

THE PENTECOSTAL EDUCATOR



A JOURNAL OF WAPTE
the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education

Vol. 4, No. 1
Spring 2017
ISSN 2375-9690

The Pentecostal Educator

A Journal of the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education

Aims and Scope

The Pentecostal Educator biannually e-publishes scholarly and practical articles related to theological education within the Pentecostal tradition to encourage the continuing maturation of Pentecostal theological education. It is intentionally practical, applied and international.

Senior Editor – Dr. Paul Alexander, Chair of WAPTE

(drpaul.r.alexander@gmail.com)

Executive Editor – Rick Wadholm Jr., Trinity Bible College and Graduate School (wadholm@gmail.com)

Book Review Editor – Meghan Musy, Southeastern University
(tpebookreviews@gmail.com)

Technical Services – Robert R. Wadholm, Trinity Bible College and Graduate School (rwadholm@indiana.edu)

WAPTE Officers

Chairperson: Dr. Paul Alexander

Vice-Chairperson: Dr. Dan Hedges

Secretary: Dr. Alex Fuentes

Treasurer: Dr. Weldyn Houger

Executive Committee Member: Dr. Stephen Fogarty

Executive Director: Rev. Roland Q. Dudley

WAPTE Board

Dr. Marilyn Abplanalp (USA)	Dr. Paul Alexander (USA)
Dr. John Carter (USA)	Dr. William Chelliah (Sri Lanka)
Dr. Jacob Cherian (India)	Dr. Jon Dahlager (Costa Rica)
Rev. Roland Dudley (USA)	Dr. John Easter (USA)
Dr. Steve Fogarty (Australia)	Dr. Alex Fuentes (Philippines)
Dr. Carl Gibbs (USA)	Dr. Pedro Gomez (Dom. Rep.)
Dr. Dan Hedges (USA)	Dr. Weldyn Houger (USA)
Dr. Ulrik Josefsson (Sweden)	Dr. Enson Lwesya (Africa)
Rev. Pasi Parkkila (Finland)	Rev. Rick Wadholm Jr (USA)
Dr. Mark Williams (USA)	

Instructions for Authors

All submissions to *The Pentecostal Educator* should conform to the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* including its use of footnotes for all citations. For abbreviations of biblical and other ancient material, as well as transliteration of all non-Roman scripts, see *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Manuscripts should be written in English with consistent spelling throughout and using 12 point Times New Roman, single spaced lines. Submissions should not exceed 5,000 words in length (though longer submissions may be considered). All submissions should be emailed as Word (.doc) attachments to rwadholm@trinitybiblecollege.edu. Please include a brief biographical sketch, a 100-300 word abstract, 3-4 keywords, and a bibliography.

Use two levels of headings. They should be flush left, and not numbered.

This is the First Level Heading

This is the Second Level Heading

Please insert page numbers in the upper right-hand corner.

Manuscripts which are submitted without sufficiently meeting the above criteria will be returned to the author without publication. All submissions

must not be currently submitted to, or previously published by, any other journal. If accepted, the author agrees to transfer copyright to *The Pentecostal Educator* and the manuscript will not be published elsewhere in any form, in English or any other language, without prior written consent of the publisher.

Instructions for Book Reviewers

For information regarding interest in being a reviewer and to learn what volumes might be currently available for review contact the Book Review Editor Meghan Musy (tpebookreviews@gmail.com).

The Pentecostal Educator is indexed by Christian Periodical Index.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).

Contents

Editorial

Paul Alexander	5
----------------------	---

Volume Editorial

Rick Wadholm Jr.....	6
----------------------	---

Moving from a Focused Center to the Blurred Edges: A Pentecostal Response to the Missional Movement

Michael Bommarito	8
-------------------------	---

Teaching Cross-Culturally

Allen Martin.....	18
-------------------	----

BOOK REVIEWS

Cartledge and Swoboda, eds. *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*

Monte Lee Rice.....	24
---------------------	----

Martin, ed. *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching*

David Courey.	27
--------------------	----

Thomas and Macchia. *Revelation*. Edited by Joel B. Green and Max Turner. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary

Melissa Archer	31
----------------------	----

Editorial

Paul R. Alexander, PhD, Senior Editor

This edition of the Pentecostal Educator is, a little unusually, without a theme. I trust, nevertheless, that you will find the collection of articles and reviews helpful.

As I have no theme to introduce allow me to use this brief editorial to highlight some important points regarding this journal.

- While not strictly a peer reviewed journal, *The Pentecostal Educator* does afford the opportunity for those involved in Christian Higher Education in general and Theological Education in particular an opportunity to publish thoughtful material. The environment in which we as Pentecostal theological educators serve is rapidly changing and the more we can help each other navigate this process the better.
- Unlike many similar learned journals, *The Pentecostal Educator* affords younger scholars, thoughtful practitioners and administrators an opportunity to publish. I do hope that more will take this opportunity in future editions.
- Being the official publication of the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education it is hoped that this journal will serve to highlight this organization and increase participation in our events and consultations. Please be sure to visit [our website](#) and communicate your ideas and thoughts with us.

I do appreciate the work of the Executive Editor Rick Wadholm Jr and all those who work hard to make this journal available.

Paul R Alexander, PhD
Chair, WAPTE

Volume Editorial

Rick Wadholm Jr., Executive Editor

September 7-10, 2016, the Pentecostal World Fellowship convened in São Paulo, Brazil, for the [24th Pentecostal World Conference](#) and as a part of the gathering the World Alliance for Pentecostal Theological Education (WAPTE) offered sessions for educators. I had the joy of being present for this event. Arriving several days early I was able to join in the celebration of a new Pentecostal church plant of the growing (estimated) 24 million Pentecostal, Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal believers across Brazil.¹



This growing movement suggests that Brazilian congregations may indeed find themselves at the leading edge of influencing Pentecostalism/s into the future if they embrace their global mission and develop further advanced means of properly training for this work. As such, WAPTE was present to attempt to give some advancement and direction for the Brazilian fellowships and educators present at the conference by offering such sessions as those discussing accreditation standards, missionary focus, and a holistic approach to Pentecostal theological education.

¹ Rudolf von Sinner notes only about 14 million, "Pentecostalism," *Brazil Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Republic* (Vol. 1; Santa Barbara, CA: 2012), p. 455.



