. Alexander, eds., *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 51.
- 28 William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer, *Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies: A Reader* (London: SCM Press, 2004), 239.
- 29 Don Basham, *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism* (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1969), 61.
- 30 Basham, *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*, 61. Italics original.
- 31 Basham, *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*, 63.
- 32 Basham, *A Handbook on Holy Spirit Baptism*, 65.
- 33 Basham, *A Handbook on Tongues, Interpretation and Prophecy: 27 Questions and Answers on the Inspirational Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1971), 69.

- 34 Basham, *A Handbook on Tongues*, 103.
- 35 Basham, *Face Up with a Miracle* (Northridge, CA: Voice, 1967), 63.
- 36 Basham, *A Handbook on Tongues*, 34.
- 37 Basham, *A Handbook on Tongues*, 76.
- 38 Basham, *Can a Christian Have a Demon?* (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1971), 42–45.
- 39 Basham, *A Manual for Spiritual Warfare* (Greensburg, PA: Manna Books, 1974), 30.
- 40 Basham, *Deliver Us from Evil* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 1972), 23.
- 41 Basham, *A Manual for Spiritual Warfare*, 31. Italics original.
- 42 Basham, *A Manual for Spiritual Warfare*, 55.
- 43 Basham, *A Manual for Spiritual Warfare*, 43.
- 44 Vinson Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 354.
- 45 Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 364.
- 46 Synan, *An Eyewitness Remembers the Century of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2010), 83.
- 48 Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 364.
- 49 Basham, *Willing to Forgive* (Ft. Lauderdale, FL: CGM Publishing, 1977), 33.
- 50 Cummins, *A Handbook for Today's Disciples in the Christian Church*, 25–26.
- 51 Conkin, *Cane Ridge*, 168–169.

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# FROM ORPHAN TO CHILD OF GOD

PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGIZING AS A CHANNEL  
OF SOCIAL  
TRANSFORMATION IN  
MOZAMBIQUE

JEREMY BONE  
SAMUEL LEE

*Spiritus* 3.1 (2018) 65–85  
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**Key Words** *Pentecostalism, holistic mission, Mozambique, Toronto Blessing, social imaginary*

## Abstract

Heidi and Rolland Baker, founders of Mozambican-based Iris Global, have been influential in developing a distinctively pentecostal framework for holistic mission.<sup>1</sup> While evangelism and social work are now widely seen as integrated processes, pentecostalism demands attention also to the supernatural. This article posits that the theological convictions of the Bakers have served as a launching pad for their holistic care of orphans in Mozambique. Because pentecostal movements are rooted in experience, pneumatic theologizing presupposes praxis. This article will initially examine three theological impulses at the core of Iris Global: pentecostalism, revivalism, and incarnational love. These theological impulses are then weaved into a chronological narrative examining holistic ministry efforts in Mozambique. By examining the place of dreams and visions among the orphans served by Iris Global, this article applies sociological insights from Arjun Appadurai's concept of the social imaginary in order

to understand the role of identity transformation in holistic mission.

## Introduction

The integration of evangelism with social justice has long been problematic for Western Christians. The First Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974 began to chip away at this dualistic tension when a group of radical evangelicals advocated for the combination of word and deed in order to reach a world in need of holistic transformation.<sup>2</sup> This new commitment was also partially birthed out of evangelical contact with non-Western Christians, many of whom did not have the same compartmentalized dualistic understandings of the gospel shared by their Western brothers and sisters.<sup>3</sup> These non-Western voices were also indicators that perhaps Western secularization theorists were misguided in assertions about the decline of global Christian expression. In Africa, Christianity actually grew at an unprecedented rate in the aftermath of decolonization.<sup>4</sup> The swelling of Christianity in Africa not only impacted the spiritual dimension of converts, but it has also been a force of social change and transformation. One mission organization committed to holistic ministry in an African context is Iris Global.

Founded by Heidi and Rolland Baker, Iris Global has sought to demonstrate an incarnational ministry that encapsulates both word and deed as demonstrated by Jesus in the gospel accounts. Following the lead of radical Pentecostals, the Bakers have also added “wonder” into the missionary ethos of Iris Global. Iris integrates these three elements—word, work, and wonder—into a single missionary agenda of transformation.<sup>5</sup> This unique combination has resulted in a massive revival that swept Mozambique in the late 1990s into the 2000s, and the effects are still being documented today. Over 10,000 churches have been planted in Mozambique under Iris Global since the Bakers arrived. While Iris Global is committed to several development, relief, and religious projects, this article specifically explores the relationship between the Bakers’ theology and holistic orphan care. Because theology is so closely related to the ministry of Iris, it is first necessary to explore the theological impulses of Heidi and Rolland Baker before examination

of social transformation in Mozambique. These briefly explored theological themes will be further weaved into the overall narrative in order to demonstrate the relationship between the Bakers' theology and their commitment to holistic ministry. Iris Global is creating multidimensional transformation in the area of Mozambican orphan care based upon an incarnational model of ministry that seeks to imitate the pneumatically empowered Jesus in service to the least of these.

## **A Preliminary Word on Social Transformation**

While this article assumes that theological impulses directly contributed to social transformation in Mozambique, it is necessary to provide a brief definitional excursus regarding developmental terminology. Dena Freeman notes that development studies, initially resistant to religion, has now shifted to an “increasing appreciation for the importance of non-material matters—such as beliefs, values and morality—in the development process.”<sup>6</sup> This burgeoning interest in multifaceted development was partially the result of the growth of pentecostalism in Africa. Freeman writes, “This movement does not separate religion from development, and for the most part does not set up development wings or FBOs.”<sup>7</sup> Rather than defining social transformation on a strictly material level, pentecostals tend to ask the question: What does God want for Africa?<sup>8</sup>

This interpretive shift in development studies has resulted in reflection among pentecostals regarding the nature of transformation. Though revivalist interest in dramatic crisis experiences has at times resulted in an individualized spirituality, personal agency driven by pneumatic encounters has also been a channel of social transformation. Freeman notes African pentecostal concerns for a “dramatic restructuring” of family dynamics, gender relations, power structures, and social organization.<sup>9</sup> In this way, pentecostalism contributes to development by means of a holistic ontology that refuses to bifurcate spiritual and material change. Thus, transformation, from a pentecostal lens, involves multifaceted change that is both personal and communal, spiritual and material, and ecclesial and public. At the root of pentecostal notions on transformation is the Christocentric pneumatic encounter;

transformation, while affecting the physical, originates with the spiritual presence of Jesus Christ. Keith Warrington writes, “One experience with God can be more life changing than an encyclopedic knowledge of God. . . . Thus, Pentecostals value experience-based encounters with God because they have the potential to transform believers. They believe that if God initiates an experience, it must be in order to positively transform the individual concerned.”<sup>10</sup>

Pentecostal focus on holistic transformation through divine encounter directly corresponds to its understanding of mission. If transformation is multifaceted, then the church’s mission in the world must also reflect the full gospel of Jesus Christ. Holistic transformation necessitates holistic mission, and pentecostals echo David Bosch’s emphasis on the need for both orthodoxy and orthopraxy. Bosch writes, “Since faith and life are inseparable, this is a liberation that is to be effected at three different levels: from social situations of oppression and marginalization, from every kind of personal servitude, and from sin, which is the breaking of friendship with God and with other human beings.”<sup>11</sup> The ministry of Heidi and Rolland Baker reflects a distinctively pentecostal commitment to multifaceted transformation through its orphan-care initiatives in Mozambique. Whether it is economic advancement or spiritual renewal, at the core of transformation is a Spirit-driven encounter with Jesus Christ, the great and holistic transformer. It is to the theological impulses of the Bakers that we now turn.

## **Theological Impulses**

### **Pentecostalism**

Heidi and Rolland Baker were both theologically shaped in a Pentecostal milieu. Heidi converted at age sixteen while attending a revival meeting at a Holiness-Pentecostal church on a Navajo Reservation; Rolland was a missionary kid from an Assemblies of God family. The two of them were married in 1980, and then they swiftly left to Indonesia on a one-way ticket.<sup>12</sup> Before departing for Indonesia, though, both of them were theologically educated at the Masters level while attending Vanguard University, an Assemblies of God university

in Costa Mesa, California. Thus, both their family and educational backgrounds demonstrate the treasured place of the classical Pentecostal tradition for their theological formation.

While pentecostalism is a broad movement, and it is perhaps better to speak of pentecostals, “the movement does have family resemblances.”<sup>13</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu suggests that pentecostal Christianity “promotes radical conversions, baptism of the Spirit with speaking in tongues, healing, deliverance, prophetic ministries, and other such pneumatic phenomena including miracles and supernatural interventions in general.”<sup>14</sup> He also suggests that a strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit is the primary reason for the expansion of Christianity in the non-Western world.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the embrace of pentecostal phenomena by Iris Global can partially explain the mission organization’s dramatic success in Mozambique. Pentecostal Christianity has uniquely cultivated an intercultural theology that is “global and multicultural, inclusive of voices from the Eastern and especially Southern Hemispheres” by promoting dialogue between Western and indigenous pentecostal expressions.<sup>16</sup>

The question must also be asked, how does pentecostalism contribute to Iris Global’s commitment to holistic ministry? Classical Pentecostals understood salvation to be multidimensional; they experimented with two primary soteriological configurations. Pentecostals emerging from Baptist circles spoke of the four-fold gospel (Jesus as Savior, baptizer, healer, and coming king), while Wesleyan Holiness Pentecostals articulated a five-fold gospel (adding Jesus as sanctifier).<sup>17</sup> This multifaceted salvation was bursting with possibilities that Jesus could dramatically empower believers to transform the world around them. Though Jesus was the coming king, he was also the healer who specifically cared for the poor and marginalized. Thus, contemporary believers were also flowing with this same energy from the Holy Spirit to transform society dynamically for the glory of God.

## **Revivalism**

While pentecostalism has contributed much to Iris Global’s theological imagination, a second spiritual impulse at the forefront of their Mozambican efforts is revivalism. Though the revivalist emphasis in



global evangelization has been etched into the collective pentecostal consciousness, Allan Anderson traces the historical development of revivalism to both evangelical revivals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as the work of missionary pioneers such as William Carey.<sup>18</sup> The Methodist movement, as well as its Holiness offshoots, were of particular importance in introducing “a new method of evangelism characterized by emotion . . . that brought evangelical faith and often profound moral change to communities.”<sup>19</sup> Revivalism from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries tended to be framed according to a holistic two-phase movement; first, participants were encouraged to encounter Jesus Christ through crisis experiences, and then the converted would in turn become agents of social transformation and activism, including mission. Many participants in these revivals, including A. B. Simpson from the Christian and Missionary Alliance, formed communities of radical evangelicals that expected “the restoration of the gift of tongues for the speedy and effective preaching to the nations.”<sup>20</sup> Following the actualization of these expectations through the nascent pentecostal movement at the turn of the twentieth century, revivalist patterns of emotionalism, mission, lay participation, and miracles became guiding principles for this revivalist pneumatic family. Though much has been made of the Azusa Street revival of 1906, there were many other global revivalist expressions stirring concurrently. Examples include the Welsh Revival (1904–1905), the Mukti Mission Revival in India (1905), and the Korean Pentecost (1907–1908). While countless historians and sociologists have examined what revival entails, I have allowed the self-understanding of revival by the Bakers to guide this brief analysis. Rolland Baker defines revival in this way: “By ‘revival’ we are not referring to particular church meetings, but to a major restoration of relationship with God in the church, accompanied by mass conversions, intense conviction of sin, major transformation of lives and often many signs and wonders.”<sup>21</sup>

Thus, revival is multifaceted wide-scale transformation that is holistic in nature. The Bakers were influenced by several major revivals in contemporary Christian history; these include the Chinese Children’s Revival in Yunnan Province, China, the Jesus People Movement of the 1970s in the United States, and the Indonesian Revival of West

Timor. While all of these were vital for the Bakers' ministry efforts in Mozambique, the revival most influential for the vision of Iris Global was the Toronto Blessing of the 1990s.

The Toronto Blessing was a highly controversial revival originating at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church in 1994. Ecstatic worship and charismatic manifestations characterized the Toronto church pastored by John and Carol Arnott. While traditional Pentecostal practices of tongues and prophecy were present, newer manifestations of crying, being slain in the Spirit, and holy laughter also emerged. The Toronto revival could be characterized as a trend in pentecostalism to resist routinization. Stephen Hunt argues that the "Charismatic movement was turning back on its self to rediscover Pentecostalism's initial impetus and with greater measure in terms of its pneumatological phenomena."<sup>22</sup> At the height of the revival's popularity, the Bakers were burnt-out missionaries seeking a fresh touch from God to reinvigorate their ministry in Mozambique. It was in this context that Heidi flew to Toronto in 1996.

When Heidi Baker arrived in Toronto, she was warned by doctors that the flight could kill her; her body was weak from pneumonia, various other infections, and tuberculosis. She records that she was completely healed the first night of her attendance at the Canadian revival.<sup>23</sup> During her stay at Toronto, she had several visions that propelled Iris Global forward into holistic initiatives revolving around orphan care. One vision is recorded below in length due to its importance for Iris Global's holistic ministries:

One night I was groaning in intercession for the children of Mozambique. There were thousands coming toward me, and I was crying, "No, Lord. There are too many!" Then I had a dramatic, clear vision of Jesus. I was with Him, and thousands and thousands of children surrounded me. . . . The Lord spoke to my heart and said, "There will always be enough, because I died."<sup>24</sup>

It was also during her time at Toronto that Randy Clark, one of the key leaders of the revival, prophesied over Heidi Baker; he told her that

miraculous healings would begin to manifest themselves in abundance in Mozambique.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Heidi returned to Mozambique inspired and empowered to live out the visions she received in Toronto. Donald Kantel writes, “Iris Ministries today is a reflection in an African context of the highest ministry values and Kingdom principles of the Toronto Blessing Revival.”<sup>26</sup> It could be effectively argued that Iris Global has actually contextualized the theology of the Toronto Blessing for Mozambique in partnership with indigenous missionaries, like Surprise Sithole, national director of Iris Global, who were open to the pneumatic impulses of the revival.

## **Incarnational Love**

A final theological impulse that has shaped the holistic ministry of Iris Global is the concept of incarnational (or godly) love. This spiritual framework has been well documented by Margaret Poloma and Matthew T. Lee, and I will be building upon their foundation here. According to Poloma and Lee, godly love is “a model that embodies the interactive ritual chains between Spirit and humans lying behind pentecostalism’s reticulate organization.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, godly love is the cooperative relationship between heavenly and anthropological love that results in amplified compassion.<sup>28</sup> Theologically, heavenly love flows from God to the human agent resulting in an empowered love toward others. For Iris Global, the use of prophecy in ministry is an example of the interactive nature of godly love. We may again turn to Heidi Baker’s prophecy given by Randy Clark at Toronto for further exemplification. During the Toronto revival, Clark asked her if she wanted the nation of Mozambique; if she responded yes, God would use Iris Global to initiate a massive charismatic revival across that nation. According to Poloma and Lee, “Heidi had to say ‘yes’ to this and then partner with God and other people . . . in interactions we have labeled ‘godly love’ in order to translate the prophetic words into lived reality.”<sup>29</sup> In prophecy, humans must cooperate with God in order to activate the divine message.

The interactive nature of godly love also directly impacts the Bakers’ holistic service in Mozambique. For the Bakers, intimacy with God is understood naturally to produce fruit for Christian service.

William K. Kay writes, “Indeed any spiritual experience with mystical overtones centering on feelings of unity with God will allow those feelings to ripple out to the rest of the universe, both material and human.”<sup>30</sup> This intimacy with God is not mechanical; one does not simply become intimate in order to get something. Rather, the Bakers understand intimacy with God to be amorous, and fruitfulness flows instinctively from this divine-human romance.<sup>31</sup> Jesus is understood to have incarnated perfectly this cosmic relationship, and the Bakers have articulated Iris Global’s vision for ministry in incarnational terms. Just as God incarnated himself in the form of Jesus to save and serve humanity, missionaries working for Iris Global are encouraged to incarnate love through actions that demonstrate God’s benevolence. Heidi Baker writes, “Ministry looks like servanthood manifested through love. Your job description is to be the fragrance of Christ, the beauty of Jesus, and the very anointing of Him on Earth.”<sup>32</sup>

Incarnational love also includes a willingness to suffer for the cause of Christ. Just as Jesus laid down his life for his friends, Iris Global missionaries are also taught to be laid-down lovers. Rolland Baker writes, “A powerful, positive, victorious theology of suffering has been necessary all through our experience in Africa. Godly suffering means learning to love when faced with evil opposition.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, godly love flows from the heart of the Father and produces fruit leading to an incarnational love that results in transformation even in the face of suffering.

## **Social Transformation in Mozambique**

Now that we have explored several theological themes (pentecostalism, revivalism, incarnational love) from which the holistic efforts of Iris Global flow, our story is now transposed to Mozambique proper. The rest of this article invites the reader to examine social transformation and its relationship to the Bakers’ theology. This will be accomplished in a narrative format that chronologically follows Iris Global’s orphan ministry in Mozambique from its origins to its current position; thus, readers will find themselves situated in two locations on this journey: 1) beginnings at Chihango; and 2) rise to prominence

at Maputo and beyond. Along this investigative trail, several theorists will show up periodically to help in the quest to understand how social transformation might be occurring in Mozambique. Primary literature from the Bakers will be at the forefront of this exploration, especially the autobiographical *Always Enough: God's Miraculous Provision among the Poorest Children on Earth* (2002) and Rolland Baker's dissertation "A Biblical Strategy of Mission" (2013). While Iris Global is committed to a variety of transformative projects, the specific arena of change addressed here is orphan care. Iris Global started in Mozambique as a ministry to war-torn orphans, and it is from this ministry that all other Iris Global ventures flow.

