own contribution to rational discourse is hardly mentioned and rationality is presented in its post-enlightenment mode. The question remains, nevertheless, and Martin poses it starkly in terms of a ‘progressive’ rationality which sees the spiritual as a superstitious hangover from a credulous past age or a spirituality which is intrinsic to the human condition and has to be accounted for. Even social scientists need to make up their minds as to which option is to be preferred.

In different ways, there is considerable interest in these works in the social structures of Pentecostalism: Martin, for instance, notes the inevitable tendency towards institutionalization, bureaucratization and specialization. Anderson is more interested in the historical development of Pentecostal organization, while Kay and Dyer’s Reader gives examples of the theological and spiritual underpinnings of Pentecostal ecclesial and missionary institutions.

Reading these books has provided the reviewer not only with a range of perspectives on world Christianity but also with some tools of social and historical analysis which will prove invaluable for future study and evaluation. It was a very good discipline to have to read them together and to write about them in this way.

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The editors of this collection believe that they ‘have included all known evidence for women deacons and presbyters, at least in the Greek- and Latin-speaking worlds’ (p. vii). This in itself is no mean feat, since some of it is only accessible in old reports and obscure journals. Even where sources are better known, the relevant material is buried in collections of inscriptions, tomes of canon law and conciliar decrees, and other extant literary material. The assembly of all this data is in itself a useful job done.

The editors not only gather it and translate it into English, but provide background sketches, exegesis and discussion, which is often essential for interpreting material that is very fragmentary, or comes from authors not otherwise known to the more general readership which may wish to grapple with the evidence. Each item is clearly set out: an introductory paragraph in italics provides context, or
something about the author; the translated text follows in bold, and the discussion follows in roman type. This exposition is invariably judicious and avoids claiming more for the data than is justifiable, setting out the ambiguities of terminology, difficulties in construal and different possibilities of meaning and reference. These problems are considerable. There are questions about what constituted ordination, whether women described as deacons or deaconesses were considered to belong to the clergy or not, whether deacon(-esse)s were sometimes women who headed a monastery, whether ‘presbyter’ in one of its feminine forms means simply an older woman, the wife of a presbyter, or an office holder. In each case, where relevant to the piece of evidence under discussion, the options are carefully reviewed.

There are nine chapters, the first and the last being the introduction and conclusion, reviewing earlier published discussions, methodological issues and what may be deduced from the material. The second chapter gathers New Testament texts and patristic commentary on those texts. Chapters 3 to 7 gather evidence for women deacons, while chapter 8 assembles the relatively meagre material on presbyters. Most evidence for women deacons comes from the East, and this is divided between three chapters: first come literary texts, literary allusions and inscriptions in the most substantial chapter of the book; then canons and comments on church practice; then later texts. The next chapter deals with all Western evidence for women deacons, including texts, inscriptions and canons. Chapter 7 reviews the Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi and related texts, the point being that they stand out as giving a very different picture: here there are deaconesses, widows and female presbyters, clearly distinguished from one another, with the widows having ‘the greatest responsibility and honor’ (p. 150). The chapter on presbyters in fact reviews as well the question about an order of widows and evidence about prophets, a fact which tends to mask the actual dearth of evidence for presbyters!

Organizing the material was clearly one of the challenges of the collection. There might have been more balance between chapters if the literary texts and inscriptions concerning deacons in the East had been separated into two, but that is a small matter. More problematic is the organization within the sections. The editors chose to arrange them by the name of each woman identified, and then put these names into alphabetical order. The disadvantage of this is that the reader is met with a chronological muddle, and to a large extent also a lack of geographical differentiation, though this is obviated to some extent by the provision of maps in the appendices. There are also occasional problems arising from the fact that this order was clearly arrived at after the sections were written – so that explanations or comments apposite to a particular piece of evidence sometimes do not appear until comment on something placed later in the book. On the other hand there is a considerable attempt to make each piece self-explanatory, the editors clearly