

An Emerging Pentecostal Ecumenism?

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The worldwide growth of the Pentecostal movement, especially its dissemination in Africa, Asia and Latin America, is generally known but differently interpreted. In unsympathetic circles in the Western world, particularly within the Catholic Church, this phenomenon is seen in negative terms as the proliferation of sects, generally with no distinctions being made between undoubtedly Christian groups and clearly heterodox bodies, that believe in authoritative revelation subsequent to Jesus Christ and the New Testament. While church leaders are worried about the loss of members to these newcomers, theologians in the West have largely ignored the whole phenomenon. The exceptions explicitly confirm the general pattern. So, for example, Walter Hollenweger was inveighing for years against this blindness of academia, while Harvey Cox reported on the astonishment of his professional colleagues as he pursued his investigation of Pentecostalism during his global travels.¹ However, the Pentecostal explosion was being studied in academic circles, above all in the departments of the social sciences and of anthropology. This has been especially in relation to Latin America.²

Apart from its first-world centredness, most academic theology is a theology of texts and concepts. For this reason, the slowness of Western academia to pay attention to the Pentecostal “explosion” in the “third” or “developing” world is no doubt because of the “oral” experiential character of Pentecostal-charismatic faith, that was primarily expressed in worship and testimony. From his time in the 1960s at the World Council of Churches, Hollenweger was strongly contesting the assumption that Pentecostals did not have a theology just because they did not produce professional theological texts. He always insisted that the theology of Pentecostals was an “oral theology” expressed in songs and testimonies.³ But theologians were not inclined to take Pentecostalism seriously when the Pentecostals themselves were dismissive of intellectual skills and regularly denounced the unbelief and apostasy of the churches.

A Slow Awakening in the Christian World

In the last twenty years, there has been a slowly increasing awareness that the older Churches need to take the Pentecostal explosion seriously. A major factor has clearly been the sheer size of the Pentecostal constituency in the developing world. It was becoming more difficult to ignore. Another factor has been the decolonization of the Christian

¹ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1994).

² See among others Emilio Willems, *Followers of the New Faith: Culture Change and the Rise of Protestantism in Brazil and Chile* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967); David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); Virginia Garrard-Burnett and David Stoll (eds.), *Rethinking Protestantism in Latin America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993); André Corten, *Le pentecôtisme au Brésil* Paris: Editions Karthala, 1995); Frans H. Kamsteeg, *Prophetic Pentecostalism in Chile* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 1998). Three studies that are inter-continental, again by social scientists, are Paul Freiston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (eds.), *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 2001); David Martin, *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*(Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

³ Walter J. Hollenweger, “After Twenty Years Research on Pentecostalism”, *Theology* 87/720 Nov. 1984, pp. 403 - 412; *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997).

Churches with virtually all churches and denominations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Polynesia now having an indigenous leadership, who make their voice heard in global gatherings of their confessional families. This was evident at the Lambeth Conference of 1998, and has since become even clearer with the controversies within the Anglican Communion, and the formation of GAFCON as a global instrument to defend traditional Anglican values and to oppose the liberal trends most strongly represented in the Episcopalian Church of the United States and the Anglican Church of Canada.

The changing shape of world Christianity has been highlighted by the work of Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*.⁴ For Jenkins, the centre of gravity of world Christianity has been moving south, a process that will continue.⁵ While he is cautious about predicting the future, he writes that “As southern churches grow and mature, they will increasingly define their own interests in ways that have little to do with the preferences and parties of Americans and Europeans.”⁶ The diverse southern churches are in most cases “fundamentalist and charismatic by nature, theologically conservative, with a powerful belief in the spiritual dimension, in visions and spiritual healing.”⁷ Jenkins is not speaking simply about the new patterns of Christian faith, but also about the changing trends in the former mission churches as they seek authentic forms of indigenization faithful to the biblical revelation and historic Christian orthodoxy.