## **Beginnings at Chihango**

In *Always Enough*, Heidi reports that during her teenage years God had called her to be a missionary to Africa, but by 1994, she and Rolland had yet to fulfill that part of her vision.<sup>34</sup> In 1995, the Bakers finally got their chance when they were offered an orphanage in Chihango, Mozambique. In 1994, the African nation of Mozambique had just emerged out of a fifteen-year-long civil war that had devastated the nation. Poverty was widespread, and hundreds of children roamed violent streets in the wake of massive casualties amassed from the turmoil.<sup>35</sup> When the Bakers arrived at the orphanage, the situation was worse than expected. Abandoned children, many of them thieves, lived collectively in an overcrowded and rundown facility. Rolland describes the situation in this way: "There were about eighty of them, living like animals. They defecated on bare floors and sat there warming tin cans over wood fires. There were no beds, no mattresses, no sheets, no pillows."<sup>36</sup> Social conditions such as these at Chihango contributed to the Bakers' holistic ministry of word, work, and wonder. While Western missionaries have debated and continue to wrestle with the tension between proclamation and social action, the realities of poverty and human rights violations have forced a more holistic picture of salvation and reconciliation, especially amongst missionaries in decolonized states.<sup>37</sup>

The Bakers had been accustomed to holistic ministry long before arriving in Mozambique. While in Indonesia, they had started a job

program targeting Muslim women.<sup>38</sup> Heidi Baker has consistently suggested that love looks like something, and at the beginning of their Mozambican ministry, love looked like addressing the issue of food insecurity. Rolland Baker articulates a vision that connects their theology to orphan ministry in Chihango. He writes, “We became more and more holistic in our approach to missions. . . . When people are thirsty and starving, the holiest thing we can do is offer a cold drink of water and fresh bread.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, the theological impulse of incarnational love is at play here. Just as Jesus stopped and addressed the specific needs of those he encountered, the Bakers have enunciated a vision of stopping and meeting the needs of the one placed in front of them every day.

In the early days of their Chihango outreach, the Bakers would walk through Mozambique looking for street children to invite into their orphanage. For example, one day an Iris Global worker came across a young girl named Beatrice nearly dead lying under a tree. Despite her bloated belly and scabies, Heidi records that she saw Jesus in the eyes of Beatrice. She writes, “I held Beatrice in my arms, and I loved her. Jesus looked back at me through that little girl. He said, ‘Whatever you do for this little one, you do for Me.’ Ministry . . . is simply about loving the person in front of you.”<sup>40</sup> This again points to the theological impulse of incarnational love, and out of this love flowed the transformative power of hope. Beatrice’s health was restored, and she was later baptized. Another example of “stopping for the one” is the story of Everista. He was found starving to death on the street with sores all over his body. Heidi gave him some bread, and then he opened up about the trauma he had experienced. Heidi writes, “He knew his parents were dead, and he was alone and hungry. . . . I asked Everista if he wanted to come and live with us. His eyes brightened. We hugged him and prayed for him and let him know he was loved.”<sup>41</sup> Chihango emerged out of the desperation of the civil war to become a sanctuary of hope for the orphaned children in Mozambique. By 1996, 350 children were living at the orphanage, and most of them had become Christians through the communal love of the Bakers and the Iris Global team.<sup>42</sup>

Theologically the Bakers identify themselves as orthodox<sup>43</sup> Christians, and several biblical themes were foundational for Iris

Global's understanding of mission at Chihango.<sup>44</sup> Both Heidi and Rolland have received extensive theological education. Heidi has a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from King's College, London, and Rolland has a D. Min. from United Theological Seminary. Their theological training is seen most vividly in scriptural application of biblical themes in Mozambican orphan care. In the Chihango years, the Bakers repeatedly used the biblical text of Isaiah in framing their ministry. Based around Isaiah 61:3, the Bakers had a vision of orphan transformation in which God would "bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes."<sup>45</sup> In Rolland Baker's dissertation, he cites Isaiah 58:10–11 as their inspiration for holistic mission; in this chapter, the prophet Isaiah promises provision and safety to those who "spend [themselves] in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed."<sup>46</sup>

Holistic mission would not truly be inclusive if it did not include the element of gospel proclamation, and prayer, worship, and preaching were at the center of Iris Global's Chihango base. Heidi focused her preaching on indigenous empowerment of the orphans. Rolland writes, "Heidi preached her heart out to them, telling them they cannot wait for Westerners. God will use them to repair Chihango."<sup>47</sup> Also, in a 1996 newsletter, the Bakers reported that the children at the orphanage had been radically transformed by the power of the Gospel. They engaged in regular collective prayer and worship, and the children also felt enabled to be "part of the answer" in healing the wounds of post-war Mozambique.<sup>48</sup> In April 1996, the Bakers recorded that almost two hundred children were baptized at Chihango during an Easter service.<sup>49</sup> Rolland writes, "Chihango has changed. The orphaned and abandoned children here are tasting the goodness and favor of their heavenly Father."<sup>50</sup> Thus, the Gospel message was the central focus at Chihango, and it remained so after Iris Global's forced migration to Maputo.

One core partnership that emerged during this phase of the Bakers' ministry was with Surprise Sithole, currently international director of pastors for Iris Global. Born to an animist household in Mozambique, Sithole fled as a teenager upon hearing a voice that commanded him to depart from his family of origin. After hearing the gospel from a man

who anticipated Sithole's arrival in a dream, he became a travelling evangelist and missionary in southern Africa. The destruction left in the wake of the Mozambican Civil War propelled Sithole into active ministry in his home country, where he met Heidi Baker in 1995. Though initially meeting briefly at a conference, Sithole had a series of dreams in which Heidi beckoned him to join Iris Global.<sup>51</sup> His arrival coincided with the eviction of the Bakers from Chihango, stemming from their refusal to stop evangelizing the children at the shelter. Sithole initially attempted to convince government officials to reconsider the eviction notice. He writes, "I thought the fact that I was one of them—not an 'outsider' from America or the United Kingdom—would give me a bit of influence."<sup>52</sup> Though his efforts failed to persuade authorities, Sithole's actions reveal an intentional commitment to indigenization on the part of Iris Global. Serving as a church planter before joining Iris Global, Sithole took steps to consolidate his previous churches under the Iris Global banner in the mid-1990s.<sup>53</sup>

## **Rise to Prominence at Maputo and Beyond**

While the Bakers had hoped that they would spend many years in Chihango, their ministerial efforts were displaced when the government retracted the Bakers' contract for the orphanage and prohibited religious activities at the children's center. Following their eviction from Chihango, the Bakers felt overwhelmed, but their visions at Toronto in 1996 carried them forward. During the Toronto revival, one prevalent manifestation was holy laughter. Though a highly controversial spiritual phenomenon, the Bakers have embraced this manifestation as pointing to a supernatural infilling of joy by the Holy Spirit into the believer's life. It is out of the experiential theology of Toronto that the Bakers maintain joy in the face of the suffering they have experienced in Mozambique. From this framework, Rolland asked these rhetorical questions:

Is it possible to preach the Sermon to the poorest of the poor?  
Can we tell victims of poverty, disease and war not to worry?  
Can they be as carefree as flowers of the field and birds of the air?  
The question was, If this gospel of Jesus does not work in these situations, where does it work?<sup>54</sup>



Thus, we see here the theological impulse of Toronto spirituality contextualized for the Mozambican context. Out of a mystical framework of joy birthed in the Toronto revival, the Bakers chose gladness in the face of their eviction; this joy propelled them forward into the next phase of their holistic orphan care in Mozambique.<sup>55</sup>

The Bakers, along with over 300 children, vacated Chihango and started a church plant in a garbage dump in Maputo, Mozambique. It was during this transitory experience that Heidi had several visions that sustained the Bakers for future ministry. She details a vision she had of Jesus dancing in the garbage dump and calling the children to Him. In the vision, Jesus also brought physical and emotional healing to all of the children.<sup>56</sup> It was during this period that a widespread healing ministry was initiated by Iris Global missionaries under the Bakers' leadership. Craig Keener has noted extensive miracle reports in Mozambique. For example, he writes, "Heidi asked . . . if anyone was sick. A deaf and mute girl . . . came forward, and Heidi prayed; the girl began to hear first and then gradually began to try to imitate sounds whispered in her ear."<sup>57</sup> The inclusion of signs and wonders into the ministry of Iris Global demonstrates the pentecostal theological impulse inherent in their service.

Picking up on the classical Pentecostal theme of multi-dimensional salvation (four-fold and five-fold gospel configurations), Iris Global has embraced what Amos Yong refers to as *material salvation* into their holistic ministry. Yong writes, "This includes the healing—of mind, soul, and body; mental, emotional, and physical—ministered by Jesus and made possible by the power of the Spirit."<sup>58</sup> Material salvation is focused principally on the poor and marginalized due to tangible experiences of disease and other social ailments.<sup>59</sup> Thus, healing in the context of Mozambican orphan ministry opens up opportunities to a previously excluded group resulting in social transformation. David Martin, in his hallmark work *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, suggests that a relationship exists between modernity and the "healing energies" of Pentecostalism. According to Martin, healing "includes internalized conscientiousness and a portable integrity at home and at work . . . and an aspiration to rise above fickle fortune."<sup>60</sup> In the context of Mozambique, divine encounters among children plagued by disease

and hopelessness thrust many of them into educational institutions and improved health. Martin also argues that this type of pentecostal conscientiousness is especially relevant in Mozambique, a colony left in ruinous condition after decolonization.<sup>61</sup>

A second pentecostal emphasis found amongst Iris Global missionaries is the use of dreams and visions for Christian discipleship. These supernatural phenomena are not limited to the Bakers, though, and signs and wonders have been an invaluable means of transformation among the orphans in Mozambique. Arjun Appadurai has argued that the most noticeable feature of globalization is “the possibility for people to deploy alternative imaginaries that give rise to new kinds of public cultures.”<sup>62</sup> Though widely utilized in postcolonial studies, Appadurai’s concept of alternative imaginaries may also be useful in analyzing the power of dreams and visions prominent among Mozambican orphans. For example, let us consider the case of Ernesto, a street child rescued by the Bakers in Maputo. As a child, Ernesto had experienced instances of rape. The death of his parents combined with sexual trauma left him in a state of poverty and hopelessness. When Heidi brought Ernesto to live with the Bakers, she reports that he had experienced a vision that radically transformed him. Ernesto was taken to heaven where he joined the angels in a blissful dance around Father God. During this trip, God engaged Ernesto in conversation, conveying his abundant love toward him. Ernesto was also told to turn away from his life of thievery and violence as a street child. God would then use him as a miracle-working pastor.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the vision Ernesto received completely redirected his life in several ways. First, there is the area of religious change; Ernesto converted to Christianity following his dream of heaven. Second, Ernesto’s social condition was changed. Following his vision, he permanently moved in with the Bakers. With his improved status, Ernesto also received the opportunity to be educated and receive proper nutritional care. Thus, Ernesto’s vision resulted in holistic transformation because he was able to conceive of a new identity of hope, or, in borrowing from Appadurai, an alternative imaginary.

The Bakers contribute to the formation of a communal alternative imaginary by stressing that their orphans are not actually orphans at all. Heidi writes, “We never call our centers orphanages because the

Father never leaves us as orphans. . . . He adopts us into His family and we become sons and daughters.”<sup>64</sup> Widespread visions by the orphans in Mozambique have resulted in the materialization of an alternative community in Mozambique guided by Iris Global. Rather than caring for orphans, though they are of course doing that, Iris Global articulates a self-understanding of transformation that propels one’s status from orphan to child.

The church plant in the garbage dump of Maputo quickly skyrocketed in attendance following the outpouring of signs and wonders on the children. Rolland Baker writes, “Our first faltering efforts with street children in Maputo soon developed into a great family of hundreds.”<sup>65</sup> Social transformation can also be statistically documented in Mozambique. The Christian population has almost doubled since 1995, and evangelical Christianity is the fastest growing demographic affiliation.<sup>66</sup> Economic change also occurred in the Mozambican areas Iris Global missionaries were present. According to an inflight magazine by South African Airways, Maputo itself has been called the “hippest city in Southern Africa.”<sup>67</sup> Though still relatively poor, Mozambique’s economy is growing. After several years in Maputo, the Bakers were again called to transplant their operations to another part of Mozambique. In 2002, Heidi received a vision that pushed Iris Global to focus on the unreached people group of the Makua in the province of Cabo Delgado.

Following a prophetic sign to seek after God’s Makua Bride, the Bakers tearfully departed Maputo in the early 2000s. After leaving their now thriving base behind in the hands of another missionary couple, the Bakers took fifty of their southern children and headed to Pemba, a town of about 50,000.<sup>68</sup> At Pemba, the Bakers experimented with many holistic ministry projects to reach out to the orphaned children. After seeking a way to combine food service with Bible teaching, Iris Global missionaries ultimately decided to open up a primary school in Pemba.<sup>69</sup> Children at the school engage in a daily routine of Christian discipleship, games, and meals.

Iris Global has now expanded their educational facilities in Pemba to include secondary education as well. This school is designed to empower children, teaching them skills that will be helpful in future

careers. Thus, the children are socially transformed so that they may in turn be change agents for the rest of Mozambique. In an interview with Joy Ercoli, an Iris missionary, I was told that over 3,500 children are educated every day at the primary and secondary schools run by Iris Global. She also stressed Iris Global's educational emphasis in recent years, stating, "I believe the Pemba school is one of . . . the top performing schools in the province. . . . A huge dream of the Bakers is to start a university in Pemba and they are in the first stages of seeing that come to fruition."<sup>70</sup> The schools in Pemba are open to all children, and orphans are actively included in this ministry. Iris Global continues to serve orphans in Mozambique to this day through the unique combination of word, work, and wonder.

## Conclusion

This article explored pentecostal theologizing as a channel of social transformation in Mozambique through Heidi and Rolland Baker's holistic orphan care efforts. Three theological impulses that were stitched into the chronological narrative included: 1) pentecostalism, 2) revivalism, and 3) incarnational love. These three pentecostal impulses birthed word, work, and wonder, and this in turn resulted in social transformation (especially in the areas of orphan enablement and religious identity). These theological impulses continue to characterize and guide the vision of the Mozambican mission organization. Iris Global missionaries are empowering the orphans in Mozambique through identity reconfiguration. Rather than using the paradigm of the hopeless orphan, the Bakers refer to their children as beloved children of God. This paradigmatic shift can be seen in the name of their children's facility in Pemba, the Village of Joy. Based upon Arjun Appadurai's concept of alternative imaginaries, it could be argued that Iris Global has empowered the orphans in Mozambique through collective re-identification, and dreams and visions have been particularly valuable in giving flesh to the skeletal framework of this new identity.

As a result, we see that Iris Global has grown "from two churches and a children's home to 7,000 churches and homes for 10,000 orphaned children."<sup>71</sup> Revival has also swept over northern

Mozambique, and Cabo Delgado is now considered a majority Christian province by the government in less than seven years since the Bakers' arrival.<sup>72</sup> When the Bakers entered Pemba, churches were being planted nearly every week. In 2002 alone, almost 3,000 Makua churches had sprung up amongst a people group that missiologists considered evangelistically impossible.<sup>73</sup> Ultimately, the Bakers' unique pentecostal theologizing has become a channel of social transformation in Mozambique.



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## Notes

1 Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 18. For purposes of this paper, I am following Amos Yong's typology of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, with Pentecostal (uppercase) referring to classical Pentecostalism that emerged out of the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 and pentecostal (lowercase) referring to the three-pronged movement emphasizing the charismatic gifts as a whole: classical Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Neo-Charismatics.

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- 22 Stephen Hunt, "Sociology of Religion," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 189.
- 23 Rolland and Heidi Baker, *Always Enough*, 48.
- 24 Rolland and Heidi Baker, *Always Enough*, 49–50.
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- Love: The Spirit Factor in the Growth of Pentecostalism,” in *Spirit and Power: The Growth and Global Impact of Pentecostalism*, ed. Donald E. Miller et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 277.
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- 27 Poloma and Lee, “Prophecy, Empowerment, and Godly Love,” 280.
- 28 Poloma and Lee, “Prophecy, Empowerment, and Godly Love,” 280.
- 29 Poloma and Lee, “Prophecy, Empowerment, and Godly Love,” 282.
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- 39 Rolland Baker, “Toward a Biblical Strategy of Missions,” 51.
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- 42 Rolland and Heidi Baker, *Always Enough*, 50.
- 43 Orthodox here refers to classical mainstream Christianity and not the Orthodox tradition specifically.
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- 46 Rolland Baker, “Toward a Biblical Strategy of Mission,” 122.
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# THE QUESTION OF POWER IN AFRICAN PENTECOSTALISM

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*Spiritus* 3.1 (2018) 87–107  
<http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/spiritus/>

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**Key Words** *African Pentecostalism, anointing, governance, African traditional religion, leadership*

## Abstract

Should the charismatic theology of anointing be considered a democratizing influence in Africa or a reiteration of mediatorial forms of power? This article seeks to answer this question by analyzing African traditional religious power structures in comparison to modern African theologies and practices of Pentecostal anointing. This comparison, however, highlights the problem of drawing direct lines from Africa's past to its present; Pentecostal rupture from a traditional past is paradoxically both a break from and connection to pre-colonial conceptions of the self and community. Ultimately, this article argues that while both traditional religions and modern Pentecostal anointing favor mediatorial structures of power, the Pentecostal proclivity for rupture and adherence to the biblical tradition leave open the continual possibility for democratization in African Pentecostalism.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In comparison with other traditions, spontaneous liturgies of African Pentecostal<sup>2</sup> churches evoke a sense of democratized power where the

charismatic flow of the Spirit is accessible to all and working through all. This is often held in stark contrast to more liturgical forms of worship and hierarchical church structures that seem to demarcate carefully mediatorial roles and positions of authority. This observation is often carried forward into an argument that Pentecostal churches should be recognized as a powerful force for democratization within African nation states. Despite this body of thought, the growth of powerful and autocratic leadership within African Pentecostal churches presents a troubling counter-narrative. The charisma of the Spirit is often understood to reside on certain individuals in special ways or in unique quantities. Due to this, “anointed” individuals often have access to immense amounts of power and resources via their communities of faith. This power can be leveraged for any number of ends. Many leaders have birthed educational initiatives or developmental organizations, many have launched crusades and proliferated churches, and still many have translated their power into the language of status via personal jets, mansions, and political leverage.

