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Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WORLD
CHRISTIAN REVITALIZATION MOVEMENTS

Revitalization

ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY • WILMORE, KY 40390

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From the Editor

This edition of *Revitalization* marks a transition in the life of our Center. Howard Snyder, who has been deeply involved in this project from its inception, has handed over the responsibility for bringing news to you, our readers, on a regular basis. He will continue to work with the Center, providing wisdom and leadership in all we do. I am honored to be assuming this responsibility, while being deeply aware of just how intimidating a task this is, given Howard's life-long passion for renewal and revitalization, his global interests, and his wide range of learning and expertise. Fortunately, I have good colleagues to assist me with this task. Chris Kiesling, a member of the Asbury Theological Seminary faculty, will be contributing timely updates on the work of the Center. Mark Lewis, a PhD graduate of Asbury's School of World Mission, and a Methodist pastor serving in Denmark, will be offering his insights on recent books and other resources related to the Center's mission. I am grateful for their initial contributions in this issue.

I recently spoke at a conference for pastors in the state of Iowa. The theme of our gathering was "The Emerging Missional Way." It happened that we began the conference just two days after Easter, Resurrection Day. I suggested to the participants that our thinking about whatever might be "emerging" in the form of church life and

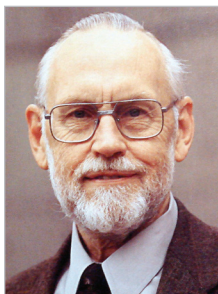
mission will be inseparable from our weekly remembrance and celebration of the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of the Father and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; the mighty acts of God which have and continue to raise up and enliven the church to be a people whose being and life bears public witness to God's reign in the world.

This is very much on our minds these days as we do the work of the Center. This issue brings you more news related to our October consultation which will focus on the theme of Pentecost and God's new humanity. Steve O'Malley, the Center's director, offers his thoughts on the progress that is being made, while Chris Kiesling spotlights some of our participants. Mark Lewis reviews a recent work on evangelism in a post-Christendom world, while I interview Howard Snyder on a variety of topics that revolve around his work with the Center. Our next issue will bring a detailed report on the proceedings of our first consultation. We look forward to sharing good things with you in November.

Peace, Michael Pasquarello III

*Granger E. and Anna A. Fisher Professor of Preaching
Asbury Theological Seminary*

An Interview with Dr. Howard Snyder



As many of our readers know, Dr. Howard Snyder was one of the founding members of the Center and has served as editor of *Revitalization* since the beginning of its publication. We are deeply grateful for his leadership. I recently had the opportunity to interview Howard on a variety of matters related to the Center's work. (MP=Michael Pasquarello - HS=Howard Snyder)

MP: *You have been working with the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements since its inception. What have you found to be significant about its work?*

HS: Three things, primarily. First, the creativity generated by our interdisciplinary, global, and crosscultural approach. For us, this is theologically, not just pragmatically, significant because revitalization has multiple causes and affects all areas of life.

Second, the project seems to have tapped into an artesian well of interest and concern, even hunger, for genuine renewal in the churches and in society.

Third, and relatedly, is hope. The ease with which this whole project has come together (not without work, of course), the willingness of people to become involved, and the sense that we are part of something larger than ourselves are all encouraging.

MP: *As you think about your role as a plenary speaker for the Center's first consultation, what kind of things are on your mind as you prepare to address its participants?*

HS: The theme is "Pentecost and the New Humanity," so I'm thinking of that historically and theologically, but also practically. I want to look at the interconnection between Pentecost and

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The Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements contributes to the vitality of Christian mission and local congregations by synthesizing learnings from past and present revitalization movements worldwide. Its approach is interdisciplinary, combining biblical studies, theology, history, anthropology, and sociology.

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church revitalization. I may examine five key elements in Pentecost, such as peoplehood, seedtime/harvest/firstfruits, and of course the mysterious sovereign working of the Holy Spirit.

