In my now eight years of serving as lead editor of *Spiritus*, I have had opportunity to consider articles submitted by Spirit-empowered scholars that cover a broad spectrum of topics. Many times, these articles appear in the pages of the journal; others are not accepted, but still demonstrate the breadth of interests among these scholars. In the past year, Oral Roberts University (ORU), the institutional home of *Spiritus*, has undergone an organizational reordering that has resulted in the formation of the Center for Spirit-empowered Research (C4SER). Under the direction of Wonsuk Ma, the C4SER is tasked with facilitating the university’s scholarly efforts to serve the worldwide Spirit-empowered Movement through efforts to support faculty, students, and friends of the university in their scholarly work. *Spiritus* and other publishing activities are often the fruits of such scholarly enquiry. My role as editor of this journal has occasioned me to consider with increasing frequency just what we mean by “Spirit-empowered research.” Is it research that focuses only on topics of interest to the Spirit-empowered Movement? Certainly it includes this focus, but is the term sufficiently expansive to include topics that may be of interest to Spirit-empowered believers and communities, but may also be of interest to those who would not self-identify as Spirit-empowered believers? It often appears that “Spirit-empowered” is simply a synonym for “Pentecostal” or “Charismatic.” But does the term “Spirit-empowered” also lend itself to an understanding that it applies to the totality of the work of the Holy Spirit that does not exclusively entail the experiences typical of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity? Surely traditions that appeal to the work of the Spirit apart from *charismata* are covered under the heading “Spirit-empowered,” aren’t they?

Of course, there is nothing inappropriate about an entity that seeks to focus on what might be described as the purview of believers who would identify as Pentecostal or Charismatic. Scholarship undertaken from this specific orientation is a relatively recent phenomenon, embodied, though not exclusively, by the formation of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS). It is reasonable that scholars in this group would conduct research into biblical, theological, and historical topics that are of particular interest to Pentecostal-Charismatic believers. For the first several decades following the Azusa Street revival, it appears that more generic evangelical scholarship provided the scholarly
context for Pentecostal-Charismatic believers as they focused on their missional efforts viewed largely as evangelism. As the movement has matured, it has grown to view scholarship as an appropriate expression of its faith. And I have been privileged to contribute to this effort in my role as editor of *Spiritus*.

What I often bristle at is the implication, conscious or not, that the only audience that may be labeled “Spirit-empowered” is one that self-identifies with church communities that are of more traditional Pentecostal-Charismatic stripes. In 1980 I became a Christian through the efforts of adherents of the Word of Faith Movement. I owe the beginnings of my spiritual journey to this particular Charismatic tradition. I spent the first three or so years of my journey in such churches. I eventually moved to the United Methodist Church (UMC), particularly to a church in Tulsa that was formed by ORU seminary professors who sought to form a community that held to the best of Wesleyan and Charismatic spirituality, and I pursued ordination in the UMC while I attended the seminary at ORU during the time it was an accepted institution for the training of UMC ministerial candidates. Over the course of my time in the UMC, which consisted of nine years of pastoral ministry and many years on faculty at ORU, I self-identified as a “charismatic,” lower-case “c,” United Methodist. And for the past almost nine years, I have identified confessionally as an Eastern Orthodox Christian. I still include those original moorings of my Christian walk in Charismatic Christianity as part of my spirituality to this day. I consider myself charismatic. But I have often encountered the charge that I am not “Spirit-empowered” due to this identification. As an aside, I am more convinced now that Eastern Orthodox and Pentecostal expressions of Christianity have much in common and that this may serve as an impetus for these two strands of Christianity to engage in dialogue. I have often participated in SPS conferences, and in the present I have been invited by many traditional Pentecostal-Charismatic scholars to contribute to studies concerning Pentecostalism and popular culture and ecological engagement. Certainly this community of “Spirit-empowered” believers considers me one of their own. I fear that the moniker “Spirit-empowered” may become rather parochial, when it actually opens this movement to see itself as a vital contributor to the larger Christian community as it also serves its own constituency. If I recall correctly the history of the Pentecostal Movement I learned as a seminary student at ORU, this is how the earliest Pentecostals saw themselves.