The aim of this article is not to pass judgment on the activities of such pastors, but to examine the historical precedents, social contexts, and particular theologies that shape the use of power within these communities. Should Pentecostal leadership be understood as a democratizing force within Africa or just the latest reiteration of traditional hierarchies of power? By looking at the power structure of traditional African religious systems in relation to the Pentecostal concept of “anointing” it will become clear that Pentecostal forms of leadership can easily correspond to traditional African power structures. Yet, Pentecostalism is more than just a reformulation of Africa’s past. The power dynamics of African Pentecostalism are part of what Birgit Meyers calls “an elaborate discourse and ritual practice” that oscillates between past and modern identities.<sup>3</sup> As such, a growing body of research has illustrated that the question of African Pentecostal leadership, whether it is democratizing or dictatorial, bears upon Africa’s colonial history and contemporary questions of governance. Rather than a reification of traditional or democratic power structures, Pentecostal leadership provides a window into the ongoing discussion of African leadership and use of power. Due to the preponderance

of source material and scholarship on African Pentecostalism hailing from West Africa, particularly Ghana and Nigeria, this paper will most likely reflect West African perspectives. Yet, the dynamic interaction of Pentecostalism, traditional religion, and good governance remains a question for much of the continent.

## Power Structures in African Traditional Religions

One is wary to venture into any dialogue that generalizes the religious structure of an entire continent, and this article should not be seen as an attempt to simplify the complexities and particularities of Africa's traditional religions. However, John Mbiti's seminal *African Religions & Philosophy* has done much to demonstrate that there are many similarities among African traditional religious systems.<sup>4</sup> This work attempts to draw connections between the diversity of African traditional religions in an effort to translate the spirituality of African societies into Western categories. As such Mbiti's work is itself a generalized translation of sorts; it foregoes the precision of locality by trying to isolate general practices and categories. One such category, "specialist," is an umbrella term for individuals who exist in special social roles that "have a language, symbolism, knowledge, skill, practice, and . . . 'office personality' of their own which are not known or easily accessible to the ordinary person."<sup>5</sup> Roles such as medicine-men, mediums, priests, prophets, rainmakers, kings, queens, and chiefs can all be considered under the category of "specialist." The distinctions of the various roles within the category of "specialist" can be hard to define as some tribes might not have one kind of role, but incorporate extra functions onto another role. Similarly, individuals might occupy multiple roles (rainmaker and medicine-man) at a single time. What can be said about each kind of specialist, however, is that they are "concrete symbols and the epitome of [humanity's] participation in and experience of the religious universe."<sup>6</sup> Specialists are bridges by which the reality of the spiritual world is actualized to and accessed by the community. As such, specialists inhabit a mediatorial role between the spiritual and the human realms.<sup>7</sup> Take for example the case of the medicine-man. Within African traditional religions, spiritual causality is a given. Sickness, even death,

is understood to be the result of a spiritual cause;<sup>8</sup> however, tracing the chain of causality is not a straightforward process. Medicine-men specialize in a holistic process of healing by which the physical ills and spiritual roots are treated.<sup>9</sup> Though magic and various cures are usually understood to be accessible to every member of the tribe, a heightened level of training is necessary to address the spiritual roots of more grievous illnesses. This knowledge can be passed on through oral traditions, yet the personal encounter of the medicine-man with divinity is essential to effective medicinal practice.<sup>10</sup> This insistence on divine knowledge brings into focus a more general view of medicine within African religion; at least in traditional cultures, “unconsecrated medicine has no meaning.”<sup>11</sup> Medicine-men function, then, to mediate the spiritual and physical world through the activity of healing. Similarly, mediums provide a direct bridge to the spiritual world through ecstatic experiences<sup>12</sup> and priests provide a bridge via ritualized ones.<sup>13</sup> Though kings/queens/chiefs are not present in every African society, Mbiti notes how, when present, they embody this mediation in their very person, becoming divine symbols of their “people’s health and welfare.”<sup>14</sup>

Individuals might occupy several mediatorial roles within a community, however, it is quite often the case that traditional communities will have multiple “specialists” for particular needs and/or divinities. What is more, these mediatorial roles are often caught up in the political dynamics of their context. The Asante society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is a perfect example. As politics saw a shift to patriarchal kingship, the queen mother retained her position as “co-ruler” along with her son.<sup>15</sup> On a more popular level, these shifts might have “diminished the political visibility of women,” yet “their role as social critics and as ritual specialists [remained] germane to the functioning of the body politic.”<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Jacob Olupona has argued that traditional Yoruba kingship is founded on a distant matriarchy and that the positions of *Opoji* (female-chief) and *Lobun* (woman-king) continue to offer female centers of power in Yoruba society through the control of the ritual and mythic corpus.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the role of spiritual “specialist” should not be too readily equated with authoritarian forms of power nor should it only be understood in its functionalist sense. Mbiti’s “specialist” gives the impression that religious power was the prerogative

of the few, a company apart, approached only in times of urgent need. “Specialists,” however, were often organized into complex hierarchies grafted into the structure of society itself. While speaking of the Yoruba, Bolaji Idowu’s assessment that “[i]n all things, they are religious”<sup>18</sup> could be applied to most traditional cultures of Africa. At the end of the day, “specialists” were also community members.

When it comes to authority, one category of specialist is particularly important in light of the growth of African indigenous churches (AICs) and the Pentecostal movement: prophets. Interestingly, however, Mbiti does not see prophecy in the biblical sense as part of traditional African religion. Rather, prophecy seems to arise in African religion as Christianity becomes part of the religious milieu.<sup>19</sup> Prophetic movements and their penchant for establishing new religious groups is by and large foreign to African religion, as religious belief was so fluidly integrated into everyday life that radically breaking with a certain belief was all but impossible.<sup>20</sup> Yet, that is not to say prophecy is unimportant. Writing seven years before Mbiti, C.G. Baëta declared that prophetism was “a perennial phenomenon of African life, and that the basic operative element in it seems to be personal in character.”<sup>21</sup>

Today, prophetic movements continue to draw attention for their intermingling of religious and political spheres. To many they appear as political responses clothed in religious garb. Yet, as far back as 1962, Baëta saw that prophetism “may be (and often is) entirely a matter of personal inward, usually religious, experience or development.”<sup>22</sup> Harold Turner takes this a step further and declares that all prophetic movements should be seen “at the bottom spiritual and religious movements. They are not social, economic, or political reactions disguised as religious movements.”<sup>23</sup>

What then is the character of these religious movements? Can they be called Christian? African prophets appear to be a synthesis of traditional African religious roles and Christian impulses for reform. Prophets are clear spiritual leaders who are endowed with an inordinate ability to impose their will by virtue of spiritual force; to their followers, prophets’ lives become repositories of spiritual direction and power.<sup>24</sup> The second question, however, has plagued scholars up to today. In much of Turner’s work, categories such as “prophet-healing,”

“spiritualist,” and “Pentecostal” are readily and admittedly conflated.<sup>25</sup> His complex taxonomy does not even include the word “Pentecostal.”<sup>26</sup> Lamin Sanneh offers a more nuanced view of the matter. In his *West African Christianity*, he discusses prophetic movements and Pentecostal movements together under the heading “Charismatic Churches,” detailing how various prophet-leaders interacted with Pentecostal materials and persons. Yet, while he notes that there is a distinction between the two movements, he leaves the readers to decide for themselves into which category a movement falls (though both are highly praised).<sup>27</sup> From Aladura churches, such as the Cherubim and Seraphim Society and the Church of the Lord (Aladura) to the Harrist and Kimanguist churches, the line between prophet and Pentecostal is seldom easy to define. Traditional religious practice and concepts can pervade a setting where traditional religious beliefs are denounced and individuals claim to be “Spirit-filled” Christians.

However defined, both Pentecostal churches and prophetic movements continue to have and celebrate prophet-leaders. Like all specialists before them, prophets provide powerful access to the nigh uncontrollable chains of spiritual causality that manifested in physical and social turmoil. In turn, by addressing the spiritual roots, prophets raise expectancy for physical and social renewal. It is no surprise that healing features so prominently in many prophetic movements, nor is it surprising that in certain forms prophets are viewed as politically dangerous.

## Understanding the Anointing

### Defining the “Anointing”

In many ways, the mediatorial role of specialists in African traditional religions seems antithetical to a Pentecostal theology of anointing. Upon further reflection, however, the relationship between the two becomes more complex. Avoiding the intricacies of an in-depth theological definition, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu has offered a three-part understanding of the term’s functional use in Africa: (1) “Anointing” refers to the practice of applying olive oil and praying for those who

are in need of healing; (2) “Anointing” is used in reference to someone whose ministry has produced tangible results (e.g., “That man healed me, he must be anointed”); and (3) “Anointing” refers to special services that are intended to mediate the power of the Spirit.<sup>28</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu’s functional definition is helpful in two ways. First, it recognizes the symbolic nature of the term “anointing.” The term is a religious marker signifying the active presence of the Spirit on people and situations. As such, the term “anointing” is a theological shorthand by which people communicate that the power of God is at work in any given context. Second, Asamoah-Gyadu’s definition highlights the spatial and temporal particularity of the anointing. The anointing is not a way to speak of a generalized presence of the Spirit in the world; one cannot refer to the sustaining work of the Spirit in holding together the cosmos as “anointing.” Rather, the term refers to the specialized manifestation of the Spirit’s work and the process by which others enter into a specialized manifestation of the Spirit. When looking over the three uses of anointing, the mediatorial nature of the term is unmistakable. Either charismatic figures utilize their anointing to enact change for others via spiritual power or liturgical practices enable others to become anointed themselves. “Anointing,” then, refers to the specialized location whereat the spiritual and physical worlds interact with one another.

## **Anointing as Democratizing**

Yet, understanding the anointing and Christian leadership as purely mediated via special practices and spiritual elites is somewhat misleading. As Sanneh has argued vociferously, the embrace of the vernacular by Christianity is an inherent embrace of pluralism. Furthermore, the use of the common tongue for religion in Africa has ultimately taken the power out of the hands of the traditional African religious elites.<sup>29</sup> As a concept born out of Christian contexts, the Pentecostal “anointing” could carry with it this democratizing, de-centralization of power. Joel 2:28 is understood in its most populist sense, with all having access to the Spirit.<sup>30</sup> Thus, while Pentecostal leaders are expected to have a powerful anointing on their lives, the presence of differentiated spiritual gifts within the community prevents such leaders from presenting themselves as experts.<sup>31</sup> In a way, the preponderance



of the Spirit on the whole community creates a sort of checks-and-balances; the Spirit cannot reside solely on any one individual. If leaders can be experts on anything, it is only helping others employ their own special anointing.<sup>32</sup> As case-in-point, Asamoah-Gyadu presents the prominence of lay leadership within Pentecostal circles. Ecumenical lay fellowships like Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International and Women Aglow have demonstrated that spiritual power is no longer held solely by recognized clergy, but that even the most ordinary person can have access to the Spirit.<sup>33</sup> This has caused an ecclesiological crisis of sorts throughout many parts of Africa, shifting past power dynamics; "pastors or ministers are no longer regarded as having exclusive access to 'deity.'" <sup>34</sup>

What results is a reorientation of the African religious marketplace. Within African mainline denominations, Pentecostal practices have been adopted to placate and/or capitalize on the fervor of those who have adopted Pentecostal beliefs and practices. AICs that rely heavily upon mediated experiences have fared worse. As the power of the Spirit is made available to more people, the customer-client relationship that sustains many of the prophetic leaders of AICs has begun to collapse.<sup>35</sup> From this perspective, the argument for democratization seems adequate. Individuals, no matter their gender, race, or economic status, are able to access the Spirit without continually defaulting to mediatorial specialists; anyone can be anointed. And while it is true that some individuals might demonstrate a greater anointing, this does not automatically disqualify the particularity of anyone else's anointing. Pentecostal belief in the universal accessibility of the Spirit, at least theologically and rhetorically, points towards a lay-oriented democratization of spiritual power.

## **Anointing as Dictatorial**

Theology and rhetoric, however, do not always reflect practice. Despite Pentecostalism's theological conviction and rhetorical insistence on the democratizing power of the Spirit, a theology of anointing has seldom resulted in democratic utopia. Early Pentecostals struck similar notes as Asamoah-Gyadu, if not more dramatic. U.S. Pentecostals at the turn of the twentieth century claimed that the movement was

devoid of human leaders, and that only the Holy Spirit guided it. While a powerful conviction, it was far from the truth. Rather, as Grant Wacker has observed, from the movement's inception, there have always been powerful, effective, prophetic leaders whose ministries guided Pentecostal identity and practice.<sup>36</sup> Like contemporary leaders, these early Pentecostal leaders were marked by their possession of spiritual giftings; anointing was a prerequisite for Pentecostal leadership.<sup>37</sup> An American strain of pragmatism, however, seemed to keep these leaders in check. While early Pentecostal leaders could easily become autocratic, there were boundaries of doctrine and practicality that kept them from achieving the status of "religious founder" as seen in other American sects.<sup>38</sup>

One should ask, then, if African Pentecostalism is subject to the same sort of dynamics at play in early U.S. Pentecostalism. Helpful in assessing these cultural differences is the work of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Study. Two ideas are specifically helpful: (1) the power distance index and (2) the individualism index. Looking at the first, according to Hofstede et al., power distance can be defined as "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally."<sup>39</sup> A country with a high-power distance index generally accepts this unequal distribution; a country that does not accept this inequality has a low power distance index. Importantly, the United States has a low power distance score while most African nations have a high power distance score.<sup>40</sup> The United States and Africa also dramatically differ in their individualism indexes. A low score in the individualism index indicates a collectivist understanding of society while a high score indicates a more individualistic conception of society. Unsurprisingly, the United States ranks as the most individualistic nation while African nations tend to be much more collectivist. Importantly, Hofstede et al. have also drawn attention to the fact that these two indexes are correlated. "Many countries that score high on the power distance index score low on the individualism index, and vice versa. In other words, the two dimensions tend to be negatively correlated."<sup>41</sup>

What do these findings have to do with the place of the anointing in each culture? The low-power index and individualistic temperament of United States society might correspond to Wacker's argument that American pragmatism kept charismatic individuals in check. If Hofstede et al.'s analysis is reliable, then American society tends not to tolerate the unequal distribution of charisma, and this authority is readily undermined by Americans' willingness to strike out on their own if they deem a situation too unequal. In African society, Hofstede et al.'s analysis would indicate that an unequal distribution of power is acceptable so long as the needs of the community are being fulfilled. This predictive scale then makes sense of Asamoah-Gyadu's tempering some of his own perspectives on the innate democratizing power of the anointing, especially in light of the rise of neo-Pentecostal churches and more extractive forms of leadership. With the American holiness ethic of classical Pentecostalism seemingly jettisoned, leaders have increasingly been able to legitimize their positions via the icons of modernity. A perfect example would be televangelists who use the airwaves to become the mediators of a different sort of spiritual gifting, one readily translatable into luxury lifestyles.<sup>42</sup> In this new style of leadership, "Miraculous healing is important . . . because of the combination of African and Christian ideas of mystical causality in their worldview."<sup>43</sup> The special anointing of prominent Ghanaian televangelists has effectively allowed them to recreate a mediatorial position between viewers and the miracle-working God.<sup>44</sup> In Nigeria, a similar development is taking place as anointed leaders occupy increasingly prominent places in their communities. Pastors have become CEOs, bishops, archbishops, even patriarchs.<sup>45</sup> These titles reflect the effective reinstitution of patrimonial relationships that mirror traditional and contemporary African power structures.

The struggle to patronize political authority, the desire for diplomatic passports and applications to government for funds to undertake pilgrimages to Jerusalem are symptomatic of the search for worldly power and relevance characterizing contemporary Christian leadership. If the chief has a stool bearer and oloyeame, the Christian pastor now has an armor bearer.<sup>46</sup>

While the miraculous is still an important marker for someone's anointing, the trappings of secular power (titles, money, and political influence) are utilized *to enhance the perception* that the Spirit is at work in someone's ministry. Rather than empowering others, many Pentecostal leaders have found a number of ways to continue to consolidate power. Asamoah-Gyadu, among others, sees this as a problem produced by the advent of neo-Pentecostalism. However, Wacker's observations of early U.S. Pentecostalism coupled with African traditional religions' penchant for mediatorial positions could indicate that the inordinate influence of charismatic individuals will remain a part of all African Pentecostal communities as both seem to favor at least some degree of charismatic authority; the roots run deep in both directions.

## **Anointing as African**

This paradoxical pull of power (between autocratic leaders and democratic spirit) is not surprising to any scholar of Pentecostalism, yet it has its own distinct character in the African context. The development of prophetism within AICs was but the first step in a process of theological synergy "that enhanced the importance of traditional religions for the deepening of Christian spirituality."<sup>47</sup> In Sanneh's words, prophetic movements and Pentecostal spirituality allowed many Africans to "advertise their Christian intentions without undervaluing their African credentials."<sup>48</sup> Prophet-leaders and Pentecostal pastors draw upon the biblical tradition of the Old Testament to enhance their mediatorial role while advancing Christian intentions.<sup>49</sup> True to a holistic African worldview, however, the salvation and healing mediated by these leaders is not merely spiritual or psychological, but material.<sup>50</sup> One cannot forget Mbiti's inclusion of the chief/king/queen as a form of spiritual specialist. While early U.S. Pentecostalism was built off a millennialist, holiness asceticism, African Pentecostalism builds off of a holistic, communitarian cosmology. Can its leaders be expected to be rich in the spirit realm and poor in the material realm? Can charismatic individuals, full of the power of the Spirit, simultaneously divest themselves of political power? Traditional African worldviews would suggest the answer trends toward "no," or at least so long as the broader collective feels this centralized power is serving the community. Still, this does

not mean that the debate over the role of tradition in Christianity is over and that the mediatorial role of those with a powerful anointing is cemented, nor is it clear to what extent these anointed individuals are or are not forces of democratization in Africa.

