Pentecostal Scholarship: A Shift Has Occurred

The ongoing development and maturation of pentecostal scholarship have reached new heights. Scholarship on global Pentecostalism is no longer what it used to be. It has decidedly moved into a new phase without abandoning its old roots. This issue of *Pneuma* seeks to capture the “spirit” of this evolution. In the beginning, the focus was on the history of the movement. Then came the effort and passion to lay a solid background for pentecostal biblical scholarship. The third wave witnessed the emergence of pentecostal scholars who rigorously laid out pentecostal pneumatological perspectives on constructive and systematic theologies. In the last ten years, we have witnessed pentecostal scholars producing philosophical theologies and philosophies that are increasingly set within broad frameworks that engage the wider academy and multiple philosophical traditions. This fourth phase includes pentecostal scholars who study global Pentecostalism using the tools of religious studies, sociology, political theory, and the like.

The above summation, based on periodicity, gives the impression that pentecostal scholarship is in its fourth wave. This, however, is an incomplete perspective. It does not, indeed, capture the qualitative leap that has occurred in the field. We will say that, alongside these four phases, there is a fifth phase that weaves its “being” all through the four phases. The sheer force of its emergence moves the whole field of pentecostal studies to a new era, a new frontier, lifting it to a glorious height, and thus inaugurating an entirely new history of pentecostal scholarship. The lines of scholarship have shifted. The lines are falling in pleasant places. A new horizon has opened up. Yet, we will not say that pentecostal scholarship has come into its glorious age. There is still room to grow. As your new editors, we pledge to work with you as readers, reviewers, contributors, and advisers to nurture that growth.

The growth that we are calling you to bear witness to today is not limited to North America and Europe. It is global; it is worldwide. Everywhere Pentecostals are eager to tell their own stories, and excellence can no longer be presumed to reside in certain hitherto privileged corners of the world. The circle of good scholarship has widened and is now generally recognized to have exceeded its previous confinements. The lines of the circle are deeper and wider, and those invited to participate in the circle are more diverse, more colorful, and more representative of the worldwide move of God’s Spirit. The

circumference of the circle embraces faithful friendship networks that bring Christians together in ways that defy racial, cultural, class, and political divisions and testify to the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to the hope of the kingdom of God to create loving communities.

Robert Danielson's essay on Albert Benjamin Norton (1847–1923) and the Mukti Revival in India demonstrates that for a very long time, friendship networks and global cooperation have played significant roles in the development of the global terrain of Pentecostalism. The American Holiness missionary Norton was invited to India by Pandita Ramabai to help build the Mukti Mission. In the words of Danielson, "Norton was ... a pioneer in mission partnerships. He responded to Pandita Ramabai's call to return to India after initially retiring from his mission work. He not only responded to her call, but also worked closely with her in establishing both the Boy's Christian Home in Dhond and the later famine work in Bahraich in conjunction with Ramabai's leadership. Such global partnering between missionaries from the West and local church leaders would not become regular mission practice until long after the deaths of both Ramabai and Norton." This American missionary was the person who reported on the Mukti Revival in an early issue of the *Apostolic Faith*, the official organ of the Azusa Revival. It was his report of 1907 that informed the participants at the Azusa Revival of the Mukti Revival that was going in India.

The global reach of the new age of pentecostal studies is not merely geographical, it is also expansive in its interdisciplinarity. Jongseock Shin's essay on the Spirit's presence and global capitalism interweaves trinitarian theology, economics of global capitalism, and the thoughts of one of the leading theologians of our time (Kathryn Tanner) to provide a model of capitalist markets informed by perichoretic relationships in the presence of the Spirit. Shin argues that "in the pathetic, transformative, and eschatological presence, the Spirit persistently brings the economic sphere of human life into the *perichoretic* fellowship of the triune God." Shin's model brings to the fore the need for pentecostal theology and social practices to engage with problems including the equal distribution of wealth, the alienation of labor, and solidarity with the poor.

