

Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen & J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (ed.)

Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity

Oxford, UK, Regnum Books International, 2014, 384 pp.

This very interesting book edited by Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen & J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu is a collection of essays written by Pentecostal scholars, ministers and laymen covering the theme of Pentecostal mission from a global Christian perspective. The authors of the book feel that it is almost impossible to envision global Christian mission in a modern setting without having Pentecostalism in the equation. The publisher of this book, Oxford Center for Mission Studies, and its editors, Dr. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, professor of Contemporary African Christianity and Pentecostal-Charismatic Studies at the Trinity Theological Seminary at Legon in Accra, Ghana; Dr. Wonsuk Ma, executive director of the Oxford Center for Mission Studies; and Dr. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, recognized the importance of approaching this important and global topic of Pentecostal mission from a worldwide perspective. Regnum Books International is a publishing branch of the Oxford Center for Mission Studies, with over 100 published books focused on Christian mission and spirituality. So in essence the topic of Pentecostal mission from a global Christian context fits right into the Oxford Center for Mission Studies' agenda. The book itself is a collection of essays from different authors that vary in their respective fields, such as researchers, missionaries, professors, missiologists, ministers and pastors, and the global perspective comes from all corners of the globe, such as Nigeria, Ghana, Korea, Honduras, India, Chile, Europe, USA, Philippines etc. This richness of different contextual missiology input is the true value of this collection of essays in which the authors are drawing from their own national or mission context from the perspective of Pentecostalism and its values and strengths in global Christian mission. In the introduction to the book the editors notice that Pentecostal mission movement does not have equal intensity throughout the globe. However, they start with the argument, which can hardly be denied by anyone, that, although in different geographical contexts, Pentecostalism is in all corners of the world often the driving force for Christian mission work.

The first essay comes from Allan Heaton Anderson under the title, „*The Emergence of a Multidimensional Global Missionary Movement: A Historical Review*”. This article looks at the origins and development of a global network in early Pentecostalism, and how this contributed to the formation of a multidimensional global movement. The author starts with the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, although from the perspective of Pentecostalism it was not as relevant,

simply because Pentecostals were not represented at the conference. However, the author states that it was noted by the Pentecostal world as a growing focus on mission by the evangelical church. By 1916 Pentecostal mission was steaming up and missionaries were sent to all corners of the globe. It becomes quite clear that the Pentecostal movement is a movement of global multidimensional mission orientation. The author proceeds to explain the historical beginnings of the movement with the notion of revivals, such as the Azusa Street, Welsh revival and the North-East and Central India revival, with focus on the Azusa Street being the most prominent and significant. The author then elaborates on the Pentecostal impact in individual churches in Africa, India and China, and finishes with the multidimensional global perspective of the movement, concluding that, even though Pentecostalism has been present for a century, it is among the most significant factors of global Christian mission. This is supported with some statistical background from the author. Pentecostalism has from its beginnings been a missionary movement focused on the Spirit that is being poured out to reach the nations.

The second essay comes from one of the editors of the book, Dr. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, with the title, "*The Pentecostal Understanding of Mission*". At the very beginning of his exposition the author states, much like his fellow scholars, that the Pentecostal movement is in its essence a missionary movement where Christians under the fresh influence of the Spirit set out to share their message and experience with the rest of the world, and in fact did so in a very short period of time. The eschatological factor and the role of the Holy Spirit make Pentecostalism missionary-oriented in the last days as the church is preparing for the coming of the Lord by faithful witness and holy living. As far as the structures in missiology go, the Pentecostals were so busy in the everyday spreading of the Gospel that little time was left for an academic missiological reflection and research that could bring about a certain structure to their endeavors, which they sometimes lacked. Only later did such research practice take shape. The development began with the work of Melvin L. Hodge in his book, *The Indigenous Church*, and continued with the works of several noted authors, which Kärkkäinen briefly analyzes in this essay. The theology of Pentecostal mission however is of an even newer date, as the theological writings in Pentecostalism were for a long time in a form of missionary writings, testimonies, prophecies and the like. In the final paragraphs of his essay the author argues that, despite contrary interpretations, Jesus Christ holds the central role for Pentecostal mission, rather than pneumatology, and the Holy Spirit from the Pentecostal perspective represents empowerment for mission. The author proceeds to tackle with issues like ecclesiology, soteriology and eschatology from a Pentecostal point of view, and concludes with a look into the future, exposing some of the challenges

and opportunities for Pentecostal mission.