## **Charisma and Governance**

### **Pentecostalism and Africa's Past**

In Paul Gifford's lengthy study of the rise of prominent Pentecostal pastors in Ghana, he posits that "'Big Man' syndrome is the curse of Africa" and that the image of the televangelist and his jet might just be the curse's Christianized manifestation.<sup>51</sup> While Gifford understands the argument for Pentecostalism's democratizing influence, his own study suggests that the anointed "Man of God" is increasingly dominating the religious landscape of West Africa and creating new forms of patron-client relationships.<sup>52</sup> As Clifton Clarke has noted, however, Gifford's study is overly narrow in its depiction of the Pentecostal community of Ghana. His focus on megachurch leaders in urban centers leaves a large blind spot that cannot be ignored. Had Gifford looked beyond the megachurch, Clarke argues, he would have seen a variety of Pentecostal communities that focus on empowering individuals for economic and socially productive futures.<sup>53</sup> The critique is well placed, yet even Clarke admits that the Pentecostal community of Ghana remains apprehensive about a future in which such leaders become increasingly visible.<sup>54</sup>

At the same time, it should be remembered that Pentecostalism's power structures were once seen as a force of ecclesial liberation. Though sometimes incorporated into colonial administration, colonial dominance in Africa meant the disempowering and/or dissolution of traditional power structures.<sup>55</sup> Protestant and Catholic practices and ecclesial patterns often only exacerbated the undercutting of these structures, mimicking colonial rule within their institutions. For Catholics, ecclesial structures and practices in Africa were dominated for centuries by the agenda of the West, and it was only Vatican II that saw this trend shift dramatically. The council's focus on the role of the bishop

and its turn toward enculturated rites led to a new era in which the Roman Catholic Church in Africa became driven by African priorities and persons.<sup>56</sup> At some level, one would expect Protestantism, with its emphasis on “the priesthood of all believers,” to have already allowed for a sort of democratization, or Africanization, of church structures from its very inception on the continent. Yet, as with Catholics, paternalistic Western oversight would be the rule until the 1960s. Thus, while African Protestant converts did most of the mission work on the continent, the actual control of mission institutions was not handed over to Africans until the 1960s as anti-colonial movements swept the continent.<sup>57</sup> It must not be forgotten that this period also saw a remarkable rise in AICs, and that if one goes back a little further both trends are foreshadowed in the revivalist prophetic movements of the early 1920s.<sup>58</sup>

As Paul Kollman observes in his 2010 piece on classifying African Christianity, however, even these typical historical timelines and classifications become problematized when one introduces the experience of Pentecostal churches.<sup>59</sup> Following the “three-wave” model of Pentecostal growth, Kollman draws attention to the fact that all three periods of Pentecostal spread and growth are represented in Africa, and that these successive growths cannot be adequately described by the typical post-colonial narrative.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, mapping Pentecostal churches’ (from any of the waves) perspectives onto debates about colonialism is even more difficult. As Kollman observes, “liberationist leaders have decried the political quietude supposedly inculcated by more overtly sectarian (often [Pentecostal/Charismatic]) ways of being Christian.”<sup>61</sup> In other words, Pentecostals are often characterized as being too ambivalent towards issues of colonialism by fellow African Christians. At the same time, the earliest Pentecostal missionaries may have been part of a vanguard of non-colonial approaches to mission in that they relied heavily upon lay African leadership, were ritually flexible, and had a penchant for sharing cosmological assumptions with Africans.<sup>62</sup> Due to this, Anderson argues that all African Pentecostal churches should be considered “essentially of African origin (even when founded by Western missionaries) and fulfill African aspirations” since they find their “roots in marginalized and underprivileged society struggling to

find dignity and identity in the face of brutal colonialism and oppression.”<sup>63</sup> Pentecostalism, thus, proved different in its initial structures in that it provided a way for Africans, as Asamoah-Gyadu says, to “take their spiritual destiny into their own hands.”<sup>64</sup> Thus, Pentecostal belief and practice did uniquely offer a means by which African Christians could engage Christianity on their own terms, even, perhaps, outside the bounds of the post-colonial dialectic. One cannot assume, however, that the Pentecostal task is just the “Africanizing” of Christianity. Rather, much Pentecostal discourse in Africa consists of rupture with traditional African religion.

Meyer notes the important role of “the past” within Pentecostal discourse, arguing that the common motif of “rupture” within Pentecostal testimonies of conversion is just the “language of modernity as it spoke to Africans through colonialization, missionization and, after Independence, modernization theory.”<sup>65</sup> In other words, the Pentecostal discourse of rupture corresponds to modernity’s focus on the self’s continual renewal and progress. Rather than a reiteration of traditional religion’s desire to build social bonds and broker harmony between the spiritual and material, Pentecostalism seeks to set believers loose from spiritual structures and social bonds. Whereas traditional religions held together tribes, Pentecostalism creates individuals.<sup>66</sup> Pentecostal practice, then, provides a fire at which the modern African person can be forged by breaking with the past, yet “it is essential to realize that the alleged break from ‘the past’ is only made possible through a practice of remembrance in the course of which this ‘past’ is constructed.”<sup>67</sup> The “past” can only be broken with *as it is constructed*, providing the character of the division to take place. In other words, by breaking with the past, Pentecostal belief is inadvertently bound to it. Meyer’s observations are important for this discussion of leadership in that they point out the complexities of describing any religious form as directly correlated to another. Pentecostal leadership has formed as a result of a perceived rupture with the past, yet that rupture is informed by the conceptual categories from which it broke. Traditional specialists and Pentecostal miracle-workers cannot be considered a manifestation of the same reality, though the relationship between the two is continually being brokered.

## Pentecostal Leaders and the Question of Governance

This dynamic is important when you consider that in a country like Nigeria, Pentecostals represent approximately thirty percent of the population.<sup>68</sup> Following Meyer's approach, Ruth Marshall has posed the question of Pentecostal influence in Nigeria's political environment. In her words, the growth of Pentecostalism is a response to the "urgent desire to institute forms of sovereignty that would redeem the individual and collective past from a history of subjection and auto-destruction, and rescue the individual and the nation from the experience of radical uncertainty."<sup>69</sup> Yet, Marshall considers Pentecostalism's individualistic and agnostic relationship to political structures to have stymied its ability to produce the change it so desired.<sup>70</sup> Yet, Marshall is only one voice. Many Pentecostals and scholars of Pentecostalism believe that it continues to offer valuable contributions to the building up of democratic civil society in Africa.

Matthews Ojo points out that many Pentecostal bodies and leaders understand themselves to be *the* answer to present problems of governance despite continual setbacks.<sup>71</sup> Though the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria expressed concerns about the corruption taking place in Pentecostal circles as far back as 1997, an end of corruption does not seem close at hand.<sup>72</sup> Ever more powerful leaders finding ever less accountability seem to be flourishing in Nigeria. Still, Ojo believes in the untapped democratic potential of African Pentecostalism, arguing:

The Church can teach tolerance, dialogue, discipline, etc. and sustain such with their own examples. What we need is value-formation within the Pentecostal constituency as well as in the civil society. Pentecostal churches already have within their bodies institutions, though informal, such as home cells or house fellowships, through which democratic values can be taught and experienced.<sup>73</sup>

Clarke sees in Pentecostalism a remarkable ability to foster and create grassroots movements and demonstrate "people power" to elected officials through the religious occupation of secular spaces.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore,



he sees Pentecostalism as an ally to pan-Africanism through its calls for self-love and its positive affirmation of multi-ethnic communities.<sup>75</sup> On a more general note, Kwame Bediako likewise sees the “way of Jesus” (preached by Pentecostals and non-Pentecostal Christians alike) offering a positive critique of traditional ontocracies.<sup>76</sup> He argues that the Hebrew Scriptures validate the desacralization of public power and that the non-dominating power of Jesus provides a different conception of power altogether.<sup>77</sup> In short, while anointed leaders flourish in Pentecostalism, so do the roots of democratic values.

## Looking Forward

Of course, the relationship between spiritual and political power is notoriously hard to map, but if traditional African frameworks are any measure then the connection between the two is undoubtedly significant. Pentecostals’ relationship with the past (pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial) remains important in constructing new paradigms by which the exercise of power might be more responsibly controlled. While Gifford’s “Big Man” curse seems an ever-present reality in the life of African Pentecostalism, the perennial pull of Pentecostalism’s democratization remains a resource from which Pentecostals can and do construct new forms and structures of power. The anointing remains strong in the life of the laity, and while mediatorial specialists continue to thrive among Pentecostal communities, perhaps the history of African Christian prophets demonstrates that there are limits to the authoritarian exercise of power as there was with U.S. Pentecostals. Pentecostalism, despite the undue influence of a select few, has historically proven to be a flexible vehicle by which African Christians can reconstruct their relationship with the past and present so as to create a better future. As African Pentecostals continually encounter their spiritual pasts, one can hope that the cessation of the Spirit’s power into the hands of the few will be one past from which the Pentecostal church can rupture. In some circumstances, this might mean a break from traditional mediatorial power structures, yet even here there are examples in which multiple centers of mediatorial power protected communal well-being. At the same time, Ogbu Kalu recalls that young Pentecostals

of the 1970s once rallied against Christian “Big Men” accumulating the trappings of secular power. Perhaps many African Pentecostals have already ruptured from traditional mediatorial pictures of power.

Many questions remain. What does the rupture with the collective past mean for modern Pentecostal individuals? How do Pentecostals navigate post-colonial constructs when their history may, at least to some degree, lie elsewhere? Why has there been a resurgence of Pentecostal “Big Men” in recent decades? Whatever the answers to these questions, what is clear is that whatever comes next in African Pentecostal leadership will undoubtedly be related to Africa’s past, drawing from the bounty of resources available to African Pentecostals: the Scriptures, traditional religions, Pentecostal history, and more. Indeed, the collectivist bent of African society is much more closely aligned with the collectivism exhibited by the cultures of the Christian Scriptures; the prophetic concern for the poor or the shepherd-king metaphor, for example, value mediatorial positions for their collectivist good. African traditional religion holds many parallels. If today’s “Big Men” exude all the pomp of modern individualism and consumeristic luxuries, perhaps tomorrow’s will exude the justice and humility of Scriptural, traditional, and communal leadership. These resources from the past can provide ways forward, yet the fires of Pentecostal rupture will continue to create individuals and communities that are connected to but distinct from that past. One can only hope that these fires might truly become the democratizing force that Ojo, Clarke, Bediako, Asamoah-Gyadu, and others foresee.

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## Notes

1 A previous version of this paper was presented at the 46th Annual Meeting of the Society of Pentecostal Studies. Prior to that, it went through several drafts with the guidance of Dr. Dana Robert and Fr. Jean Luc Enyegue, S.J. I would like to thank them and the editors of *Spiritus* for their help in refining this present article. Their observations and suggestions have helped to bolster the paper's main argument; any faults that remain are my own.

2 This paper will utilize the term "Pentecostal" as an umbrella term to refer to churches that variously fall under the labels of "Classical Pentecostal," "Neo-Pentecostal," "Charismatic," "Renewalist," and, at times, "Spiritualist." This choice is due to the general scope of the present work. While sub-categorization is useful in closer studies, a clear and generalizable categorization of communities via practice and self-identification is seldom easy to establish. See Anderson's discussion of this problem in Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge, U.K./New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 103–106.

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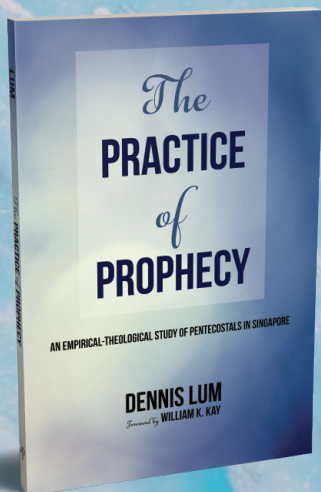
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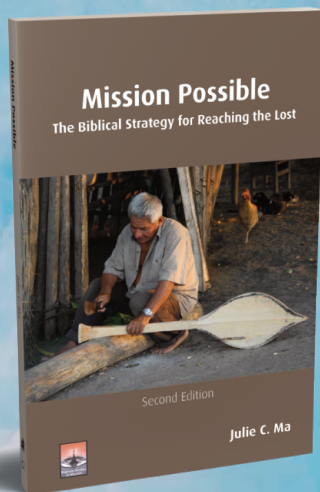
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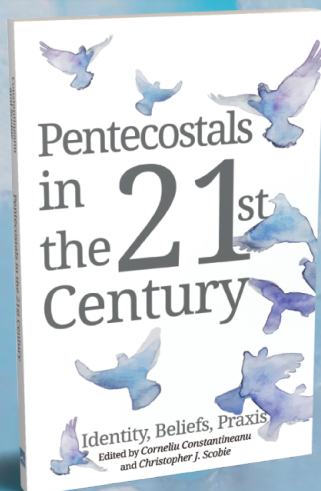
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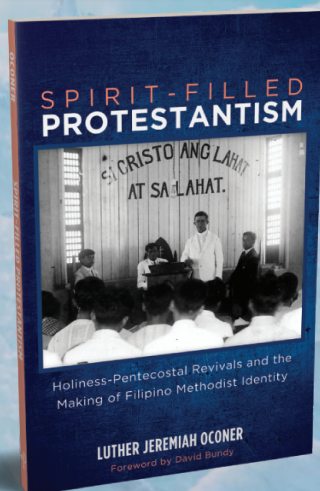
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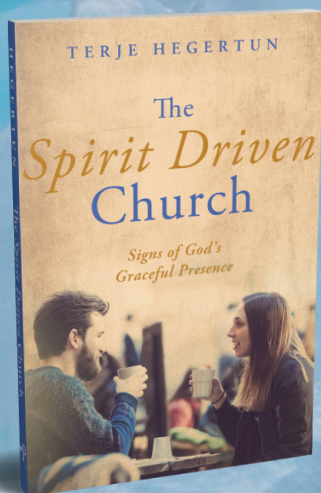
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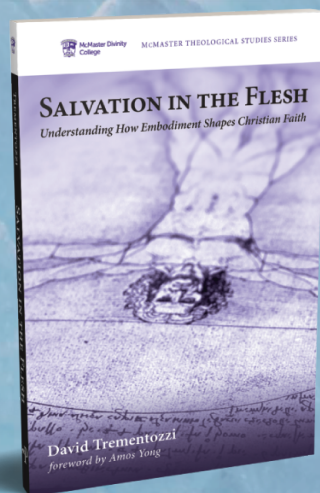
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# SEXUALITY, GENDER, AND MARRIAGE

PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY OF  
SEXUALITY AND EMPOWERING  
THE GIRL-CHILD IN INDIA

BRAINERD PRINCE  
ATULA WALLING

*Spiritus* 3.1 (2018) 109–126  
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**Key Words** *gender, human sexuality, marriage, Hindu, Pentecostal theology of sexuality, narrative identity*

## Abstract

The focus of the article arises from a case study of an Indian woman and her adopted child, Sunita and Komal. There are three key issues that can be abstracted from the story of Sunita and Komal. The abandoned “girl-child” Komal raises the question of sex—what am I? What does it mean to be biologically female? What consequences are there for being born female? Sunita’s and Komal’s rejection from their families has led them to ask the question about their gender—who am I? What does it mean to be a girl or woman in a predominantly Hindu society? How is my female identity constrained and constructed by my society? Finally, Sunita, as a young wife and in light of her miscarriages, recasts the question of marriage itself—how am I supposed to live as a woman in society, particularly in the context of family? What role and functions are expected of me as



a woman? Thus, the three issues raised are sexuality, gender, and marriage of the Hindu girl-child. This article seeks to explore, in response, a Pentecostal theology of human sexuality along these lines.

## Introduction

Five-and-one-half-year-old Komal is one of the children whom we serve at Shiksha Rath. Komal's mother, Sunita, got married at the very young age of fourteen. She faced a lot of problems as she was unable to manage the household chores she had to perform in her husband's house. Furthermore, being very young, she had two miscarriages. The doctor had already warned the family that she would not be able to bear children in the future if pregnancies continued, as her body was not ready to bear children. Meanwhile, the villagers found an abandoned premature girl baby (born in the seventh month) in the forest. The doctor diagnosed that the baby would not survive for long. Sunita's in-laws, thinking that the baby would die soon, forced Sunita to take the baby and look after her. They thought this would be a distraction for Sunita and ease the pain of her two miscarriages. They believed that the baby would surely die soon, so there was no question about adopting it. Unwillingly Sunita took the baby, but soon found herself genuinely taking care of her. By the time the baby, Komal, reached two months of age she got healthier, and Sunita had developed a great attachment to her. Seeing the baby getting healthier and growing, Sunita's husband and family got worried and told her to give away the baby as it was not their own. But Sunita was not willing to abandon Komal again. Sunita was physically abused for not listening to them and was told to leave the house. In addition to her husband's family, all the villagers started taunting her. She left her husband and in-laws and came to her parents' home with Komal. But even her own family was not supportive of her decisions. Sunita brought Komal to Delhi to begin a new life in the Outram Lines slum. She is working as a maid to support both Komal and herself. In addition to her work, Sunita is taking tuition classes to complete the tenth grade so that she can get a better job.

## Shiksha Rath

Shiksha Rath (“chariot of education”) is an after-school holistic educational program for the slum children living in Outram Lines, North Delhi. There are eighty children between the ages of five and fourteen from sixty-eight households who regularly attend our daily classes. Shiksha Rath aims to help the underprivileged children in their studies and give them opportunities to develop their skills and talents and most of all give them an environment of love and acceptance and a place to learn the principles and teachings of Jesus. This is done in a non-conventional way of evangelism. We do not talk or teach about religion directly, but mostly demonstrate it through our lifestyle and deeds. We work very closely with the parents and the community as a whole. Our approach is to be a true light and salt in this community and to allow our good deeds amongst them to speak about the love of Jesus that motivates our work.