This issue consists of seven articles that explore a broad range of topics, and in a couple of instances, it explores topics that extend beyond a narrow definition of “Spirit-empowered.” The issue opens with a rather serendipitous study by Daniel Bunn of Oral Roberts’ use of a scholarly biblical commentary. As he was giving his students a tour of
the library at ORU, he happened across a commentary on Exodus by Israeli scholar Umberto Cassuto that had previously been owned by Roberts in which he underlined and wrote margin notes on various passages in the commentary. Bunn places Roberts’ reading of the commentary in the tumultuous period of Roberts’ life in which he owned and studied the commentary. He explores Roberts’ engagement with the commentary in order to discern how Roberts’ own reading habits of this work were later incorporated into a sermon published in the periodical *Abundant Life* in 1985. The resulting study is a revealing insight into how one of the giants of twentieth-century Spirit-empowered Christianity availed himself of the insights of biblical scholarship.

Lora Angeline E. Timenia follows with a hermeneutical proposal for Asian Pentecostal hermeneutics that builds upon the triadic models developed by Kenneth Archer and Amos Yong. The result is a *quadrilectic* model that she argues is more appropriate for Asian hermeneutical contexts, adding consideration of the Asian context to the triad of Spirit, Scripture, and tradition. Clyde Glandon contributes a study of the work of Charismatic Roman Catholic Abbot David Geraets in bringing together the Pentecostal practice of *glossolalia* with the Eastern Orthodox Jesus Prayer. Geraets argued that *glossolalia* and the Jesus Prayer mutually enhance the practice of these two modes of prayer. Glandon argues that this often overlooked figure provides a crucial contribution that would greatly benefit the spiritual lives of Spirit-empowered believers who seek a deeper experience of prayer. Ivan Hartsfield contributes a study that examines the concept of holiness as wholeness in Afro-Pentecostal tradition, drawing on the example of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). Drawing on the thought of C. H. Mason, Hartsfield argues that the COGIC understands holiness as entailing the “human flourishing of the total person,” resulting in an experience of holiness that is available to all people, not just those considered “saints.”

The issue concludes with three studies that focus on African Christianity. First, Rebecca Attah, Christine Avortri, Emmanuel Appah, and Alexander Preko present the findings of a qualitative research study that examined the responses of religious persons following the financial sector clean-up efforts by governmental agencies in Ghana designed to alleviate corruption in the country’s financial system. The results of this effort caused significant distress to individuals. The study addresses two religious responses to the suffering experienced by people—“faith” and “leave it to God”—coping mechanisms that customers employ to address circumstances that lay outside their ability to influence directly. The authors suggest that these two responses, largely ignored by financial management literature, may be profitably considered in future studies. Though not explicitly focused on Spirit-empowered believers, the study is an example of how Spirit-empowered researchers may contribute to research on topics that involve Spirit-empowered believers in the larger social context. Fred Cudjoe Adadey and Barnabas Yisa follow with a study of the contribution that African Pentecostals may
make in the area of development in Western Africa. Drawing on research conducted in
two large churches—the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria, and the Church
of Pentecost, Ghana—the authors demonstrate how these Pentecostal groups contribute
to the social and political landscape in light of the growing sense that Pentecostal
mission entails engagement in social arenas. In the final article, Justice A. Arthur and
Lydia Andoh-Quainoo examine how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced church
attendance in Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Ghana. Employing the concept of
religious economy, the authors employ a survey of church leaders and attendees to
gauge the attitudes and practices regarding church attendance in terms that view church
leaders as marketers of religious products and attendees as consumers of these products.
The study looks at how participants in the survey viewed church attendance in the pre-
COVID-19, COVID-19, and post-COVID-19 periods, observing how the pandemic
has affected church attendance behaviors, both in negative and positive ways.

Four book reviews close out the issue.

The scope of these articles demonstrates the breadth of topics available for
research for Spirit-empowered scholars. Many times the topics are specific to the Spirit-
empowered Movement; other times they exemplify how these scholars might participate
in studies that address concerns of the larger Christian community. In each case, the
results are fruitful contributions to Spirit-empowered scholarship.

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