Hollenweger was Professor of Mission at the University of Birmingham (England) in the 1970s and 1980s, making Birmingham a first choice for many students of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements to do doctoral studies.⁸ After his retirement his massive personal archives were acquired by the Free University of Amsterdam, that appointed first a professorial chair for Pentecostal studies and then a second chair for charismatic studies. At the same time, Birmingham continued to be a major centre for Pentecostal studies, particularly since the appointment of Allan Anderson as Professor of Global Pentecostal Studies. Anderson brings to his academic work years of pastoral experience and research in Zimbabwe and South Africa, so his theological contribution is untypical of European professional theology and deeply marked by the challenges of African culture and spirituality. He is thus well-placed to speak to the awakening interest in Pentecostal studies and to bridge the disciplines in a constructive way. In recent years, other scholars have strengthened the theology department at Birmingham in this area, e.g. Mark Cartledge, a charismatic Anglican scholar, and Andrew Davies, a Pentecostal. Other European universities have been following suit with centres for Pentecostal studies in Heidelberg, Germany and in Uppsala, Sweden.

A New Ecumenical Initiative

The massive growth in the Pentecostal - charismatic and Evangelical sectors did not of course pass unnoticed at the World Council of Churches (WCC). Leaders at the WCC were acutely aware of the decrease in membership in many denominations of the West,

⁴ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, rev. edn. 2007).

⁵ “Over the last century, however, the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa and Latin America.” (p. 1); “This trend will continue apace in coming years.” (p. 2).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁸ The present author was one of his doctoral students.

resulting in reduced financial support. These factors together diminished the credibility of the World Council that was representing a decreasing percentage of the world's Christians. During the 1990s among senior WCC staff arose the sense that a new initiative was needed to bring together leaders from all parts of the Christian spectrum, and to overcome the ecumenical-Evangelical divide. A consultation was held at Bossey in Switzerland in 1998, which led to a lengthy process of consultation, gradually drawing in more and more leaders from the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches.⁹ From the start, it was recognized that what was needed was not another ecumenical organization, but a forum where all could meet as equals and as Christians. As a consequence, the Global Christian Forum (GCF) was launched at Limuru, Kenya, in November 2007.

GCF was formed with the intention that the Evangelical and Pentecostal constituencies should form at least one half of the Forum's participants.¹⁰ This was "done in recognition of their extraordinary growth over the past century and in order to strengthen their presence as they meet with the 'older' churches and make their voices heard."¹¹ Maximum effort was made to make the Evangelical and Pentecostals feel at home. Each day began and ended with a time of prayer. On the first day, all participants were invited to share their faith journeys in small groups showing who Jesus Christ is for them. Bible studies were also held in small groups and the two plenary papers were presented by two Pentecostal scholars, a Korean man and a woman from the United States.

Changing Attitudes in the Pentecostal World

The Pentecostal world had been unsympathetic to all things ecumenical, with a few exceptions.¹² The general Pentecostal antipathy makes the bridge-building ministry of David du Plessis from the 1950s all the more remarkable. The first dialogue between Pentecostals and other Christians was the Catholic - Pentecostal dialogue, dating from 1972, which was the fruit of du Plessis's visits to Rome. In effect, at the beginning the dialogue was between an officially appointed Catholic team and a group of friends of du Plessis.¹³ Only gradually did the Pentecostal participants become authorized by their denominations, though this authorization signified a gradual evolution in their attitudes but not yet an acceptance of the ecumenical movement as such.

The Emergence of Pentecostal Scholarship. As the Pentecostal groupings grow out of their earlier sectarian patterns and develop more typical denominational ways, their anti-intellectualism wanes and their institutes of formation develop from unaffiliated Bible colleges to theological colleges and seminaries, even to universities. The major change in Pentecostal attitudes to ecumenism is a direct consequence of this emergence from

⁹ The story of this process is told by Sarah Rowland Jones in "The Global Christian Forum - A Narrative History" in Huibert van Beek (ed.) *Revisioning Christian Unity: The Global Christian Forum* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2009), pp. 3 - 22.

