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Edited by Cecil M. Robeck and Amos Yong

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Global Pentecostalism: An Introduction to an Introduction

CECIL M. ROBECK, JR. AND AMOS YONG

Where does one begin when introducing a book that attempts to provide a scholarly introduction to a phenomenon as complex as is global Pentecostalism? Part of the challenge relates to how to define Pentecostalism, and the complexity of this question derives in part from debates about its history, including its origins. Lingering for a moment over some of the historiographic issues will illuminate this contested scholarly terrain.

Although the modern pentecostal movement is barely a century old, discussions surrounding its historiography – that is, how its history has been written and, more importantly, how its origins have been or are being interpreted – have become increasingly complex. There are several reasons for this. First, in recent years significant changes have taken place in the writing of pentecostal history. Voices from around the world, voices that have not been heard from previously or have been ignored by earlier pentecostal historians, are increasingly involved in these discussions. Regional histories are emerging with the result that the findings of earlier, more general histories, originating mainly from the United States, are being challenged and in some cases set aside. Pentecostal history writing and pentecostal historiography are now worldwide discussions, no longer dominated solely by voices from the United States.¹

Second, the definition of what it means to be “Pentecostal” has become nearly as elusive as a grain of sand in a desert windstorm. Probably because the writing of pentecostal history and pentecostal theology was controlled for so long by American pentecostal denominations and the authors whose salaries they paid, the Pentecostals who wrote and published earlier works believed that the definition of a Pentecostal, and hence the meaning of Pentecostalism, was rightfully defined solely by them. It was understood to be a movement defined by an encounter with the Holy Spirit called “baptism in the Holy Spirit” that was evidenced by speaking in tongues.² As a result of the many

Cambridge University Press

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Excerpt

[More information](#)2 *Robeck, Jr. and Yong*

works now being published throughout the world, that assumption is no longer taken for granted. Those who thought that they knew who Pentecostals were increasingly fail to recognize themselves in the various definitions being demanded by the greater inclusiveness now given to the term "Pentecostal."³

Third, for a generation Pentecostalism has become the focus of studies in a growing number of nonhistorical (in the technical sense) but related disciplines such as theology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science. These disciplines are frequently combined with history (e.g., social, economic, or political history, historical theology, among other variations) and provide important insights into our understanding of Pentecostalism. They have also raised new questions that deserve thoughtful responses. Because Pentecostalism is currently one of the more popular fields in the study of religion on the global level, it is now being defined by an increasing number of external observers working in these and related fields as much as it is by Pentecostals.⁴ This has contributed to the broadening understandings of what it means to be Pentecostal, sometimes without any reference to speaking in tongues.⁵ As a result, some have pointed to this as the dilution of what it means to be Pentecostal. Whether or not that claim is accurate, the range of possibilities given to the term Pentecostal has in many cases become a source of confusion.⁶

Fourth, the growing complexity of the term Pentecostal and its modifiers has led a number of historians to observe that no single definition for the term may any longer be possible. One must now think of pentecostal movements (plural) with multiple definitions.⁷ This concession has been useful because it enables differentiation between various types of pentecostal groups that otherwise display unique characteristics, especially against a postmodern backdrop. While the term Pentecostal helps identify what they hold in common, its modifiers allow such groups also to claim their unique contributions. However, this concession to a growing number of adjectives also contributes to the growing fragmentation of Pentecostalism. A generation ago they might have been content with the simple designation Pentecostal, but now they appeal to one of these many adjectives (e.g., classical, holiness, finished work, Oneness, deliverance, word of faith, neo-, and others) to establish their independent existence *over against* other Pentecostals from whom, for whatever reason, they wish to differentiate themselves. There is, for instance, remarkably little difference between the teachings of Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus as set forth by its founder, Bishop Edir Macedo, and which views itself as a

Cambridge University Press

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Excerpt

[More information](#)*Global Pentecostalism* 3

neo-pentecostal church, and those taught by the Assemblies of God, a classical Pentecostal church.⁸

