



**Sturla J. StÅylsett, ed.** *Spirits of Globalization: The Growth of Pentecostalism and Experiential Spiritualities in a Global Age.* London: SCM Press, 2006. x + 229 pp. No price listed (paper), ISBN 978-0-334-04054-5.

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**Published on** H-Pentecostalism (August, 2007)

## The Spirit Goes Global

This compendium discusses the relationship between the causes of the growth of Pentecostalism in different continents and those of modern, market economy-driven globalization. Although the book is to some extent interdisciplinary, its authors are theologians and/or study religion, and most are outsiders. The starting point is a chapter by Harvard divinity professor Harvey Cox, whose theory is that Pentecostalism is “primal spirituality,” a reaction to both traditional and rationalistic forms of religion. Pentecostalism and the global market economy are two global movements with “selective affinity” (p. 14), he maintains, but with significant, even opposing, differences. The object of study in the following chapters, however, is not usually “orthodox” Pentecostalism, but its more bizarre extremes, including the Brazilian prosperity-oriented Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (IURD), the South African Messianic movement of George Khambule, and a classic Pentecostal church in Sweden that went horribly wrong, the author concluding that it represents the “dark side” of Pentecostalism. These extreme forms should not be considered representative. Other chapters consider Indian Pentecostals in South Africa as captive to white racism and/or a form of American imperialism, Korean Pentecostalism as a form of shamanism and capitalism, and the intriguing case of

Norwegian Charismatic evangelist Aril Edvardsen and his creative attempts at dialogue with Muslims. Towards the end, there are two more systematic theological chapters on pneumatology and liberation.

As with most collections, this one has good and mediocre chapters. There are always dangers of reductionism and generalization in such a compilation. Simply equating Pentecostalism in Korea with shamanism is too facile an interpretation. So too is the attempt made to contrast Confucianism as “self-serving” and Charismatic Christianity as “self-seeking.” The focus on the notorious and, in the case study from Knutby, Sweden, the horrific, is probably no more common to Pentecostal and Charismatic churches than might occur in older churches. Some of these authors may have misunderstood Pentecostalism fundamentally. Others have a profounder and more nuanced approach to the forces that drive globalization and the considerable varieties of Christianity we lump together under the term “Pentecostalism.” The two chapters on the IURD find positive aspects in the church’s ability to respond to the perceived needs of the urban poor. On the whole, this book will interest anyone with a theological interest in Pentecostalism, experiential Christianity, and globalization.

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**Citation:** Allan Anderson. Review of StÅlsett, Sturla J., ed., *Spirits of Globalization: The Growth of Pentecostalism and Experiential Spiritualities in a Global Age*. H-Pentecostalism, H-Net Reviews. August, 2007.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=13468>

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