¹⁰ "Care had been taken to ensure that half of the participants were from Evangelical, Holiness, Pentecostal and Independent constituencies." (van Beek eds., *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. xvii).

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. xvii.

¹² Hollenweger had included among his five roots of Pentecostalism an "Ecumenical Root" (Pentecostalism, pp. 334 - 388), pointing to some pioneers who remained within their churches of origin, all Europeans (pp. 334 - 349). But those listed did not have a vision for church reconciliation, except for Louis Dallière, who was a generation after the others and who never accepted being labelled a Pentecostal.

¹³ See P. Hocken, "Dialogue Extraordinary", *One in Christ* XXIV/3 (1988) pp. 202 - 213.

isolation and entry into a wider world.¹⁴ More and more teachers of theology at Pentecostal institutions have Ph. D.s, quite a number from prestigious universities in the USA and Europe. Significant theological works are appearing from Pentecostal scholars bringing a distinctively Pentecostal perspective into mainline theological debates. Among the theologians are Frank Macchia (USA)¹⁵, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Finland and USA), Amos Yong (USA), Simon Chan (Singapore), with Gordon Fee one of the first Pentecostals to be widely recognized as a biblical scholar.

As a result the climate towards ecumenism has undergone a huge change in the educated Pentecostal constituency. This is especially marked in North America, but the same trend is present, though less advanced in Asia, in Latin America and in Europe. In North America, the atmosphere in the Society for Pentecostal Studies has changed dramatically. In 1980, when I became a member of the Society, “ecumenism” was a suspect term, that one did not use without subsequent justification. Today, the Society is three times larger than in 1980, it has formed specialist Interest Groups, of which one is an Ecumenical Group. This group is well-supported and its existence is taken for granted. Several members are also involved in professional academic societies, particularly those relating to biblical studies. It is from the ranks of this Society that almost all North American participants are drawn for the increasing number of bilateral dialogues in which Pentecostals are involved.¹⁶ While most marked in North America, this trend is also evident on the other continents, especially in Australia and Asia. These trends are making more Pentecostals open to ecumenism, the teachers in their colleges more rapidly than the denominational leaders. There is also an Asian Pentecostal Theological Society, which publishes its own journal and another in Australia. Here similar trends can be seen. This gap is clearly present in Europe, as will be indicated in the rest of this article. How this tension will play out in the future is a major issue in world Pentecostalism, where the denominational leadership probably reflects the grass-roots church membership more than the scholars and the theologians.¹⁷

Another fruit of the emergence of Pentecostal scholarship is a much better understanding of their own historical origins. This development has drawn more attention to what some see as an ecumenical strand in Pentecostal origins. Among several Pentecostal pioneers there was an emphasis on the Holy Spirit bringing believers into unity. This leads Amos Yong to propose that “the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit provides a reconciling dynamic able to heal the fragmentation of the church”¹⁸ But it is important to recognize that this form of proto-ecumenism had no vision for ecclesial reconciliation, Yong noting that the reasons for the “ecumenical failure” of the Pentecostals include “the pentecostal valuing of spiritual over visible unity; pentecostal fears that ecumenical relationships

¹⁴ For some Pentecostal institutions, this is entry into the wider Evangelical world, but for others it is also entry into the ecumenical worlds of thought.

¹⁵ See Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006) and *Justified in the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010).

¹⁶ Virtually all of these dialogues have begun with Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. from Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, playing a major role. Robeck has had a delicate task, since he is a pastor of the Assemblies of God of the USA, which has in general taken an anti-ecumenical stance, more so than other major Pentecostal denominations in the USA.

¹⁷ See Amos Yong, “Pentecostal Scholarship and Scholarship on Pentecostalism: The Next Generation”, *Pneuma* 34 (2012), pp. 161 - 165.

¹⁸ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of a Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), p. 168.

erode the doctrinal foundations of the gospel, and the influence of dispensational eschatology, which identifies the ecumenical movement with the apostasy of the end times”¹⁹.

