


2018

Editorial

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Custom Citation

Jeffery. Lamp S. "Editorial." *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology*. 3, no. 1 (2018) 1- 4. <http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/spiritus/vol3/iss1/3>

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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.