

Martin W. Mittelstadt, *Reading Luke-Acts in the Pentecostal Tradition* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010).

It is gratifying to both reader and reviewer when a book delivers on what it promises. In his preface Mittelstadt states his intention of filling “a significant gap in Pentecostal scholarship on Luke-Acts” by offering “the first comprehensive history of interpretation of Lukan scholarship by Pentecostals” (p. ix). He fulfills that task well and provides the Pentecostal scholarly community as well as the larger Lukan studies community with a very valuable resource. The book presents an engaging historical overview of the place of Gospel of Luke and especially of the book of Acts in Pentecostal discussion and controversy over the past century and appraises the significant books and articles that have shaped that long conversation. The literature review establishes the book as a significant contribution to and an indispensable tool for Lukan and Pentecostal studies.

Mittelstadt outlines the history of Pentecostal scholarship on Luke-Acts in four stages: 1) In the earliest period, from the origins of the movement to 1970, the book of Acts emerges as the standard for the movement, in the sense that it becomes the controlling document through which the Pentecostal movement reads the rest of scripture. Given the missional focus of this early period, works on Acts are primarily homiletical and devotional. 2) The transition from this early period to the second phase, during which time Pentecostal scholarship shifts from a pre-critical stance to a scholarly awakening, is

marked by the appearance Dunn's *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* in 1970, a volume that occasions several responses carefully investigating and articulating the Pentecostal position on the purpose of Spirit baptism in Luke's writings. 3) The third stage is described by the phrase "Out of the Shadows" since Pentecostal scholarship by the post-Dunn era has successfully moved beyond a pre-critical and defensive mode. Pentecostal scholars now produce mature work and participate with other Lukan scholars in addressing questions not exclusively related to Pentecostal issues. 4) The final stage is that of the present and near future as Pentecostal scholarship continues to face the challenges and opportunities presented by postmodernism, globalization, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue along with a host of other concerns.

This survey of Pentecostal scholarship is informative and clearly presented. There is very little to criticize in terms of approach or content. At the same time, some observations are in order suggesting additional content and revisions that will make future editions of the volume even more useful. 1) Those who work as scholars within the Pentecostal tradition recognize that pre-critical approaches to Luke-Acts are still very much present within the movement. The publishing houses of the classical Pentecostal denominations continue to publish works on Luke-Acts that reflect a pre-critical approach to scholarship and that seem unaware of the literature catalogued in this book. Moreover, much of the language canonized in the doctrinal statements of these denominations reflects a

pre-critical approach to Luke-Acts and other portions of scripture. It would be helpful if Mittelstadt devoted more attention to this theological-sociological phenomenon within the Pentecostal tradition wherein there co-exists a vibrant scholarly community represented, for the most part, by the membership of the Society for Pentecostal Studies and a larger, though much less hermeneutically sophisticated, community represented by most leaders, pastors and laypeople of Pentecostal denominations. The point is that not all within the Pentecostal tradition are reading Luke-Acts in the same way. A great divide continues within the tradition. The scholarly insights gained in the last generation have not shaped the reading of the majority within the tradition. 2) Such scholarly insights are due in large part to Pentecostal scholars over time adopting and refining interpretive methods appropriate to the study of scripture. Without minimizing the importance of Dunn's work, the focus of stage two in Mittelstadt's trajectory is perhaps best placed on the methodological coming of age attained by Pentecostal scholarship from the 1960s to 1980s. Pentecostal appreciation of the insights gained by redactional and compositional analysis led to a revolution in scholarship. Mittelstadt does give attention to narrative approaches in his discussion of stage three, but it is likely that the entire history of Pentecostal scholarship is one of developing methodological sophistication. 3) One final observation relates to the bibliographic information presented in the book. The book is a valuable bibliographic resource, yet in many cases articles initially presented at academic conferences but subsequently

published in journals or collections of essays are not cited according to their published form but rather their unpublished conference form. This impairs the usefulness of the volume as a bibliographic resource but such oversights can be easily fixed in the second edition. And one can speak with confidence of future editions of this book since it fills an important role in Pentecostal scholarship.

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