With this Brazilian opportunity in mind, this issue presents two articles relevant to the specific issue of missions and the missional movement as educators. Michael Bommarito, an educator and former international church pastor, offers a foray into the “Missional Movement” and his proposed Pentecostal response to such. He addresses the movement as one which could simply be another trend passing from the horizon of the church and theological education, but notes the ways in which aspects of the missional movement are best interpreted and applied via a renewed Pneumatic experience and appreciation that recognized and calls for the Spirit filled community to exercise every gift in advancing the kingdom of God.

Allen Martin, a missionary educator, proposes ways in which Pentecostal theological educators should give careful consideration to their global and local contexts in order to most appropriately make the connections needed for training in a cross-cultural context. While being contextually sensitive, he also calls for a dependence upon Spirit empowerment in the educational process that leads to transformation both of the educator and the educated.

It is hoped that in such local contexts as Brazil (and also much of the global south), where the full-gospel message flourishes, that the focus upon global advancement of this message and its maturation will also be present. This is the basis for *The Pentecostal Educator* to exist as a journal for advancing the kingdom and enriching its more formal educational workers.

Moving from a Focused Center to the Blurred Edges: A Pentecostal Response to the Missional Movement

Michael S. Bommarito

Abstract: From its humble and ambiguous beginnings, it seems the missional movement has come into its own. It is nearly impossible to avoid the term in church related publications today. While some have embraced this movement with the vigor of a new Reformation, others worry it is just another in a chain of movements promising change that it cannot deliver. This article discusses the development and growth of the missional movement and seeks to understand that movement from its broader context. Further discussion connects this movement to aspects of Pentecostal theology and, in particular, the fuller empowering work of the Holy Spirit.

Keywords: Missional, Church, Apostolic, Missions, Post-Christian

From its humble and ambiguous beginnings, it seems the missional movement has come into its own. From its first official mention by Charles Van Engen of Fuller Theological Seminary in 1991,² it is nearly impossible to avoid the term in church related publications today. A simple internet search of the term quickly produces countless references to blogs, articles, books, conferences and even graduate and post graduate degrees on the subject.³ The question on many people's minds, however, is where is the missional movement heading and how long will it be around? Will the message of this movement end up another passing phase of ministry hype; all the books and resources neatly stacked alongside those of the friendship evangelism, church growth, cell group, power encounter and

² Milfred Minatrea, *Shaped by God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004). Charles Van Engen is professor of Biblical Theology of Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary.

³ In the spirit of full disclosure, I teach in just such a master's program (MA in Missional Leadership) at Trinity Bible College and Graduate School.

other such movements of the past? Is the missional movement the next great phase soon to be replaced, or is there a deeper message behind the hype that can help transform the church for future generations?

A Brief History and Development of Missional

As the Christian church continued to lose ground in western culture, visionaries such as David Bosch⁴ and Lesslie Newbigin⁵ began to challenge the church to consider its local context with the same vigor and theological insight as those in cross-cultural, missionary contexts around the world. Once the stronghold of the Christian faith, western nations have become a growing and needy mission field in their own right.⁶ The fledgling missional movement sought to blur the divide between homebased evangelism and overseas missions by emphasizing the broader mission of God to preach the Good News in all corners of the world, local and remote. In many contexts, missionary endeavors had become tainted with visions of Christian colonization as it focused on opening new territories to unreached people groups.⁷ Missional language sought to reorient the church from what might be viewed as a conquest mentality to a more natural, lifestyle orientation. Being missionary seemed more about taking and building the Kingdom of God on Earth, while missional claimed to be about God accomplishing His mission through His followers anywhere and everywhere. As Robert Webber suggests, “it’s more about God’s mission in the world and how we all do it together”.⁸ The missional emphasis is less about going or staying and more about living as “authentic disciples accomplishing God’s mission”⁹ regardless of one’s location.

Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder suggest that the expression of church, both in its local and global configurations, had begun to act as if mission was something they dreamed and created, rather than the fact that the fulfillment of God’s mission was why they were created and existed in the

⁴ D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991),

⁵ L. Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986).

⁶ Daniel Im, *Developing a Missional Response to Seismic Shifts in the Church*, August 2, 2016, accessed August 2, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/august/developing-missional-response-to-seismic-shifts-in-church.html>.

⁷ Brian McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004).

⁸ Robert Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 152.

⁹ Minatrea, *Shaped by God’s Heart*, 10.

first place.¹⁰ Mission comes before any expression or activity of the church. Alan Hirsch explains:

A proper understanding of *missional* begins with recovering a missionary understanding of God. By his very nature God is a “sent one” who takes the initiative to redeem his creation. This doctrine, known as *missio Dei*—the sending of God—is causing many to redefine their understanding of the church. Because we are the “sent” people of God, the church is the instrument of God's mission in the world. As things stand, many people see it the other way around. They believe mission is an instrument of the church; a means by which the church is grown. Although we frequently say “the church has a mission,” according to missional theology a more correct statement would be “the mission has a church.”¹¹

It should also be said that not only does the mission have a church, but it has a missionary force as well. It would be unfair and inaccurate to say that the missional movement seeks to supplant or even weaken any cross-cultural, overseas missionary endeavor. There is certainly no literature to suggest this notion. On the contrary, the missional message seeks to encourage and correct the full Body of Christ, the Church, in all of her expressions and work locally and globally. These various expressions will be discussed in greater detail later in this article.

Missional Focus: A Complex Simplicity

There seems to be something about human nature that prefers the simple. When faced with a formidable challenge, human nature tends to find itself analyzing, deconstructing, compartmentalizing and strategizing to find a way forward. Here is where the church excels, constantly re-envisioning itself according to the latest and greatest strategic methodology for success. On the surface at least, the missional movement looks very much like the latest and greatest answer to the church's decline, and many have responded to it as such. The website www.vergenetwork.org offers a host of resources recommending several “simple ways to be missional” in various settings.¹² Although these simple suggestions are, in and of themselves, very helpful and worth looking into, such articles run the risk of reducing the missional movement to a simple set of behaviors, implying

¹⁰ Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder, *Missional Moves*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012).

¹¹ Alan Hirsch, *Defining Missional*, 2008, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2008/fall/17.20.html>

¹² Simple Ways to be Missional, accessed July 9, 2016, <http://www.vergenetwork.org/lp/free-membership>

if an individual does certain things they are or have become *missional*. Try as one may to master mission, mission must master the individual. A second response to the missional movement often seeks to define missional within the context of a specific ministry focus. These often come in corrective warnings and exhortations meant to keep the missional movement on track, such as “If your church is not advancing/discipling/apostolic/etc., it is not missional.” Again, although any of these warnings might be true, they run the risk of reducing the missional movement to a single focused ministry endeavor. Fortunately for the world, yet unfortunately for those who desire a simple, focused solution, the mission of God cannot be confined to any one approach.