Most of the children and the families we serve belong to different kinds of Hindu traditions. They may be Shaivites or Vaishnavites and would worship many gods and goddesses and broadly live out the Hindu life, even if they are not consciously indoctrinated in it. Even as we have served these children for over seven years, we have gotten close to their families and have been able to observe the deeper issues and challenges they face—particularly the girl-children and their mothers. Komal’s and Sunita’s story is an example. It is well documented that the Hindu traditions predominantly have a low view of women and female sexuality, particularly with respect to the girl-child, at least in the practical sense of their role and function in society. Hence, wonderful stories in the tradition that honor women are exceptions; revisionist historians have built the argument that the marginal notion of women has not always been the case. However, in the context of our work, the girl-child and often their mothers are disrespected as they are seen as a dowry curse. Furthermore, the anticipation of their early marriage and going away alienates the girl-child from her own family from a very young age, as she is perceived as belonging to the other. The practice of female child marriage also translates into a lack of present care of the girl-child as well as fuels a disinterest in her welfare through

education or other means. These issues are not only seen as emerging in the Sunita-Komal story but are also generally well documented within the larger Hindu society. In the Indian social world, these oppressive and abusive structures continue to persist, fed by unchallenged social customs that are often termed religious.

There are three key issues that can be abstracted from this story. The abandoned girl-child Komal raises the question of sex—what am I? What does it mean to be biologically female? What consequences are there for being born female? Komal's and Sunita's rejection from their families has led them to ask the question about their gender—who am I? What does it mean to be a girl or woman in a predominantly Hindu society? How is my female identity constrained and constructed by my society? Finally, Sunita, as a young wife and in light of her miscarriages, recasts the question of marriage itself—how am I supposed to live as a woman in society, particularly in the context of family? What role and functions are expected of me as a woman? Thus, the three issues raised by the above vignette are sexuality, gender, and marriage of the Hindu girl-child. This article seeks to explore a Pentecostal theology of human sexuality along these lines.

The methodology followed is the method of correlation with the following structure. First, after an initial description of these issues—sexuality, gender, marriage—problems are identified by the survey research done with the girls and mothers in Shiksha Rath. Second, the issues are explored and engaged from the Hindu point of view within whose horizons the Shiksha Rath women experience their lives. Finally, building on what Shiksha Rath is doing practically, we will offer a theological reflection from a Pentecostal perspective. Through this case study on the work of Shiksha Rath, it will be argued that a Spirit-empowered ministry intervention can go a long way in engaging these issues and reforming the cultural and religious practices, particularly related to the dignity of the Hindu girl-child in India.

However, before we get to the main sections, three preliminary points will be addressed: a) the method of correlation used in this article; b) the status of Pentecostal studies on human sexuality; and c) the three-part conceptual structure of Ricoeur's narrative identity, which will provide the theoretical scaffolding for this work.

## Method of Correlation

In a general sense, this work lies within the theology, and particularly contextual Pentecostal theology, of human sexuality. However, it is not a mere review of theological material that concerns us here: rather this is an attempt to make a contribution to a Pentecostal theology of human sexuality from the ground up, in a sense, from the problems faced in a particular context in which theology is asked to respond and seek for an answer. Paul Tillich called it “dialectic” or “answering” theology, which he developed in his *Systematic Theology Volume 1* as the method of correlation. Tillich states that “the method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, the questions are raised in “real life,” as in the case of the project of Shiksha Rath, which depicts the human condition, and an attempt is made to seek theological answers. It is in this correlation that the contents of the Christian faith are revealed. However, for Tillich, the entire process possesses a circularity within which God has a predominant place. He writes,

God answers man's [*sic*] questions, and under the impact of God's answers, man [*sic*] asks them. Theology formulates the questions implied in human existence, and theology formulates the answers implied in divine self-manifestation under the guidance of the questions implied in human existence.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in a sense, there is a predominance of theology in the method of correlation. Adrian Thatcher provides a helpful insight in his introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality, and Gender*. While this method of correlation has been heavily critiqued, he argues, “Tillich was right on several counts” and that “he was right to insist that for revelation to occur at all, it must first be received in human context.” Thatcher affirms that “Tillich was right to demand ‘answering theology.’” He also claims that the *Handbook*, published in 2015, attempted “to provide ‘answers’ to very modern and pressing questions arising from the experience and study of sexuality and gender, within

and beyond the Christian faith.”<sup>3</sup> This article seeks to follow in the lineage of such an inquiry, attempting to articulate a Christian response to issues of gender, sexual identity, and marriage in a Hindu context, with a view to contribute to a Pentecostal theology of human sexuality.

## **Pentecostal Perspective on Human Sexuality**

It has been acknowledged more than once that there is a paucity of material about the Pentecostal perspective on human sexuality.<sup>4</sup> While Pentecostalism has been open to cultural changes, such as the use of media and its encouragement of a strong work ethic in a capitalist economy, William Kay and Stephen Hunt argue that:

across its “various” streams Pentecostalism has largely remained counter-cultural in respect of preserving conventional moral positions, especially those related to sexuality and thus has taken a stand against adultery, sex before marriage, divorce (except on the grounds of adultery), and homosexuality.<sup>5</sup>

However, it is not Pentecostalism’s conservative counter-cultural stance that draws our attention, but rather that historically these subjects related to human sexuality (for Kay and Hunt it was the subject of homosexuality, but it can also be extended to the other issues listed above) have “largely remained ‘closed,’ not needing discussion, and [have] usually only been dealt with as a matter of pastoral discipline.”<sup>6</sup> This lack of engagement is once again reiterated by Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse, the editors of the eighth volume of the *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion*, which was on the theme of “Pentecostals and the Body” (2017). They wrote in their initial call for papers in 2015 that “to date, there is no sustained examination of Pentecostalism and the themes associated with research on the body.” Therefore, one of the main themes they have listed to be explored in their volume is “the politics of sexuality and gender roles—Pentecostalism as liberating and limiting for bodies, social control and gender roles, sexuality and notions of holiness/purity of body.”<sup>7</sup> I believe the present discussion, as well as the aforementioned edited volume, seeks to remedy this lack of Pentecostal resources, albeit in a

small manner. However, it must also be noted that within contemporary discourse, human sexuality has come to be taken as synonymous with discourses on homosexuality or LGBT rights. While these are legitimate contemporary concerns and issues that need addressing, the classical issues of identity and role of human beings on the basis of sexual differentiation equally need to be addressed from a Pentecostal perspective, which is precisely what this article attempts to do.

## Narrative Identity

We argue that gender, sexuality, and marriage can be adequately treated under the thematic of narrative identity, following closely the model put forward by the French Protestant theologian/philosopher, Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur argues that identity is always a response to “who,” which is mostly in the form of “naming,” although this “who” continually changes over the passage of time. Therefore, on what basis can we be justified in taking a single name of the subject throughout a life filled with changes from birth to death? Ricoeur’s answer is because of its “narrative” structure. In other words, the answer to the question “who” is always “to tell the story of a life.” Therefore the identity of this “who” must be a narrative identity.<sup>8</sup> Thus, identity, understood in narrative terms, can be called “by linguistic convention, the identity of the character”—in other words, a character in a narrative.<sup>9</sup> Ricoeur posits that this identity of a subject has two dimensions: identity as sameness (*idem*) and identity as selfhood (*ipse*) and it is the dialectic between *idem* and *ipse* that contains the identity of the subject.<sup>10</sup> Ricoeur argues that while *idem*-identity as sameness is what is permanent over time in the sense of a numerical identity, *ipse*-identity constitutes the changes over time. We argue that Ricoeur’s narrative identity possesses a third aspect as well—the narrative role played by the character, which fulfills all the functions required by the constraints of the role. Thus, Ricoeur’s narrative identity arguably implicitly possesses a three-part structure that responds to the following three questions respectively: a) *idem*, as what am I, or what about me does not change over time?; b) *ipse*, as who am I even as I grow and change through time?; and c) character, as how am I supposed to live, or what role am I supposed to play in the larger narrative of life? The first question for us can be translated into the

question of sex and sexuality—what am I? The second question refers to gender—who am I even as I change over time and am constructed by society? And the third question can point to marriage, the role played by the person in the larger family narrative. Ricoeur argues that “the identity of a person or a community is made up of these identifications with values, norms, ideals, models, and heroes, in which the person or the community recognizes itself.”<sup>11</sup> Here it should be noted that the Shiksha Rath community belongs predominantly to various Hindu traditions and therefore their identity and roles are primarily informed by Hindu narratives. However, the work of Shiksha Rath introduces new narratives, new characters, values, and models, based on the Christian tradition and this article also seeks to uncover how these new narratives have influenced the community.

With these preliminary points made, we now turn to the main section of the article, which raises questions about the sexuality, gender, and marriage of girl-children in India to which, following Tillich, we will posit an “answering” Pentecostal theology.

## **Sex, Gender, and Marriage of Shiksha Rath Women**

Simon Brodbeck and Brian Black, in the introduction to their edited volume on *Gender and Narrative in the Mahabharata*, claim that “the *Mahabharata* is one of the definitive cultural narratives in the construction of masculine and feminine gender roles in ancient India, and its numerous tellings and retellings have helped shape Indian gender and social norms ever since.”<sup>12</sup> They make a useful distinction between sex and gender that serves our purposes. They understand “sex” to be a biological identity, while employing “gender” to refer to a social identity. If “sex” makes someone male or female, then “gender,” they argue, differentiates masculinity and femininity. Therefore, gender for them is culturally constructed even if sex is a biological universal.<sup>13</sup> Following this distinction, we want to begin with sex and sexuality. However, as said above, the discussion is not in the line of the common pursuit towards homosexuality and LGBT rights. The interesting question we want to pursue, albeit a classical question, is about the theological implications of the biological status of being female. In reverse, we want

to begin by asking if there are implicit problems in being born female and possessing this sexual sameness throughout life. What are the implications and challenges of possessing a female biological identity in the Indian context?

On the other hand, gender seen as culturally constructed refers to the “who” question. Who is a feminine person in Indian society and how is her identity being shaped and constructed on the basis of her gender? While the term “gender,” from the Old French *gendre*, now *genre*, derived from the Latin *genus*, originated as a grammatical term referring to “classes of noun designated as masculine, feminine, or neuter,” since the fourteenth century it has also been used to refer to the “state of being male or female,” which after the fall of Christendom has been dictated by medicine and the social sciences.<sup>14</sup> In other words, it is the discourse of medicine and social sciences that has shaped gender identity with its possibilities and constraints in the modern West. However, in the Indian context, it is the broader Hindu discourse that has shaped and constructed gender identity and set out who is a feminine person along with her identity. This goes back to the question of who am I, asked by feminine persons, which entails a deeper question—how do the Hindu traditions shape and construct the feminine gender and what are its implications for my life?

Finally, with regard to the role or function played by the feminine-character in the broader Indian social narrative, the primary role of women in the Indian social narrative is tied to her role in marriage. This connection is so strong that even when the girl is young, she is already seen through the lens of marriage and even betrothed at a very young age.

Of the thirty-one mothers from Shiksha Rath who were interviewed for this study, ninety percent of them (twenty-seven) who were married off below the legal age of eighteen say that being born female mattered a great deal to how life has turned out for them. Being a girl meant that they were to be married off and nothing else could be expected of them. Ramkali, who was married off at the age of thirteen, narrates about her marriage saying, “I was not ready for marriage, but after my mother had died while I was still very young, my older brother found a boy for me and asked me to get married.” Sunita, who was married off at the



age of fourteen, says, "I did not even understand what marriage was when I got married. My parents told me they would come and take me back after a month, but they never came back for me. I just listened to my parents and got married." None of the thirty-one reached university level in education. Over fifty percent of them (seventeen) did not receive any education at all, and another forty percent attended classes below fifth grade, with only three of the thirty-one women studying above sixth grade. Seventeen of them are working as maids, four as cooks, one gives beauty treatment from house to house, and three of them have small shops in the slum. Rekha exclaims, "I am working in eight houses now, and I am so tired of life." Most of them (twenty-six) said that they are not satisfied with the work they are presently doing. They believe that, if they had studied further, they could have gotten better-paying jobs and would have been treated with respect. Vimla best sums up the general feeling of the women: "I am not satisfied with the work that I am doing right now. I feel that had my parents allowed me to study further, today I could have done a better job and earned more."

Being born a girl-child, or having a feminine sexual identity, meant that they were to be married off at an early age, and so the families did not consider any value in educating them since they would be sent away to belong to another family. This also meant menial jobs for them along with much harassment. Their feminine sexuality disempowered them. What undergirds this treatment is not mere social pragmatism of getting the daughters married, but a deep-rooted Hindu low view of the feminine sex.

## **Hindu View on Sexuality, Gender, and Marriage**

Of course, affirming that there is no single Hindu view on anything is obvious, as there are multitudes of Hindu traditions, similar to any other world religion. This is more so the case in Hinduism, each tradition with its gods, sacred texts, practices, and theology, including a theology of gender. However, given this diversity, is it possible to abstract from these traditions a Hindu theology of gender? Vasudha Narayanan, in her article on gender in the *Blackwell Companion to Hinduism*, affirms diverse views within Hindu traditions. In her opening line, she

contends, “gender is understood and acted out in different ways in the many Hindu *sampradayas* or traditions.” She further argues, “the Hindu traditions have a wealth of materials which can inform us on how some human beings have understood gender in many ways over four millennia; narratives and arts which can contribute to the current academic discourses on gender.”<sup>15</sup> In this work, she limits discussion to a description of the gender of the devotee within the Tamil *Srivaishnava* tradition of the ninth century and bases her understanding of Hindu gender in light of the life and work of the poet Nammalvar. She particularly looks at his poems that are composed from the standpoint of a woman, which Nammalvar would recite in a woman’s voice. Nammalvar becomes a young woman taking on the roles of different female characters of both the helpless devotee as well as that of a strong leader. From the classical Hindu texts characters such as Sita, Radha or the gopis, and Lord Vishnu are portrayed by the young man. Narayanan asks, “in what ways does this role-playing inform us about gender?” To which she replies,

some may argue that in the laments of the lovesick woman as well as in the ritual with Nammalvar, the portrayal projects a social, “patriarchal” relationship on to and replicates the male-female social power structure in the human-divine relationship. This, indeed, is true in many instances, where the deity is seen as the supreme “Man” (*Purusottama*) and the woman’s “lowliness” is exalted.<sup>16</sup>

But she quickly adds that this is only a partial view, as the voice of the helpless woman is only one of the voices the poet takes, and that he also takes the voice of dominant women such as a woman in love, a world-wise courtesan, as well as that of a mother. With this, Narayanan wants to prove that the voices of women are valued and privileged. However, what she fails to take into account is that it still took a male poet, Nammalva, to give voice to the feminine gender. Were the actual women of eighth- and ninth-century India able to give voice to their own selves or did it necessarily require the masculine gender to give voice to them? Out of the twelve Alvar poets, Andal of the eighth century is the only woman poet. So in spite of Narayanan’s view of the

positive portrayal of “women’s voices,” her perspective actually echoes the exclusion and helplessness faced by the Shiksha Rath mothers.

This is useful because then we can safely assume that the gender of the Shiksha Rath women is constructed in line with the social and cultural realities of their Hindu traditions. The above data on the women’s experiences suggest that however idealistic textual Hinduism may be about feminine gender identity, Hindu women embodying these gender identities have been deprived of their dignity and have been disempowered.

The ideal woman is often portrayed in terms of the *pativrata*, the wife who is religiously devoted to her husband. One of the most well-known *Mahabharata* examples of the *pativrata* is Savitri, who, by means of cunning, perseverance, and eloquence, outwits Death to save her husband. Another example is Gandhari, who makes loyalty to her husband her highest aim (*pativrataparayana*) by willfully blindfolding herself when she marries the blind Dhritarastra, resolving that “she would not experience more than her husband could.”<sup>17</sup> Another trope used for women is that of the courtesan. And in this role, although she does not play out the marriage ideal, it is still contingent on her sexuality and how she uses her sexual power over a man. “*Sri*, who in some ways resembles the courtesan (*ganika*) as depicted in the *Kamasutra*, chooses the man who pleases her most (this is the difference between victory and defeat), and features as a temporary and fickle consort, not as a childbearer.”<sup>18</sup>

So we find that “the *pativrata* and *Sri* are two of the more prominent paradigms of femininity in the *Mahabharata*. Both paradigms present women as important complements to their husbands’ success. Both are restrictive, only representing women in relation to their menfolk.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus, we find that broadly within Hindu traditions the *idem*-identity of being female restricts the woman primarily to a complementary role as the *pativrata*, or wife, or its powerful counterpart as an aberration in the *Sri* as the courtesan. This restrictive view delimits all other possibilities. The woman is not viewed as a unique creation of God, who is an equal image-bearer, with creative possibilities.

## Exploring a Pentecostal Theology of Human Sexuality

As mentioned above the contemporary discourse on sexuality, even within theology, has largely focused on responding to issues of homosexuality and LGBT rights. However, these are not the issues faced by the women of the Shiksha Rath community. With regard to the church's undivided focus on homosexuality, Elizabeth Stuart writes,

while the church debates have become predictable . . . perhaps because the Holy Spirit has been moving elsewhere, theological reflection upon sexuality . . . produced a rich seam of theological discourse focused not only on homosexuality . . . but on human sexuality in all its diversity and complexity.<sup>20</sup>

So what is Shiksha Rath doing that can bring about a change in the lives of the girl-children so that they do not have to suffer the plight of their mothers? Thirty-two girls from the ages of five to fourteen were interviewed and surveyed for this article. Twenty-six of them said that they are happy to be girls and it was interesting to note that their social identity as being feminine was not seen negatively, yet many felt discriminated against for being a girl. One girl said she was unhappy because “she wants to be with her mother even after marriage but as a girl, she has to go and stay with her in-laws.” Also, they can notice the gender differentiation. One of the girls complained, “granny doesn’t like girls, she says only my brother will continue the family line.” All thirty-two of them want to work, and their dreams are diverse, either to be a doctor, teacher, dancer, artist, or an engineer. Some said that if their parents do not support them, then they will fight for their career dreams and many of them want Shiksha Rath to be involved in negotiating with their families when it comes to these difficult decisions of marriage and career. One Shiksha Rath staff said, “we take groups of girls and spend time with them talking about different issues according to their age. For example, with the older ones we talk about their careers, relationships, and dressings while with the younger girls we do activities and talk about different options for their career as well as about pursuing their hobbies.”