At times, it has been argued that “The Church is Charismatic”⁹ or even “pentecostal,” and today, we hear much about the pentecostalization, even charismatization, of the church.¹⁰ The editors have given the authors a free hand to use the term P/pentecostal in the way or ways that best helps them to describe the realities that they have been assigned. As a result, the term is used in a manner that is sufficiently broad, and a few members of some groups described as pentecostal may raise voices that do not readily approve. The ways that the various authors have understood their specific assignments, however, are fully in keeping with the task as it was envisioned by the editors. The breadth as well as the depth of what it means to be or how a group may be described as Pentecostal is explored in ways that are fully consistent with the historical, theological, and/or praxiological realities that these groups manifest. That being said, it is not the intention of either the editors or the authors of the various chapters to be or act in a triumphalistic manner. That the term Pentecostal has been or may be used to describe movements that do not always see eye to eye on all aspects of their history, theology, or praxis does not in itself disqualify them from the core realities that make them Pentecostal.

How then to situate the topic in a manageable manner without dismissing the important issues but yet also without getting bogged down in any one or another debate? The editors of this volume have adopted a framework for the book that holds together three commitments: first, it adopts a historical method that observes how and why the current debates have emerged; second, it expands on the discussion both through regional and thematic/disciplinary approaches that enable registration of the family resemblances as well as differences related to the contemporary global phenomenon; and third, the ensuing discussion provides numerous occasions for both insiders and outsiders to the movement – however such is defined – to appreciate and engage the issues. The rest of this introductory chapter explicates on these matters via comments on the three parts of the book.

Part I allows readers to trace, at least in broad strokes, the emergence of the dominant streams of twentieth-century pentecostal and charismatic renewal while also observing how critical scholarship on these movements has emerged. Cecil M. Robeck frequently writes as a social historian or as an historical theologian. In this case, his chapter focuses on the first generation of Pentecostalism, particularly in North America, although he places it into a larger narrative structure

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Edited by Cecil M. Robeck and Amos Yong

Excerpt

[More information](#)*4 Robeck, Jr. and Yong*

that takes seriously the global horizon. Even here, although portraying both the complexity and coherence of the early pentecostal movement clearly, there is already a contested diversity amid a recognizable unity. However, the plurality that seems from the beginning to have bubbled perennially under the pentecostal banner unfolds – even explodes – with the neo-pentecostal movement starting in the late 1940s. Picking up at this point, historical theologian Michael McClymond expertly traces the main lines of charismatic renewal through the mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic, and other churches not only through the early twentieth-century pentecostal streams but also through the mid-twentieth-century Latter Rain Revivals and other related currents. Read together, Robeck's and McClymond's chapters say much about why we can talk about Pentecostalism as if it were a homogeneous phenomenon on the one hand, and also why it simultaneously makes sense to refer to Pentecostals as disparate phenomena (*vis-à-vis* their differences) that nevertheless hold loosely together (*vis-à-vis* the non-Pentecostals with which such might be contrasted).

The third chapter in this part of the book both sets in relief as well as prominently foregrounds the issues of pentecostal unity and diversity through a focused analysis of Oneness Pentecostalism. Whereas the preceding two chapters do not neglect the Oneness tradition – or traditions, as the case might be – there are important historical and theological differences at stake that merit a separate discussion within the overall framework of this companion. Of course, the divide between Oneness and Trinitarian Pentecostalism is specifically theological, not only with regard to the doctrine of God but also with regard to the understandings of salvation and the baptism of the Spirit, not to mention holiness codes of conduct and behavior. However, David Reed's historical and theological assessment – he is equally at home in both disciplines – spotlights both the unity and diversity of Pentecostalism writ large: there is no denying the theological similarities and even practices across the full range of Oneness Pentecostalism, just as there is also no doubt about the vast differences that separate white Oneness groups and churches from black and other ethnic versions across the global apostolic landscape (even movements). In short, Reed's chapter can be read as providing parallel depiction, even commentary, on Robeck's and McClymond's chapters in ways that illuminate the (contested) origins, growth, and development of Pentecostalism while also showing why diversity has been a central part of these narratives from the very beginning.

The second part of the book seeks to register regional developments, trends, and distinctives. We have divided things in just this way largely

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Excerpt

[More information](#)*Global Pentecostalism* 5

for pragmatic reasons – in particular, those things that related to the existing scholarly literature deserving of coverage in books published in such a companion series. This means that there is no explicit or sustained focus on Pentecostalism in Oceania or even the Middle East, for instance, except in passing. It also means that each contributor has had to make difficult choices about what to include and exclude within the word constraints established by the publisher. However, what does emerge in this part of the book is two features that build on but yet also add to the three essays in Part I: first, a deeper portrait that specifies what can only be discussed in more abstract terms in the initial set of essays, and second, a set of comparative lenses that illuminate the real life issues and the scholarly conflicts about how to interpret the global pentecostal movement.