Likely Consequences for the Future of Ecumenism

If the GCF initiative continues to unfold, it is impossible that the ecumenical patterns of the past fifty years will remain unchanged. All involved understand that the GCF can never evolve into a replacement for the WCC. It is also clear that the future relations between the hitherto ecumenical world and the Pentecostal - evangelical constituency will fit the pattern and indeed intensify it of increasing weight being attached to the younger churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This has to have consequences for the forms of theology that serve the movement for unity. It will undoubtedly bring to the fore pneumatology and its relation to Christology, and a more holistic anthropology doing full justice to the spiritual, the psychic and the bodily.

The emergence of significant Pentecostal scholars, both exegetes and theologians, will clearly enrich the ecumenical journey. Not only are many knocking at our door, they want to play a full part. These Pentecostal ecumenists have for the most part been formed in the USA, and the theological world they have entered is primarily that of the North American academy. But as Pentecostals, they bring an awareness of the world-wide Pentecostal explosion and a connatural sympathy that could make them ecumenical bridge-builders in the future. Scholars such as Frank Macchia, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Wolfgang Vonney and Amos Yong are already seeking to play such a role.²⁰

A Newly-Published Symposium

The changing situation is well illustrated though not described in a recently published symposium on European Pentecostalism.²¹ This volume demonstrates the ongoing emergence of Pentecostalism from sectarian and isolationist attitudes, showing that this process is more advanced in countries with a pluralist Christian presence than in those with a Catholic or Orthodox majority. I want to focus first on two related tendencies concerning “what is Pentecostalism?” and the differences between Pentecostals and non-denominational charismatics.

Terminology and Classification. A non-sectarian attitude is demonstrated by the editors in their evident desire to understand “Pentecostalism” in a wide sense, that is to say, a sense that includes the various brands of charismatic Christians and of Spirit-Churches with a strong emphasis on experience and spiritual power. The stance of the editors reflects a debate between the scholars as to the definition of Pentecostalism, who is included and who is not, with some like Allan Anderson of Birmingham being inclusivist using primarily phenomenological criteria and others more restrictive like the late Ogbu Kalu, having a stronger theological component in their classifications. Kay and Dyer basically follow the thinking of Anderson, who includes as Pentecostal all Spirit-inspired movements appealing to the Christian Bible. So, there is a clear intention to include Catholic charismatic renewal in their survey of European Pentecostalism. In the Introduction, Anne Dyer seeks

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 168, note 1.

²⁰ See Wolfgang Vonney (ed.), *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity: Ecumenical Documents and Critical Assessments* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010); Yong, *op. cit.*, where Ch. 4 treats of “The Ecumenical Potential of Pentecostalism for World Theology”.

²¹ William K. Kay & Anne E. Dyer (eds.) *European Pentecostalism* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011).

to include under the heading “Pentecostal” at least three categories (see p. 5): classical (those belonging to or connected with recognized Pentecostal denominations), renewalist (participants in charismatic renewal within the Protestant and Catholic churches) and neo-Pentecostal, which in context seems to cover both the new charismatic networks, on which Kay has published a full-length study of the British developments²², and the new migrant or migrant-founded churches springing up across Europe.

The first problem with this lumping together is that it does not correspond to the perceptions of the people being so numbered and classified. Very few “classical Pentecostals” would regard the renewalists, Catholic and Protestant, as Pentecostal. Neither do those in charismatic renewal or in the new charismatic sector consider themselves to be Pentecostals. It would have aided the reader not familiar with the complexities of terminology within the whole Pentecostal - charismatic realm to have provided some further clarification. There is clearly a major difference between the new charismatic assemblies and networks in Europe and North America, which also have considerable outreach into the other continents, and the new charismatic churches and ministries springing up in Africa that are very different both from the Pentecostal mission churches and from the older forms of African independent/instituted churches that mushroomed earlier in the twentieth century. The Pentecostals were always chary of the latter, seeing them as syncretistic, whereas the Pentecostal hesitations about the newer groupings are more ethical, concerning the eccentricity and exploitative character of some practitioners.