So the question for us regarding these discussions on sexuality and gender is, what theology of gender is operative in Shiksha Rath that drives them to engage robustly with Hindu theology and the practice of gender differentiation faced by their girls?

First, the operative theology is one that affirms the creation of both the masculine and the feminine sex in the image of the triune God. While it does not pander to the call of equality of all genders, it deals with the precise uniqueness of the girl-child. Janet Soskice argues, “The as yet unsung glory of Gen. 1:26-7 is that the fullness of divine life and creativity is reflected by a human race which is male and female, which encompasses if not an ontological then a primal difference.”<sup>21</sup> Beattie argues that “the account of the goodness of creation and of the human male and female made in the image of God requires a delicate balancing act between the affirmation of sexual difference as part of that original goodness.”<sup>22</sup> The *idem*-identity of sexuality, of being a girl-child, explicitly differentiates the kind of life the Shiksha Rath children lead and the future they anticipate. This theology, sensitive to sexual differentiation, has enabled Shiksha Rath to encourage the girls to rethink what it means to be girls, different from boys, and yet wholly in the image of God, and thus full of feminine possibilities. As we saw above, two of the more prominent paradigms of femininity in the *Mahabharata* are *pativrata* and *Sri*, and yet both of these ideals are dependent on the menfolk, be it husband or male. This is precisely because the Hindu imagination does not have the notion of the woman being in the image of God, independent of the male folk. One way forward is to reimagine a Pentecostal Hindu theology of sexuality in which women can be directly connected to the divine, independent of the male.

Second, in Shiksha Rath, we take full advantage of the *ipse*-identity that opens up the girl-children to be reshaped by alternative empowering narratives. If the primary *ipse*-identity (the changing identity) of the girls is shaped broadly by the Hindu narratives and practices, then the teachers and leaders of Shiksha Rath wisely use their opportunity with the girls not only to address their problems but also to offer biblical material in the form of stories and narratives, including as expressed through art, drama, and theatre, as alternative visions of being of feminine gender. Stories of Ruth, Esther, and Hannah from

the Old Testament, as well as the stories of Mary and Martha and Mary Magdalene from the New Testament, serve as powerful narratives of empowered women, which when shared with the girls enable them to be receptive to be reshaped by these narratives. Here the stress is not on imperatives and rules, as identities are seldom developed by such forceful constraints. Rather, it is a unique partnership with the Holy Spirit, in which while we share the narratives, we allow the Holy Spirit to do his work in enabling the girls to get embedded in these new narratives. Here a question can be raised to Pentecostal theology. Would it be open to developing a theology of religion on different themes, including sexuality, which would take an interfaith approach? Such a theology would bring together narratives from both Christian as well as other religions' texts in order to seek an understanding of sexuality directed by the Holy Spirit. Would this provide a genuine platform for the development of a Pentecostal theology of religion on gender from the ground up? This is not a completely new idea within Pentecostal theology. In Amos Yong we have a Pentecostal theologian who claims that emergent churches are already participating in these forms of interfaith engagement in that they "emphasize genuine dialogue, encourage visiting other sacred sites and even participating in their liturgies, and insist on learning about the lives and religious commitments of others."<sup>23</sup> On the basis of Eddie Gibbs' and Ryan Bolger's *Emerging Churches*, Yong argues that "these activities are informed by the conviction that there is much to be learned from other cultures, even to the point of being evangelized by those of other faiths in ways that transform Christian self-understandings."<sup>24</sup>

Finally, about the social role and character played by these girls in the larger social narrative, as shown above, the girls from childhood are steered to a single role and function, as a wife in a marital role. While this ideal does not go against the Pentecostal theological position of the primary role of a woman, we would like to broaden this understanding in light of the girl-child being in the image of God. If the Holy Spirit is actively involved in shaping and reshaping the unique roles of the girl-children so that they fulfill their unique destiny, then a "single standard fit" of "marriage" will not do for all. It is here that we at Shiksha Rath are sensitive to the Spirit's leading for each of these girls so

that we can support them in the directions they are led regarding their futures, in which of course marriage is a central possibility. However, we want to be careful that we do not become the handmaiden of a Hindu theology that advocates women to be treated as Sunita and to suffer without consideration. However, this discovery is not made by the leaders of Shiksha Rath for the child. Rather it follows a Trinitarian model in which the girl, along with the Shiksha Rath leadership and the Holy Spirit, equally working together, are on a journey for the girls to find their dignity and roles in society. In our view, it is here in these moments of practical empowerment that the grounded Pentecostal theology of sexuality, gender, and marriage blossoms. While this is an initial attempt to abstract reflectively a theology from practice, much more must be done to work towards maturing such a theology.

## Conclusion

This exploration of how the Spirit discloses the inherent image of God in female sexuality indeed reveals the godly destiny of the girl-child. The Spirit-given charismata operational in the service of the workers enables the growth and nurture of the godly destiny in the girl-child. We hope that the study of these themes has not only enabled us to begin an attempt at a Pentecostal theology of human sexuality, but also explicitly demonstrates the role of the Holy Spirit in restoring the dignity of the girl-child in Shiksha Rath.

To end this presentation, a recent story in a mainline Indian newspaper continues to reveal the plight of the girl-child in India. “A 12-year-old survivor of rape, who recently gave birth to a child making her possibly Bengal’s youngest mother,” has to transfer out of her school as she was being accused of bringing a “bad name” to the school. The reasons given for her expulsion are: a) she would discuss her “sexual exploitation” with her classmates, and they did not want such a “dirty girl” to study along with their children; b) they were questioning how a girl could even be raped in this manner; c) why was the family not more protective of the child?; and d) male faculty members feared that she might level false allegations of physical assault against them. However, her aunt said, “she was born on July 1, 2005, and isn’t even 12 yet. She

still plays with toys, and it's me who is taking care of her baby. Even now all she is concerned about is having chocolates and cold drinks.”<sup>25</sup>

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## Notes

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- 3 Adrian Thatcher, “Introduction,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality, and Gender*, ed. Adrian Thatcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 4–5.
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- 9 Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 141.
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- 22 Tina Beattie, "The Theological Study of Gender," in *The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality and Gender*, 41.
- 23 Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices and the Neighbour* (New York: New York University, 2008), 36.
- 24 Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 36. See Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).
- 25 Priyanka Dasgupta, "12-year-old Mother Takes Transfer from School," *The Times of India*, 5 May 2017, n.p., <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/12-year-old-mom-takes-transfer-from-school/articleshow/58523785.cms> (6 May 2017).

# REVIEWS

***Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in Light of Pentecost.*** By Craig S. Keener. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2016. xxvii + 522 pp.

Is it debate or just spirited discussion among friends? Scholars in the Society for Pentecostal Studies disagree about Pentecostal-charismatic hermeneutics, with more than two sides to an argument among self-identified Spirit-filled scholars. Keener's welcome work can enlighten all sides.

This hermeneutics debate is not about historic Pentecostal practices (glossolalia, prophecy, healing, etc.); it first concerns whether there is a distinctively Spirit-filled way to study and teach the Bible. For those who answer that question affirmatively, the debate further concerns how to define such a hermeneutic.

Some doubt there is a distinct approach to the Bible that could be called charismatic hermeneutics any more than there is a charismatic chemistry. For these scholars, biblical scholars should do their work—especially for the academy—in ways that meet the standards of historical, linguistic, and cultural studies (as also practiced by non-charismatics). If there is a Pentecostal dimension to such scholars' work, it might be in their prayer for the Holy Spirit's help in the task (just as a charismatic chemist might pray) or in the application of the text as the Spirit directs the individual's or congregation's life or in both. The "meaning" of the scriptural text is "set" in the historical-grammatical and social particulars of the original human authors and their intended audiences. The Spirit-filled scholar's job is to find and articulate that meaning in the text; it is not to find a meaning that is invisible or nonsense to anyone trained to read the text but not Spirit-empowered.

On the spectrum's other end are some Pentecostal-charismatic scholars who argue that the Spirit-empowered community plays a vital role in biblical interpretation. More than "community as context"

(which is undeniable), the community provides keys and traditions for how to interpret Scripture. The community is even said to be the location for the “meaning” (86, 124, and 277–85). In the jargon of current hermeneutical discussions, these scholars lean on reader-response perspectives more than on historical-grammatical rules (traditionally taught in evangelical seminaries). The question is not simply, “What did Paul mean in saying this to the Corinthians?” The question is also, “How does this text resonate with our Spirit-filled community?” Both questions are appropriate for hermeneutics, but other questions are raised when the emphasis is placed on one end or the other of the spectrum: “original meaning” of the text or “meaning in our context.”

Craig Keener’s excellent *Spirit Hermeneutics*, in this reviewer’s opinion, strikes an almost perfect balance in the discussion and debate described above (simplistically, to be sure). Keener unabashedly recounts his charismatic experiences, but he also argues that the text must be understood historically, grammatically, and in its cultural setting: “Individual spiritual experience is necessarily subjective, but it can be balanced with something objective: tested past revelation, corporately affirmed by God’s people” (112). If the text is not the authority over the community, what is? Something or someone will function as the authority over the community and the text—for meaning and application.

Reader-response approaches have their greatest value in demonstrating the text’s “history of effects,” answering questions such as, “How has this been interpreted and what have been the results of those interpretations?” (Consider Scriptural arguments to support slavery, for example.) Reader-response approaches help us evaluate whether Scripture has been silenced, misused, or used appropriately. Reader-response critiques can find examples of all of the above in contemporary charismatic communities! That is exactly why reader-response approaches to Scripture can supplement but not replace historical-grammatical exegesis.

Pentecostals should not identify ourselves with just one part of the Body of Christ. Keener rightly insists that our biblical hermeneutics should recognize that the whole church is meant to be Spirit-empowered. Our exegetical proclamation should speak to the whole

church, even as we listen to the whole church. In the testimony of the global church (57–98), we hear confident witness to the Holy Spirit’s activity and the power of Jesus’s name as millions come into the kingdom every year from around the world! This is not the time (nor was it ever) for Pentecostals to talk only to ourselves about our experiences of the Holy Spirit. Thus it is not the time for Pentecostals to promote a hermeneutics that speaks only to our experiences.

Indeed, Pentecostals have much to offer those parts of the church not considered charismatic. For example, early twentieth-century Pentecostals interpreted their Holy Spirit experiences as consistent with the narrative reports in the Book of Acts. Some scholars (even Pentecostals trained in non-charismatic, evangelical schools) found fault with reading Luke’s narratives as normative. Those scholars (many still living) preferred Paul’s prescriptive teachings (up to a point) over Luke’s narratives. But while Pentecostals and charismatics continued to read the narratives of Acts as (at least) descriptive of things the Holy Spirit might do among us, the rest of the church’s scholars were also re-discovering the importance of narrative for framing and forming our theology.

Keener’s book has many merits: insisting that experiential reading of the Bible is biblical (19–56); viewing hermeneutics with the global church (57–98); discussing “Epistemology and the Spirit” (153–204). Most crucial for Keener’s balancing act (valuing literary and historical approaches) is “Connection with the Designed Sense” (99–152). Here Keener states his strongest arguments for the authority of “the designed sense” (terminology he prefers over “original meaning,” which is fraught with impossible questions about reading authors’ minds). Keener makes his case well, but this section will draw disapproval from those with higher regard for “the meaning in our context” than for “the meaning of the text” as traditionally understood.

Christians generally agree that “reading [Scripture] in light of Jesus’s cross and triumph helps us put other matters in perspective” (203). Is that not a historical meaning in the text that sheds light on my context? Would a literary reading have the same power if no history supported it?

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***A Guide to Pentecostal Movements for Lutherans.*** By Sarah Hinlicky Wilson. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016. 150 pp.

Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, an ordained Lutheran pastor and faculty member of the Institute for Ecumenical Research, has written a book that will interest both Pentecostals and Lutherans. Written as a guide for a journey “to a foreign land” for Lutherans (and perhaps Pentecostals as well), Wilson reminds these seemingly disparate groups, “we are all baptized Christians, believers in the crucified and risen Jesus, called by the gospel to new life” (xii). This ecumenical theme echoes throughout this the book by way of her use of history, Scripture, and theology. As a participant in the dialogues between The Lutheran World Federation and Classical Pentecostals, Wilson respectfully and capably exegetes scriptures that are central to Pentecostal faith and practice while conveying this understanding to Lutherans, referencing Lutheran history, the Book of Concord, and the writings of Martin Luther.

Wilson’s opening chapters (“Azusa,” “Pentecostals,” “Lutherans”) introduce the various groups to each other by way of historical narrative. Next she provides two chapters on “Baptism,” in which she exegetes Luke-Acts regarding the “baptism in the Spirit” (34), discusses subsequence, infant baptism, and cites the distinctives and problems with Pentecostal terminology. Then, in the chapter on “Charismata,” Wilson provides a meaningful and instructive exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12–14 regarding the gifts of the Spirit, their benefits to individual Christians, and the dangers often associated with these “supernatural” manifestations (68). Her chapter on the history of Pentecostal restorationist perspectives and dispensational eschatology aim to help Lutherans understand the 20th-century Pentecostal perspective on the “imminent return of Jesus” (77). The next chapter, “Power,” treats a number of topics related to the exercise of various forms of power in Pentecostalism and suggests some tools for discernment that would benefit Lutherans and Pentecostals alike. The chapter on “Prosperity” provides a helpful Lutheran law-and-gospel approach to a topic Lutherans often denounce. It distinguishes faith as defined in Lutheran theology

and faith as defined by prosperity teaching. The next-to-last chapter, "Experience," uses Luther's discussion of Psalm 5 to help Lutherans understand the vital role of experience in the Christian life. Wilson's "Conclusion" makes a strong case that Lutherans and Pentecostals can learn from each other, particularly regarding worship.

Throughout the book, I found several explanations helpful to both Lutherans and Pentecostals. For example, Wilson identifies for Lutherans the similarity of Lutheran confessions to Pentecostal thought and doctrine in that both groups seek "to put Christ at the center of Christian faith and to receive him as the key to understanding the whole" (24). She provides a way to understand Pentecostal approaches to faith and practice by stipulating that Pentecostals are united by a common experience, baptism in the Spirit (95). So in the same way that Lutheran churches are united by common "Confessions," Pentecostals are unified by "Experience" (31). Drawing from the Book of Acts, she describes Pentecostalism as a movement toward reclaiming the experience of the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts of tongues, prophecy, and healing as a normal part of the Christian life (31). Furthermore, Wilson clearly defines the differences between Lutheran and Pentecostal worship, including the Lord's Supper, in a way that is easily understood.

Of special import, I believe, are the chapters on baptism. Here Wilson provides a fascinating and informative reading of Luke-Acts perspectives of baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit (34). She explores the issue of subsequence in the passages about Pentecost (Acts 2) and Philip's visit to Samaria (Acts 8). She also takes up the issues of speaking in tongues, infant baptism vs. believer's baptism, and re-baptism. The latter is important because Lutherans regard baptism as God's act, not merely a human one (58). In the chapter on prosperity, Wilson recognizes that Lutherans have historically eschewed prosperity messages and, to the relief of Pentecostals like myself, she repudiates the idea that this movement had Pentecostal origins (102). Instead, she provides sound biblical and theological teaching regarding prosperity and admits to the benefit of prosperity teaching for marginalized populations (105).

However, Wilson's narrative errs in some ways. For example, while discussing the occurrences of charismatic gifts throughout church

history, she fails refer to seminal texts such as Stanley Burgess' *The Holy Spirit: Medieval Roman Catholic and Reformation Traditions*. Second, Wilson equates Oral Roberts' retreat to the prayer tower to raise money for the City of Faith hospital with the excesses and moral failures of Jimmy Swaggart and Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker. I believe her accounting of this event portrays Chancellor Roberts and his efforts and motivations inaccurately (96-97). Finally, Wilson identifies ORU, along with Rhema, as an institution in the US who trains pastors for the prosperity movement (105). This is not true now, nor was it true for the twenty-eight years I was affiliated with the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry at ORU.

Wilson concludes this work by identifying the important influence of Pentecostalism on Lutherans and expresses a clear hope for the Lutheran contribution to Pentecostals (128). This is a hope I share. I highly recommend this book for its stated purpose, a journey to a foreign land for Lutherans, as well as a guide for Pentecostals who wish to learn about Lutherans.

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***Jesus the Lord according to Paul the Apostle: A Concise Introduction.*** By Gordon D. Fee. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018. xx + 201 pp.

Gordon D. Fee, professor emeritus of New Testament studies at Regent College, is a well-respected biblical scholar with a Pentecostal spirituality, practical devotion to Jesus, and special respect and love for Paul. He is a foremost authority on Paul and the Spirit and has written commentaries on 1 Corinthians, Revelation, Philippians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus. He made his exhaustive tome, *God's Empowering Presence* (1994), available to a wider audience of ministers and students in *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God* (1996). In like manner, has distilled his findings from his extensive work *Pauline Christology* (2007)

into an accessible and practical form in *Jesus the Lord according to Paul the Apostle*—perhaps the last book of his productive and influential career.

In this work, Fee redresses a perceived scholarly gap in Paul's understanding of the person of Christ. Because this is a succinct four-part synthesis of his larger work, he necessarily excludes his comprehensive exegetical analysis of each of Paul's letters, two appendices, and his treatment of Wisdom Christology. The result is a biblical theology that flows from his prior examination sprinkled with exegetical highlights on key interpretative issues.

In *Jesus the Lord*, Fee structures his presentation to maintain a balance in emphasis between the work and the person of Christ. He notes how Paul's experience, love, and worship of Christ impacted his Christology—a connection often overlooked. In Paul's letters, the work of Christ, he argues, derives from Christ's person. Parts 1 and 2 he devotes to Christ's work as savior and creator of a new humanity; parts 3 and 4 concentrate upon the person of Christ.