Historian David Daniels's chapter, for instance, shows how the Day of Pentecostal narrative central to the modern pentecostal revival can function heuristically as an interpretive lens. Without denying the specifically theological value of tongues-speech as a pentecostal identity marker, Daniels's analysis highlights also how the visitation of the Spirit brought about observable effects in race and gender relations, both indicated in the Acts account as impacted by the pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit. To the same degree that pentecostal movements have not only included charismatic leaders but also empowered lay ministers in almost every arena, Daniels' chapter elaborates on pentecostal expressions in both ecclesial and civic domains. Similarly, theologian Jean-Daniel Plüss's chapter illustrates the diversity of ethnic Pentecostalism across the European and Eurasian landmass, albeit not usually in ways that threaten to dissolve this category for understanding. The broader European sociopolitical and religious contexts both set in relief how North American and continental manifestations can be recognizably pentecostal on the one hand and clarify how scholarly analysis inevitably diverges in multiple trajectories on the other.

The next three chapters on Latin American, African, and Asian Pentecostalism can be profitably overviewed together. These are three very different continents, each with a large variety of pentecostal churches, traditions, and movements. The three chapters differ firstly because of their methodologies. Daniel Ramirez works primarily as a cultural historian, whereas Cephas Omenyo is a theologian, and Wonsuk Ma is trained in biblical studies but has long published on Asian Pentecostalism. Further, Ramirez's home is within a secular religious studies department, while both Omenyo and Ma operate as theological educators engaged in missiological endeavors. Part of the result is that

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Excerpt

[More information](#)6 *Robeck, Jr. and Yong*

the chapter on Latin America explicates more of the cultural-historical factors, whereas that on Africa is more extensively theological. Ma, in part because of the overwhelming diversity of Pentecostalism across the Asian continent, helpfully utilizes a case study approach that invites other more concrete investigations.

What is common to the three chapters is a grappling with the unity and the diversity of the movement/s, precisely what is laid out in Part I. Ramirez does this through historiographic and periodization analyses – certainly to be expected from his vantage point as a historian – but this is enriched through the interdisciplinary methods that inform his study. Omenyo focuses on the terminological, typological, and taxonomic debates regarding African Pentecostalism and attempts to come to grips with the many indigenous forms that have led scholars to include “pentecostal-type” in their efforts. As already noted, Ma decides that the way forward through the conflicted terrain is by describing three very different types of Asian Pentecostalism. Each can be seen to be grappling with how to understand the nature of Pentecostalism, even if in nonessentialist ways, while appreciating how a diversified approach can be helpful rather than debilitating.

Similarly, all three scholars deal with the theological aspects of Pentecostalism in their respective regions. Ramirez, as a cultural historian, focuses on how migration and globalization dynamics impinge on missiological and theologies of culture discourses. The African context presses soteriological (related to the doctrine of salvation) questions, the complex interfaces between missiology and public life, and the nature of the “Africanness” of Pentecostalism in that part of the world. The Asian case studies prompt similar questions about the indigenous character of Pentecostalism across that continent and also about the charismatic character of its various levels of manifestation.

If the five chapters in Part II of this volume provide greater depth for and expand our understanding of contemporary global Pentecostalism and its various vicissitudes, then the contributions that the third and final part of this companion provide further cross-disciplinary perspectives. These go from the more social-scientific to the more theological. However, the former are not oblivious to the explicitly religious and even theological aspects of the movement, while the latter are also methodologically interdisciplinary and sophisticated in their approach.

Chapters 9 through 11 are on the political-economic (Calvin Smith), cultural-anthropological (André Droogers), and sociological (Michael Wilkinson) facets of global Pentecostalism. Each relies on personal

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Excerpt

[More information](#)*Global Pentecostalism* 7

ethnographical and empirical research while at the same time superbly drawing from the breadth and depth of the extant literature in these areas. They also take up contested questions in their various fields of study – that is, how Pentecostalism contributes, if at all, to the debate about religion's capacity to motivate socioeconomic uplift and political engagement (Smith); how pentecostal conversion facilitates cultural rupture in personal identities (Droogers); and how Pentecostalism exemplifies or undermines the dominant secularization narrative in the sociology of religion (Wilkinson) – in each case demonstrating the difference the pentecostal perspective and focus make in the discussion.

