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Scripture and Context: An Evangelical Exploration

Abstract

The first section of this paper addresses contextualization and scripture, suggesting the value of hearing texts from multiple cultural settings. The latter section offers two concrete examples where many majority world readings could help western readers to hear biblical texts more sympathetically and in ways closer to what the first audiences would have heard. In both sections, the two groups participating in the interdisciplinary colloquium—biblical studies and intercultural studies—are invited to learn from one another.

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Part I: Contextualization and Scripture

N. T. Wright, one of the most creative and prolific NT theologians of our generation, has argued that Mark 13 “is advice ‘more useful to a *refugee* from military invasion than to a man caught unawares by the last trumpet.”¹ While this verdict is certainly true of part of the passage, I asked my wife, who was a refugee for 18 months, about Mark 13:24-27. She replied that it sounded to her instead like “the end of the world,” and noted that that was how people in Congo-Brazzaville read the passage whether they are refugees or not.²

In terms of how we read Scripture, let us begin by offering two scenarios:

A. Let us say that one of you goes as a missionary to Katsina, Nigeria and requires any new convert who is polygynous to divorce his second wife, in a culture where divorce has rarely been known.³ The second wife is then excluded from church membership because she is divorced; she also lacks means of support unless, if she is willing, she sells her body. Her children grow up loathing Christianity. You base your decision on “husband of one wife” in 1 Timothy 3:2. You are unaware that Ephesus, the city addressed in this letter, did not practice polygamy and the text probably instead refers to faithfulness to one’s marriage.

B. Tim Tennent dialogues with a Hindu in Uttar Pradesh, India, who has read the Gospel of John. The Hindu says, Jesus talked about being reborn; Jesus thus affirms reincarnation. Jesus uses language familiar from his ancient Jewish context to make a point for Nicodemus, but the Hindu does not know about this. Who is Tim Tennent to tell the Hindu that he has misinterpreted the Gospel of John? (Besides being my boss, I mean!)

What role should receptor contexts play in how we practice texts? What role should original contexts play in how we understand and communicate them?

1. Introduction: Scripture and Context

Culture makes a difference in communication.⁴ Examples could be multiplied, but a particularly conspicuous one for my wife and myself comes in how we express love. In my culture, when a husband says to his wife, “I love you,” she typically responds, “I love you too.” But my wife Médine is from central Africa, and when I would say, “Je t’aime,” instead of responding, “Je t’aime, moi aussi”—“I love you too”—she would respond, “Merci”—“Thank you.” So early in our marriage I often walked around downcast, thinking that my wife did not love me. She, meanwhile, could not understand what was wrong with me. Finally another intercultural couple mentioned the same dynamic in their marriage, and we were able to understand better the cultural element. In her culture, the typical response is gratitude rather than reciprocity.

-Scripture as a cross-cultural canon

Intercultural communication has complications, but hearing the messages of Scripture involves an additional cultural complication: what relevance theory calls “secondary communication.” When my wife and I communicate, we can clarify our meaning through discussion—this is sometimes called negotiating meaning. If we are simply reading a report from another culture with which we are unfamiliar, however, the words are translated, but the idioms, the literary forms, and so forth are not.

In secondary communication, the cultures of the receiver and the current communicator still matter. If we genuinely care to understand what the original communication was meant to communicate, however, we also need some understanding of the cultural context of the original communication. If the Scriptures are not just a decoration and prop for what we want to say, but themselves hold special authority for us, we want to hear what God inspired their authors to say. Yet these authors wrote in particular languages, cultures, and circumstances. This observation should highlight the importance of both disciplines gathered at this colloquium—biblical studies and intercultural studies. Each discipline works at different ends of the communication spectrum, but both are needed—and communication with each other is needed.

Cultural sensitivity in reading Scripture offers a foundation for believers across cultures, offering a common functional basis or canon for intercultural dialogue; it is a natural component of the same approach that invites us to listen to one another interculturally. As Christians, we share a common basis for conversation in the received canonical text. That text did not originate in a cultural vacuum,

but in a concrete linguistic, cultural and historical setting that may be explored.⁵ The Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words and even letters are unintelligible markings when extracted from the particular linguistic settings in which they originated.⁶ Relevance theory, grounded in cognitive linguistics, approaches texts in terms of communications, taking into account the cultural assumptions that inform them.⁷ Part of our transcultural goal should be listening honestly to the texts. The more effectively that we hear texts in their first contexts, the greater the confidence with which we may recontextualize the principles for other settings, and the greater our *shared* basis for dialoguing about what the texts say to us today.⁸

-Insights on Scripture from diverse cultures

Yet we also will hear the text more clearly when we listen to one another, because Christians in some cultures will intuitively hear customs and concepts in particular passages in ways closer to the original context. Even widespread customs such as brideprice or dowry, levirate marriage and so forth differ from one culture to another. Although a Ghanaian Christian may intuitively understand such customs better than a Westerner, she may still envision them somewhat differently than the way the biblical writers anticipated their first audiences understanding them.

We intuitively interpret people's actions or sayings in light of our broader knowledge or cultural assumptions; interpreters from other cultures provide alternative possibilities for understanding. Sometimes one culture's or interpreter's reading explains the text more satisfactorily than another's; sometimes the diverse interpretive options drive us to explore more deeply the original cultural context, or simply serve to make us more cautious about our *a priori*, especially when we lack means to reconstruct some details beyond the text.

Often alternative frameworks prove more accurate than those we started with, a situation that also appears within some biblical narratives. Why is it that bicultural Hellenist believers such as Stephen (theologically) and Philip (practically; Acts 6—8) were able to begin bridging cultural gaps before the Jerusalem apostles did? The apostles were the ones whom Jesus directly instructed to bring the good news to “the ends of the earth” (1:8), but initially they may have expected it to spread indirectly or by a sovereign miracle while they continued to work in Jerusalem. Yet once Peter and John witnessed and supported Philip's success in Samaria, they also began preaching in Samaritan villages (8:25). Is it possible that cultural lenses influenced who first understood Jesus's instructions most clearly?

Teachings about justice and sacrificial care for the poor constitute such a significant proportion of the Bible that they may be deemed among the Bible's most common themes.⁹ Liberation theologians picked up on such important themes that

traditional Western systematic theology, for all its value, had typically neglected as a topic of disciplined study. If we make hamartiology a theological rubric, concerns about whether gluttony is a venial sin or whether street children in Brazil are abused represent different yet genuine contexts. I confess that being very *hungry* as an unpaid young pastor did affect my hermeneutical grid, but I think that experience highlighted for me a biblical emphasis (one that I already recognized in principle) rather than creating a bias analogous to that of those who have never experienced hunger.

-Cross-cultural communication within Scripture: A case study

Even within the Bible itself, cross-cultural communication could prove complicated. Thus when Jesus talks with the Samaritan woman in John 4, their conversation presupposes an undercurrent of hostility between Jews and Samaritans that John's audience probably took for granted. Jesus crosses three social barriers to communicate with this woman.¹⁰ First, in Jesus' culture, conservative opinion frowned on men talking alone with women who were not relatives.¹¹ If anyone is tempted to doubt that this custom affected someone in the narrative, one need only recall the report of 4:27: Jesus's own disciples were amazed that he was "conversing with a woman." Of course, Jesus also transforms this situation, since in 4:29 she ends up inviting all her people to Jesus with virtually the same words ("Come and see") through which Philip earlier invited Nathanael in 1:46. That is, she becomes a witness for Jesus at an even more dramatic level—this in spite of the fact that women's testimony was usually demeaned in the wider culture.¹²

Second, both Jews and Samaritans agreed that upright people should avoid unnecessary contact with those known to be immoral. Jesus reaches across those barriers in the other Gospels, and he probably does so here as well. Granted, this woman could have been widowed five times and living with her brother (4:18),¹³ but this would not explain why she comes to the well alone, whereas village women normally came to wells together.¹⁴ Moreover, she specifically comes at the sixth hour (4:6)—noon—when, throughout ancient Mediterranean literature, people stopped work and rested in the shade, often even taking siestas.¹⁵ She comes at the very time when no one else would come, probably because she was not welcome among the other women. That this woman must come alone to the well at the hottest hour of the day (4:6), instead of coming with the other village women, shows that she was unwelcome among the other women.