In his essay on Acts 2:17–21, Daniel Baker analyzes Luke's theology in subtle ways that clearly undergird and encompass the praxes of Pentecostals. He highlights five elements in the theological program of this passage and accentuates its potential to speak to a universal pentecostal self-understanding. These elements are (1) a distinct salvation history; (2) a new deluge of the Spirit; (3) a new universality of prophecy; (4) a new diversity of spiritual gifts; and (5) a new promise of salvation in Jesus's name.

With delicate handling, Baker connects Acts 2:17–21 to Joel's prophecy about the deluge of the Holy Spirit in ways that he hopes will transform pentecostal biblical theology, arguing that Joel 2:28–32a provides a key for the study of the whole of the New Testament. "Joel 2:28–32a was no accidental choice for the supremely important Pentecost moment. It captures not only what has just happened ("this is what") in Acts 2:1–11, but it presents a theological program for the entire church age, the age of the Spirit. Peter gives a multifaceted vision of the Christian life until 'the day of the Lord comes.'"

The fourth witness to the new horizon of pentecostal scholarship is represented by Richard Roberts's essay. He offers us a new methodology to engage the study of networked church. His essay takes us into the recent literature concerning networked churches, which now suggests that recently formed churches do not inevitably slide into denominations but continue to remain in the form of networks. He demonstrates how some newly established charismatic churches have managed to avoid being organized into more formalized and bureaucratized denominational structures, contrary to the expectations of sociological theory. His point is that network structures have proved to be stable over the long run and are not necessarily predisposed to slide into denominations. Roberts even suggests that some denominations may revert to network structures as a better way of organizing themselves. He then conceptualizes a continuum from loose networks to highly centralized ecclesial bodies.

Indeed, these four essays strongly suggest that a new ethos of pentecostal scholarship is afoot. Mark Cartledge captures this new ethos in his review of the four-volume set of *Global Renewal Christianity*, edited by Vinson Synan, Amos Yong, Miguel Álvarez, and Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu. The volumes cover Asia and Oceania, Latin America, Africa, and Europe and North America. As he puts it: "In this four-volume set of scholarly essays we get a glimpse of the energy and vitality of pentecostal and charismatic scholarship and the renewal movements it studies." More importantly, these four volumes provide a coverage of global Pentecostalism, offer engagements of diverse regional voices, and give an orientation to the field that earlier sets of books found too daunting even to attempt. Cartledge's review essay of the four volumes demonstrates how a global religious movement needs a congeries of global voices to map out its global terrain.

Obviously, these five essays do not fully capture the emerging spirit of pentecostal studies. But they demonstrate something about the diversity of the approaches to study of global Pentecostalism, giving us a portrait (albeit an incomplete one) of the five phases of pentecostal studies as they coexist. Increasingly, the best studies in the field of pentecostal study intersect all the disciplines in the paradigmatic phases of the evolution as they resort to trans-

disciplinary methodologies. It is our recognition of this jostling, or the salad-bowl character of the historical and intellectual phases and their accompanying transdisciplinary methodologies, that has prompted us to proclaim that the ongoing development and maturation of pentecostal scholarship have reached new heights. In every issue we will try to give you a glimpse from and of these mountaintops of pentecostal scholarship. We have a dream.

We can afford to dream—and dream big—because of each of the editors who have come before us. We are grateful for their pathfinding work that has prepared the way for us. We are blessed because of the difficulties and struggles that they have overcome, so we can now come and harvest the fruits of their labors. Among the heroes of the past are Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell, the immediate past editors of *Pneuma* and top-notch scholars in their own rights. They did outstanding work in their five-year tenure. They produced one excellent edition after another, unfurling the flag of pentecostal studies at the higher reaches of respectability, rigor, and innovation. They executed a smooth transfer of the baton from their firm hands to ours. Above all, they did everything with grace, infinite patience, brilliance of mind, and beauty of soul. Their labor will not be in vain as we hope to build on their legacies.

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