In order to grasp the mission of the church, the church wants desperately to define that mission from a single perspective, but then must redefine that perspective to encompass the full mission of God. For example, some have argued the mission of God is all about worship, responding to and reflecting back the worth of God. But to encompass the full context of Body life found in Scripture, worship is expanded to include all things Christian. The church not only worships in her songs and prayers, but by sharing the truth of God to others (evangelism), by building ourselves and others up in the fullness of who God is (discipleship), and by expanding the base of God’s influence to new areas (missions and church planting). Before long, nothing remains but worship. The same has been argued for discipleship, church planting, missions and others. But as Van Engen used to warn his students, “If everything is missions, then nothing is missions.”¹³ If everything is worship, than nothing is worship. In his blog post “Why the Missional Movement Will Fail,” Mike Breen likens the missional movement to a shiny new car that will not go anywhere and will eventually fail without the engine of discipleship.¹⁴ Breen goes so far as to state, “If you make disciples you will always get the church, but if you try to build the church you will rarely get disciples.” That might make a catchy tweet, but would that not depend on how one was going about building churches or, for that matter, making disciples? Are there not plenty of examples of discipleship making ministries so focused on multiplying their own ministry that they inadvertently keep individuals

¹³ From class lectures with Chuck Van Engen at Fuller Theological Seminary, ca. 1990.

¹⁴ Mike Breen, *Why the Missional Movement Will Fail*, accessed June 25, 2016, http://www.vergenetwork.org/2011/09/14/mike-breen-why-the-missional-movement-will-fail/?inf_contact_key=5fe50c7cf580791959ef10f01ee6badaf1d927dc346082538a38e795fef3397b

from full participation in growing the local church?¹⁵ The missional movement certainly can sound like, and runs the risk of becoming like any other one-size-fits-all ministry cure. The distinction, however, is in its name, which, if properly understood and applied, could bring a revival that touches every aspect of Christian ministry known to mankind, and some not even dreamed of yet.

Everything is Not Mission, But Mission is Everything

Unlike other renewal movements of the past, the missional movement is about the full mission of God in all its complexity, not a particular element of or function in fulfilling the mission. The mission of God, and thus the missional movement by extrapolation, is holistic by nature. If then the missional movement is anything, it is a call back to the full, encompassing mission of God in all its glory and minutia. Mission is not defined by the church; the church is defined by mission. As Wegner and Magruder explain “mission is *a priori* (‘from what comes before’) any expression of the church.”¹⁶ If the church is going to find her way once again, this is where she must begin. So often the church has sought to define itself by defining its mission, claiming to be a teaching church, an emerging church, a missions church, parachurch, and so on. While a missional entity will certainly have unique, if not specialized, areas or aspects of service, it is the broader mission of God that gives shape to this uniqueness.

To return to Breen’s analogy of the church as a car with discipleship as its engine, it is important to note that mission should not be considered the tires that give the car direction.¹⁷ Mission is the purpose for which the car was created and aligns the parts toward the accomplishment of that purpose. To say a car without an engine will not go anywhere, although certainly true, is tragically over simplistic. Even a car with the most powerful of engines will go nowhere without wheels and a system that connects the power of the engine to the wheels. The car will not be able to transport anyone without a chassis and body. Failure to connect each part securely will ensure the car goes nowhere fast. To suggest the engine is more important than the wheels or any other part of the car, is like the foot suggesting it is less a part of the body than the hand.¹⁸ For a car to be fully functional all of its parts are necessary, just as are all parts necessary in a healthy, fully functional human body. Likewise a healthy, fully functional

¹⁵ From experience with a college based discipleship ministry that sent their members to our church on Sunday morning, but allowed no other connection or activity between the two.

¹⁶ Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder, *Missional Moves*, 50.

¹⁷ Mike Breen, *Why the Missional Movement Will Fail*.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:15

church, i.e. a *missional* church, will have all its parts present and properly connected and aligned.

The missional shift is a subtle but significant one. It might best be described as a shift from ministry focus to mission focus. In that shift very little may change on the surface, but the world might change on the edges. In the past the church has tended to operate from a ministry perspective or what Wegner and Magruder call a “silo mentality.”¹⁹ In a silo mentality the church recognizes that there are numerous tasks or ministries it is called to perform and then organizes itself to accomplish as many of those as possible. In a typical church this often includes outreach, discipleship, children and youth, small groups, missions and teaching, among others. Parachurch organizations often came into existence to fill perceived gaps in ministry. The ministries defined the organization, its structures, its activities and its mission. Organizations could easily become so focused on their specific mission or purpose, they could easily lose any notion of greater missional responsibility. The regional director of an international evangelism ministry once commented, “Our job is to spread the seed. Whether it falls on good soil and grows or in the rocks and withers in the sun is not our concern. We are called to scatter seed.”²⁰ Although the focus is commendable, it seems unfortunately short sighted of the greater mission of God. That is like the motor of a car saying my job is to run, whether we go anywhere or not is not my concern. The shift from ministry to missional does not remove one’s eyes from a particular call, but enlarges the vision to see the fuller picture.

The Mission Defined

Then what is the missional mission? To borrow from the wisdom of children in Sunday school classrooms around the globe, the missional mission is Jesus. Although stated with a fair amount of tongue-in-cheek, Jesus certainly is the fulfilment of God’s mission, not to mention the best example of a missional individual. Jesus breathed, lived and literally died the mission of God, to redeem the world back to its creator. To borrow Hirsch’s words a second time, “God is a ‘sent one,’” and he is a sending one. He sent his word through the prophets to capture and convict the hearts of his people, he sent his Son to capture and save their souls, he sent his Spirit to correct, guide and empower his Body in mission, and he continues to send his church in that same work today. In short, the missional mission is God’s mission, to view the world as God sees it and

¹⁹ Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder, *Missional Moves*, 49.

