

Steven M. Studebaker (ed.), *Defining Issues in Pentecostalism: Classical and Emergent* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2008).

In the last decade Pentecostal studies have been coming into their own, with the emergence of a new generation of Pentecostal scholars and a growing interest in the wider academic world. The greater interest is clearly connected with the rapid spread of Pentecostal and charismatic revivalistic faith on the emerging continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Studebaker's collection of essays gathers the papers, mostly by Canadian scholars, presented at the Pentecostal Forum hosted by McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario, in 2007.

The editor's introduction presents Pentecostalism as comprising three "waves", classical Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Renewal from the 1950s and "the neo-charismatic movement" or "Third Wave", spear-headed by C. Peter Wagner and John Wimber in the 1980s. The third label is misleading, accepting too uncritically Wagner's 1980s self-perception of this development before he identified the beginnings of a "New Apostolic Reformation". It also betrays the North-American centredness of the volume, since the worldwide explosion of new charismatic-type networks and churches has not simply been launched from the USA. Here we touch on a dilemma faced not only by the editor but by the whole Pentecostal movement in North America. The massive growth of Pentecostalism as a dynamic explosion of spiritual experience and phenomena is happening above all in Africa, Asia and Latin America, at the same time as Pentecostal scholars in North America are attaining some respectability and notice in the academic world. We should note, however, that Pentecostal scholarship is also developing elsewhere, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, where the defining issues would not be identical with those selected for this collection. The dilemma concerns the relationship between theological scholarship and charismatic experience. Theological scholarship tends to focus on the study of texts, whether the biblical text or the writings of other scholars. The fact that the academic world is now taking Pentecostalism more seriously owes much to Walter Hollenweger, "who shifted what was most distinctive about Pentecostal theology from doctrinal points to religious experience and how this was expressed orally and narratively" (Macchia, p. 19). Of the papers in this volume, the one which most clearly correlates experience and theology is that of Cynthia Long Westfall, who is described as the only contributor not being "part of a self-styled Pentecostal or charismatic church" (p. 7).

The papers of the other contributors are almost all studies of biblical texts and/or of the writings of other scholars. In consequence, this book does not refer at all to recent trends and developments in the overall Pentecostal-charismatic phenomenon, only to some recent trends in Pentecostal scholarship. It is then more a treatment of some defining issues in Pentecostal theology rather than defining issues in Pentecostalism. The danger in this process is that the biblical and theological scholars are continuing to debate issues which were important in the past but which are no longer on the cutting edge. This is illustrated in the paper of Stronstad, who is locked into the century-old Pentecostal debate about subsequence and initial evidence in a way that adds little or nothing, but is very critical (p. 120) of Frank Macchia, the one Pentecostal theologian who has opened up the theology of baptism in the Spirit beyond the narrow scope of Pentecostal apologetics, and whose paper argues for baptism in the Spirit as that which is most distinctively Pentecostal (p. 22).

To a Catholic reviewer, it seems very difficult for Pentecostals to think theologically about current reality. There is an overwhelming concern to be biblical, that results both from

the principle of *Scriptura sola* and from Evangelical criticism that Pentecostals elevate experience above Scripture. In consequence, much Pentecostal scholarship focuses on the biblical text and what other scholars are saying about the biblical text. There is little theological reflection on issues like how Pentecostal churches actually function, only on the biblical basis for their existence. This focus is clearly apparent in this collection, particularly in the interesting and helpful paper of Martin Mittelstadt on “Spirit and Suffering in Contemporary Pentecostalism: The Lukan Epic Continues”. Here Mittelstedt is clearly aware of the dangers of a Pentecostal-charismatic focus on blessing and prosperity to the neglect of the role of martyrdom and suffering in the Christian life, while noting how many Pentecostals in Africa and China have suffered for their faith. The value of his paper lies especially in the use of Luke’s Gospel to show how Luke combined a focus on the Holy Spirit, an awareness of suffering and of the poor. But the contemporary imbalances are not directly addressed.

One major theme that is undoubtedly a defining issue in contemporary Pentecostal theology is the restrictive influence of conservative Evangelical theology on Pentecostal teaching and the need for Pentecostalism to develop its own theology in a way that does full justice to the rich reality of Pentecostal life. In his contribution “Beyond Tongues: A Pentecostal Theology of Grace”, the editor, Steven M. Studebaker argues persuasively that “The source of Pentecostalism’s anemic pneumatology lies in its tendency to adopt the soteriological paradigms of Protestant Evangelicalism.” (p. 64). He shows how the Evangelical framework of “the objective-subjective, achiever-applier paradigms” (p. 54) has the ironical result that “Pentecostal theology intensifies the subordination of the Spirit [to Christ] already present within the evangelical tradition” (p. 55). However, he says that “its [Pentecostalism’s defining doctrine of Spirit baptism radically subordinates the theological importance of the Holy Spirit.” (p. 64). Here he has either not understood or is not accepting the writings of Frank Macchia, whose paper “Baptized in the Spirit: Towards a Global Pentecostal Theology” insists that the distinguishing mark of Pentecostalism since its beginnings has been Spirit-Baptism. Macchia sees the problem not in the concept of Spirit-baptism, but in the attempt to fit it into an Evangelical doctrinal framework.