In cross-cultural settings, actions intended one way can easily be misconstrued. When Jesus tells the woman to "call" her husband (a term earlier

used, again, for Philip calling Nathanael, 1:48), she replies, “I do not have a husband” (4:16-17). Today we could read this response in various ways, but the reply may have struck John’s first audience less subtly. In Jesus’s milieu, people sometimes sought marital or sexual partners at wells;¹⁶ the biblically informed would think of encounters with Rebekah, Rachel, and Zipporah (Gen 24:13-15; 29:10; Exod 2:15-21).¹⁷ But if the woman suspects that Jesus’s intentions are sexual or conjugal, his elaboration of her own domestic situation (John 4:18) clarifies his interest, and she recognizes that he is God’s prophet (4:19).

The third barrier is the explicitly ethnic one. As John 4:9 puts it simply, “Jews do not associate with Samaritans.” Jewish teachers considered Jewish women unclean one week per month—but Samaritan women unclean every week of every month since infancy.¹⁸ It is therefore no wonder she is surprised by his request for a drink from her vessel; it violated Jewish tradition.

And yet the woman herself also ventures beyond Samaritan tradition here. At least if our later sources are accurate, Samaritans did not believe in prophets between Moses and the future restorer who would be like Moses.¹⁹ That is why, once she acknowledges Jesus as a prophet in 4:19, she immediately shifts into what might seem to us a different subject. “Our ancestors worshiped on Mount Gerizim here—but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the only right place of worship” (4:20). If he is a prophet, Jews are right and Samaritans are wrong. Yet ever since Samaritans desecrated the Jerusalem temple, they were unwelcome there; there was therefore no hope for her or her people. Her use of past tense for their ancestral place of worship is also deliberate, evoking the history of division between them: Jews had destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim more than a century earlier.²⁰ Jesus goes on to transcend this ethnic division by speaking of a greater place for worship than Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim: in Spirit and in truth (4:22-24).

Culture as well as language is encoded in this text, and if we have only a translation without the cultural context, we will miss some of the meaning. Cues in the narrative signaled this meaning for its first audience, but some of the meaning could be left implicit because certain information could be simply assumed as shared between the author and the audience.²¹ (Returning again to relevance theory: communication often takes the simplest forms by leaving unsaid elements that those involved in the communication can take for granted.)²² This happens elsewhere in Scripture as well. Mark, for example, explains a Jewish custom in Mark 7:3-4. When Matthew retells the same story in Matt 15:1-2, he omits the explanation because Matthew’s Jewish Christian audience would not need it. How often does the Bible leave cultural matters unexplained because its first audiences did not need these explanations, but we today do?

-Contextualization within the Bible

When I asked my missiology colleague at my former seminary, Samuel Escobar, where biblical studies could be helpful for missiology, he suggested that biblical scholars could help to define the boundaries between contextualization and syncretism.²³ Because the entire Bible has a cultural context, the entire Bible offers us models for non-syncretistic contextualization.

Those of us who embrace Scripture as divine revelation must recognize that God communicated cross-culturally. All communication has a cultural context; no one communicates or hears in a cultural vacuum. Insofar as we wish to hear the Bible as communication, then, we need to take into account its cultural context.²⁴

The Bible provides countless examples of God identifying with cultures—sometimes down to the terms used for various kinds of sacrifices; literary forms used for oracles; or Proverbs, Jesus, and Paul using rhetorical forms of contemporary sages. Yet it also provides countless examples of God challenging culture, for instance in warnings against deity statues.

God went further in relating to local cultures than many of us today are willing to do. In many cases God used forms that resembled forms used in the religious practices of Israel's neighbors, while infusing those forms with new meanings.

Although some of the Bible's examples represent limited cultural accommodation short of God's ideal (cf. Mark 10:5: "because of the hardness of your hearts"), others represent translation into the language and images intelligible in the host culture. For example, the Tabernacle²⁵ adapts the tripartite design standard in Egyptian and some Canaanite temples.²⁶ Similarly, like most ancient Near Eastern temples the Tabernacle has a sacred object in the innermost shrine.²⁷ Tent shrines were also part of their milieu.²⁸ The use of the most expensive dyes and metals nearest the ark may reflect a wider understanding of the gradation of holiness.²⁹ Such features would help Israelites—whom the Egyptians may have employed in temple construction—better relate to the Tabernacle as a temple.

Nevertheless, these cultural analogies heighten the significance of the explicit contrasts: for example, no bed for the deity,³⁰ because YHWH neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps 121:4). Indeed, most strikingly, the climax of other ancient temples was the image of the deity, but no image is enthroned above the ark's cherubim.³¹ The Lord reminds his people that they must have no images and other gods in his sight (Exod 20:3-5). Elements of culture can be helpful or harmful; good contextualization avoids syncretism.

The cross-cultural strategies of God's servants in Scripture can provide even more explicit models for contextualization. In seeking to win as many people

as possible, Paul says that he became all things to all people (1 Cor 9:19-23).³² Paul preaches from Scripture in a synagogue (Acts 13:16-41), from nature in a farming community (14:15-17), and from Greek poets and philosophic themes that intersected biblical theology in Athens (17:22-31).³³ In his Gentile mission, Paul befriended Asiarchs, many of who would have participated in some aspects of public pagan religion (Acts 19:31).³⁴ Likewise, reaffirming his solidarity with Israel's heritage (but not their ethnocentrism) he offered sacrifice in the Jerusalem temple (Acts 21:24-26).³⁵ Paul's letters abound with sensitivity to local or cultural situations. For example, he affirms hair coverings, which to at least lower class persons in the Eastern Mediterranean represented sexual modesty.³⁶ Although most Christians today would recognize that Paul contextualized the principle helpfully for his setting, most of us would also feel comfortable expressing sexual modesty in different ways for very different cultures.

-Recontextualization for a new context in Scripture

Recontextualization was practiced already within Scripture. For example, NT writers recontextualized OT images for new settings. Thus Revelation adapts oracles against literal Babylon (e.g., Isa 21:9; 47:7-9; Jer 51:6-14) to apply them to Rome (Rev 18:2-8). This transference was logical because for Jewish people Rome constituted the Babylon-type empire of its day—what Jewish interpreters of the day construed as Babylon's ultimate successor among Daniel's four kingdoms (Dan 2:37-45; 7:3-14).³⁷ Some Jewish thinkers depicted Rome as a new Babylon,³⁸ since it had destroyed the temple and enslaved God's people like Babylon of old; people also *regularly* referred to Rome as a city on seven hills or mountains (Rev 17:9),³⁹ saw it as the city that ruled the kings of the earth (17:18),⁴⁰ the city that traded in the merchandise listed in Rev 18:12-13,⁴¹ and so forth. Because Revelation's beast, however, blends all four of Daniel's beasts (Dan 7:3-14; Rev 13:1-7), it seems clear that John did not expect Rome to exhaust the image's significance. The spirit of evil empire outlived Rome—though it is ultimately as doomed as were Babylon and Rome.

Similarly, Paul applies the figure of Eve to some women in 1 Tim 2:13-14 but to the Corinthian church in 2 Cor 11:3. In 1 Tim 5:14, women ideally rule the domestic sphere, as in Greek ideals appropriate in Ephesus; in various OT passages, however, they sometimes work outside the home (Gen 29:9; Prov 31:16, 24; Song 1:6).⁴²

2. Needing Other Cultures' Input

In seeking to distinguish the permanent *message* of Scripture from its concrete cultural *applications* to its original audience, many Christians are often tempted to resort merely to our own assumptions, which are often culturally informed.⁴³ Western churches and denominations often even divide today over which issues are cultural and which are transcultural, although all texts, whatever transcultural points they communicate, are communicated in culturally and linguistically specific ways.

-The need for contextualization

Principles applied one way in biblical cultures may be expressed in different ways in different contexts. How many of us follow biblical building codes? Deuteronomy 22:8 requires a parapet or rim around the roof lest we incur bloodguilt. Israelites could perform various activities on their flat roofs and thus were required to have protection against someone falling off and getting hurt or dying.⁴⁴ Most of us today spend little time on our roofs, but the principle of caring for our neighbors' safety and following safety protocols remains.