²⁰ In private conversation at a conference in Budapest, Hungary, 1999.

to act as God would act; to see what the father is doing and do likewise.²¹ Wegner and Magruder explain that as God is on mission, fulfilling his purposes on the Earth, he calls his church and her people on mission with him.²²

Although to condense the mission of God into simple, understandable terms is a task too large for the scope of this article, the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28 seems an obvious place to begin. Realizing this hardly seems new or innovative, considering the church has been focused on accomplishing the Great Commission for the past two millennia, it is not the mission that needs to be renewed but the churches perspective of the mission. What is unique and timely about the missional movement is its call to action within the larger mission of the whole church. The missional movement is not program or ministry driven, it is mission driven, and as such, calls for a greater unity while allowing a greater diversity within the Body of Christ at the same time. This issue is not about whether the church is doing evangelism or discipleship or small groups or any other particular ministry, but whether and how what any individual or local church is doing connects to the fuller mission of accomplishing the Great Commission. This is what Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson refer to as an Apostolic Movement. When the people of God are on mission to reach those around them with the Good News of Christ, within the context of a local church that is on mission and reaching out to a lost and dying world, in response to following God who is on mission to redeem his world, then apostolic movements happen.²³ In other words the potential significance of the missional movement is connectedness and leverage.

Hirsch and Ferguson build much of their work of apostolic movements from the text of Ephesians 4:11-16, urging the church to grasp the full spectrum of APEST (apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers) ministry. In particular they note that many churches have little to no role for apostles or prophets, and that this needs to change. With no outlet for new ministries that emerge within or out of the local church, the church can quickly plateau and decline. Hirsch and Ferguson argue that if Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers to the church in the first place, the church needs to embrace the full spectrum of this gift if she is going to succeed in mission.

²¹ John 5:19-20 NIV

²² Rob Wegner and Jack Magruder, *Missional Moves*.

²³ Alan Hirsch and Dave Ferguson, *On the Verge: A Journey into the Apostolic Future of the Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

Building on the work of Hirsch and Ferguson, Sam Metcalf applies APEST leadership as a spectrum across modalic (local church) and sodalic (missionary) entities to emphasize the need for balance across the scale (see figure 1).²⁴ Modalities, as Metcalf explains, are expressions of the church that are more local and stable in nature, such as local churches, where shepherd and teachers tend to thrive. Sodalities, on the other hand, are expressions of the church that are more mobile in nature, such as missionary agencies, where apostles and prophets tend to thrive. Metcalf points out that often sodalities and modalities have lived in a tension filled relationship within the church due to their somewhat contrary natures. For the church to fulfill its fullest potential, however, bridges need to be mended and strengthened so that both emphases remain and grow. Metcalf argues that a healthy modality needs at least some level of apostolic and prophet leadership to avoid stagnation and decline, just as sodalities need the grounding often provided by teachers and shepherds.

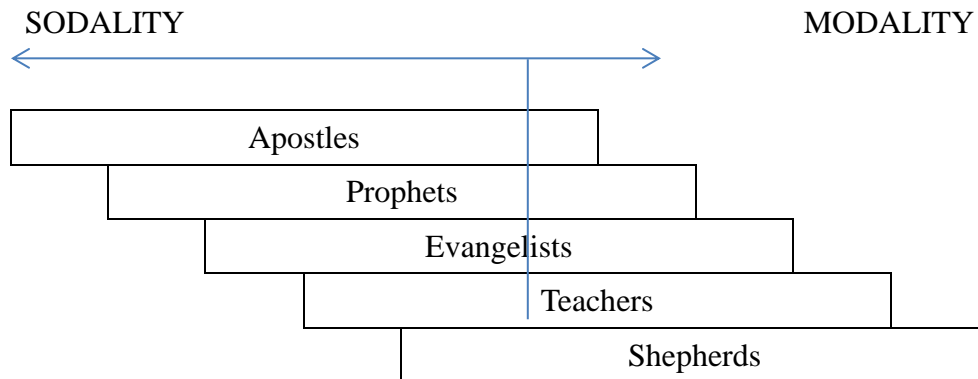


Figure 1²⁵

It could be argued that a missional mindset is what enables individuals to lift their heads from the task at hand and to ask if everything is in balance. Imagine Figure 1 above with a triangular fulcrum at the center base allowing the scale to rest in balance. That fulcrum is a missional perspective that validates each role individually while monitoring the overall effect. For the church universal to be effective, its work must be in balance with the mission. In the past, movements would emerge to bring

²⁴ Sam Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church: How Apostolic Movements Can Change the World*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015). Metcalf borrows the terms *modality* and *sodality* from the work of Ralph Winter, "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission," *Missiology* 2, no. 1, 1974.

²⁵ Recreated from Sam Metcalf, *Beyond the Local Church*, 105.

balance by calling for more emphasis on some missing element (more Scripture, more evangelism, more missions, more discipleship, more Spirit, etc.). What happened more often than not was a swing in the pendulum that resulted in the scales being thrown out of balance in a different direction. The missional movement seeks not to correct any one aspect of the spectrum, but to call for a broader perspective that seeks greater balance across the full spectrum of God's design. That does not mean every person or church or organization has to do everything itself in perfect balance, but that the Body of Christ working together can and should.

The Holy Spirit's Role in the Missional Movement

Take special note of the follow two passages of Scripture.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. – I Corinthians 12:4-6

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. – Ephesians 4:11-13 NIV

It is Christ through the Spirit who gives gifts for the purpose of accomplishing the mission of God. The first implication of these verses is all too familiar to most in the church. As Christ followers we are not called to do it all. Individuals are given unique gifts to use in obedience to the call of God on their lives. Where the church can go wrong is when this leads to an island mentality that allows individuals to focus solely on their own gifts and ministry. The missional movement calls for a second look at these verses and to note the partnership and unity they demand. Paul continues in I Corinthians 12:12 by saying, "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ" (NIV). Again, a powerful illustration all too familiar to those in the church, but which has its limits as an analogy. Unlike a body where the diverse parts go about fulfilling their unique roles utterly unaware of the existence of any other part, the members of the Body of Christ enjoy self-awareness, the awareness of others around them and the ability to self-regulate. To be certain, Christ is the head of the body and holds all things together, but as members of that body, the church has the unique ability to

actively join in the work of Christ. If anything, the missional movement is a call for the body as a whole and each individual member to work in greater cooperation with each other and the Spirit.

Conclusion

If Pentecostal Theology is about anything, it is about the fullness of the Holy Spirit to work in and through individual believers and the full Body of Christ to fulfill God's purposes on earth. If the missional movement seems to be about anything, it seems to be about the Body of Christ and each individual member thereof working in balance together to fulfill the mission of God on earth. The recent focus and fervor over the missional movement has the potential to send shockwaves of successful, fruitful, mission-accomplishing ministry to all corners of the globe, if only the church will keep her vision high enough and her eyes on the prize of Christ. Otherwise, she runs the risk of turning the mission of God into another short-term, quick fix of disappointment.

