


If the statisticians and demographers are right to say that there are now over 500 million adherents of Pentecostal- and Charismatic-type movements worldwide — and even if this number is contested, as it is, whatever the actual numbers are finally will be large — then scholars need to think about how Pentecostalism (and neo-Pentecostalism and/or the Pentecostal-Charismatic movements) functions as a global movement. The three books under review will assist us in this task, albeit in three very different ways.

Vásquez (professor of religion at the University of Florida, Gainesville) and Marquardt (trained in sociology but now visiting professor of religion at Agnes Scott College) provide what they call a regional or hemispheric account of religion and globalization. In contrast to congregational ethnographies or nation-state sociological analyses, regional/hemispheric approaches highlight (a) how religious networks are now transnational, covering multiple locales; (b) how religions both mark boundaries (territorializing and localizing activities) and also mix/blur them (determinitorializing and hybridizing trajectories); (c) how religious beliefs and practices proceed as “glocalization,” whereby universal themes, motifs, or rituals are contextualized to particular local settings on the one hand, but yet simultaneously other local perspectives are universalized and transported to other places on the other; and (d) how religious identities are dynamic and creatively constructed at “borderlands” where hybrids are formed. Vásquez and Marquardt explicate their theory of globalization through a number of case studies that explore how various congregations use the internet; that map the new shape of Latino churches in the southern USA; and that analyze the transformation of religious institutions such as the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

Of particular interest to readers of *Pneuma* will be the chapters on Pentecostalism and youth gangs in the USA and El Salvador, and on the Christian Broadcasting Network as exemplary of the shifting politics and practices of religious media and technology operating in transnational contexts. In the interpretation of Vásquez and Marquardt, Pentecostalism can be beneficially explored across four overlapping axes: that of how religious conversion transforms past self identities; that of how Pentecostals and their churches interact locally within their socioeconomic and political contexts; that of how churches operate globally in terms of their transnational relations; and that of how Pentecostal eschatological expectations shape their future identities. In this way, regional or hemispheric approaches open up new vistas on Pentecostal beliefs, practices, and identities.

Lechner and Boli are both sociologists at Emory University. Their book is an introduction to and analysis of “world culture,” providing historical, organizational, and institutional perspectives. Whether the Olympics or the International Criminal Court, world
culture is here to stay. But whatever it is, world culture is not static. On the one hand, world culture homogenizes by producing standardized uniformities around the world; but on the other hand, world culture also diversifies and differentiates by introducing local particularities into global consciousness. So while United Nations meetings (and, we might add, World Council of Churches, World Evangelical Fellowship, and Pentecostal World Fellowship meetings) are rituals that construct world culture, at the same time antiglobalization movements (for example, the World Social Forum) and counter-globalization movements (for example, militant Islam) provide the necessary criticisms that transform such constructions. Similarly, national identities are allowed to flourish but only insofar as nations buy into the modern world cultural notion regarding the sovereignty of nation-states, and fundamentalisms react to world cultural processes but only insofar as they presume global cultural conventions regarding their right to self-definition. As such, world culture both absolutizes and relativizes, albeit in different respects.

These analyses inform Lechner and Boli’s discussion of “Pentecostal and a Global Movement” (chapter 7). A dynamic and expanding world cultural force, Pentecostalism exemplifies both universalist aspirations and particularist emphases simultaneously. While Pentecostal development opposes some local cultural realities on the one hand, it also redeems and embraces others aspects of local cultures and absorbs them into a more global frame of reference. In these senses, “Pentecostals constitute the ultimate INGO [international nongovernmental organization]” (185) that “transforms world culture from within” while it “practices the liberty world culture defines” (189).

Stålsett’s *Spirits of Globalization* is a collection of thirteen essays produced out of a larger research program of the University of Oslo’s Faculty of Theology on “Religion in a Globalized Age: Transfers and Transformations, Integration and Resistance.” The subtitle of the research initiative captures the dominant themes that inform the essays even as they further illuminate the theses of both Vásquez/Marquardt and Lechner/Boli. But *Spirits of Globalization* is an interesting read because the arguments are based on case studies. From Pentecostalism’s affinities with shamanism and capitalism in South Korea to the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God as a neoliberal religiosity; from the Indian diaspora to Pentecostal South Africa to Pentecostal enthusiasm and fanaticism in the industrialized world; from interfaith dialogue as practiced in Aril Edvardsen’s Norwegian Proof of Faith World Mission activities in Pakistan and Sudan to attempts to forge a dialogue between Confucian notions of self-cultivation and Charismatic Christian beliefs and practices regarding self-transformation — each of these cases and others reveal Pentecostalism as a world cultural participant involved in myriad processes of world cultural construction and reconstruction.

There are also a few substantive theological essays developed in critical and constructive dialogue with Pentecostalism. These more theologically oriented essays show that while there is much to criticize about the ways in which Pentecostalism has hopped on the globalizing bandwagon of neoliberal capitalism, nevertheless there is the potential that self-reflective Pentecostal theologizing has much to contribute to the task of a global theology insofar as it is sensitive to the demand of living in the world culture of the twenty-first century.

Whether we like it or not, the Pentecostal academy now lives in what I call a “post-al” age: the age of post-colonialism, post-patriarchalism, postmodernism, post-Constantinianism,