Relating Scripture to target cultures, including our own, should also enable us to hear its message all the more graphically—hence not only its message of comfort, but sometimes also its offense. Thus, for example, so long as we do not understand the status expectations influential members of the Corinthian church faced from their peers, we can dismiss their spiritual immaturity easily. When we understand their situation better and find analogous situations in our own settings today, however, we cannot so easily evade the text's challenges to our own prejudices and behavior.

-Bad Contextualizations

In the opening scenarios, some of you may have differed concerning what the missionary should have done, but probably most of you agreed that the Hindu reader of John's Gospel missed the Gospel's point. Counter readings of texts by reading them in the wrong context create a new problem. Reading Scripture in the way that they had learned, Paul's rivals in Galatia mixed their own culture up with the gospel. When they went so far as to impose this mixture on believers in another culture, Paul resisted their approach as heretical.

Years ago I was involved with a Messianic Jewish congregation where believers danced and the men wore *kipphahs*. Some Gentile critics complained, "You shouldn't dance at all, much less dance the *horah!* Keeping Jewish customs is going

back to the law, just like the Judaizers in Galatia did!” My reply was that the problem in Galatia wasn’t that someone was Jewish—after all, so was Paul—but that they were imposing their customs on a different culture—just like these Gentile critics were doing. “You’re imposing your own customs on others,” I explained to our critics. “It doesn’t make it any better just because yours *aren’t* in the Bible.”

Those of you who know missions history know that bad contextualizations have been rife. For example, nineteenth-century western missionaries tried to impose a covering for women’s breasts in one culture; by ignoring the covering’s function as a status marker they provoked social unrest.⁴⁵ Elsewhere the same missionary concern with covering skin deeply wounded the spirits of some Christians using a culturally indigenous way to express their faith.⁴⁶

-Culture shapes what we think is cultural

These questions can arise in any culture. When I was teaching a course at the University of Jos in Plateau State, Nigeria, some students believed that the Bible commands women in all cultures to wear head coverings in church. Yet they laughed when I asked why none of them had greeted me with a holy kiss, commanded even more often in the Bible (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14).⁴⁷

Kisses did not function as a form of greeting in their culture, whereas head coverings functioned as markers of gender and modesty in their culture. As we explored the issues of sexual modesty, ostentation and class conflict in the text, however, most students recognized that the principles in the text went far beyond head coverings. Wearing head coverings was appropriate in their setting, but would not function the same way in all settings; some students complained that some other people even used head coverings ostentatiously or to attract cross-gender attention at times.

Some African friends have expressed surprise to learn that their cultures’ traditional customs of bridewealth and family-arranged marriages are more like the Jewish marriage arrangements of Jesus’ day than are expensive church weddings and wedding rings.⁴⁸ This insight proved valuable because some African Christians were living together for years while saving money for a church wedding. In this case, western missionaries imported the problematic custom.

Almost everyone today recognizes that at least some texts address local situations. Most Christians, for example, do not set aside money every Sunday to send to the church in Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-3). Still fewer have gone to Troas to try to find Paul’s cloak and take it to him (2 Tim 4:13). But texts have cultural and often situational contexts even when the case is not so obvious. As Christians, we

embrace all of Scripture as God's message, but we also must recognize that it is contextualized within languages and cultures. Indeed, the ultimate contextualization is the Word that became flesh as a first-century Galilean Jewish man, in a particularity that could better identify with us in our particularities than could an impossibly generic, cultureless person.

Much of the New Testament simply reinforces the basic message of the apostolic gospel and its ethical implications, contextualizing it for a variety of concrete situations. In so doing, the New Testament writers provide us with models for how to apply their teachings in often quite different concrete situations today, whether in Nigeria, Nepal, Nicaragua, or North America.

-Blind Spots

Many theological interests are contextual; but one generation's theologizing or apologetics can simply become the next generation's tradition. It is often mission and encounter with new cultures that liberate theology from captivity to theologians' cultures.⁴⁹ New cultural settings raise new questions that sometimes contribute to important theological insights. This happened in biblical times as well; Scripture probably first speaks of Satan by name, for example, in texts of the Persian period. Whenever the resurrection belief⁵⁰ began, it is first articulated most explicitly in the Persian period, when it became a more relevant issue. New situations and interaction with surrounding cultures sometimes raise new questions that open the door for fresh divine answers, answers that sometimes resemble and sometimes resist those of the surrounding culture.

We all have cultural blind spots, and too often we are ready to remove the splinter from someone else's eye before removing the log from our own (Matt 7:3). For example, most North American evangelicals are more inclined to think of syncretism in terms of, say, East Asian ancestor veneration than in terms of worshiping both God and mammon, though Jesus explicitly deemed the latter idolatry (Matt 6:24; Luke 16:13). In our culture, secularism and unbridled consumerism compete with Christian values; monotheism is not supposed to be one God or less.

Similarly, some western Christians quick to criticize allusions from Christians in other cultures to pagan traditions nevertheless tell their children about tooth fairies, an Easter bunny, divinatory traditions about seasonal activity of groundhogs, or recount tales of morally positive witches and wizards. Western Christians who are confident that they can isolate such story worlds from the sphere of faith often do not accord such confidence to mature Christians in other cultures.

This problem is normally most acute for members of a dominant culture. Members of minority cultures have to learn about a majority culture to survive, but members of a dominant culture can live their entire lives without knowing much about minority cultures. For years I tacitly assumed that the Civil Rights Movement had resolved most real race issues in the U.S. until I became part of an African-American circle of friends who trusted me enough to share experiences they faced on an almost daily basis.⁵¹ I became ashamed of my ignorance—my brothers and sisters were experiencing wrongs that I did not believe happened because they were not part of my own experience.

Western Christian critiques of tribalism and ethnic strife in other parts of the world ring hollow to others who observe our own churches' racial segregation and ideological separation along racial and often cultural lines.⁵² One close Nigerian friend studying in the United States was disillusioned when he realized the entrenched racial arrogance in some of the very churches that sent the missionaries who taught his people. He also noted that many of these churches allowed women to do almost any ministry in Africa but almost no ministry in the U.S., because they seemed to view both women and Africans as second-class Christians.

-Prioritizing Texts

Most Christians function with a canon within a canon, prioritizing some texts and teachings above others. Martin Luther's analogy of faith hermeneutic created a canon within the canon fairly plainly, but various church traditions have functional canons all the time. Messianic Jewish believers thus, for example, rightly call Gentile Christians' attention to positive texts about the law or the Jewish people that we have historically neglected. Because of traditional Confucian values, Chinese and Korean believers rightly highlight for us westerners the values of honor and respect found in Scripture. In our western individualism, it is easy for us to neglect biblical teachings about honoring parents and those in authority; indeed, it seems almost a North American duty to criticize political leaders even when we voted for them!

At the same time, those of us shaped by the western Jesus revival of the 1970s or by some revolutionary contexts in Latin America may contribute emphases on justice and liberation even when these emphases lead to prophetic challenges to authority. The Confessing Church in Nazi Germany and antiapartheid Christians in South Africa rightly raised such challenges to churches subservient to demonic political ideologies. Too often Christian readings domesticate the Bible in ways acceptable to our own settings, but listening to Christians from different settings helps challenge our hermeneutical blind spots and canons within the

canon. This is true whether the corrections come from studying the history of interpretation (reception history) or from global voices of living churches today. We are the body of Christ, and each member brings needed gifts and insights.

3. Contextualization of Scripture versus cultural imperialism

Listening to other Christians today means listening to the global church. Western academics have long privileged their own readings and approaches and need to be made aware of their blind spots. At the same time, hearing Scripture means that we do not privilege the reading of any one culture. We all do our best to gather around the text and bring our varied readings to the table to learn from one another. Some traditional academic approaches have much to contribute, so long as they become much more culturally sensitive.