Teaching Cross-Culturally

Allen Martin

Abstract: The need to grow in the knowledge of contextualization with regard to education is ever present—particularly for the cross-cultural educator. A number of personal observations on values, training, and critical self-reflection are offered toward a more contextually relevant engagement in a cross-cultural educational setting.

Keywords: cross-cultural, missionary, teaching

As a brand new and very green missionary, having only recently arrived in the country of my calling after the typical 18 months of deputation and year of language school, I was anxious to jump with both feet into the ministry that God had called me to. Then, my area director at the time, Norm Campbell, sat me down for the talk. Now, almost 25 years later, I can understand the wisdom in his instructions, but at the time they seemed almost cruel. He informed me that I would not yet be permitted to begin the ministry that I had long prepared to undertake. To begin with, for the next six months, while still living in the capital city, I was to visit and preach in every church anywhere in the country where I could garner an invitation. Also, I was instructed to travel the country and visit every one of our missionaries and take the opportunity to learn to know their ministries. As Norm wisely counseled me, “You, as a missionary, have been given the opportunity to have a tremendous influence and impact in this country for many years to come, but that influence will be even greater if you come to know and understand the people and the people have been given the opportunity to learn to know and trust you.”

One cultural anthropologist defines culture as “learned and shared attitudes, values, and ways of behaving.”¹ We are in many ways prisoners of our own cultural biases, those things that we have been conditioned

¹Grunlan, Stephen A. and Marvin K. Mayers, *Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 39.

from birth to rely on to cope and deal with everyday life. This was driven home to me shortly after arriving in the country of Ecuador where we were to serve among the Quichua Indians for the next 20 years. One of my missionary colleagues complained to me on several occasions that the local Indian pastors were liars and that we needed to confront them about their lying. We had been invited to participate in numerous Tent Crusades that were being held in different mountain villages. The announced starting times of the services was to be 7 PM, however the services rarely started before 9 PM. That meant that quite often we were not being given the pulpit until anywhere from 11 PM to midnight. One night it was actually 2 AM when they invited me to preach! Now, I know that this practice was not a lie in their eyes. As long as the event took place that night everyone was happy. Unlike ourselves, as Westerners, the indigenous leaders simply were not slaves to a clock. Their culture was event oriented in contrast to the time oriented culture that we had been raised in. Over time, since we always arrived 15 - 30 minutes before the appointed time, as they continued to announce the services at 7 PM they would quietly turn to tell me: "Brother Allen that means 8:30 PM for you!"



As western-trained missionary educators teaching and ministering in a non-western school setting, we must first come to understand our own culture of teaching and learning before we can be truly successful as teachers in another culture. Just because we learned in a school where certain methods were modeled, there is no guarantee that those same

methods will also be successful in our adopted culture. One of the best books that I have found on this subject is *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching* by Judy & Sherwood Lingenfelter.² I like how the Lingenfelters explain this truth about teaching in another culture: “All of us are people of a culture, and we carry our cultural heritage and practices, including our practice of faith, with us into every situation of life. Unless we have a clear understanding of our cultural self and how that self restricts our acceptance of and service to others, we will not readily reach an understanding of others or be able to serve them effectively.”³

I am convinced that the best way to learn the cultural cues that will help us be better teachers in the classroom is to first of all be teachable ourselves. Even as you are observing daily life in your new culture, begin by interviewing and spending time with those persons that can help you learn the culture. I have found that veteran missionaries who also work in education are oftentimes an excellent source of valuable information on the subject. Not only in the very beginning, but also for years to come I often found myself going to these same veterans for advice as different situations arose. Their wise counsel was of tremendous value to me while at the same time validating their own worth, knowledge, and experience.

Another valuable source for understanding your adopted culture is the local children. Even as you are making new friends, learn to observe how the children interact, both with their own siblings, other children and with adults as well. Take note of the ways that the children are instructed and how they are expected to learn. Do their parents ask them questions and if so what types of questions are they asked? Are the children encouraged to ask questions or are they possibly quieter and seem to learn more through observation? Do the parents read them stories from books or is it more common to have times of storytelling where they teach them about their own culture through stories about their ancestors? How do the children interact with their siblings? Quichua Indian children are expected to take responsibility for their younger siblings even as they help the adults to work in the fields. Often times the little ones could be seen strapped to the backs of an older sibling who was no more than 8-10 years older than the toddlers they carried.

² Judith Lingenfelter and Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).

³ Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 9.

Spend time socially with your students both at meal time as well as at play. Often you will find that they will be much more open to volunteer information to you in a casual setting than in the formal setting of the classroom. Interviews can also be helpful, just beware that the interviewee is not simply telling you what they believe that you want to hear. One of the greatest things that I have found for breaking down cultural barriers is being willing to eat their traditional foods. On various occasions I was told by different Spanish pastors: “Allen, do you know what the Indians say about you? They tell us, Brother Allen loves us because he eats our food!”

Teaching cross-culturally requires that we learn to think outside of the box, being willing to venture beyond our own cultural context to begin to look for solutions that are not limited to our own experience, training, and expertise.⁴ Look for resources to help guide you as well. In this age of Google and the internet we are no longer as isolated as we as missionaries once were. Try to stay current through reading mission’s journals and books by some of the better missionary anthropologists and educators. Sometimes we simply need to update our toolbox by staying up to date with what is taking place in the current trends in education.

We would be wise to contemplate the following list of assumptions about ourselves as cross-cultural educators:

1. We have been given the gift of influence in the lives and ministries of our students.
2. We are working with education in some form cross-culturally with the goal of doing so more effectively.
3. Our past experiences in education as learners have been in a Western system of education.
4. Our ultimate priority is training others to follow Jesus more effectively.
5. We have to keep learning to be effective.
6. We are teaching for spiritual change in the midst of cultural change.
7. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate teacher.

⁴ Lingenfelter and Lingenfelter, *Teaching Cross-Culturally*, 33.

8. We as Christian Educators have a prophetic role in creating an educational environment where God can prepare and raise up prophetic voices.⁵

Now, ask yourself the question:
“If not us, who???”



First graduating class of SEBAD-Riobamba (Ecuador)

⁵ Grant, Beth, “Alternative Approaches to Education.” Class notes for MS 930 Course at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO July 13-17, 2015.

