

EDITORIAL: MOST LIKELY YOU GO YOUR WAY...

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This issue of *Spiritus* is a special one indeed. Almost three years ago I received a message from Martin Mittelstadt of Evangel University concerning the dialogue underway between representatives of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA) and the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). This dialogue would take place over a three-year period (2021–2023), with papers and responses addressing three topics from the perspectives of Pentecostals and Roman Catholics. The participants expressed an interest in having the presentations from this dialogue published in journals representing both traditions. Professor Mittelstadt suggested that *Spiritus* be the repository of these studies on the Pentecostal side (the journal *Worship* will publish them on the Roman Catholic side), to which the editorial team gladly responded, Yes! The dialogue completed, Mittelstadt's team worked to compile the papers and send them my way for the editorial task of readying them for publication.

This was no small task! A total of fifteen separate offerings arrived in a combined document, along with author bios and photos. Disaggregating them into separate files and combining them with their respective bios and photos was the first step. But then came the task of reading them for the purpose of editing. What at first just seemed a daunting editorial task turned into a real delight. Before me was the fruit of a lengthy dialogue, a dialogue that was not only a gathering of learned scholars describing and responding to the positions of the two traditions on some potentially controversial topics—sacraments/ordinances of initiation, healing, and vocation—but also a time of refreshing and mutual edification. I could sense this in reading the submissions, so much so that I was often engrossed in soaking it all in and had to go back and do my job as editor.

As I noted, we have collected here fifteen pieces, consisting of three cycles of papers read and responses given by representatives of PCCNA and USCCB. Harold Hunter, International Pentecostal Holiness Church Ecumenical Officer, and Walter Kedjierski, Executive Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the USCCB, launch this issue with general commentary on the proceedings of the dialogue from Pentecostal and Roman Catholic perspectives, respectively, providing historical context and personal reflections on the discussions. The first cycle of papers, presented in 2021 in Washington, DC, at a Catholic retreat center called the Washington Retreat House, addressed the topic of initiation, primarily baptism, in the

two traditions. Frederick Ware of Howard University presented the quite varied positions of Pentecostals, drawing on personal testimony to do so, while Kimberly Belcher of the University of Notre Dame presented the Catholic position. The second cycle, presented in 2022 at Oral Roberts University (ORU) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, covered the topic of healing (appropriately enough). David Han of Pentecostal Theological Seminary and Andrew Prevot of Georgetown University provided illuminating discussions of how healing is perceived in the two traditions.¹ The final cycle of papers, covering the topic of vocation, was presented on the campus of the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, Indiana. This topic proved sufficiently complex as to require two papers from the Roman Catholic perspective. The concept of vocation in the Catholic Church is understood from two angles: the sacraments of marriage and Holy Orders. Walter Kedjerski presents an insightful look at marriage from the Catholic perspective, much of which may be unknown to many Pentecostals, while Leonardo Gajardo, a priest in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gary, Indiana, presents a Catholic understanding of ordained ministry. Martin Mittelstadt of Evangel University presents what is essentially a view of what vocation should be from a Pentecostal perspective in light of its somewhat narrow focus on church ministries.

At the end of the day, this collection of papers and responses was not only informative (at least from my perspective), but also very encouraging. While it may have been the preconception of many of the dialogue participants that there was not too much common ground between these two traditions, what eventuated was a recognition by all that there was a great deal of common ground that encourages continued discussion and provides a foundation for engaging in those areas in which there is substantial disagreement. In a world wracked with division, it is refreshing to see a concerted effort to understand one another and find common ground for discourse.

And now, the answer to the question some of you may have regarding the title of this editorial. First, some background. I was pastor of Spiro First United Methodist Church in Spiro, Oklahoma, 1995–2000. In June of 2000, I gave my final sermon before moving to Tulsa to take a full-time faculty post at ORU. The title of that sermon was the title of this editorial. Kudos to those who recognize it as part of the title of an old Bob Dylan song. In the way it was the title of my farewell to Spiro, it is also my farewell to *Spiritus*. To my surprise, I have been editor for eight volume years. As with any undertaking, there have been times of exhilaration, mostly when an issue is actually published, and times of great stress, but in the final analysis, I am happy with what the

¹ David Han was not available to respond to the paper by Andrew Prevot. It then became the responsibility of co-chair Harold Hunter to write the Pentecostal response to Prevot's paper.

journal has been able to accomplish in this time. As of the Spring 2025 issue, Mark Roberts of ORU will serve as editor. There are so many to thank for what has taken place here. I thank all who have contributed articles and book reviews, both those that were published and those that were not. I thank Wonsuk Ma for bringing the journal back from a thirty-two-year hiatus and making it a part of the scholarly culture at ORU. Sally Shelton and Robert McBain served as book review editors during this time. And Daniel Isgrigg has served in the herculean role of managing editor, which entailed all of the processes that take the articles I give him to the actual published issues people can actually read. I cannot thank him enough. He has been an indispensable part of the effort to produce this journal. And a great thanks to the College of Theology and Ministry at ORU for its support of the journal.