In Part 1, Fee contends that Christ came for two reasons: "to reveal the true nature and character of the eternal God" and "to redeem us from our fallen, and thus broken, condition" (1). He does this by examining Paul's soteriology, i.e., his presentation of what Christ did for humanity through his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

In Part 2, Fee contends that Paul upholds the true humanity of Christ by exploring key passages in which Paul presents Christ as the second or last Adam and in which he uses related terminology of new creation, the *imago Dei*, and new humanity in reference to Christ. Indicative of his careful exegetical analysis, Fee is cautious in his support of a so-called "Adam Christology" and rejects the equation of *morphē* and *eikōn*. For Fee, Paul fundamentally presents Christ as one who bears and restores the divine image lost in the fall.

Fee shifts his focus to Paul's two main Christological emphases on the person of Christ in the latter half of the book. Part 3 presents Christ as the Jewish messiah and Son of God by looking at the roots of Jewish messianism, Jesus as the Davidic Son of God, and the eternal Son of God. In Part 4, the heart of the book, Fee makes the case that



the center of Paul's Christology is Jesus Christ as the *kyrios* (Lord). He demonstrates through intertextual links that *kyrios* is an adaptation of the divine name in the LXX. Paul, according to Fee, uses this exclusively as a title for Jesus Christ and thus, transfers "*divine roles*" and "*divine prerogatives* of Israel's God to the Lord, Jesus Christ" (118). In contrast, Fee observes that Paul employs *theos* solely for God.

Fee's contention throughout is that Paul presupposes the highest Christology. Paul affirms Christ's humanity, divinity, and preexistence while maintaining historic monotheism. This is rooted in history for Paul, being derived from the earliest Christian communities and traditions. For example, he writes, "Paul argues from rather than for the reality of the incarnation" (72). Against a commonly held assumption, Fee asserts that Paul and John are "on the same christological page" (116).

Fee's careful exegetical work and years of study offer helpful insights and correctives to the field of Pauline studies. Here are a few highlights: First, he critiques the overly individualistic focus on salvation by Protestants—a presupposition contrary to Paul's largely communal focus on the new "people of God" (6). Fee could have placed even greater weight on this point throughout the book. Second, Fee contends that the restorative aspects of Paul's understanding of salvation leads to Christ-like conformity, which necessarily involves behavior (not works). This too, he contends, historical Protestantism has downplayed. Manifestations of the new creation include "love for one's enemies, caring for the poor, breaking down ethnic and cultural boundaries (Jew and gentile as *one people* of God)" (49). In line with recent Pauline scholarship, Fee also provides important exegetical insights into present, ongoing participation in the new creation. For instance, he argues from 1 Corinthians 15:49 that believers are to bear the likeness of Christ in the present as well as in the future. Fee also exposes a common cognitive mistranslation of Galatians 1:15-16, where Paul expresses experientially that the Son was "revealed *in me*" rather than "*to me*." In this way, "Paul intended his own conversion to be a place of revelation for others" (115).

In his conclusion, Fee moves the discussion forward by advocating that Paul upholds a "proto-trinitarian view of God" (176). Fee looks

closely at triadic expressions and the personhood of the Spirit in Paul. By utilizing a hermeneutic of trust rather than one of suspicion, Fee's inclusion of the entire Pauline corpus ultimately paints a fuller picture of Paul's high Christology—one that inevitably supports “the so-called economic Trinity” and later Trinitarian formulations of the church (182).

Overall, Fee has successfully accomplished his intended goal. He discloses Paul's high Christology in a form accessible to a wider audience. He even includes a helpful glossary of technical terms for non-specialists along with a subject and Scripture index. While the book contains few footnotes, Fee refers readers seeking detailed exegetical analysis and scholarly discussion to his prior work. Any reader will benefit from Fee's masterful grasp of Paul's Christology; it is refreshing, cogent and corrective. *Jesus as Lord* comes highly recommended and would be an excellent textbook for undergraduate and seminary courses on Christology or Pauline theology.

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***Jesus before Pentecost.*** By William P. Atkinson. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers-Cascade Books, 2016. 222 pp.

This latest book by William Atkinson (three others preceded since 2009) is at once scholarly and devotional in its look at well-known Pentecostal pillars of Jesus as savior, healer, baptizer, and soon-coming king. Atkinson acknowledges the five-fold pattern which includes Jesus as sanctifier, but chooses to examine the four-square rubric, as that is the pattern of his own tradition (UK-based Elim Pentecostal Church).

Atkinson contends that “someone who looks at Jesus through Pentecostal eyes thereby gains helpful insight by means of that perspective” (7). If, as he believes, “what you see depends on where you are looking from” (40), this brings certain things to the foreground, such as the miraculous healing ministry of Jesus and his anointing of God's Spirit.

*Savior.* “Salvation,” Atkinson writes, “will not be presented in Pentecostal communities as only a hope for the life to come.” He follows with a discussion of believers enjoying “the benefits of God’s kingdom in their present lives” (47). Jesus is savior in many ways—he saved people from the immediate threat of drowning, he saved people from physical hunger, he saved people from God’s silence and from God’s absence (48–50). More important, Jesus saved from Satanic bondage and divine judgment.

Atkinson concludes this chapter poignantly:

What the feeding of the five thousand represented was further recalled and highlighted at the last supper. . . . While there was no miraculous multiplication of the bread on this latter occasion, his words pointed forwards . . . to the cross that lay soon ahead. . . . Perhaps he foresaw that countless thousands, not just five thousand, would benefit from the breaking of this latter bread. He was to give his life for the world. (78)

*Healer.* Pentecostals, Atkinson writes (as a medical doctor as well as a divine), believing as they do in supernatural healing, bring a helpful perspective to the miraculous healings performed by Jesus. Ever cautious, Atkinson does not claim that Pentecostals are better at reading the healing accounts, but that “they come to the task with a particular set of equipment” (80). He believes that there is “sufficient likelihood” that healings occurring today are analogous to the healings that occurred in Jesus’s ministry, thus it is reasonable that some trust “be placed in the light that shines on the text when the eyes reading it are Pentecostal” (80).

The last two sections are the most interesting and meaningful. First, he discusses healings and the identity of Jesus. Noting that Jesus acknowledged that there were other exorcists around (Mark 9:8), he did not see his ministry as simply continuing their good work,

but as uniquely eschatological in character (Luke 11:20). . . . Satan’s defeat had begun . . . repentance—a return to God the king—should follow. . . .

Jesus regarded his healings as signs . . . [and] expected people to

look beyond the healings themselves and to look at him, Jesus, in their light. He is the one prophesied by John. . . . Healings should in this sense incite faith that Jesus was acting on behalf of Israel's God (John 11:42). (104, 105)

*Baptizer in the Spirit.* Although Atkinson writes that he would “if necessary correct Pentecostal thinking in this area” (124), I noted no corrections. What Pentecostal would not agree that “the promised power of the Spirit is intimately tied to the responsibility to engage in Christian mission” or that “the same Spirit of God is at work in their lives as enabled Jesus to engage in his mission” (123).

Atkinson argues that the anointing of the Spirit that Jesus received was for his mission (129); likewise, he called not just the twelve but scores (Luke 10:1–12) and instructed them to pray for more workers of the harvest; Jesus understood this as a “*worldwide*” mission (146). “He was looking for people to go and engage in his prophetic mission, performing miracles too” (135).

Jesus freely received power and authority from heaven by the Spirit, and freely gave it to his team (140). “There is no reason to suppose, then,” Atkinson writes, “that Jesus expected his co-missioners to experience any less success in their mission than he did in his, for they were now equipped with divine authority by the Spirit’s agency” (141).

After the resurrection, with the cross behind him, Jesus proceeded with his mission, which would now be taken internationally:

When his promises were fulfilled, the first generation of believers . . . rightly picked up both John the Baptist’s promise and his language, and identified the exalted Jesus as their “baptizer in the Spirit” . . . Pentecostals are not wrong to regard this as a promise and activity of Jesus; neither is it wrong to associate it with power and authority to engage in the mission Jesus both initiated and commanded. (151)

*Soon-coming King.* There are two issues in this pillar and Atkinson discusses both: the imminent return of Christ and his kingly nature. Pentecostals hold with great passion Jesus’s return, although their

“fervor has cooled over the course of the twentieth century. It remains a central Pentecostal conviction that Jesus will return in power and glory to rule and judge the world . . .” (156). In the beginning of the Pentecostal movement (and even today), this fervor in Pentecostal thinking was not misplaced, and it translated into a zeal for evangelism (187).

Atkinson notes that not only was Jesus nailed to the cross, but so was his crime—“king of the Jews”: “Jesus died as a deeply traumatized and virtually deserted man. He died as a convicted criminal. But he died labeled a king” (170). In the epilogue appropriately titled “In the Time Before He Comes,” Atkinson concludes: “As he had sent some out in pairs to further his mission in preaching and healing, so too they would send out others in the same mission, until he came once again, as the king he had always been. Maranatha; Come, Lord Jesus” (189).

For a heady but semi-devotional read, I highly recommend *Jesus before Pentecost*.

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***Pentecostals and the Poor***. By Ivan Satyavrata. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017. 74 pp.

Pentecostals have lately attended a lot to social issues such as poverty, and in *Pentecostals and the Poor*, Ivan Satyavrata wades into this issue from his unique perspective as an evangelist, church planter, missionary, and theologian in India. This short volume, adapted from a series of lectures at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, seeks to set the relationship between Pentecostalism and the poor within contexts, including historical, biblical, and theological.

Chapter One begins with a discussion of Pentecostalism as a unique theological tradition. Satyavrata rightly recognizes that many historical accounts of Pentecostalism are geared toward North American Pentecostalism, but as a member of the majority world, he insists

that the question of how Pentecostals respond to the poor cannot be answered without a global perspective. Satyavrata believes that there is “adequate support” within the global Pentecostal tradition to make a case for a Pentecostal tradition of engagement with the poor. To argue this, he presents examples from Azusa, from early missions in India, and from several recent missionary leaders in the Assemblies of God. He concludes that Pentecostals have blended social and evangelistic engagements, which have only grown in importance in recent years.

In Chapter Two, Satyavrata seeks to build a biblical theology of mission grounded in the concept of the kingdom of God. He believes the mission of the kingdom of God is exemplified in the mission of Christ who came to engage the powers of darkness, proclaim freedom, demonstrate God’s power, bring reconciliation, and engage in social transformation. He argues that because all social ills are ultimately sin issues which “overflow into the social and political structures of our world,” evangelism must take priority in the church’s mission. In this way, the gospel transforms lives, which then influences society. Therefore, accomplishing God’s mission requires a holistic approach, by engaging in evangelism, discipleship, cross-cultural ministry, and social engagement, particularly in developing countries.

In Chapter Three, the strongest of his chapters, Satyavrata discusses the way that Pentecostal theology has a tradition of empowering the poor. He recognizes that the tradition of premillennialism, a rejection of the social gospel, a dualistic worldview, and an apolitical posture within the Pentecostal tradition have at times discouraged social engagement. But, he argues, social engagement was vital to the worldwide missions strategy of the movement. Pentecostal spirituality transforms cultures and is rooted in the biblical testimony of the Spirit’s empowering believers to overcome economic, gender, and cultural barriers. Engrained in Pentecostal theology and praxis are the kingdom values of liberation, healing, community, and hope.

Chapter Four diverges from the topic of the poor in order to discuss the impact of Pentecostal theological education in shaping next-generation missional leaders. While the chapter seems a bit ancillary to his subject, his ultimate purpose is to argue that theological education must transform the heart and the mind in order to fulfill the missional

mandate to the world. With this in mind, he concludes by discussing three ways that evangelism and social concern work together in accomplishing the mission of God. First, social concern is a consequence of evangelism because salvation is transformational and holistic. Second, social concern is a bridge to creating opportunities to evangelize. Third, social concern and evangelism can partner together by proclaiming the love of God and demonstrating that love by acts of service. He concludes, “Evangelism and social responsibility, while distinct from one another, are integrally related in our proclamation of, and obedience to, the Gospel” (72).

While this work is brief, it offers several helpful perspectives to the topic of Pentecostals and social engagement. First, Satyavrata is right that his perspective as a majority-world theologian is important to this discussion. Although voicing majority world perspectives is his goal, this work expresses a global perspective more than how this issue is addressed in India. Second, he demonstrates that Pentecostals have engaged in social concern from the beginning of the movement, even if the claim lacks much primary source material. Most of his evidence comes from contemporary leaders, many of whom are North American Assemblies of God leaders. Given his goal of expressing a Pentecostal tradition not limited to a Western perspective, I expected more engagement from a part of the world in which poverty is a major missional concern. Finally, Satyavrata argues ably that ministry should be grounded in the kingdom of God and should be modeled after Christ’s mission of liberation, healing, and social concern. His discussion of the partnership between evangelism and social concern strikes a good balance.

These edited lectures help frame the issues and offer perspectives that are timely for Pentecost scholars, educators, and those ministering in the global Spirit-empowered movement. They remind us that any reflection on how Pentecostals have engaged with the poor should be global in scope.

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***The Mind of the Spirit: Paul's Approach to Transformed Thinking.*** By Craig S. Keener. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016. 402 + xliii pp.

Anyone familiar with Craig Keener is impressed by his expansive grasp of ancient literature—pagan, Jewish, and Christian. The present volume is another example of his mastery of these sources.

In *The Mind of the Spirit*, Keener addresses an aspect of Pauline theology that is underappreciated in current discussions focused on more controversial issues (e.g., “New Perspective” debates). Of concern to Keener is anthropology, more specifically, the role of cognition in the new life of human beings in Christ. Keener examines passages in Paul’s letters that focus on human cognition, both apart from and in Christ, to elucidate the transformation of thinking that occurs through the work of the Spirit when an individual comes to faith in Christ. The result is not a thoroughgoing Pauline psychology or anthropology, nor is it a detailed theological or exegetical exposition of the soteriological effects of the Spirit’s work in the transformation of the human mind. Rather, it is a study of how Paul’s audiences would have understood his presentation of the transformed human mind in terms of the similarities to and divergences from the various intellectual and religious backgrounds represented in the recipient congregations.

Over the course of eight chapters, Keener examines representative passages that illustrate Paul’s understanding of the movement of the human mind from its fallen, corrupt state to its redemption in Christ through the Spirit. The first five chapters of Keener’s study follow a course through Romans. Chapter one, “The Corrupted Mind,” examines Romans 1:18–32 in its description of the pagan mind warped by idolatry and mired in the futility of its passions. The next chapter, “The Mind of Faith,” is presented as a counter to the first, examining Romans 6:11 to address how faith in the death and resurrection of Christ and the future destiny of believers shapes the identity and thus the actions of believers in the present. The third chapter, “The Mind of the Flesh,” addresses Romans 7:22–25, identifying the “I” of Romans 7 with one living under the law, having knowledge of God’s law, but finding this



information insufficient to provide freedom from the effects of the passions on human cognition. In effect, this passage depicts a situation for Jews analogous to the one Romans 1:18–32 depicts for pagans. The fourth chapter, “The Mind of the Spirit,” discusses Paul’s antidote to this situation, given in Romans 8:5–7. Here the indwelling Spirit provides resources for overcoming the passions, reshaping human cognition such that it is capable of directing a lifestyle that achieves the righteous purpose of God’s law. The fifth chapter, “A Renewed Mind,” describes the mind that is transformed through the rational decision of believers to offer their bodies as living sacrifices via a rationality that has been transformed by Christ and the Spirit to discern what is pleasing to God.

The final three chapters examine passages outside Romans. Chapter six, “The Mind of Christ,” examines 1 Corinthians 2:15–17, concluding that Paul describes a wisdom that is defined by the cross and that is communicated by the Spirit to believers, a wisdom that runs counter to worldly standards of status and that should characterize the thinking and judgment of mature believers. The seventh chapter, “A Christlike Mind,” examines a series of passages in Philippians (2:1–5; 3:19–21; 4:6–8), identifying Paul’s concerns as a mind that meditates on Jesus’ example to engender unity within the community, on virtuous matters to reshape how believers think, and on committing their needs to God in prayer to foster peace of heart and mind. The final chapter, “The Heavenly Mind,” examines Paul’s exhortation to believers in Colossians 3:1–2 to set their minds on the heavenly vision of Christ, a vision that leads to Christlike character and victory over earthly passions.

The volume closes with a conclusion summarizing the results of the previous eight chapters, a postscript providing some broad considerations for pastoral care, two appendices examining views of the soul in the ancient Mediterranean world and Paul’s broad conception of God’s wise plan for the ages, a substantive bibliography (forty-six pages in length), and indexes of subjects, authors and selected names, scriptural references, and other ancient sources.

The strength of Keener’s study lies in viewing Paul’s teaching within the broader matrix of ancient thought. It is commonplace for chapters of twenty to thirty pages to contain over 200 footnotes! The comparisons are nuanced, avoiding the “parallelomania” rampant in earlier

generations of scholarship, highlighting instead how Paul's views accord with and differ from other views. Keener repeatedly emphasizes that Paul's language would have enough points of contact with the thought worlds of both pagans and Jews to lead them into eventual understanding of Paul's distinctly Christian portrayal of the transformation of the mind in Christ. In this respect, the book is a treasure trove of supporting literary evidence that gives readers more than ample opportunity to engage in further study.

One minor weakness in the book is the relationship of the chapter summaries with the chapters themselves. The chapters are devoted to relating Paul's teaching to the intellectual world of his day, but the conclusions are very brief thematic summaries of the passages under investigation. These conclusions are largely self-evident from a cursory reading of the passages without referring to the chapters themselves. The way the conclusions fit with the preceding argumentation gives the impression that the detailed studies were merely there to show that holding these conclusions accords well with the ancient context of Paul's teaching. While this may be valuable in itself, given the wording of the book's subtitle, some readers might expect more of a primer on effecting the transformation of the mind through Paul's writings.