Bibliography

- Armstrong, Thomas. *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2000.
- Beard, Colin and J. P. Wilson. *Experiential Learning: A Handbook for Education, Training and Coaching (3rd edition)*. Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page, 2013.
- Eaton, Philip W. *Engaging the Culture, Changing the World: The Christian University in a Post-Christian World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005.
- Gupta, Paul R. and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Breaking Tradition to Accomplish Vision: Training Leaders for a Church-Planting Movement*. Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2006.
- Lingenfelter, Judith E and Sherwood G. Lingenfelter. *Teaching Cross-Culturally: An Incarnational Model for Learning and Teaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of A Teacher's Life, Tenth Anniversary Edition*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2007.
- Rynkiewich, Michael. *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Colonial World*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.

BOOK REVIEWS

Cartledge, Mark J. and A. J. Swoboda, eds. *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*. London: Routledge, 2017. 252 pages + xii. US\$149.95. ISBN 978-1472443274.

Mark J. Cartledge and A. J. Swoboda's edited volume, *Scripting Pentecost: A Study of Pentecostals, Worship and Liturgy*, presents new forays into assessing how Pentecostals and charismatics understand and practice worship while also suggesting trajectories towards constructing a Pentecostal/charismatic (P/C) theology of worship. In the introduction, Cartledge and Swoboda smartly frame the book's purpose with the broader contemporary efforts exploring the theme of worship in P/C spirituality. Cartledge and Swoboda stress that this volume builds on preceding efforts but also fills a gap in present scholarship by providing constructive theological reflection informed by global examples of P/C worship experience, practice, and theological understanding. They view this volume as a complement to Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong's interdisciplinary, edited volume, *The Spirit of Praise*,¹ which explores music through religious, social scientific, and ethnographic studies. In contrast, this volume focuses on "worship in dialogue with liturgical structure" (p. 3), explored through historical accounts, constructive theology, and global case studies. Cartledge and Swoboda argue that within current scholarship, this work provides the first attempt at exploring P/C worship and liturgy from a theological yet globally diverse perspective.

This book's thirteen essays are arranged into two parts: "History and theology" and "Global case studies." The first section is comprised of four historical and three theological essays, and the second section features

¹ Monique M. Ingalls and Amos Yong, eds., *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2015).

case studies from around the world. While the historical chapters focus primarily on twentieth-century, North American and British classical Pentecostalism, each analysis suggests implications for contemporary practices that are relevant globally. Chapter 1, written by Leah Payne, analyzes Pentecostal preaching in relation to holiness theology, revivalist practices, and innovation. In ch. 2, Jennifer A. Miskov explores how liturgical practices and themes characteristic of the Welsh Revival informed the Azusa Street Revival. Aaron Friesen, in ch. 3, assesses how worship *ordo* (worship service structure) and practices, along with Pentecostal penchants for liturgical flexibility, spontaneity, and congregational tongues speech, developed through processes or phases of non-structured renewal not institutionalization. Chapter 4, by Neil Hudson, explores key characteristics (i.e., the pursuit of renewal, restoration, power, excellence, and authenticity) of the culture and practices of the Charismatic Movement over the past fifty years.

The three constructive theology chapters reflect on broader theological traditions and serve as an effective bridge between historical analyses and case studies. Drawing on his background as an Anglican minister and theologian, Andy Lord argues “sung worship” should be rooted in “an understanding of God who is creative, active and relational” (pp. 85–86). In dialogue with Roman Catholic theology, Wolfgang Vondey, in ch. 6, delineates a “pentecostal sacramentality” that underwrites a “theology of the altar” (p. 94). In ch. 7, Chris E. W. Green argues that the broad historical trajectory of Pentecostal spirituality does not and should not suggest that its stress on liturgical spontaneity reflects a corresponding rejection of or movement away from fixed liturgy. He advocates for a “discerning reintegration of the liturgical traditions(s)” (p. 114) of the broader Christian tradition.

The global case studies provide examples of how P/C communities have recently been or are currently engaging in worship. With the exception of ch. 10, in which Swoboda focuses on a North American, classical Pentecostal church, these chapters examine worship practices and expressions within a region or nation representative of a broader region. These are namely, Europe (ch. 9 by Anne E. Dyer), Kenya (ch. 10 by Samuel W. Muindi), Myanmar (ch. 11 by Denise Ross), Venezuela (ch. 12 by Greg W. Burch), and Papua New Guinea (ch. 13 by Sarita D. Gallagher). Hence, the case studies represent North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania.

Each essay in the volume evidences erudite scholarship, research, and analysis, and is generally concise and engaging. While this book is generally accessible to a wide audience, including those with limited

theological or scholarly training, some chapters or chapter sections may prove challenging for varied readerships. Cartledge and Swoboda's introduction provides historical context for the book's diverse trajectories P/C liturgical theology and integrates every essay toward a common aim—to broaden scholarly explorations of P/C practices and expressions of worship within the broader disciplinary rubrics of liturgical, ritual, and cultural-anthropological studies. This book's expansive aims—combining historical analysis; ecumenically resourced, theological construction; and globally derived cases studies—provides a seedbed for further scholarly exploration of and on-the-ground reflection on these themes, which have the potential to enrich P/C congregational worship.

Some critical concerns should be raised. Cartledge and Swoboda should have established more congruency between the title's theme—namely, the notions of “liturgy” and “Scripting Pentecost”—and the collected essays. The essays often utilized the concept of liturgy without clearly defining its meaning or function(s). Cartledge and Swoboda define *liturgy* as “the church's expression of worship towards the Triune God, who is creator and redeemer” (p. 12) in the introduction. However, this definition is too tepid as a guiding or framing rubric. Hence, the one thing lacking, unfortunately, in this volume is a sufficiently explicated understanding of *liturgy*, along with notion of “Scripting Pentecost.” The theological chapters do provide more exploration of liturgy in their discussions, so the warrant lies primarily with the historical analysis chapters. On the other hand, perhaps the book's title is an invitation for readers to discover how and why a scholarly approach to P/C worship employs the notion of liturgy and how this notion encourages us to actually “script” the dynamics of P/C worship.