MP: *Do you see the Center breaking new ground in the way it is organizing its consultations?*

HS: Yes. We have said from the beginning that a key goal is to bridge the common barrier between theory and practice, and between the academy and local congregations. Our conference process accomplishes that in some very creative ways, thanks to the input of many good people.

The sequence of the three consultations is also creative, allowing the whole process to build in terms of revitalization theory and theology. There are built-in feedback loops that will enhance our overall learning, I think.

MP: *What do you hope might come from the first consultation? How do you think churches in North America might benefit from this work?*

HS: I hope the first consultation sparks increased interest in and hope for renewal generally, teaches us through the diversity of interactions and case studies, and gives us clear guidance for next steps. We are not interested in new programs but primarily in information- and inspiration-sharing. The ultimate fruit is unpredictable, but the consultation should indeed have significant benefit for a good many churches, both in the short term and in the longer run.

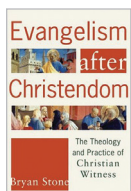
MP: *Since the Center is attached to a theological seminary, how might its work have implications for theological education in the twenty-first century?*

HS: This is an important question. Our current form of theological education is neither biblically mandated nor optimal for forming disciples of Jesus Christ, more than just paid professionals. Discerning how God's Spirit has worked in multiple renewal movements in diverse cultural and historical contexts could prove enormously illuminating in the ongoing process of the evolution of theological education.

MP: *As a historian of missions, you have had an opportunity to study renewal movements from earlier periods in the history of the church. Where do you see similar signs of renewal in our time?*

HS: Genuine renewal, in my view, is based firmly in Jesus Christ and the hope of God's reign--what E. Stanley Jones called "The Unchanging Christ and the Unshakable Kingdom"--as revealed in Scripture. Historically speaking, the most transforming renewal movements have had a comprehensive vision both for the deep personal experience of God and for the transformation of society by the power of the Spirit, with a wide-angle kingdom vision. I see glimmers, pieces, of this here and there. Renewal currents are stirring in some older "mainline" denominations, in many new movements around the world, and on the edges of contemporary Evangelicalism.

The most encouraging signs of renewal I see today are a clearer focus on understanding Jesus Christ and his resurrection in context (both the New Testament context and ours), a more comprehensive grasp of the church's mission through insights from *missio Dei* theology, some of the more promising newer work on the Trinity, a greater awareness of culture and its dynamics, and the beginning of an awakening to the place and role of the land, the earth, in God's economy to bring "new heavens and a new earth." The most exciting churches are those which are actually putting that into practice "on the ground," especially in urban contexts.



Bryan Stone – *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness*. (Brazos, 2007, 336 pp.)

For many, the notion of post-Christian evangelism is an oxymoron. In a pluralistic age, characterized by the concern for mutual respect and sensitivity toward faith and non-faith perspectives that are different from one's own, evangelism (the "E-word!") often conjures pejorative associations, which are not in keeping with the contemporary situation. The issue for Bryan Stone becomes a matter of forming an understanding of the church's evangelical disposition in light of current challenges, as well as discerning practices reflecting integrity and faithfulness to the gospel. In contrast to forms of evangelism that call for privatized salvation or the Christianization of entire cultures and social orders, *Evangelism after Christendom* advocates starting with the practices and habits of the church. Evangelism and ecclesiology are inseparable. In an effort to disassociate evangelism from popularized notions of faith-sharing, which are often triumphal,

propositional, "how-to" and "success"-oriented, Stone argues from a position of marginality. In this way, "the church is best able to announce peace and bear witness to God's peaceable reign in such a way as to invite others to take seriously the subversive implications of that reign" (p. 11).