Continuing on the note of empowerment briefly touched by Kärkkäinen, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, in the following essay titled, „*You Shall Receive Power: Empowerment in Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity*“, describes and examines the theology of empowerment in Pentecostal charismatic Christianity, with attention to the range of understandings of the concept within the movement itself. The author analyzes the word and the development of its meaning and interpretation in the Pentecostal movement, along with the Spirit manifestations following empowerment, and focuses on biblical interpretations and perspectives on the term. The final chapters of the essay focus on empowerment in the perspective of mission and ecclesiology, with interesting Pentecostal insight. Kwabena concludes that credit is due to Pentecostalism for reminding the traditional churches of the importance of experience and the empowerment of the Spirit in Christian life and mission.

The following essay with a substantially long title, “*Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial*’ (1 Cor 10:23): *Pneumatological Christology of the Parousian Church of Christ and (Ab)Uses of Spiritual Power in Nigerian Pentecostalism*”, analyzes the well-known phenomenon of African Pentecostalism, which has recently also made its influence in European Christianity, from the perspective of Nigerian churches. The article is mainly focused on explaining and analyzing abuses of the spiritual gifts within the African context, among others the prosperity Gospel message preached and lived by some of the flamboyant Pentecostal pastors. Such practices make the appreciation of Pentecostalism in a Nigerian context somewhat difficult. The author also highlights the perspective of Catholic Pentecostalism in Nigeria through the Parousian Church, Catholic Charismatic Ministry, commissioned by Rome in 1986. The author then expands on the theological scheme of the Parousian Church and finishes the essay with the words from 1 Corinthians 10:23, stating that in their own Nigerian context and experience everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial.

“*Pentecostal Evangelism, Church Planting, and Church Growth*” is the title of the following article written by Julie C. Ma, a Korean Pentecostal missiologist and research tutor of missiology at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. In her essay she analyzes the theological grounding for Pentecostal mission that comes from several different highlights, such as the way Pentecostals read the Bible, their soul-saving zeal and Holy Spirit empowerment, accompanied with strong emphasis on eschatology as mentioned by most of her colleagues in this collection of essays. She then proceeds to explain some of the more practical focuses on Pentecostal mission, such as the way they have used media, event organization and open air preaching in order to procure the growth of the church. Church planting in rural settings as well as the rise of Pentecostal mega-churches in ur-

ban areas must be in the light of the growth of God's kingdom, says Ma, and the main focus in mission must be authentic discipleship.

Much can be learned about the important and useful aspects of Pentecostal mission by simply looking to the more prominent churches that have stood for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and by analyzing their path from the initial steps to the churches they are today. One such example is the Yoido Full Gospel Church and the following essay by Younghoon Lee, "*Church Growth: Reflections on Yoido Full Gospel Church*", that brings us closer to observe the modest beginnings and development and expansion of the YFGC. The author argues in his article that YFGC's growth is primarily a result of its successful embracing of the Pentecostal tradition and embedding the Pentecostal tradition within the uniquely specific Korean context. The growth of this famous Korean church is a monumental event in the history of world Christianity, claims the author. Although it has been made possible through the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, much can be learned from this essay about the church's enthusiasm for the Gospel.

The contextual richness of this book is highly educational and pragmatic for a reader interested in missiology and it is affirmed by the variety of global Pentecostal mission stories. One such story comes from Chile in the next essay by Elizabeth Salazar Sanzana, Theological Advisor of the Evangelical Pentecostal Church in Chile, and leads the reader into the basic understanding of who Pentecostals are from the Latin American perspective, as well as what they have to offer to the troubled and sinful world they have been sent to serve.

One of the more interesting and present topics in Pentecostal missiology is the concept of Spiritual Warfare that is described and researched by Opoku Onyinah in his extensive article conveniently titled, "*Principalities and Powers*". In this essay Onyinah analyzes this important and widely discussed concept of Spiritual Warfare and its relation to Christian mission to the world from the perspective of the sovereignty of God and the importance of deliverance, while also addressing the strengths as well as some of the problems of the Spiritual Warfare approach, such as overemphasizing satanic and demonic issues.

Johan Mostert, in the following essay, "*Ministry of Mercy and Justice*", writes about the Pentecostal emphasis on helping the poor and the needy as one of the key aspects and strengths of Pentecostal mission in the author's context. The article is a very good analysis of the way the Gospel, pushed by the Pentecostal missionary inclination, served as a correctional tool for the bifurcation and social inequality in American society. Yet the author emphasizes that there is still a very large gap that western Christians should try to overcome to come closer to their brothers and sisters in the global south.