How much does this matter when the inclusive terminology is basically restricted to the scholarly realm, and has little or no influence on how these groups do or do not relate to each other? In fact, it raises an important theological point, that of fellowship and mutual recognition. For who is classified with whom must bear some relationship to who associates with whom. Ecumenism has to begin with those in whom you recognize some affinity as Christians and to whom you are willing to talk. It has a direct bearing on the increasing openness of Pentecostal scholars to ecumenism, for this is not yet paralleled among the new charismatic groupings. However, in the Western world, the new charismatic groupings are less sectarian than the earlier Pentecostals, but their openness is more pragmatic than theological leading at this stage to some collaboration rather than to any dialogue.

Another issue concerns the renewal currents within the Protestant churches, where the terminology of charismatic renewal is now rarely used. How much does this indicate that a distinctive movement of charismatic renewal no longer exists in the Protestant churches? Its decline in French Protestantism is explicitly noted (p. 329), and it seems to have been poorly received in Protestant Eastern Europe. In some places, one speaks of “spiritual renewal” as among German-speaking Lutherans; in others the sense of a distinctive movement is fading, with charismatic practices being received into the wider church life, as for example through the Alpha course. However, specific currents that are undoubtedly charismatic in the older sense still continue, as with New Wine and Soul Survivor in Britain. The one sphere where the language of charismatic renewal is still common usage is in the Catholic Church, where the worldwide movement is served by International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) and most countries have their own service committees for Catholic Charismatic Renewal. However, even here we should note that the large movement Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo in Italy does not use the term

²² William K. Kay, *Apostolic Networks in Britain: New Ways of Being Church* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007).

“charismatic” and in France which has exercised a much wider influence through the major French communities, the usage has become simply “le Renouveau” (the Renewal).

The Actual Coverage of the Symposium. The wider definition of Pentecostalism espoused by the editors indicates a desire that the symposium should cover all these Pentecostal-charismatic expressions as they are found in Europe today. The following comments apply to the first two-thirds of the symposium which contains ten contributions from the various areas of Europe with the first five covering northern and west-central Europe being very different in style and approach to the second five, covering Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, including the Balkans. With two exceptions, almost all the actual coverage is of the “classical Pentecostals”, i.e. those whom everyone calls Pentecostals. By contrast, the charismatic developments, whether mainline renewal or new networks unrelated to existing churches and denominations, receive but passing attention, except in the contributions of Cornelis van der Laan (Netherlands) and Raymond Pfister (francophone Europe), to which we will turn. In general, the references to charismatic renewal (Dyer’s “renewalists”) concern the origins and primarily treat it from the angle of its challenge to the Pentecostals.²³ There is a little more on the new charismatic bodies, though this is clearly not an adequate survey of the phenomenon.

What has produced this disconnect between the description of European Pentecostalism in the Introduction and the vast majority of the contributions? One factor is no doubt the understanding of Pentecostalism of the majority of the contributors. When asked to write about Pentecostalism in their regions or nations, they naturally write about what they have regarded all their lives as the Pentecostal movement. Another factor is that they are deeply familiar with the Pentecostal movement in this strict sense, and are not so well informed about the charismatic developments. The authors of the first five surveys, being teachers with university education, are more aware of the charismatic and are also more sympathetic. The last five are written by pastor-leaders from southern and eastern Europe, who have not been part of the theological ferment described above, and show few signs of an incipient ecumenism. The fact that these leaders in no way see charismatic Catholics as fellow Pentecostals is no doubt one factor necessitating a separate chapter on Catholic charismatic renewal.