In addition to being strongly ecclesiological, Stone's approach is decidedly ethical. When the call to conversion, for example, becomes an "end justifies the means" affair, the internal character of the church is compromised and thereby manipulated to serve an alien purpose. A substantial element of the book confronts the competing narratives of Constantine and Enlightenment modernism. Since Christianity throughout the ages has too often been coopted by these and other narratives, it has often become subservient to an agenda that ultimately contravenes the Christian narrative and ethos. Evangelism in a post-Christendom era looks critically upon

the forces which have sought to convert the church into an agent of the state or relegate her to the role of displaced chaplain, while promoting an invigorated sense of call and purpose in service to God's Reign.

Stone's book is timely in its offering of a perspective that focuses on virtuous practice and an embracing of the church's marginal status. In doing so, Stone circumvents evangelical approaches that are driven by a will to "win" and "succeed," at any cost. An end justifies the means perception of the church's evangelical task is increasingly becoming exposed as morally unsound in a multicultural, religiously diverse context, therefore necessitating a reconfiguration of Christian mission in light of the divine call to witness faithfully and peaceably. For this and other reasons, Stone's work is an important contribution in the ongoing dialogue regarding Christianity's evangelical disposition in a post-Christendom era. —Mark W. Lewis

Features of the 2009 Consultation

“Pentecost and the new humanity: Assessing the work of God” will be the theme of the 2009 Fall consultation, gathering scholars and practitioners of revitalization movements occurring throughout global Christianity. The conference will feature more than twenty plenary participants representing indigenous revitalization movements across the world including Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Pentecostal, and indigenous Christian movements. Plenary presentations will offer case study explorations with responders offering insights moving between historical and contemporary implications.

Just as *koinonia* and love feast meals served as the context whereby early Christians gave witness to all that God had wrought among them (cf. Baucum, *Evangelical Hospitality*, 2008 in the Revitalization Series), so a central aspect of this first consultation will involve interactive table discussions. Observational notes from the table conversations will resource much of the descriptive gleanings from the consultation. Diverse expressions of the sights and sounds of Pentecost will also be reflected in shared worship experiences led by indigenous practitioners of revitalization from a variety of cultures. Following are brief bios on keynote and plenary speakers, and worship leaders.

A few international leaders from the Revitalization gathering will also be featured at Asbury Seminary’s Kingdom Conference. Kingdom Conference is an annual event for students, faculty, staff, and organizational representatives focused on exploring issues of mission, mercy and justice. The 2009 theme, *Integral Worship: Worship in all of Life*, will examine how divine mercy and compassion are compelled by, and how ultimately they lead to, deep encounters with God in worship. Swee Hong Lim, an expert in Asian expressions of liturgical music, will extend his visit from the revitalization gathering to offer a one-day intensive class for Asbury students and to participate in the leadership of Kingdom Conference.

Keynote address:



Howard Snyder is Tyndale Seminary’s Distinguished Professor and Chair of Wesley Studies. Dr. Snyder is a well-known author and educator from Asbury Seminary where he has served for the past ten years as Professor of the History and Theology of Mission in the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism.

Panel respondents to the keynote will be given by...



**Billy
Abraham**



**Anthea
Butler**



**Bryan
Froehle**



**Paul
Gavriluk**

Worship Leaders:

Obed Burgos is an Ecuadorian pastor working with the Christian & Missionary Alliance in Quito. He graduated from FATELA (the Alliance Latin American Graduate School of Theology), writing his dissertation on worship within the context of the local church.

Daniel Wambete Lutien is a Kenyan currently working with a mission organization that carries out evangelism and discipleship in the countries of Sudan, Kenya, Congo, and Uganda in East Africa.

Inchai and Ruth Srisuwan operate a ministry that works with indigenous expressions of music and faith in the urban slum areas of Thailand.

(Swee Hong Lim will serve as our worship observer offering insights into the experiences of worship events.)

Plenary presenters:

Albert Hernandez is a scholar of Pentecost studies in medieval Christendom and an author in our series published by Scarecrow. Dr. Hernández is a United Methodist layperson and is currently the coordinator of Iliff’s Masters in Theolog-

ical Studies Program. He also serves on the Advisory council of the Hispanic Theological Initiative, located at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Gerald MacDonald is a Ph.D. student at the University of Marburg, Germany, studying under the supervision of Professor Hans Schneider, for whom he has translated works into English, in the area of Church History and German Pietism.