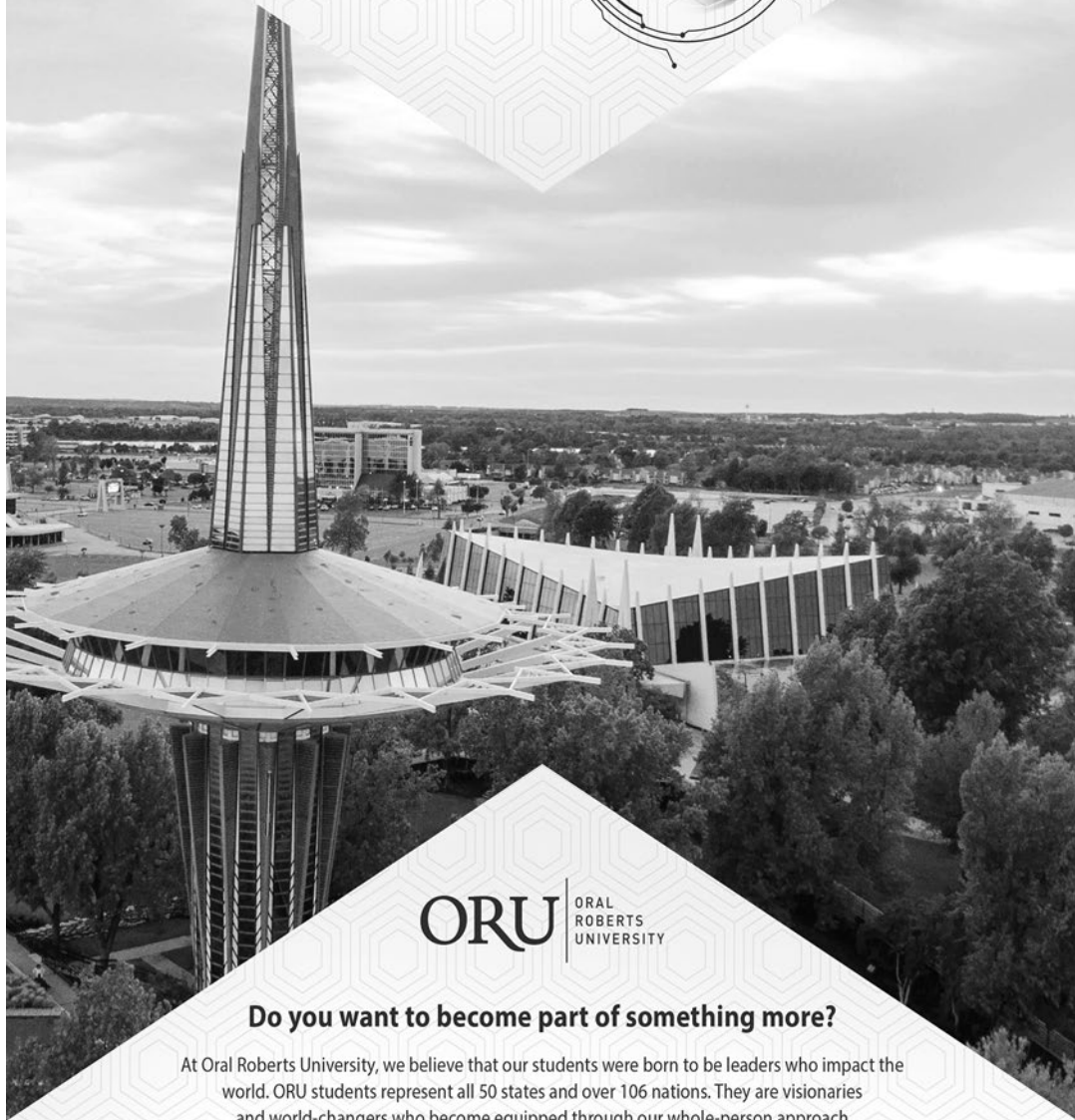
So to complete the title of the song, “Most Likely You Go Your Way, and I’ll Go Mine.” I am not leaving ORU, nor is this a final goodbye to the journal. I have lived with it for too long to let it slip away from my life. I will be a supporter of its efforts, and maybe here and there try to get something published in it. Any journal that has had downloads to Antarctica must be doing something right. Perhaps that is my proudest moment as editor.

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