-Hearing today's global church

Today interpretive communities are far more diverse than they were a century ago. As we noted in the introduction to *Global Voices*, “Many estimate that in 1900 ... 16.7 percent of Christians lived in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. By 2010 it was 63.2 percent, and by 2025 it will be nearly 70 percent.”⁵³ In the past half-century, evangelicals on these continents have multiplied roughly twelve times over, and already represent more than 80 percent of evangelicals in the world, far outnumbering those in the West. Nevertheless, western evangelicals continue to control a majority of evangelical theological education, so as long as this remains the case they must take whatever steps necessary to serve the needs of the larger global church.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, “independent” churches have grown from 1 percent of Christians in 1900 to an estimated one-quarter by 2050.⁵⁵ Overlapping with this group at many points, charismatics and Pentecostals by 2050 will likely constitute one-third of Christians and 11 percent of the global population.⁵⁶ Addressing the future of global Christianity, Moonjang Lee notes, “The growing churches in the non-Western world are mostly Pentecostal-Charismatic, as seen in the Pentecostal movements in Latin America, Independent Churches in Africa, and Charismatic movements in Asia.” Observing that Christianity is losing its traditional western forms, Lee warns that it will need to fully recover its early charismatic character to survive and flourish.⁵⁷

Mainline historian Robert Bruce Mullin observes that already by the end of the twentieth century, there were “more Pentecostals worldwide” than mainline Protestants.⁵⁸ Sociologist Peter Berger contends that Pentecostalism, presumably

in the broad sense, “accounts for something like 80 percent of its [evangelical Protestantism’s] worldwide growth.”⁵⁹ Although such claims actually include an amorphous array of groups in their figure, it remains significant that many estimate nearly half a billion charismatics worldwide; a recent article in *IBMR* even estimates 614 million.⁶⁰ If such estimates are accurate, the charismatic branch of Christendom is now second in size in Christendom only to Roman Catholicism (with which it overlaps).

As the center of world Christianity has shifted to the Global South, the dominant Christian perspectives in the world have shifted with it.⁶¹ The interests of mid-twentieth-century western biblical scholarship are no longer the issues of most of the global church. The mushrooming church in the majority world is in desperate need of more biblical scholarship, but it must be a biblical scholarship in touch with the genuine issues confronted by the global church. The median Christian today is a young woman with limited education from the Global South, whose interests may well lie more with understanding biblical narrative than with parsing the details of *Formgeschichte*.⁶² As much as I appreciate and use historical-critical methods when addressing historical questions,⁶³ the hegemony of interest in whatever is the latest critical methodology the professor has learned are often taught to students as the best way to do scholarship, and then exported into contexts all over the world where those issues are utterly irrelevant to the lives of the churches.⁶⁴ Following R. S. Sugirtharajah, Davina Lopez warns that this approach has itself served as an intellectually colonizing activity.⁶⁵

Keep in mind that I am not referring to simply reading Scripture in its historical context, which we *must* do if we are to be consistent in genuine cross-cultural listening, as suggested above. The critics remain correct, however, that many of our traditional critical methods were designed to answer questions that prevail or prevailed in particular contexts (e.g., addressed to Enlightenment skepticism). Such questions remain valuable in their appropriate contexts, but other concerns take priority for believers in other contexts. Earlier Chinese church leader Watchman Nee, for example, warned that some western Christians’ theological acumen would benefit them little in his country “if when the need arose you could not cast out a demon.”⁶⁶

Moreover, as noted above, some of those readings are from cultures with values more like those directly addressed in Scripture, and sometimes ask questions more like the questions that the authors of Scripture were directly answering. Thus, for example, when Médine and I during our engagement did devotions in Genesis, I contributed insights on some passages from my limited knowledge of ancient Near Eastern sources. Médine, however, contributed more insights based on her

intuitive grasp of the cultures, especially in the patriarchal narratives. The births that I found so strange in Genesis were in fact not unfamiliar in her culture. Whereas I passed out at the only childbirth I ever witnessed—and that was only from a photograph—Médine had been present for midwifed births. Although the biblical patriarchs were seminomadic, Médine's experience of rural village culture allowed her to grasp their lifestyle better than I could with my almost exclusively suburban and urban experiences (until I moved to Wilmore).

-Bible teaching and cultural imperialism

Even outsiders who know a culture better than other outsiders come to it with blind spots. Historically many missionaries overcome many of the prejudices of their sending culture to identify with indigenous cultures, such as many Jesuit missionaries in East Asia, William Carey in India or much of Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission.⁶⁷ At the same time, other missionaries often imposed their culture, most forcefully where they supposed indigenous cultures inferior (such as in much of Africa), and sometimes conquerors introduced forms of Christianity by means of the sword (such as in much of Latin America).⁶⁸

To be sure, the caricatures of some nineteenth-century missions by some modern anthropologists often neglect the fact that nineteenth century anthropologists tended to be at least as racist and culturally imperialistic as other westerners.⁶⁹ Even in the heyday of colonialism, European evangelical missionaries to Africa were often the least ethnocentric of the Europeans (even if in some cases that was not saying much).⁷⁰ Missionaries who did not come from state churches aligned with colonial authorities also faced frequent opposition from these authorities, as did indigenous Christian movements like that of Prophet Braide in West Africa.⁷¹ Although many western missionaries accepted colonialism, some others fought its evils, including the slave trade, and faced the ridicule of their intellectual contemporaries in Europe who thought race theories had a scientific basis.⁷²

Nevertheless, westerners very often conducted missions from a culturally insensitive and even imperialistic standpoint.⁷³ Such approaches are not unlike Paul's opponents in Galatia who demanded conformity to the sending culture's norms for the converts to be fully integrated into the people of God.

-Cultural imperialism and postcolonial readings

Some sorts of texts readily address cultural imperialism, such as texts that provide positive models for mission (e.g., Paul in Acts)⁷⁴ or condemn negative models of mission (e.g., Paul's letter to the Galatians).⁷⁵ Postcolonial readings of

the Bible⁷⁶ highlight the presence of the empire,⁷⁷ which is relevant to various biblical texts. Many scholars, for example, see the imperial cult as part of the regular experience of the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation.⁷⁸ Some NT language of “peace” may also challenge the hollow Augustan *Pax Romana*.⁷⁹

Postcolonial approaches vary, but their examination of social power dynamics can be fruitful.⁸⁰ Although some early postcolonial studies did not value studying texts in their ancient context, such neglect is not inherent in postcolonial approaches per se;⁸¹ certainly social power was regularly an issue in ancient contexts, as both sociological and social-historical approaches often highlight. Neither needs postcolonial approaches to oppose biblical liberationist readings, although again early studies were sometimes used this way.⁸²

At the same time, some scholars have warned uncritical users of the postcolonial label to keep in mind that not all empires are the same; one cannot impose grids from one empire onto another without sensitivity to the differences.⁸³ Further, NT scholars’ use of “imperial studies” often needs to acquaint itself better with the diversity even in the Roman imperial cult, with its range of local and generational variation.⁸⁴ A wider concern from a traditional textual perspective, however, may be simply the danger of reading all texts through the same grid.⁸⁵

Particular postcolonial approaches vary among interpreters, often depending on their differing sociopolitical locations;⁸⁶ thus, for example, some Jewish feminists have complained about many majority world postcolonialists’ appropriation of western anti-Semitism in treating ancient Jews as religious colonizers.⁸⁷ Indeed, in some scholars’ hands, postcolonialism has become another opportunity for an educated elite to speak in the name of an underclass, and sometimes profit in academic status by so speaking, without relinquishing personal privilege or helping the oppressed.⁸⁸

-Post-postcolonial readings?

At the same time, part of the genius of postcolonial approaches is that they embrace readings from diverse social locations. Although the seminal works remain highly influential, as students continue to develop their own approaches for a range of contexts, one might even come to speak of emerging postcolonialisms, and to evaluate each on its own terms. Just as postcolonial approaches rightly challenge the hegemony of traditional western cultural assumptions, their very diversity should welcome voices that diverge from the views of some leading postcolonial thinkers.⁸⁹ That is, majority world biblical scholars should continue to feel free to forge their own ways based on their own convictions and communities

of interpretation, not beholden to anyone else's consensus, including that of groups within the academy.⁹⁰

Not everything done in the name of global readings truly involves cross-cultural listening. Some interpreters have created almost uniform interpretive grids through which they then filter all texts, often forcing awkward texts to serve incompatible political agendas just as earlier colonial readings often did (whether by forced readings or counter readings). Like colonial readings, they can serve as assertions of power within their limited framework.