Methodologically with regard to these various disciplines, each chapter also suggests how the study of pentecostal movements advances theoretical discussion in the field. Smith's political overview depicts what political scientists and even politicians are gradually becoming aware of: that there is a political potential to modern Pentecostalism awaiting harness. Droogers shows how pentecostal religiosity does not allow dismissal of the transcendental domain in considering the repertoire of available behaviors and practices, while Wilkinson depicts how current social network theory is being expanded through a constructivist model informed by the centrality of testimony in the pentecostal social imaginary. In each case, then, the various disciplinary angles open up new vistas for understanding, but simultaneously, the focus on pentecostal movements precipitates new questions for methodological and theoretical consideration within these domains of inquiry.

The chapter by Daniel Albrecht and Evan Howard shifts from nonreligious to religious and theological methods of analysis. Their approach utilizes ritual theory and spirituality studies, both as deployed within the religious and theological studies domains. In that sense, this chapter straddles the insider-outsider issue in multiple ways – for example, via assessment of pentecostal beliefs and practices from both angles, even as Albrecht does so as a pentecostal insider while Howard locates himself more within the charismatic renewal tradition. Our two authors conclude via a consideration of the normative question about if and how Pentecostalism is to be considered a revitalization or renewal movement, which itself partakes of multiple discursive fields of discourse.

The last three chapters are explicitly theological in orientation. We make no apologies for including these chapters because the discipline of religious studies itself is increasingly recognizing that the understanding of religious phenomenon is reductionistic if the religious and theological self-understanding of its devotees and practitioners are neglected. The

Cambridge University Press

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Edited by Cecil M. Robeck and Amos Yong

Excerpt

[More information](#)8 *Robeck, Jr. and Yong*

inclusion of these specifically theological analyses intends to register how pentecostal commitments make a difference not only to pentecostal praxis and ways of life but also to the understanding of such, for both insiders and outsiders. In each case, however, our authors are expert navigators of the scholarly enterprise that respects but yet is not uncritical about the confessional gaze.

How do they attain a measure of objectivity amid their writing from a confessional location? Mark Cartledge's Anglican charismatic orientation is measured by his training in the social sciences, and this shapes his work as a practical theologian in the continental sense that prizes empirical methodologies: his chapter thus skillfully surveys the contemporary pentecostal theological frontline and does so in ways that highlight its lived, practical, and empirical bases. Wolfgang Vondey's pentecostal commitments are balanced against his ecumenical sensibilities and training: his chapter not only maps the ecumenical character of Pentecostalism but also exemplifies the ecumenical methodology and its capacity to chart a way forward for competing faith communities. Last but not least, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen is an ecumenical and systematic theologian but, here, brings this background into service of chronicling Pentecostalism as a missionary movement, especially in the interfaith encounter. Readers – theologians and otherwise, inside and outside the movement – will learn much about pentecostal self-understanding from attending to its missiological dynamics in particular, not to mention its ecumenical and broader theological vanguard as unfolded in these three chapters. The concluding chapter by Amos Yong will pick up on various theological themes and anticipate next steps in the many theoretical, disciplinary, and methodological discussions initiated in and through the study of Pentecostalism.

The preceding overview is designed primarily to register how the organization and execution of this companion takes seriously the insider-outsider issue in the study of religion but does so by confronting head on its challenges rather than take one or the other side in response. This has led to the organizational structure of the volume (which rationale has been here briefly unpacked), even as it has motivated invitation of different confessional, disciplinary, and majority world vantage points. In each of these ways, the editors trust that the coherence and diversity of Pentecostalism on the historically diachronic and globally synchronic scales can be appreciated. More can and ought to be said, and readers who come away inspired about the next research project in contemporary global Pentecostalism will have received the proper spirit in which this companion is being released.

