

Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel* (London: T&T Clark, 2017). xiv, 302 pp. RRP \$66.99 paperback.

Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel represents the culmination of many years of Pentecostal scholarship by Wolfgang Vondey and offers an important contribution to the Systematic Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology series. It is also a welcomed recent outline of Pentecostal systematic theology that complements Keith Warrington's *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T&T Clark) published in 2008, while also presenting some recent shifts in the way Pentecostal scholarship express some of the key theological doctrines.

Chapter 1 provides a prolegomena to Pentecostal doctrine. Here Vondey sets out the key motifs, important elements, and general methodology he considers important to a Pentecostal theology. An aim of Vondey's *Pentecostal Theology* is to outline the principles of a theological narrative that is grounded in Pentecostalism, without having to tell too much of the Pentecostal story (1). According to Vondey, Pentecostal theology "reaches deep into the heart of Pentecost" (6), and in this case, is centred around the fivefold pattern of the full Gospel motif. This motif is expressed as: salvation, sanctification, baptism in the Spirit, divine healing, and the coming kingdom. This fivefold structure not only represents the themes of Part 1 (chs 2–6), it also provides the framework from which Vondey explores each of the chapter themes discussed in chs 7–11 — with the key focus on the encounter of God at the altar. As Vondey notes, "the metaphor of the altar adopted throughout this book specifies the significance of worship on Pentecostal life and doctrine in terms of a spiritual movement towards and mystical encounter with God in Christ through the Holy Spirit that empowers and transforms the world" (256).

Following the prolegomenon, in chapters 1–6 that make up Part 1 *Pentecostal Theology*, Vondey explores themes he considers central to a five-fold gospel approach to the principles of a Pentecostal theology. The chapter titles and subtitles reflect this framework and the key outcomes of this for Pentecostal believers: 2) Saved: Meeting Jesus at the Altar; 3) Sanctified: Participating in the Life of God), 4) Baptised: Transformed by the Holy Spirit; 5) Healed: Manifesting the Sign and Wonders; 6) Commissioned: Enacting the Coming Kingdom. As these titles reflect, each of these themes echo the fivefold gospel description of Jesus as saviour, sanctify, baptiser and the Spirit, healer, and coming king. Additionally, they also represent the lived experience of the Pentecostal community as they encounter Jesus within his fivefold ministry. This represents a major strength of Vondey's work, and a key emphasis on the narrational and experiential nature of Pentecostals thinking that is grounded first in experience—of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, and only then theologically as a third-order reflection and speech.

In Part 2, chapters 7–11 present themes from systematic theology. Again, the titles and subtitles highlight the focus of Vondey's thought: 7) Creation: Spirit, Redemption, and Cosmology; 8) Humanity: Divine Image, Human Agency, and Theological Anthropology; 9) Society: Civilisation, the Common Good, and Cultural Theory; 10) Church: Mission, Movement, and Ecclesiology; 11) God: Pentecost, Altar, and Doxology. There is a noticeable movement throughout this section from the breadth of creation, through the individual, the individuals place in society, and the Church community's place in that society as God's people of mission. Vondey states his reason for placing God at the end of the book, rather than at the beginning as is usual in other systematic work, is that any discussion on Pentecostal theology begins with a movement from creation towards mystical encounter and doxology. Consequently, "the full Gospel points to the worship of God." This is because God "is the beginning and end of Pentecostal theology" (256). This worship, of course, is not merely the corporate active praise through music and liturgy (although this is an important aspect of Pentecostal liturgy—as is reiterated in Vondey focus on the altar as the key place of encounter) but is also an embodied expression of the character and life of God, shaped by Jesus, and transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This occurs in both the individual believer and the Christian community as they live this character and life in, through and beyond their own context. As a result, Pentecostal theology and worship is always an upward expression of praise and thanksgiving to God, a commitment to develop an internal spiritual health, an expectation of personal and corporate transformation and divine healing, along with an external expression of love towards others and creation that includes the manifestation of the Spirit gifts and their expression both within the Christian community and beyond to the world.

As I noted above, a key strength of this work is its emphasis on Pentecostal praxis and experience. The overall structure of the book is cohesive and helps locate the ideas clearly within a Pentecostal context. The way in which Vondey explores each of the themes through the fivefold lens, with an emphasis at the end of each section on encounter at the altar definitely highlights the Pentecostal nature of this text. He also provides adequate support in his footnotes for his discussion and emphases throughout the book.

I have three criticisms of this book. Firstly, while the fivefold Gospel motif alongside the altar motif provided a good structure for Vondey's discussion, there were times that I found his arguments circular or limited by the desire to fit the various themes into this structure. Consequently, and what makes up my second criticism, is the way in which Vondey suggests that some of the ideas and themes he presented were uniquely Pentecostal. Coming myself from a traditional charismatic evangelical context prior to transferring to my current Pentecostal context, many of these ideas were already familiar to me from scholarship outside Pentecostalism. That said, the themes that Vondey discusses when appropriated and applied by Pentecostal scholarship and communities, definitely take on a Pentecostal flavour. Although this

was the aim of this book, the way Vondey presents this at times, does leave the reader thinking that they were developed within Pentecostalism. Finally, the lack of a bibliography, or even an author index at the end of the book is a potential limitation for those who like to refer back to the primary and secondary sources Vondey cites throughout the work.

Notwithstanding these critiques, *Pentecostal Theology* is well-written, and offers readers a good reflection on current Pentecostal thinking. I commend Vondey's offering to all those studying systematic theology—especially Pentecostal theology, to pastors and leaders looking for a text that locates key systematic theological themes within a Pentecostal tradition, and also to general readership who are looking for ways to understand, locate and articulate their own Charismatic-Pentecostal thinking within a broader global community.

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