-Brief excursus on method

Deconstructionists posited that the range of possible meanings of texts was unlimited, given the range of possible contexts in which to read them. Reader-response critics followed by observing the ways those texts are read in different settings. As a descriptive tool, reader-response criticism that identifies different interpretations in different interpretive communities can be helpful, laying new questions and interpretive options on the table for consideration.⁹¹

But in a more radical form, reader-response criticism locates meaning in the heads of interpretive communities. Interpretation thus becomes a political act, prescribing meaning for communities; its success rests not with correspondence to implied communicators' interests, but with interpreters' social or political power. Most communication and aesthetic literary artifice thus deconstruct into propaganda to achieve the interpreter's ends; critical readers now become those who resist implied authors' persuasive strategies and instead manipulate texts for the readers' own goals. When reader-response criticism moves from its descriptive role to a prescriptive one, it ranks some meanings as more authoritative than others, except that the new authority lies in the interpreter, the head of the interpretive community, or the socially constructed values or politics favored by the interpreter.

The descriptive approach is valuable by bringing all voices to the table; the prescriptive approach, however, raises questions for those who seek to hear the text as God's word. If we have the Spirit, do we really need to control politically the reading of texts in God's community, the church, where the least should be the greatest? Is it the voice of the most powerful interpreters or the divine Author's voice for which we relentlessly pursue the canonical texts? We recognize (descriptively) the reality of social power dynamics in influencing interpretation, a reality that confronts us on both popular and academic levels. But we resist these not by establishing our own following but by seeking to hear the biblical texts in ways faithful to its first contexts that also challenge us afresh in our own, and helping others to do so.⁹²

-Avoid new ethnocentrism

Listening to other voices is crucial; making any particular set of voices normative, however, can bring us back to the ethnocentric approach with which we began.⁹³ Proponents can end up imposing their group's ideology uniformly on texts and calling this ideological lens a method.⁹⁴ One danger, regardless of how commendable one's ideology might be, is that one simply rearticulates the same ideology in multiple ways, rather than being challenged by new insights from the text that stand outside one's range of vision.

Popular readers have often made a study Bible's notes the norm. Some readers today make patristic interpreters the norm through which we must read Scripture.⁹⁵ Some feminist or liberationist interpreters make their hermeneutical grids the norm for responsible interpretation, sometimes challenging other liberationist readings as deficient in a particular version of liberationism.⁹⁶ Some make majority world voices the norm, although in most cases westerners are listening only to the voices of a published, educated minority within the majority world rather than voices from the grassroots.⁹⁷ In many cases academicians listen only to fellow academicians, and often of those of the same basic theological persuasions, whatever their cultures.

Whenever new voices are made the transcultural norm, we weaken our case against Eurocentric interpreters continuing to assume, as they often have, that their own perspective is the norm. If any group constitutes the new dominant norm for all, we have returned to ethnocentrism, nationalism, racism, sexism and the like.

It should nevertheless be pointed out that most contemporary voices—say, African theology, or Latino/a theology—do not seek to make their own voice the transcultural norm, but only to have a place at the table. Western readings have been so long privileged that western readers who really want to hear other voices now have an obligation to wear hearing aids or to provide non-western voices with superior sound systems. Providing safe space and a better hearing for non-dominant voices is needed to transcend the blinders of the dominant culture.

Each culture has contributions to make as well as some blind spots; dominant cultures tend to be blinder because they alone have had freedom to function without attention to other voices. The point is that our ultimate goal is not any single group's hegemony, but conversation, engaged in the loving and humble spirit of Christ.

Part II: Examples where majority world interpreters bring us closer to the text

In principle, many of us are willing to learn from believers in a range of cultures. But what happens when their input challenges centuries-old assumptions in our own cultures? We are not obligated to abandon our assumptions uncritically, but often believers from other cultures can help us in the areas where our assumptions reflect cultural blind spots.

Here I summarize two sample areas where believers in many parts of the world may help the western church and western seminaries challenge traditional modern western materialism: the issues of spirits and miracles. Not everything that all believers say in these contexts is compatible with biblical revelation, but much of it poses a potent challenge to the typical western academic dismissal of these notions.

1. Case Study I: Spirits⁹⁸

Missionary anthropologist Paul Hiebert notes that Christians in India addressed a cultural blind spot that he carried: his scientific training stressed a naturalistic, empirical approach; his theological training emphasized theistic explanations. But he had lacked a functional category for superhuman activity other than that of the supreme God, despite its prevalence in parts of Scripture as well as many cultures' belief in it. In recent centuries, western thought had left no intermediate category between God and the natural world, but in his dialogue with Indian Christians he came to believe that such a sphere existed.⁹⁹

There are dangers of seeing spirits more pervasively than Scripture warrants; it should be noted that cultures that believe in possession by a spirit are more likely to generate more cases of the phenomenon so interpreted.¹⁰⁰ Still, one suspects that most Western Christians probably recognize spiritual realities far less than Scripture suggests.

-Global experiences

John Pilch suggests that 90 percent of the world today accepts both "ordinary reality and non-ordinary reality," the latter including God and spirits.¹⁰¹ Further, anthropologist Erika Bourguignon points out that belief in spirit possession is widespread in varied cultures around the world, "as any reader of ethnographies knows."¹⁰² Already four decades ago she could attest spirit possession beliefs in nearly three-quarters of representative societies studied;¹⁰³ some subsequent studies

speak of altered states of consciousness in some 90 percent of societies.¹⁰⁴ Diverse cultures offer an array of different interpretive matrixes for these experiences,¹⁰⁵ although their experiences often do produce some similar beliefs even in very different societies.¹⁰⁶

Many early twentieth-century Presbyterian missionaries to Korea learned in seminary that spirits were not real, but most came to believe otherwise in the context of ministry alongside local Korean believers.¹⁰⁷ A generation ago noted western missiologist Stephen Neill warned that it was next to impossible to convince most majority world Christians “that evil spirits do not exist.”¹⁰⁸ More recently, Peruvian missiologist Samuel Escobar reports a conversation with an indigenous teacher from the Peruvian jungle. When local people noticed demons in the western linguist’s translation of Mark, the western linguist explained that such spirits were only for the first century. While the local teacher respected the linguist, however, he insisted that their local environment matched better what they found in Mark’s Gospel: “we know that there really are demons and spirits; they’re around here.”¹⁰⁹

African scholar John S. Mbiti dismisses the ignorance of westerners who deny spirits and witchcraft, which are local realities.¹¹⁰ Africans often report encounters with spirits as genuine experiences. A Ghanaian physician trained in the west, for example, found his arm paralyzed by electricity for a few hours after touching a patient who had been to “fetish priests.”¹¹¹ Power encounters have often sparked church growth; thus tens of thousands of followers of traditional religions became Christians after early twentieth-century African figures such as Garrick Sokari Braide or William Wadé Harris contested the older spiritual powers.¹¹² Such power encounters are widely reported in the spread of Christianity elsewhere, such as in Haiti, India and the Philippines.¹¹³ In many cases such power encounters have even led to priests of traditional religions becoming Christians.¹¹⁴

Not surprisingly, such experiences influence how believers approach what they view as analogous accounts in the biblical text.¹¹⁵ In one African theological journal a Tanzanian Lutheran writer notes, “the phenomenon of demon possession is a hard reality with which a good number of East African Christians struggle daily.” In contrast to westerners, East Africans thus hear “the biblical accounts ... not as myths, but as objective accounts of actual experiences.”¹¹⁶

-Western academic versus indigenous interpretations

Paul Stoller, an anthropologist working among Songhay Muslims, was warned that he would face an attack of sorcery; that night he felt pressed down by a suffocating weight and heard threatening creatures on his roof. The affliction stopped only when he recalled the locally prescribed cure (reciting some Qur’anic

verses). This experience changed his perspective; indigenous understandings rather than his anthropological training enabled him to cope with the local reality.¹¹⁷ Publication of his experience initially stirred controversy and disdain from some peers, though it eventually led to accolades.¹¹⁸