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

Notes

- 1 See for example, **Asia**: Michael Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), and Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Oxford: Regnum Books International and APTS Press, 2005); **Africa**: Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); **Latin America**: Karl Wilhelm-Westmeier, *Protestant Pentecostalism in Latin America: A Study in the Dynamics of Missions* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999); **Europe**: William K. Kay and Anne E. Dyer, eds., *European Pentecostalism* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011); and **North America**: Joe Creech, "Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History," *Church History* 65 (1996), 405–24, and Adam Stewart, "A Canadian Azusa? The Implications of the Hebden Mission for Pentecostal Historiography," in Michael Wilkinson and Peter Althouse, eds., *Winds from the North: Canadian Contributions to the Pentecostal Movement* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 17–37.
- 2 Gary B. McGee, ed., *Initial Evidence: Historical and Biblical Perspectives on the Pentecostal Doctrine of Spirit Baptism* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991).
- 3 See for instance the discussion of Gary McGee, "Pentecostal Missiology: Moving beyond Triumphalism to Face the Issues," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 16:2 (1994), 277, and Boo-Woong Yoo, *Korean Pentecostalism: Its History and Theology* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988).
- 4 See for example, **Anthropology**: Karla Poewe, ed., *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), Barbara Boudewijnse, André Droogers, and Frans Kamsteeg, eds., *More than Opium: An Anthropological Approach to Latin American and Caribbean Pentecostal Praxis* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998), and Sturla J. Stålsett, ed., *Spirits of Globalization: The Growth of Pentecostalism and Experiential Spiritualities in a Global Age* (London: SCM Press, 2006); **Sociology**: Emilio Willems, *Followers of the New Faith: Culture Change and the Rise of Pentecostalism in Brazil and Chile* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967), Benjamin F. Gutierrez and Dennis A. Smith, eds., *In the Power of the Spirit: The Pentecostal Challenge to Historic Churches in Latin America* (Mexico City: AIPRAL, Guatemala City: CELEP, and Louisville: Presbyterian Church USA, Worldwide Ministries Division, 1996), and Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton, and Tony Walker, eds., *Charismatic Christianity: Sociological Perspectives* (London: Macmillan, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); **Economics**: R. Andrew Chesnut, *Competitive Spirits: Latin America's New Religious Economy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), and Dana Freeman, ed., *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); **Politics**: Edward L. Cleary and Hannah Stewart-Gambino, eds., *Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), Paul Freston, *Evangelicals*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-00709-3 - The Cambridge Companion to Pentecostalism

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Excerpt

[More information](#)

10 Robeck, Jr. and Yong

and *Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), and Timothy J. Steigenga, *The Politics of the Spirit: The Political Implications of Pentecostalized Religion in Costa Rica and Guatemala* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001).

- 5 E.g., Tony Campolo, *How to Be Pentecostal without Speaking in Tongues* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1991).
- 6 See Gary B. McGee, "'More than Evangelical': The Challenge of the Evolving Theological Identity of the Assemblies of God," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 25:2 (2003), 289–300, and James K. Bridges, "The Full Consummation of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit," *Enrichment: A Journal of Pentecostal Ministry* 5:4 (Fall 2000), 92.
- 7 See Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10.
- 8 Cf. Bishop Edir Macedo, *Doutrinas da Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus*, 2 vols. (Rio de Janeiro: Universal, 1998), and the *Minutes of the 54th Session of the General Council of the Assemblies of God Convened in Phoenix, Arizona August 1–5, 2011 with Constitution and Bylaws*, (Springfield, MO, 2011), Article V "Statement of Fundamental Truths," 90–94. The difference between these two denominations lies largely in their approach to political involvement and their teachings regarding exorcism and prosperity. Cf. Leonildo Silveira Campos, *Teatro, Templo e Mercado: Organização e marketing de um empreendimento Neopentecostal* (Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, São Paulo: Simpósio Editora, and São Bernardo do Campo: UMESP, 1999), 329n2. The beliefs of the Rhema churches of southern Africa and *Deus es Amor* in Brazil are also similar to those of the Assemblies of God.
- 9 Arnold Bittlinger, *The Church is Charismatic* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981).
- 10 Russell P. Spittler speaks of Evangelicals in "Are Pentecostals and Charismatics Fundamentalists? A Review of American Uses of these Categories," in Karla Poewe, ed., *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 112–13; John Allen speaks of Catholics in *The Future Church: How Ten Trends Are Revolutionizing the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 375–413.