John Smith is from Australia and helped transport the Jesus People movement to his homeland. John is currently a doctoral student at Asbury.

Viv Grigg lives among the poor and has catalyzed new apostolic orders (networks of communities) in the slums of over 40 emerging mega-cities, including Manila, Calcutta, São Paulo, Los Angeles, Auckland. He has created a plethora of ministries to transform poverty including the global AD2000 Cities network, the Urban Leadership Foundation, and the Encarnação Alliance of Urban Poor Movement Leaders. He teaches frequently and is author of *Companion to the Poor, Transforming Cities*.

(Responses to the plenary presentations will be given by Arlene Sanchez-Walsh, James Karanja, Alice Ott, and Scott Sunquist.)

After Pentecost Practicioners

Bert Waggoner – National Director of Vineyard Movement and Senior Pastor of the Vineyard Church of Sugar Land, Texas.

Thomas Kane, a Paulist priest, teaches preaching, liturgy and the arts at Boston College.

Veronica Perez is the Coordinator of the Biblical and Theological Training Program for Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America (CEDEPCA).

Peter Xu - Chinese House Church (not yet confirmed)

Steven O’Malley will be serving as the emcee, host for the event and John Witvliet will offer a synthesis of each day’s experiences.

Director's Report

Anticipation is building as we set our focus upon the forthcoming consultation on "Pentecost and the New Humanity," convening on the campuses of Asbury Seminary and Asbury College this October 15-18, 2009. We will be taking the heartbeat of revitalization movements from around the globe, which mark points of spiritual vitality and Kingdom transformation occurring within contemporary world Christianity. It has been my privilege to invite key practitioners of Christian revitalization from around the globe, who will convene here on the eve of Asbury Seminary's fall Kingdom Conference. The public is invited to our opening session on Thursday, October 15, at 7 p.m. in Hughes Auditorium of Asbury College. Please contact us if you plan to spend the night in the area, so we may direct you to accommodations in our area.

Professor Howard Snyder, the founding director of this Center, will be our plenary

speaker. Responding to him will be leading theologians and practitioners of revitalization representing the Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Methodist communities. Revitalization is occurring in each of these living traditions.

Sessions on Friday and Saturday will highlight historical and contemporary case studies in revitalization, as well as "Pentecost practitioners," with presenters coming from Latin America, Africa, East Asia, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Each will relate how the promise of Pentecost is becoming manifest in their respective communities. Worship will be led by practitioners from the non-Western cultures, and will interface with presentations and table discussion around programmatic themes. There, substantive issues emerging from the data presented will be identified and assessed.

My expectation is that this will be some-

thing of a replication of the sights and sounds of the first Pentecost, as the promise of a new humanity is seen to be a transformative reality in the world of the twenty-first century. It is a reality built on manifestations of Pentecost in history, whose insights will provide direction for what God is about today as the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ around the globe. In several instances, these will be Pentecost reports that have not before been heard or known in our Western tradition. Through these "witnesses," new insight will be made known concerning the vital ministry of the ecclesia, the people of God, in this day of sore global challenge and unmet opportunity. The potential is here for God to speak to each of us through this event. It is the culmination of what we have been called to be about as a Center, and even as a Seminary, here at Asbury.

—J. Steven O'Malley, Director

Revitalization is the twice-yearly bulletin of the Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements. Center Director: J. Steven O'Malley. Editor: Michael Pasquarello; Associate Editor, Chris Kiesling; Book Review Editor, Mark Lewis. The cost is \$6.00/year by mail, or \$5.00 on our website. Sample copies sent free. Send correspondence or change of address to *Revitalization*, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY 40390 or email revitalization@asburyseminary.edu. Feedback, letters to the editor, and brief articles are welcome.

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