The following provocative essay by Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., "*Christian Unity and Pentecostal Mission: A Contradiction?*", raises a very interesting and sometimes

forgotten question of the relation between the unity of the Church and its mission to the world. The author rightly raises the question of the credibility of the Gospel of Jesus Christ from the perspective of the world in the light of the witness to the disunity of the Church that carries it. It is the author's interpretation that the Christian world is somehow binary in its focus and presents a dichotomy between unity and mission, when in fact one should inevitably support the other. The question of ecumenism and global Christian mission from the context of Asian Pentecostalism is also addressed in the following article by Connie Au, "Global Christianity and Ecumenism in Asian Pentecostalism", where the 1910 Edinburgh Conference is once again dissected in the light of the modern Pentecostal mission.

Tony Richie's "The Sevenfold Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Christian Theology of Religions" states that the in-depth Christian theology of religions has become a more pressing need in today's global context of ever-increasing contact between various religions in environments all-too-often involving conflictive and even violent confrontation. He states that, along with other Christian traditions, it is important for Pentecostals to contemplate the reality of other religions and construct a theological and missiological worldview capable of encompassing their existence and activity. The author concludes with an interesting point that the history of Christian theology of religions and of interreligious encounter and dialogue indicate that those who were most devoted to their own faith were usually best equipped for talking and working with those of other faiths. Such a story comes in the following essay by Bal Krishna Sharma describing Pentecostal interaction with other religions in Nepal. Direct interaction of Pentecostals with various religions that exist within Nepal, such as the Buddhist and Hindu religions, provides for an interesting contextual missionary read.

"Word, Work, and Wonder as Holistic Ministry" by Douglas Petersen takes this collection of essays in the direction of thought about the marginalized and the Pentecostal ministry among them. Focusing on Mark 8:22-10:52, the core of Jesus' teaching on discipleship, the author contrasts the social and ethical norms of power, authority, control, knowledge, status and wealth with the requirements that Jesus set before his disciples regarding the poor, sick, disabled, unclean, outlawed and outcast, and specifically the children. The same requirements stand before Christian mission today.

Another article by the editor of the book, Wonsuk Ma, "Blessing in Pentecostal Theology and Mission", deals with the negatively perceived prosperity gospel within the Pentecostal tradition. The purpose of his essay is to investigate theological elements of the Prosperity Gospel to explore its potential in the shape of a particular social and religious attitude and behavior. The author believes that the generally positive and immanent religious attitude of the global South

has much to do with religious dynamism directly and indirectly shaped through Prosperity teachings. The article is also supported by the personal story of the author coming from a Korean Pentecostal perspective. The author does not flee from the problematic aspects of Prosperity Gospel, yet stands by his arguments and proposes a less negative perception of the core theological beliefs he calls the Theology of Blessing.

An interesting article by Japie La Poorta on the ever important topic of church and society interaction coming from a South African perspective is the next essay. Certainly the South African context of social and religious interaction is a definitely interesting one. The author starts the essay by introducing a very interesting definition of the church, highlighting its ambiguous social and eschatological reality. He then proceeds to analyze different ways the church views its role in society, ranging from withdrawal from society to altering the society itself. South African context provides an interesting analysis of social problems such as apartheid and the role of the church, especially the Pentecostals, in raising awareness of such issues. The author concludes that Christians globally often remain silent on many important social issues such as social injustice, suffering of Palestinians, global warming etc.

Miguel Alvarez's article, "*Pentecostals, Society and Christian Mission in Latin America*", comes from a Honduran context and develops an argument for Christian involvement in public service and politics. With their service among the poor and the marginalized, Pentecostals have emphasized that the human person is the foundation and purpose of Christian mission, humanity and political life. In some Pentecostal communities, claims the author, the theme of promoting human rights is yet to be addressed holistically. However, they are now recognizing that working for the human person as the foundation and purpose of the political community means laboring to recognize and respect human dignity through defending and promoting fundamental and inalienable human rights. The article provides an interesting comparison of Pentecostal and Roman Catholic perceptions on issues like politics and social and public service in Latin America.