I strongly recommend this volume as requisite reading for scholarly research in P/C worship practices and expression and an imperative investment those engaging with the discipline of P/C liturgical theology and practice(s). Its readability makes it accessible for those in both academic and non-academic settings. Unfortunately, its hefty cost may discourage purchases for personal libraries and certainly makes it less likely to serve as a required textbook. Nonetheless, Pentecostal educators can profitably use this volume for required, selected readings at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Monte Lee Rice
Independent Scholar
Singapore

Martin, Lee Roy, ed. *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching*. Cleveland, TN: CPT, 2015. viii + 297 pp. US\$17.95 Paperback. ISBN: 978-1935931416.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the bridge between the Academy and the Church is generally unsteady and unsound, and, yes, often unused. At one time, the truism applied more particularly to Pentecostalism, but, just as the evangelical church at large has been increasingly ‘pentecostalized,’ it has also been ‘pragmatized’ and perhaps ‘de-theologized’. The chasm between church *praxis* and theological *doxa* has never seemed deeper.

Into this chasm, quite clearly from the Academy side, comes a series of fifteen fine essays (including the introduction), each of which takes a decidedly theological approach to one of the central praxes of ecclesial experience: preaching. Of course, a significant branch of practical theology contemplates homiletics. What is especially fascinating about *this* book is that it brings to bear the now fertile theological imagination of the Pentecostal Academy to what has been a remarkably unexamined dimension of Pentecostal experience.

It should be noted that, within the Pentecostal tradition, preaching has held a significantly experiential place. Notions like anointing and unction, illumination and revelation, conviction and testimony are part of the Pentecostal vocabulary of preaching and convey its existential dimensions. But it is theological reflection on the pneumatic dimension of homiletic practice in the preacher and congregation that makes this collection of essays valuable.

It is precisely at this point that the book raises the perennial Pentecostal question. Is there indeed a distinctly Pentecostal theology of preaching or should Pentecostal insights contribute to a pneumatologically informed account of the more broadly Christian proclamational process? If the former, then Pentecostal preaching must be seen as different in kind than others; if the latter, all preaching worthy of the name must reckon with the pneumatic dimension. The book does not broach the question directly

though there is much talk of the uniqueness of Pentecostal oratory, combined with a breadth of critical interaction that clearly places the discussion in the larger field of homiletical theology.

Thus, along with much work in the Pentecostal Academy, and particularly from its Cleveland branch, there is a stated goal of constructing a distinctively Pentecostal theology. Lee Roy Martin and Frank Macchia, for example, search the tradition for illuminating examples through which to develop their Spirit-centered models. Macchia tells of his father's call to ministry; Martin shares stories about his mentors. These stories root theology in testimony and contribute to the project's Pentecostal uniqueness. At times, though, there is a self-consciousness about this quest for the peculiarly Pentecostal, which is at some points refreshing and at others a little tiresome. (Despite the extent to which the book focuses on a uniquely Pentecostal traditioning, it misses the second unstated goal—the formation of a pneumatological account of preaching.)

Of course, the problem does not demand a mutually exclusive response, and the essays presented here run the gamut from more distinctly Pentecostal to much more broadly pneumatological. Joseph K. Byrd's "Pentecostal Homiletic: A Convergence of History, Theology and Worship" offers a profoundly nuanced basis for the dialogical, narrative, and inductive nature of Pentecostal preaching *praxis*. On the other hand, Daniela Augustine's "From Proclamation to Embodiment: The Sacrament of the Word for the Life of the World and its Destiny in *Theosis*" furthers Pentecostal contemplation on Orthodox themes, producing a constructive proposal for incarnational proclamation.

Martin's edited volume demonstrates how effectively Pentecostal theology offers particularly insightful paradigms for understanding the theological and experiential significance of the preaching moment and the journey to and from the kerygmatic act. In their reflection on preaching within the context of Pentecostal theology, several contributors bridge the gap between *doxa* and *praxis* by offering theological perspectives that will enrich the work of thoughtful practitioners.

John Gordy finds in Jonathan Edwards a pneumatological forebear who embodies a particularly doxological model for Pentecostal preaching. Having surveyed the Pentecostal vocabulary of proclamation, he turns to a consideration of Edwards' epistemology in service of his theology of preaching. Edwards proposes two kinds of knowledge of God, one that is rationally driven and the other a pneumatically inspired 'heart knowledge'. The rational mind can apprehend the doctrine of God, but only the 'sense of the heart' can create the awe that the rational mind knows should attend

it. For Edwards, the Spirit's work is to mediate personal experience of the glory of God which in turn inspires the aesthetic that makes the Christian life so desirable, and true preaching so compelling.

Leah Payne's discussion of technology takes a balanced view of a topic one might have predicted to receive harsh treatment from scholars. Her approach sets the discussion within historical and theological matrices that permit a judicious evaluation of the place of technology. But Payne makes her appraisal against the challenges of the contemporary context and offers practical perspectives for pastoral consideration. Pentecostalism, which came of age with technology, lives in an ambiguous symbiosis with it.

Three essays explore women's issues, probing biblical (Chris Thomas), theological (Lisa Stephenson) and cultural/hermeneutical (Antoinette Alvarado) issues. Thomas' article is lamentably short, but still manages to touch all the important bases and deliver a Pentecostal framework (see the 'Thomistic' appeal to Acts 15) for a response to the contentious Pauline passages. Stephenson shapes her 'apologetic' around the image of God. She pushes the equality of being and function central to the notion of *imago Dei* through the *imago Christi*, which through water baptism restores the original creation mandate of equality, and the *imago Spiritus*, which takes Spirit baptism as transcending social orders. Alvarez, on the other hand, faces the limitations of social order in this age. She constructs a hermeneutic of empowerment, through a perceptive analysis of the experience of African-American women preachers. She places Sojourner Truth and Jarena Lee in the framework of both race and gender struggles of the nineteenth century in the abolitionist and suffrage movements, while she considers Susie Owens and Vashti McKenzie as contemporary examples, who have forged their callings in parallel though dissimilar contexts. Alvarez demonstrates the development of a feminist hermeneutic of empowerment across two centuries.

As a practitioner, myself, having pastored for over thirty years, I found Martin's exposition of prophetic preaching particularly generative. Martin surveys Abraham Heschel, Walter Brueggemann, John Goldingay, and Rickie D. Moore for prophetic models, and then applies them in describing multiple facets of prophetic preaching. In the process, he develops a paradigm of Pentecostal immediacy, pneumatological inspiration, and prophetic revelation, which he sees as consistent with the contemporary preacher's concern for study and preparation.