Likewise, Solon Kimball, a noted anthropologist,¹¹⁹ notes his own completely unexpected experience of encountering an apparition during his fieldwork in Ireland.¹²⁰ He learned only afterward that many local people had encountered the same figure.¹²¹ Anthropologist Edith Turner confesses that “anthropology marveled briefly at Solon Kimball’s ghost story,” but then neglected its implications until other such stories began to be published.¹²² Turner herself became a believer in genuine spirits in 1985 when she witnessed what she calls “spirit substance” ejected from a patient during a Zambian spirit ritual.¹²³ From a pro-shamanist perspective, she now rejects her former dismissal of spirits as cultural imperialism.¹²⁴ She complains that some academics “believe that trained anthropologists ... understand aspects of a culture” better than people from that culture.¹²⁵

Anthropologists today often try to study experiences with alleged spirits from societies’ indigenous perspectives, rather than imposing a western interpretive grid on them.¹²⁶ In contrast to theologians and parapsychologists, most anthropologists seek to study not spiritual phenomena but indigenous *beliefs* about spirits.¹²⁷ Thus one study offers as a working definition of spirit possession “*any altered state of consciousness indigenously interpreted in terms of the influence of an alien spirit.*”¹²⁸ More recent studies work harder than most of their predecessors to take into account the indigenous frame of reference;¹²⁹ while traditional western categories, often from a medical perspective, make cross-cultural comparison easier, more contextualized and phenomenological approaches prove more epistemologically open.¹³⁰

Yet the approaches of anthropologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and indigenous interpreters often vary considerably from one another.¹³¹ Even in the west, there is no unanimity regarding the meaning of possession experiences. Thus, for example, anthropologists have criticized psychologists and psychiatrists for ethnocentric understandings of altered states of consciousness, whereas others have criticized anthropologists’ limited competence in psychological and psychiatric matters.¹³² Although reports from a range of sources provide valuable data, interpreting the data is often a matter of worldview. In many cases, indigenous approaches prove closer to the deliverance narratives of the Gospels than do western materialist interpretations.¹³³

Witchcraft

Despite frequent abuses and exaggerations,¹³⁴ some people in many African societies do seek to practice malevolent sorcery, as is inevitable in cultures that believe in sorcery.¹³⁵ Whatever the actual degree of efficacy, practitioners themselves, and often most of the culture, believes in their efficacy.¹³⁶ Despite the stigma in many places, some confessions of murder by sorcery appear in various societies.¹³⁷ One western lecturer, after having denied the existence of witches, was corrected by an African student who noted that he was a witch and believed that he had an effective record of killing people through witchcraft.¹³⁸ Many others believe that witchcraft in their context kills.¹³⁹ Voodoo deaths, associated with spirits, are a real phenomenon,¹⁴⁰ though western observers, usually seeking psychological rather than spiritual explanations, typically associate them with terror.¹⁴¹

Western missionaries from desupernaturalized Europe, which had declared belief in witchcraft heretical because of its own earlier excesses, often taught ideas unworkable for an African context.¹⁴² Local people often mistrusted traditional missionaries for ignoring sorcery.¹⁴³ Indeed, witchcraft beliefs fulfill roles within societies that if unaddressed by newer religious cultures can persist and grow.¹⁴⁴

Although harmful use of spiritual power may take different forms in different contexts, not all of which actually exercise the same degree of power, improper local accusations and responses to accusations may lead westerners to too readily dismiss all indigenous beliefs about witchcraft. Negative spiritual power and sometimes power encounters with its practitioners appears in a number of biblical texts (including Exod 7:10–12; Acts 8:9–13; 13:8–12; 19:11–20; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:13); the early centuries of Christianity include often still more elaborate stories of power encounters. My own views on the subject were forced to shift after an unexpected and worldview-shattering experience of power related to African traditional religions in December of 2008.¹⁴⁵

2. Case Study II: Miracles¹⁴⁶

Some western Christians made invaluable contributions to the world's improvement during the early English Enlightenment, especially through experimental science. Nevertheless, strands of the radical Enlightenment created false dichotomies that remain with the west to this day.

Many westerners doubt the possibility of miracles, an issue of no little importance for biblical studies, where, for example, some 30 percent of our earliest Gospel involves miracles and exorcisms.¹⁴⁷ An influential essay of David

Hume that most philosophers today regard as circularly argued heavily shaped this skepticism toward miracles.¹⁴⁸ The most relevant point for the present essay is that one of Hume's key arguments is explicitly ethnocentric, rejecting all testimony from nonwhites and non-western cultures, which Hume dismissed as "ignorant and barbarous."¹⁴⁹ Hume's racism is well documented, and it plays a significant role in his argument against miracles.¹⁵⁰ (His ethnocentrism included anti-Semitism, thus prejudice against ancient Jewish civilization.)¹⁵¹

Yet medical anthropology now rejects "medicocentrism," the ethnocentric view that only current western views of sickness and healing are authentic and that disputes the many claims to cures outside western views.¹⁵² Medical anthropology is a burgeoning field that has generated vast scholarship.¹⁵³ It also offers promise for biblical scholars; medical anthropology, John Pilch argues, "could help the exegete to adopt a transcultural stance"¹⁵⁴ when addressing healing claims in the NT.

-Widespread experiences

Social scientists have noted that, despite a variety of interpretations, "people from all cultures relate stories of spontaneous, miraculous cures," based on experiences that they have had.¹⁵⁵ In addition to differing in their paradigms involving paranormal phenomena, many other cultures are in general more holistic, expecting spiritual beliefs to impinge on physical needs in ways that western culture has often found uncomfortable.¹⁵⁶

Results from a recent Pew survey of Pentecostals and charismatics suggest that even in just the ten countries surveyed, some two hundred million Pentecostals and charismatics claim to have witnessed divine healing.¹⁵⁷ However we construe many of these experiences, the number is certainly too high to accommodate Hume's default claim of no reliable witnesses as a starting point for discussion. Although a large proportion of mainline Christians in the majority world fit the broad western definition of charismatic,¹⁵⁸ such beliefs and practices are not limited to Pentecostals and charismatics. In the same Pew survey, more than one-third of Christians worldwide who do *not* identify themselves as Pentecostal or charismatic claim to not simply believe in healing but to have "witnessed divine healings."¹⁵⁹

Western scholar of global Christianity Philip Jenkins notes that in general Christianity in the Global South is quite interested in "the immediate workings of the supernatural, through prophecy, visions, ecstatic utterances, and healing."¹⁶⁰ Historian Mark Noll observes that western Christians working in the majority world "consistently report that most Christian experience reflects a much stronger supernatural awareness than is characteristic of even charismatic and Pentecostal circles in the west."¹⁶¹

-Reading miracles with the global church

The above observations have some relevance for how we approach biblical narratives involving healings. Not surprisingly, readings of Scripture in the Global South often contrast starkly with modern western critics' readings.¹⁶² Thus a western writer with experience in Africa suggests that African culture offers better foundations for understanding biblical texts addressing such issues.¹⁶³

Most Christians in the majority world, less shaped by the modern western tradition of the radical Enlightenment, find stories of miraculous phenomena far less objectionable than do their western counterparts.¹⁶⁴ These other cultures offer a check on traditional western assumptions; as Lamin Sanneh, professor of missions and history at Yale Divinity School, points out, it is here that western culture "can encounter ... the gospel as it is being embraced by societies that had not been shaped by the Enlightenment," and are thus closer to the milieu of earliest Christianity.¹⁶⁵

Western missionaries to one region in Africa who merely left behind Gospels reportedly returned to find a flourishing church with NT-like miracles happening daily, "because there had been no missionaries to teach that such things were not to be taken literally."¹⁶⁶ An indigenous reading of Scripture often noticed patterns there "that the missionaries did not want [local believers] to see."¹⁶⁷

Thus, for example, one anthropologist recounts the experience of a fellow anthropologist named Jacob Loewen, who was doing Bible translation among the Choco people in Panama.¹⁶⁸ The wife of his host, Aureliano, was dying, and medicine was unavailable. While Loewen had translated the promise of healing in James 5:14–15, he felt that he lacked faith to pray. Nevertheless, reading this passage, the local believers prayed with him for her healing, and she rallied slightly. By the next morning, however, she was dying again, so the local believers anointed her with oil, without inviting Loewen, and this time she rose from the bed completely well. When Aureliano declared happily that God's Spirit had chased away the fever spirits, Loewen observed that they had not invited him and his western colleague to pray this time. Aureliano apologized but noted, "It doesn't work when you and David are in the circle. You and David don't really believe." Loewen was a devoted Christian, yet found "himself unable to transcend the secular assumptions and understandings of his particular birth society."¹⁶⁹