This minor quibble aside, Craig Keener has performed an inestimable service for the church by placing Paul firmly within his intellectual context, showing how Paul engages the thought world of his day with transforming power of the gospel.

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***A Pentecostal Biblical Theology: Turning Points in the Story of Redemption.*** By Roger Stronstad. Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2016, 277 pp.

Roger Stronstad is an eminent Canadian Pentecostal scholar, currently serving as Scholar in Residence at Summit Pacific College,

Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada. His first book, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (1984), courageously broke new ground in the field of Lukan pneumatology, which has inspired many to follow this path of inquiry. His New Testament studies are consciously rooted in the development of Old Testament traditions. Reflecting on more than three decades of teaching and writing, this book is a welcome and expected study that brings together both Testaments to present a biblical theology that is, understandably and pleasantly, distinctly Pentecostal.

The subtitle of the book, “Turning Points in the Story of Redemption,” suggests that the biblical narrative should be understood as a historical process towards God’s goal of ‘redemption.’” This process navigates through seven “turning points”: creation, flood, Babel, wilderness, captivity, exile, and new creation (2-3). Each turning point initiates a new cycle exhibiting four characteristics: “new start,” “sin,” “judgment,” and “a new start” (2). This programmatic presentation is also expressed in the diagrams of each turning point discussed in each chapter. The sixth cycle (“new creation”) is the most extensive discussion, covering most of the NT with five chapters, while the other cycles take up one chapter each.

The sections on the OT lay a foundation for the book. The five OT cycles (Part 1) are defined by historical markers: from creation to the flood (Cycle 1); from Noah to the Tower of Babel (Cycle 2); from Abraham to Israel’s wilderness wanderings (Cycle 3); from Joshua to Exile (Cycle 4); and from Joshua and Zerubbabel to the Jewish Revolt (Cycle 5). Part two of the book divides the two NT cycles (6 & 7) into five literary blocks: the Synoptic Gospels (ch. 6), John’s Gospel (ch. 7), the Book of Acts (ch. 8), Pauline literature (ch. 9), and the Book of Revelation (ch. 10). The book concludes with Cycle 7 where the history of redemption is fully consummated. This book employs historical data in the construction of its “biblical” theology, particularly in the “transition” discussion between the Testaments (105-108) and the several references to the Jewish war against the Romans (e.g., 107, 153).

As an accomplished Pentecostal NT scholar, the book understandably shines in Cycle Six in which he gives his most extensive treatment to the Book of Acts (ch. 8). In my reading, his Lukan scholarship

particularly excels in this Pentecostal chapter, as the author presents compelling and convincing literary evidence for the charismatic nature of the early church. This chapter is not only his longest, but also is his most illustrated (consisting of eight tables and diagrams compared to only two or three for other chapters).

This book asks a foundational question, “What makes a biblical theology Pentecostal?” Indeed, similar questions might be posed of related disciplines, e.g., what makes an ecclesiology or a missiology Pentecostal? Therefore this work is significant in that it is an excellent example of biblical theology from a distinctly Pentecostal perspective. From this exemplar, several key characteristics of Pentecostal biblical theology surface. The first is the clear plan of God to redeem the world through history. Similar to the recently emerging Missional Hermeneutics, this perspective expresses the teleological historiography of Pentecostals. God is intentional in setting the goal, process, actors, and contexts of history. The second is the role of God’s people as his agents who are often charismatically empowered through the presence of God’s Holy Spirit. In the book, there is an agent(s) to mark each cycle, some of which bear God’s redemptive intention in their names, such as Joshua and Jesus. The agent can also be a group of God’s people or a whole nation, such as Israel in the OT and the church in the NT. These groups are used by God to both reveal and to carry out his purpose for the world in each period. The third is the work of God’s Holy Spirit in the unfolding of the history of redemption. Since the preceding two can be said of any evangelical biblical theology, the third element distinguishes a Pentecostal biblical theology from the others. Closely connected to the role of the agents, the charismatic aspects of the Spirit’s work is best illustrated in ch. 8. For this reason, I was expecting the author’s rigorous treatment of the Spirit passages in the OT to be similar to those in the NT. Such added attention to the OT could have further strengthened his charismatic argument for the NT. Perhaps more discussion of the potential characteristics of Pentecostal biblical theology could be warranted.

This book is timely for a few reasons. With the steady and even explosive expansion of charismatic Christianity in the world, this book can fill an urgent need for an undergraduate textbook for Pentecostal

biblical theology. This book, I hope, will also be able to inspire similar studies and bring the distinct Pentecostal and charismatic spirituality and experiences to the construction of OT and NT theology as well as contextual theology from various ecclesiastical and social contexts. The author clearly intends for this book to serve the needs of undergraduate students. Thus, within it there are neither notes nor much engagement with relevant scholarship. The bibliography is brief and mostly of dated material. Those who follow his suit may need to look for a list of resources elsewhere. Nevertheless, as his first book in the 1980s has stirred many young Pentecostal minds, perhaps this book will also become an enduring legacy and find wide use.

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***Rethinking Holiness: A Theological Introduction.*** By Bernie A. Van De Walle. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017, xvi + 172 pp.

*B*ernie A. Van De Walle's *Rethinking Holiness: A Theological Introduction*, is an approachable introduction to a theological understanding of holiness as it relates to God, the church, individual Christians and society. The intended audience, "students, pastors, and the interested person in the pew," is likely to find the book both accessible and beneficial (xiii). The premise of the work is that for both the individual and the church, holy living begins with a proper theology of holiness. Van De Walle's discussion of holiness depends on two related concepts: 1) All holiness has its source in God, who alone is holy by nature. This means that all other expressions of holiness are derivative and can be properly understood only in their relationship to God. 2) Holiness as an ontological category precedes holiness as a moral category. We must first understand what it means to *be* holy before we can begin to properly act holy. The arrangement of the book serves this end.

Chapter 1 argues for the need for holiness, both in and outside of the church. Chapters 2 and 3 lay the biblical and theological foundation for the discussion of holiness. The remaining chapters explore the theme as it relates to anthropology (Chapter 4), hamartiology (Chapter 5), soteriology (Chapter 6), and ecclesiology (Chapter 7). A concluding chapter summarizes and synthesizes the conclusions of the book.

The chief weakness of the book is in the descriptive early chapters. One can hardly expect a thin volume of one hundred fifty pages to plumb the depths of any topic, especially those which play a supporting role in the central theme. While a full discussion is well outside the scope of the work some indication that the issue is far from simple would have been welcome. This is particularly evident in Chapter 2, in which the book attempts to describe the contours of second temple Judaism. For example, Van De Walle writes that “The Jews knew that God’s choice of Abraham and his descendants was unexpected and unmerited” (37). To write thus is to take one of many positions in a still-contested area of biblical scholarship; yet, nothing indicates this debate in the text or the end notes.

The strength of the book is the discussion of holiness as it relates to the classical divisions of systematic theology. Concerning theology proper, the author argues convincingly that holiness is not just one among many aspects of the character of God, but that it is that aspect of God’s character without which we could not speak of others. The concept of the *imago dei* provides the framework for Van de Walle’s discussion of anthropology. This divine image is expressed most completely in the person of Jesus Christ who serves not only as a perfect revelation of God to humanity but also as a picture of humanity fully realized. In discussing hamartiology, Van de Walle wishes to avoid portraying holiness as simply the avoidance of sin but does acknowledge the tarnishing impact of sin on the *imago dei*. Using an approach that the author describes as mosaic, sin is defined broadly as both willful and relational and ultimately directed against God and God’s holiness. In light of the preceding chapters, it is not surprising that the author defines salvation in terms of the restoration of the *imago dei* and as a progressive act by which God makes humans holy. The subject of ecclesiology is addressed using biblical metaphors of the people of God, the body of Christ, and

the temple of the Holy Spirit. Van de Walle's describes the church as holy today because of its divine election but concedes that that holiness is not fully actualized in action and character. In this sense, holiness is something to which the church aspires toward and toward which it advances through confession of sin and the sanctifying work of God. On the whole, the book is accessible, edifying, and worthy of a reading by lay readers, pastors, and teachers.

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***Azusa, Rome, and Zion: Pentecostal Faith, Catholic Reform, and Jewish Roots.*** By Peter Hocken. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016, 244 pp.

*F*r. Peter Hocken was a British theologian and historian of the Catholic Charismatic and Pentecostal movements and served as Executive Secretary of the Society for Pentecostal Studies. This collection of articles was published in 2016, the year before his death.

The work has four sections: 1. The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements and Christian Unity; 2. Reflections on the New Charismatic Churches and Networks; 3. The Holy Spirit, Israel, and the Church; and 4. Pope Francis and Christian Unity.

First, Hocken demonstrates that the Pentecostal movement should not be relegated to a mere subset of evangelicalism, as is the opinion of some in and out of the movement. He comments, "I knew in my guts that this tendency sells the Pentecostal movement short and fails to do justice to its originality as a work of the Holy Spirit" (4). Hocken points out that there are significant similarities between Pentecostalism and the Catholic Church. From the movement's inception, Seymour maintained, "Azusa stands for the unity of God's people everywhere. God is uniting his people, baptizing them by one Spirit into one body" (4). Because of this, Hocken believes Pentecostal and Catholic Christianity share a common spirituality and epistemology. Christian unity is essential to the Holy Spirit's work.

Hocken recognizes the need for a more developed ecclesiology in the Pentecostal movement. He presents Miroslav Volf's "free church" model with its emphasis on autonomous local bodies and critiques its weaker extra-local component. He insists there is a need for a strong connection with the historic Christian community by mining the riches of the ancient church and hopefully arriving at a visible union with the church. Before that can happen, however, "huge changes of mentality" must occur on all sides. A major strength of the Pentecostal movement is that its "ecclesiology from below" focuses on equipping individuals in the gifts of the Spirit.

Hocken asserts that the theological task of the ecumenical renewal is purification from ideology. "Today I understand that just as the Holy Spirit sanctifies the Christian, so an authentic theology of the Holy Spirit purifies the church's theology" (21). He understands that ideology is "the idolatry of the mind" that "turns a part into the whole." He critiques the old and sometimes persistent Catholic aversion to the Holy Spirit working outside of the Catholic Church, though Vatican II conceded the point, and points to John Paul II's insistence that the ecumenical dialogue should be more than a mere exchange of words but also an "exchange of gifts" (*Ut Unum Sint*, 28).

Similarly, Hocken identifies as a theological distortion the ideological proclivity to identify as anti-Protestant or anti-Catholic. The tendency on each side is to think that "their group is where the Holy Spirit is really working, that they are truly on the cutting edge of the Spirit's work today, and that those who do not act like them or speak their language do not know the deep work of the Holy Spirit" (23).

In his chapter, "Liturgy and Eschatology in a Pentecostal-Charismatic Ecumenism," Hocken notes some of the points of contrast between Pentecostals and Catholics, not the least of which is the individual versus the corporate experience. He shows how emphasizing liturgy and its physical-sacramental aspects needs to be tempered by the "spiritual" Pentecostal approach and vice versa. The often-dispensational eschatology of the Pentecostal needs re-evaluation, while in liturgical communions, eschatological anticipation needs greater emphasis.

In the chapter on the Catholic Charismatic renewal, the author traces the history of the movement and how the Church dealt with the



experience commonly called “baptism with the Holy Spirit” and its relation to the sacraments of water-baptism and confirmation. Spirit baptism is often viewed as an awakening of the grace of the Spirit already present or a subsequent empowerment for mission.

Hocken addresses the growth of the non-denominational and new charismatic groups and describes them and their development briefly. These groups see their “new revival streams” as “correctives to weaknesses, neglects, and failures of the historic churches” (90). Because they do not have a denominational apparatus, he sees them as “parallel to the new ecclesial movements in the Catholic Church, which make no claim to be the church” (89).

A major section of the book deals with continuity and discontinuity in relation to the church and Israel. The church and the Jews are inextricably connected. “Christianity without Israel is in danger of becoming an ideology” (142) and becomes “an unhistorical Christianity, reduced to a humanism of nature, of law, of socio-political liberation or of ecology” (citing de Gasperis, 143). As John Paul II said, “If you scratch a Christian, he bleeds a Jew.” The essential values and world-view of the church are essentially Jewish.

Hocken explores connections with Messianic Jews. Replacement theology, Sabbath observance, and “works righteousness” are legitimate concerns. The movement Toward Jerusalem Council II (TJCII) calls for unity between the Messianic Jews and the rest of Christianity.

The fourth section of the book deals with Pope Francis and Christian unity. Hocken tells the electrifying story of how Francis, then Cardinal Bergoglio of Argentina, came in contact with the charismatic renewal, when Pentecostal pastors along with Fr. Raneiro Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household, laid hands on him and prayed for the Cardinal with the words, “Fill him with the Spirit and power, Lord! In the name of Jesus!” (167). When he became pope, he asked the Italian Pentecostals for forgiveness for the way the Catholics had treated them in the past. As pope, he has communicated with significant charismatic leaders and has provided a new paradigm for the Catholic ecumenical task. This new model promotes an ecumenism of the Holy Spirit, the knowledge of Jesus, openness to the Holy Spirit, and mission to the extremities (179-183). He calls on his Pentecostal “brothers” to join

him in the walk with Jesus.

Fr. Hocken shows us the way to unity. Let us walk in it, Amen.

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***Evangelical, Sacramental, and Pentecostal: Why the Church Should Be All Three.*** By Gordon T. Smith. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017, 136 pp.

In a time when the church appears to be deeply fractured, Gordon T. Smith's recent work, *Evangelical, Sacramental, and Pentecostal*, provides a hopeful proposal on how Christ's church can worship together in unity. The book opens with a personal anecdote of Smith's journey as an evangelical into appreciating the resources that the sacramental and Pentecostal streams of Christianity offer. A part of this journey was his discovery of Lesslie Newbigin's "fundamental insight" that Scripture, sacrament, and Spirit are the "three distinct angles by which we might consider and live in the grace of the ascended Christ" (3). In following Newbigin, Smith argues that the church cannot simply choose between Scripture, sacraments, or the Spirit; it is necessary for these three to be integrated, not separated, in order to "live in dynamic communion with its Living Head" (4).

In Chapter 1, Smith states that the mutual "abiding" in John 15:4 is best understood as union with Christ. However, as Smith effectively demonstrates, evangelical, sacramental, and Pentecostal Christians all differ in how this graced union with God is effected in the life of the church and the believer. Evangelicals, with their emphasis on Scripture, typically understand Christ as abiding with the church through the "Word of God". Sacramental Christians, emphasizing "physical and tangible things," believe that baptism and the Eucharist are the primary means through which they commune with God (17). Pentecostals emphasize the Spirit in how believers realize this union. After surveying each perspective, he concludes that all three, taken together, are "the means by which we abide in Christ as Christ abides in us" (21).

Chapter 2 examines the Luke-Acts narrative to explore what it means for the church to be “a graced community” (22). Smith argues that the narrative of Luke-Acts “rests, or pivots, on the ascension,” while Pentecost fulfills it (25). Turning to Acts, Smith argues that just as Christ and the Spirit cannot be divided, neither can the ecclesial practices in which early Christians engaged. The baptized community of believers committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to daily observance of the Lord’s Supper, and to the ministry of the Spirit who reveals Christ. Therefore, Smith argues that the Luke-Acts narrative builds the case that the church must be evangelical, sacramental, and Pentecostal.

In Chapter 3, Smith discusses the grace of God. He states that each of the evangelical, sacramental, and Pentecostal “means of grace” work “in tandem” to make Christ known to the church (43). He then presents John Calvin and John Wesley as two significant examples of “forerunner(s) of the evangelical tradition” who affirmed the importance of Scripture, the sacraments, and the Spirit in the life of the church.

In the next three chapters, Smith reflects on each “principle”: “The Evangelical Principle” (Chapter 4), “The Sacramental Principle” (Chapter 5), and “The Pentecost Principle” (Chapter 6). All three chapters follow the same general format: focusing first on the emphasis that the tradition underscores, moving to a brief theological treatise on the emphasis and associated practices, then discussing how the emphasis is illuminated by the other two, and concluding with a brief reflection of the resources that each tradition brings to the church catholic. In situating each principle alongside the other two, Smith shows that the practices associated are strengthened when the others are present. In the concluding chapter, Smith offers some final observations and a case study demonstrating the church will be united with Christ through these “three perspectives of grace” (126).

In sum, the author provides a compelling pastoral call for the church to experience “an ecology of grace” by bringing the evangelical, sacramental, and Pentecostal elements together. Smith’s call is particularly aimed at evangelicals, which is felt throughout the whole of the book. To demonstrate this point, in Chapter 5: “The Sacramental Principle,” he states that the sacramental life of the church is “not

a threat” but is indispensable “to those within my own evangelical tradition and to my Pentecostal and charismatic friends” (73). Further, he dialogues with John Calvin and John Wesley because “evangelicals typically assume that it is not consistent with the evangelical theological and spiritual tradition to affirm the sacraments and to profile the immediacy of the Spirit” (50-51). This might also explain Smith’s choice of couching these practices as “means of grace.”

This monograph is an encouraging pastoral call for evangelicals to explore and embrace the riches that the sacramental and Pentecostal streams of Christianity have to offer. However, negatively in my estimation, this book tends to ‘evangelicalize’ the sacramental and Pentecostal traditions in its descriptions. For example, while Smith roots his sacramental theology in “creation, incarnation, (and) church,” I was still left wondering if sacramental Christians would agree to Smith’s insistence that the Eucharist and Baptism are simply “means of grace” (77)? And while Smith, agreeing with some Pentecostal scholars, asserts that the Pentecostal-charismatic movement is in continuity with the “ancient and historical mystical movement,” one questions why Smith would choose Ignatius of Loyola as the archetypal “representative” of this larger, historical stream (109, 103). Thus, some might find Smith’s description of their own tradition to be wanting.

Despite such considerations, *Evangelical, Sacramental, and Pentecostal* is worthy of attention. I recommend this monograph for evangelical pastors, scholars, and well-read lay people, for it offers a needed pastoral invitation to move beyond traditional historical and theological separations to a more a well-rounded and robust ecclesiology.

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