How useful then is the overall survey in the first ten chapters, granted that it is largely limited to the classical Pentecostals? It is thorough, including virtually every European nation, extending even to such smaller states as Iceland and Macedonia. Several entries (Russia and Ukraine, Central European countries, the Iberian peninsula) provide more information on Pentecostal history than has been readily available in English. But the data in these chapters are largely limited to the names of leaders, the development of denominations and their institutions, together with key dates and statistics. They register little change in the outlook of Pentecostals towards the wider Christian world, focusing instead on the movement’s growth and the controversies leading to splits and new groupings.²⁴ Most surveys go from the Pentecostal origins to the present day, though that on Russia and the Ukraine has less than a page on the period between Stalin’s clampdown

²³ See Alvarsson on Scandinavia (p. 33), Hudson on Britain (pp. 54 - 55), and Simpson on Germany (pp. 77 - 78).

²⁴ Pfister’s final article on “The Future(s) of Pentecostalism in Europe” has a footnote illustrating this lack of Pentecostal engagement with societal changes: “The 2008 Pentecostal Europe Conference was held in November in Madrid (Spain). The chosen theme did focus on ‘a new outpouring for a new Europe’, yet the discourse pointed solely to the need of divine visitation and Europe’s need to turn back to Jesus.” (p. 361, note 13).

in 1927 and the present.²⁵ Interestingly, the largest local congregation mentioned is a charismatic free church in Central Europe, the Faith Church in Budapest, Hungary (p. 247), but nothing is said about its distinctive teaching and how it is perceived by the Pentecostals and other Christians (in fact, quite negatively as being sectarian).

The Coverage of Catholic Charismatic Renewal

The practical necessity of devoting a separate chapter to Catholic charismatic renewal (CCR) reflects a widespread Pentecostal hesitation about its inclusion as well as a lack of contact and knowledge among the contributors, apart from van der Laan and Pfister, the only ones who are well-informed on all the categories of “Pentecostalism” as defined by the editors. But it also draws attention to the relative lack of mention of renewalist currents within the Protestant Churches, restricted to their origins in Scandinavia and in Germany, while the main mention of current Anglican renewal currents in Britain comes in the chapter on the Netherlands, where there is significant influence from Britain (p. 108).

With minimal references to CCR in the other chapters, the contributions of van der Laan on CCR in the Netherlands and of Pfister on francophone Europe had to be removed from their respective chapters and made part of an additional chapter on CCR, placed in the third section on theology and sociology, entitled “”Pentecostal Theology and Catholic Europe”, despite having minimal theological content.²⁶ So the Catholic chapter is an editorial amalgam of the research of van der Laan and Pfister, lifted from its original context, and of data forwarded by Kees Slijkerman, who runs a news service for CCR in Europe.²⁷ Slijkerman has clearly provided a survey based on reports he has received from CCR national leaders. While there is much information here pertinent to an historical account of CCR, the material is too occasional and erratic to provide the basis for a coherent overall account, either of the history or of the current reality. In some places, there are reasons to question how much the official office for CCR is in touch with the reality on the ground (e.g. Slovakia, with which the present author is familiar). There is nothing on the large Italian movement Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo, as Italy has only three lines about the first prayer group at the Gregorian in Rome, and nothing on Malta, where CCR has had a considerable impact. The United Kingdom has half a page, with nothing significant after the 1970s. This is ludicrous in a purported European survey. Not surprisingly, the contributions of van der Laan and Pfister on CCR within their own territories is fuller and more significant.

Van der Laan mentions a dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Brotherhood of Pentecostal Churches started in 1999 (p. 322). This dialogue is in fact between the Pentecostal Brotherhood and CCR, until now a development unique to the Netherlands. Otherwise the symposium gives little or no idea at all of the places and occasions where Pentecostals and Catholics in Europe meet each other. One such is the Austrian Round Table mentioned as “ecumenical leaders ... working for reconciliation between the ‘old’ churches and the newer Free Churches” (p. 317). There is also some such contact in Charismatic Leaders groupings that meet in Britain and Germany, as also in

²⁵ The article by Peter Kuzmic in the final theological section has some later information on Soviet Russia.