One of the essays coming from a context closer to ours, a European one, comes from Jan-Åke Alvarsson, a professor of Cultural Anthropology at Uppsala University in Sweden, titled "*Could Anthropology Contribute to the Future of Swedish Pentecostalism?*" In this essay Alvarsson tries to make a connection between cultural anthropology and the Pentecostal movement with regard to the future. The author begins with an historic overview of the Pentecostal beginnings in Sweden in 1906 brought by the preaching of Andrew G. Johnson, thus connecting the Pentecostal movement in Sweden with the famous Azusa Street event. The author states that a large number of international Pentecostal studies were conducted by sociologists and anthropologists and thus contributed to the

development of the Pentecostal mission. One of the frequent case studies was the gender balance that is evident within the Pentecostal tradition. The author then highlights the Swedish context and draws from the past involvement of sociologists and anthropologists in the studies of Swedish Pentecostalism. He gives a valuable and detailed insight into the Swedish Pentecostal movement that is struggling with difficulties similar to those of most Christian movements and missions in Europe. The author, himself an anthropologist, believes that this study of human beings that draws and builds upon knowledge from the social sciences and biological sciences, as well as the humanities and the natural sciences, can be a useful tool for developing Pentecostal mission in Sweden.

One of the concluding essays in the book comes from Teresa Chai, a Malaysian ordained Pentecostal minister, titled "*Pentecostal Theological Education and Ministerial Formation*", bringing an insight from the practical, ministerial and ministry teaching side of the Pentecostal mission. The author diagnoses a fear and hesitation in Pentecostal Christians as to whether they can manage keeping in step with the Spirit if they fill their minds with too much knowledge. Often the belief is that it would hinder the work of the Spirit in them, and Chai believes that a healthy balance is in order. In this essay the author traces the roots of this Pentecostal dilemma regarding theological education and academic ministerial formation. Chai divides her essay into three parts in which she extensively analyzes the past, present and future of Pentecostal theological education in a global Pentecostal setting, all the time tackling the tension between theological academic education and unique Pentecostal spiritual tradition.

The final essay in the book is one by Jonathan W. Rice, an American Pentecostal missionary and theology professor interested in the relationship between ecology and spirituality. His essay is entitled "*Ecology and the Future of Pentecostalism: Problems, Possibilities and Proposals*". The author claims that the relationship of Pentecostals to ecology has often been marked by indifference, and in some cases outright hostility. However, Rice also claims that other Pentecostals are becoming keenly aware that stewardship of the earth and its resources must become an integral part of their spirituality. In his interesting article Rice analyzes some of the frequent Pentecostal views on ecology and interprets the reasons and sources of such attitudes, along with describing the historical development of such positions toward ecology. The mandate of preserving nature is one of the highlights of the author's lifelong research and he successfully conveys this call to the reader, supporting it with solid biblical arguments.

In the final pages of the book the editors give their concluding remarks which are directed mainly at the future of Pentecostal mission, summarizing briefly the global dimension of the book with its many diverse articles coming from various contexts of the world Christian mission. The editors admit that Pentecostals have

been by nature activists. Church planters, evangelists and cross-cultural mission workers have demonstrated “act now and think later” patterns. This approach has produced amazing results as well as some terrible mistakes. Mission is learned while doing it. Thus, reflection becomes essential so that the lessons are preserved and mistakes are identified, not to be repeated. This is in fact what the book tries to accomplish for the reader, unpacking before him the years of Pentecostal mission, with all its strengths and weaknesses, and enabling him to learn, analyze, discern and question the implications along with the various authors this collection of essays has brought together. The book offers an opportunity to engage in dialogue with different global contexts of Pentecostalism and its mission, and learn valuable lessons. For readers coming from Pentecostal backgrounds the book is sure to provide an interesting trip around the world, visiting fellow Christians coming from the same tradition and engaging topics that spring from the same tradition, yet are very diverse, depending on the specific context. For others it could be a very detailed and elaborate door for understanding and learning about Pentecostal mission and its development around the world, which can provide many valuable insights and raise questions within different denominations. The editors and authors have been genuine in addressing the mistakes of the Pentecostal mission movement, yet so much can be learned from their empowered and passionate zeal for reaching the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Filip Grujić

Pascal Denault

The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant Theology: A Comparison Between Seventeenth-Century Particular Baptist and Paedobaptist Federalism

Birmingham, Alabama USA, Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013, 167.

Pascal Denault, the pastor of a Reformed Baptist Church *l'Église évangélique de St-Jérôme*, wrote a book that deals with the historical research of one of the neglected but very valuable theological currents, that of Baptist Covenant Theology. Covenant Theology (also known as *federalism*) is a biblical interpretive framework that uses the idea of a covenant as its organizing theological principle, and is mainly associated with paedobaptist Reformed churches, i.e. churches that baptize not only those who profess faith, but children of believers also.

Meanwhile, it is relatively unknown that Particular (Calvinistic) Baptists of the seventeenth century developed their own stream of Covenant Theology, which followed the main outline of mainstream federalism, but inserted some chan-