-Challenging western skepticism about miracles

As Justo González remarks in his commentary on Acts, the frequent denial of narratives' historicity because of their miracle reports employs a questionable epistemological criterion. Bultmann denied that modern people who

use scientific inventions could believe in miracles,¹⁷⁰ yet “what Bultmann declares to be impossible is not just possible, but even frequent.” Miracles are, González points out, affirmed in most Latino churches, despite the influence of the mechanistic worldview from much western thought.¹⁷¹ Cuban Lutheran bishop Ismael Laborde Figueras notes that it is hard to find Latin American Christians who do not believe in miracles.¹⁷²

Cross-cultural studies suggest that socialization rather than exposure to science accounts for most of the skepticism in some circles.¹⁷³ African psychologist Regina Eya warns that all claims to extranormal healing are dismissed by many western scholars, the credible along with the spurious, because of the inappropriate application of traditional western scientific paradigms to matters for which they were not designed.¹⁷⁴

Some Asian theologians have likewise complained that the approach of Bultmann’s school is irrelevant to Asian realities. The recent Methodist bishop of Malaysia, Hwa Yung, notes that Asian worldviews affirm miracles, angels, and hostile spirits.¹⁷⁵ It is actually the western, mechanistic, naturalistic Enlightenment worldview that is culturally and historically idiosyncratic.¹⁷⁶

Conclusion

Western interpreters have often accumulated historical insights helpful for reading Scripture, insights that, when properly evaluated and applied, should become property of the whole global church. Likewise, some cases where most western interpreters may learn from many majority world believers include the latter’s more common experiences with spirits, miracles, poverty, injustice, and so forth. The relative strengths and weaknesses of different parts of the global church will shift over time as we grow together, so long as we are all humble enough to learn from one another.

Because of our cultural blind spots, we all need one another’s help to hear Scripture fully. This is work for the entire global body of Christ, each bringing the contributions we are currently best equipped to contribute while also learning from others. The long-term hegemony of western interpreters often yields less humility, and thus greater blind spots, but all of us may learn from one another. This is the best way to forestall future hegemonies of different kinds.

We cannot understand the message of the inspired authors apart from the social and linguistic contexts in which they communicated; the message came to us already concretely enculturated. Neither can we fully engage or communicate their message, however, without grasping how it can engage us in our various

cultures today. Scripture's principles will be illustrated and reapplied in diverse ways in different cultures who hear and enculturate its message afresh.

End Notes

¹ N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 359, citing his teacher, G. B. Caird.

² Médine Moussounga Keener, Wilmore, KY, Sept. 19, 2012.

³ For this issue, see further e.g., Marvin K. Meyers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-Cultural Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 91-92; Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity and Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1979), 10, 21, 127, 130; M. G. Smith, "After Secondary Marriage, What?" *Ethnology* 19 (3, July 1980): 265-77, here 276-77.

⁴ Ancient Mediterranean peoples also readily recognized that different peoples had different customs; see e.g., Cornelius Nepos *Generals* pref. 5; Plutarch *Themistocles* 27.2-3; Sextus Empiricus *Eth.* passim.

⁵ See e.g., James D. G. Dunn, "Reconstructions of Corinthian Christianity and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians," 295-310 in *Christianity at Corinth: The Quest for the Pauline Church* (ed. Edward Adams and David G. Horrell; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 296. The ancient Mediterranean world was a "high context" culture that presumed "a broadly shared, generally well-understood knowledge of the context of anything referred to in conversation or in writing" (Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Social-Science Commentary on the Letters of Paul* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006], 5).

⁶ With e.g., Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 242. Some critics have complained that reading in historical context is a modern notion irrelevant to Greco-Roman texts. Even a cursory survey of Greco-Roman sources will expose the fallacy of this complaint, even if many interpreters were inconsistent in their application of the principle; see e.g., Aeschines *Ctesiphon* 33; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Thuc.* 29; Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.22; Aulus Gellius 20.1.6; Galen *Grief* 24b-26; Hermogenes *Issues* 60.13-14; 66.12-13; Heraclitus *Hom. Prob.* 79.8; Proclus *Poetics* Essay 6, Bk. 1, K145.27—K146.1; K150.12-13; Libanius *Maxim* 3.9. For literary context, see e.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Dem.* 46; Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.20-21; Seneca *Ep. Lucil.* 108.24-25; Apuleius *Apol.* 82-83; Philostratus *Hrk.* 11.5; Hermogenes *Method in Forceful Speaking* 13.428; for sensitivity to genres, e.g., Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.36; Maximus of Tyre *Or.* 38.4; Menander *Rhetor* 1.1.333.31—334.5; Philostratus *Vit. soph.* 2.33.628. Many modern theories have analogues in ancient philosophy; see Stephen M. Pogoloff, "Isocrates and Contemporary Hermeneutics," 338-62 in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (ed. Duane F. Watson; JSNTSup 50; Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 338-62.

⁷ See e.g., Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); idem, "Précis of Relevance: Communication and Cognition," *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 10 (1987): 697-754; Deirdre Wilson and Dan Sperber, "Representation and Relevance," 133-53 in *Mental Representations: The*

Interface between Language and Reality (ed. Ruth M. Kempson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); in biblical studies, see e.g., Karen H. Jobes, "Relevance Theory and the Translation of Scripture," *JETS* 50 (4, 2007): 773–97; Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); Gene L. Green, "Relevance Theory and Theological Interpretation: Thoughts on Metarepresentation," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 4 (2010): 75–90.

⁸ This is the purpose for my *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (rev. ed.; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2014).

⁹ See e.g., Ronald J. Sider, *Cry Justice: The Bible on Hunger and Poverty* (New York: Paulist, 1980); idem, *For They Shall be Fed: Scripture Readings and Prayers for a Just World* (Dallas: Word, 1997); in Wesley's teaching, see Theodore W. Jennings, Jr., *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).

¹⁰ I give more detail on this section of John in Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 1:584–628; more briefly, cf. idem, "Some New Testament Invitations to Ethnic Reconciliation," *Evangelical Quarterly* 75 (3, July 2003): 195–213, here 195–202; most briefly, idem, "The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation," 117–30, 181–90 in *The Gospel in Black & White: Theological Resources for Racial Reconciliation* (ed. Dennis L. Ockholm. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 124–25.

¹¹ E.g., m. Abot 1:5; Ketub. 7:6; t. Shab. 1:14; b. Ber. 43b, bar.; Erub. 53b; cf. Sir 9:9; 42:12; T. Reub. 6:1–2; y. Abod. Zar. 2:3, §1; Sot. 1:1, §7; among earlier Gentiles, cf. Euripides *Electra* 343–44; frg. 927; Theophrastus *Char.* 28.3; Livy 34.2.9; 34.4.1.

¹² See e.g., Justinian Inst. 2.10.6; Josephus *Ant.* 4.219; m. Yeb. 15:1, 8–10; 16:7; Ketub. 1:6–9; t. Yeb. 14:10; Sipra Vayyiqra Dibura Dehobah pq. 7.45.1.1. For qualifications of this general practice, see Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1996), 163–66; Robert Gordon Maccini, *Her Testimony Is True: Women as Witnesses according to John (JSNTSup 125; Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 63–97.*

¹³ For arguments against this, see Keener, *John*, 606–8.

¹⁴ Cf. e.g., Gen 24:11; Julia Pizzuto-Pomaco, "From Shame to Honour: Mediterranean Women in Romans 16" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 2003), 50; Dale F. Eckelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach* (2nd ed.; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1989), 163.