The essays in *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Preaching* propose a bridge between the Pentecostal Academy and Church. They validate the claim of a Pentecostal homiletic and suggest perspectives to formulate a

more robust pneumatology of preaching in all traditions. No doubt, they all begin on the Academy side, and some will be a long stretch for those working primarily in the Church. But there is much here to nourish the pastoral heart and to stoke Spirit-led proclamation. There is also much to further stimulate theological reflection on such a central dimension ecclesial practice. These papers make a noble attempt to fuse *doxa* and *praxis* and cross the chasm between practitioners and scholars.

David Courey
Continental Theological Seminary
Brussels, Belgium
Evangelical Theological Faculty
Leuven, Belgium

Thomas, John Christopher and Frank D. Macchia. *Revelation*. Edited by Joel B. Green and Max Turner. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xxii + 670 pp. US\$36. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0-8028-2554-4.

John Christopher Thomas and Frank Macchia's *Revelation* volume in the Two Horizons Commentary Series provides the reader with theological exegesis and theological reflection on the book of Revelation. Because the commentary is written by two authors, the reader would do well to read the preface as both Thomas and Macchia reflect on their journeys into and with the Apocalypse. Admittedly, each half of the volume can be read as a stand-alone piece; however, together they create a rich exploration of Revelation that is unmatched to this point in scholarship on the Apocalypse.

In keeping with the traditional format for the Two Horizons series, the commentary on the text of Revelation is followed by the theological reflection on the text. Thomas' analysis of Revelation makes up the first 403 pages of the volume. His stated purpose is to "offer a literary and theological reading of the text that seeks to discern the effect of the text on its hearers, both implied and actual" (xviii). The introductory chapter (pp. 1–72) contains not only traditional issues related to structure, genre, authorship, audience, and so forth, but also a section on the effective history of the Apocalypse, including its influence on music, poetry, and film. The commentary proper is divided into chapters based on Thomas' outline of Revelation, which reflects the 'In the Spirit' phrases as follows: Prologue (1:1–8); "In the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (1:9–3:22); "In the Spirit in Heaven" (4:1–16:21); "In the Spirit"—Carried to a Wilderness (17:1–21:8); "In the Spirit"—Carried to a Great High Mountain (21:9–22:5); and Epilogue (22:6–21). Thomas not only sees the 'In the Spirit' phrases as literary markers, which subdivide the vision(s) of Revelation, but also as indicative of the central role the Spirit plays in Revelation. Such an emphasis should encourage Pentecostals to (re)read Revelation through a pneumatological lens. Throughout the entirety of his exposition,

Thomas pays close attention to the literary and narrative features of Revelation, allowing the text to speak on its own terms, freed from the imposition of theological systems, such as Dispensationalism, that have captivated Pentecostals in particular. For example, rather than seeing the seven letters to the churches (Rev 2–3) as seven dispensations of church history, Thomas presents them as *prophetic messages* from Jesus and the Spirit intended to inculcate “faithful and true witness” from the Johannine churches (p. 134). In depicting the two witnesses (Rev 11), Thomas carefully connects the witnesses not only with the lampstands of Zech 4 but also with the lampstands of Revelation itself to demonstrate that “previous associations” in the text—where the lampstands are associated both with Jesus and the churches (1:20) and with the Spirit before the throne (4:5)—suggest that the two witnesses are a depiction of the “prophetic, Spirit-inspired ministry of the church itself” (p. 203). The reader will appreciate Thomas’ explanation and diagrams of *gematria* and its use in deciphering the number 666; his deescalating of concepts such as Armageddon, Gog and Magog; and his emphasis on themes such as worship, repentance, faithful witness, and hope for the conversion of the nations. In the end, Thomas calls Revelation a “means of grace” from the One who is full of grace (p. 403).

The second part of the book contains Macchia’s exposition on traditional theological loci with Revelation being the starting point. He designates a chapter for each of the following: God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, salvation, and eschatology. Each chapter addresses its respective theological theme in Revelation, the New Testament, and systematic theology. In this way, every chapter is a self-contained exploration of each theological topic. Macchia’s theological exposition on these loci is exceedingly valuable for it contributes both to biblical and systematic theology.

As stated, Macchia begins each chapter by addressing a theme in Revelation. For example, in his chapter on God, he addresses, among other things, the tension between God’s sovereignty and love. He writes, “God’s granting the opposition space in which to resist is not meant to be understood as a divine sanction. There is no contradiction between the God who sits on the throne and the God revealed in the crucified Lamb” (p. 411). He continues, “God works to draw the affairs of history, even human rejection, into the fulfillment of redemptive purposes” (p. 411). In his chapter on Christ, Macchia sees the depiction of the “risen Christ who was crucified for the salvation of the world” as the interpretive key to Revelation (p. 438). Macchia defines Revelation’s eschatology as “an accounting of God’s ultimate purposes for creation,” and states, “It reaches its intense expression precisely within the drama of this battle of divine

love to resolve the contradiction between the risen Christ and the world under captivity to the dragon and those who assist him. This is the context for Christian eschatology assumed by Revelation” (p. 586). After discussing these theological loci in Revelation, Macchia then explores them under each of the following NT groupings: John and 1–3 John, Matthew and Mark, Luke and Acts, Pauline literature, and the General Epistles (what he terms “other New Testament voices”). Finally, Macchia discusses each of the loci in the context of systematic theology and suggests ways in which Revelation can function as a resource for theological revisioning and reflection. Macchia suggests, for instance, that God’s sovereignty cannot be discussed outside the contexts of resurrection, love and grace, and holiness—concepts found throughout Revelation’s depiction of God. In his reflections on eschatology, Macchia challenges ‘escapist’ concepts: “The goal is not escaping this world for heaven, but, rather, a new world that receives God’s heavenly presence and will on earth” (p. 618). The return of Christ must remain at the center of the Church’s yearning, not as “the result of a scientific calculation or certainty” but as the “longing of a bride for her groom and for the justice of the kingdom” (p. 619).

This volume is accessible to readers in the Church and the academy. Greek terms used in the commentary are always transliterated and translated, and technical language is kept to a minimum. The book also includes a bibliography as well as indexes of names, subjects, and biblical and other ancient resources. This volume makes a significant contribution to both biblical and theological studies of the Apocalypse and will be a must-read for anyone engaging in scholarly research. Furthermore, this volume could be used as a textbook by those teaching undergraduate or graduate courses on Johannine literature or Revelation as well as a supplemental textbook for those teaching biblical or New Testament theology. Pastors looking for a solid biblical and theological exposition of Revelation could preach and teach from this volume with great profit both to themselves and their congregations.

Melissa L. Archer
Southeastern University
Lakeland, FL