²⁶ A footnote under France and French-speaking areas mentions that “This section about Catholic charismatics was originally written by Raymond Pfister as integral part of his chapter on Pentecostalism in francophone Europe.” (p. 324, note 3).

²⁷ The chapter is presented as written by William K. Kay, with Kees Slijkerman, Raymond Pfister and Cornelis van der Laan (see p. 313).

the European Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Association (EPCRA), coordinated by a contributor, Jean-Daniel Plüss. While mention is made under Scandinavian Pentecostalism of the Word of Life Church in Uppsala, Sweden, founded and led by Ulf Ekman (p. 35), nothing is said about the remarkable transformation of Ekman and Word of Life in the last fifteen years from a sectarian stance to more liturgical worship and an ecumenical engagement with the historic churches (Ekman has made several visits to the Pontifical Council for Promoting the Unity of Christians). In the charismatic free sector, there is also the remarkable ministry in Paris of Carlos Payan, who has authored a book on Mary with a preface by Mgr. Léonard, the primate of Belgium.

The final five chapters of the symposium are intended to provide theological (Chs. 11 - 13) and sociological reflection (Chs. 14 - 15). The most useful article in considering ecumenical relations is undoubtedly “Pentecostal Theology and Protestant Europe” by Jean-Daniel Plüss, the Swiss convener of EPCRA, who considers Pentecostal life and thought from the angle of the five pillars of the Reformation: *sola scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia, solus Christus* and *soli Dei gloria*. Plüss highlights those aspects of Pentecostalism that not only endorse the principles of the Reformation, but also those that can enrich them and contribute to a wider ecumenical reconciliation.

The other theological contribution by Peter Kuzmic on “Pentecostal Theology and Communist Europe” adds an important dimension to the symposium. Among the Pentecostal pioneers in the Soviet Union, he highlights the role of Ivan Voronaev, a heroic figure who died a martyr after years in labour camps. Kuzmic examines the threefold modes of survival adopted by Pentecostals under Communist oppression: resignation, resistance and accommodation (pp. 340 - 346). He notes that “Pentecostal believers in Marxist-dominated lands were marked by a theology of the cross.” (p. 347), while commenting that “A full-fledged study of the theology of suffering in light of the experience of Spirit-filled believers also waits to be written.” (p. 335). These elements of suffering and the cross, often cited as lacunae in the more recent prosperity-gospel patterns of charismatic faith, are also central in the underground church in China, which has marked Pentecostal-charismatic characteristics.

Statistics. The unresolved issue of the Pentecostal and the charismatic recurs in the statistical chart provided at the end (p. 403). Under the general heading “Statistics for European Pentecostalism per Nation” a column entitled “P/C numbers”, we find generous statistics that clearly include every type of charismatic Christian, including Catholics. So, for example, for the UK the figure 2,950,000 is given, whereas the relevant article shows 150,000 classical Pentecostals (p. 41); that for Italy lists 1,740,000, whereas the section on Italy indicates 250,000 classical Pentecostals (p. 199). Similarly for Germany, the P/C figure is 1,660,000, whereas the combined figure for self-confessing Pentecostals can hardly be more than 50,000 (see p. 77). Here it would seem that the Pentecostal desire to present impressive statistics to the world leads to a much easier accommodation of all types of charismatic Christian.

A straight reading of this symposium could easily give the impression that ecumenism is almost completely absent from the thinking of European Pentecostals. But the felt need to include the charismatics despite Pentecostal ambivalence points to a world in transition. Although Europe is the weakest continent as far as Pentecostal growth and influence are concerned, and the European leaders are clearly not the pace-setters at the global level, European Pentecostals have some sensitivity to global trends in their movement. Particularly relevant here is European Pentecostal participation in the Global Christian Forum now spreading since its first global assembly at Limuru, Kenya, in 2007, not

mentioned in the symposium. For these reasons, I would draw more optimistic conclusions concerning an incipient Pentecostal ecumenism in Europe than a cursory reading of this symposium would suggest.

Peter Hocken