

Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement

Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori

Authors: Donald Miller is Professor of Religion and Executive Director of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California. Tetsunao Yamamori is President Emeritus of Food for the Hungry International and Senior Fellow of the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California.

Publisher, Date & Pages: University of California Press, 2007. 261 pgs.

Cover Description: How and why is Christianity's center of gravity shifting to the developing world? To understand this rapidly growing phenomenon, Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori spent four years traveling the globe conducting extensive on-the-ground research in twenty different countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe. The result is this vividly detailed book and accompanying online material, which together contain the most comprehensive information available on Pentecostalism, the fastest-growing religion in the world. Rich with scenes from everyday life, Miller and Yamamori dispel many stereotypes about this religion as they build a wide-ranging, nuanced portrait of a major new social movement. The online ancillary material features footage of Pentecostal religious worship, testimony, and social activism, and includes interviews with Pentecostal pastors and leader from around the world.

Endorsements: Peter Berger, Jack Miles, Christian Smith, and Doug Peterson

Comments from Endorsments: "Written in an engaging style and filled with highly instructive material, this book provides an impressive picture of what is arguably the most dynamic religious phenomenon of our time." (Peter Berger)

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Rating: On a scale of 1-5:

1. Not a good use of time
2. Okay, but not that useful
3. Satisfactory, not great – but a good read
4. Loved reading it
5. Impactful, highly recommended

This book: 2

“Recommend “ Statement: Very disappointing read. Both authors are self-professed “non Pentecostals” – and their writing and observations reflect such. Some of their observations are so naïve and basic – that you wonder how they could be so uninformed. They spent four years and traveled to twenty different countries – and any informed Pentecostal could have filled in all the blanks for them! For a Pentecostal this was basic 101 material. Almost nothing new at all. The author made a lot of applications using the social sciences – not bad – but again, nothing that hasn’t been said before. They began by carefully differentiating the “kind of Pentecostal” they were about. They used the term “Progressive Pentecostals” and basically eliminated any Pentecostal who did not fit their definition – which includes “Classic Pentecostals” such as the Assemblies of God. Then they go to Classic Pentecostal churches and include them in their material. They were primarily interested in how Pentecostal churches were addressing social and cultural issues. The good parts of the book affirm the growth of real Pentecostalism. They also include some wonderful testimonies. I don’t recommend anyone spending valuable time to read this. I kept waiting for something truly worthwhile – and it never happened.

Reviewer: Jim Bennett, May 2019