¹⁵ E.g., Sus 7 (Dan 13:7 LXX); Joseph and Asenath 3:2/3; Life of Aesop 6; Virgil *Georg.* 3.331–34; Columella *Trees* 12.1; Plutarch *Them.* 30.1; Longus 1.8, 25; 2.4; Aulus Gellius 17.2.10; Suetonius *Aug.* 78.1; Vesp. 21; Pliny *Ep.* 1.3.1; 7.4.4; 9.36.5. For the heat, see e.g., Aeschylus *Seven Ag. Thebes* 430–31; Sophocles *Antig.* 416; Apollonius *Rhodium* 2.739; 4.1312–13.

¹⁶ See e.g., Menander *Dyskolos* 200; Arrian *Alex.* 2.3.4; Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2003), 88; cf. Cicero *Pro Caelio* 15.36; probably Lam. Rab. 1:1, §19.

¹⁷ Cf. consideration in Jo-Ann A. Brant, “Husband Hunting: Characterization and Narrative Art in the Gospel of John,” *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (2, 1996): 205-23 (here 211-16).

¹⁸ See m. Nid. 4:2; t. Nid. 5:1-2; cf. m. Toh. 5:8.

¹⁹ See F. F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), 37-38; cf. John MacDonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 15. The possible exception in Josephus Ant. 18.85-87 is apparently an eschatological prophet, who might be regarded as the prophet like Moses.

²⁰ For the conflicts over these holy sites, see e.g., Josephus Ant. 11.310, 346-47; 12.10, 259; 13.74; 18.10; War 1.62-63; 2.237.

²¹ For the return of the “implied author” in interpretation, see Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 69-72.

²² See e.g., Ernst-August Gutt, *Relevance Theory: A Guide to Successful Communication in Translation* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics; New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 33; note above.

²³ For some earlier Western evangelical discussions of contextualization and hermeneutics see e.g., the essays in D. A. Carson, ed., *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985); Craig Blomberg, “The Globalization of Hermeneutics,” *JETS* 38 (4, Dec. 1995): 581-93; for some more recent contextual approaches, see e.g., Samuel Jayakumar, *Mission Reader: Historical Models for Wholistic Mission in the Indian Context* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 2002); Ivan Satyavrata, *God has not left himself without a witness* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

²⁴ Some of these examples reflect a response paper I presented to the Institute of Biblical Research, Orlando, Nov. 1998.

²⁵ See more fully my “The Tabernacle and Contextual Worship,” *Asbury Journal* 67 (1, 2012): 127-38.

²⁶ Harold H. Nelson, “The Egyptian Temple,” 147-58 in *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader* (ed. G. Ernest Wright and David Noel Freedman; Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961), 147; John Atwood Scott, “The Pattern of the Tabernacle” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1965), 314; Alexander Badawy, *A History of Egyptian Architecture: The Empire (1580-1085 B.C.)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1968), 176-77. In the Levant, see J. Gray, “Ugarit,” 145-67 in *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, ed. D. Winton Thomas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 146-7; William G. Dever, “The MB IIC Stratifications In the Northwest Gate Area At Shechem,” *BASOR* 216 (Dec. 1974): 43.

²⁷ Nelson, “Temple,” 148-49; Badawy, *Architecture*, 177.

²⁸ E.g., Kenneth A. Kitchen, “Some Egyptian Background to the Old Testament,” *TynBul* 5 (16, 1960): 4–18, here 8-11; Nelson, “Egyptian Temple,” 148-49; Carol Meyers, *Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 220.

²⁹ Menahem Haran, “The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle,” *HUCA* 36 (1965): 191–226 (here 202, 206).

³⁰ See e.g., Margaret A. Murray, *The Splendor That Was Egypt* (New York: Hawthorn, 1963), 183-84; Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. Israel Abrahams. Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 322-23; O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1972), 149-50; Meyers, *Exodus*, 221.

³¹ Also contrast the adjoining shrines for tutelary deities in many Egyptian temples (Badawy, *Architecture*, 180).

³² See e.g., Craig Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 80-81. Adapting to local customs could be viewed positively (Cornelius Nepos 7.11.2-6), because it was widely understood that customs varied in different lands (e.g., Apollonius Rhodius 2.1017). Aristocratic ideology regularly opposed, however, any pandering to the masses, which they viewed as demagoguery (e.g., Aristophanes *Acharnians* 371-373; *Frogs* 419; Aristotle *Pol.* 4.4.4-7, 1292a; Diodorus Siculus 10.7.3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 7.8.1; 7.45.4; 7.56.2; Livy 6.11.7; Appian *R.H.* 2.9; 3.7.1). Philosophers and moralists who appealed to the masses thus risked alienating those of higher status (Aristotle *Rhet.* 2.20.5, 1393b; Walter L. Liefeld, “The Wandering Preacher As a Social Figure in the Roman Empire” [Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1967], 39, 59, 162), which Paul probably did in Corinth (cf. Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* [New Haven: Yale, 1990], 92-116).

³³ Adapting to one’s audience was good rhetoric (Quintilian *Inst.* 3.7.24; for examples, see Suetonius *Rhet.* 6; Eunapius *Lives* 495-96).

³⁴ See more fully my “Paul’s ‘Friends’ the Asiarchs (Acts 19.31),” *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 3 (2006): 134-41.

³⁵ See discussion in Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (4 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012-15), 3:3113-43, esp. 3141-43.

³⁶ Cf. Charillus 2 in Plut. *Saying of Spartans*, *Mor.* 232C; Valerius Maximus 5.3.10-12; *m. Ketub.* 7:6; cf. in traditional Middle Eastern culture, Carol Delaney, “Seeds of Honor, Fields of Shame,” 35-48 in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (ed. David D. Gilmore; American Anthropological Association Monographs 22; Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 42; Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1989), 165. See more fully Craig Keener, *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 19-69; Ramsay MacMullen, “Women in Public in the Roman Empire,” *Historia* 29 (1980): 217-18; and especially my “Head coverings,” 442-47 in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000).

³⁷ Cf. e.g., Josephus *Ant.* 11.276; 2 *Bar.* 39:4-7; Sipre *Deut.* 317.4.2; 320.2.3; Tg. Neof. 1 on Gen 15:12. Note also the probable interpretation of

Daniel's Kittim in the latest Qumran texts as Romans; see Dupont-Sommer, A. *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (trans. Geza Vermes; Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), 349; Geza Vermes, "Historiographical Elements in the Qumran Writings: A Synopsis of the Textual Evidence," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 58 (1, 2007): 121-39. Earlier Greeks and Romans envisioned four eastern empires—though replacing Babylon with Assyria—before adding Rome; see Velleius Paterculus Compendium 1.6.6 (though some view this as a gloss); Doron Mendels, "The Five Empires: A Note on a Propagandistic Topos," *American Journal of Philology* 102 (3, 1981): 330-37; cf. Sib. Or. 8.6-11.

³⁸ E.g., Sib. Or. 5.143, 159-61; probably 1 Pet 5:13 (with Papias frg. 21.2); 4 Ezra and 2 Bar. passim. See discussion in e.g., Theodor H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 318; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 218; J. Nelson Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse (JSNTSup 132; Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 149-50.*

³⁹ See e.g., Sib. Or. 2.18; 11.113-16; Dionysius of Halicarnassus Ant. rom. 4.13.2-3; Varro Latin Language 5.7.41; Ovid Tristia 1.5.69-70; Pliny N.H. 3.5.66; Silius Italicus 10.586; 12.608; Statius Silvae 2.3.21; 4.1.6-7; Symmachus Ep. 1.12.3. For the annual festival celebrating Rome's founding on these hills, see Suetonius Dom. 4.5.

⁴⁰ E.g., Diodorus Siculus 1.4.3; Dionysius of Halicarnassus Ant. rom. 1.9.1; Cicero Phil. 4.6.15.

⁴¹ See e.g., Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 352-66; especially Pliny N.H. 37.78.204.

⁴² I elaborate these questions further in my Paul, *Women & Wives*.

⁴³ Of course, most scholars are much more nuanced in their hermeneutic; see e.g., William J. Webb, *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (foreword by Darrell L. Bock; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001).

⁴⁴ E.g., Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 289.

⁴⁵ Penelope Carson, "Christianity, Colonialism, and Hinduism in Kerala: Integration, Adaptation, or Confrontation?" 127-54 in *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-cultural Communication Since 1500, with Special Reference to Caste, Conversion, and Colonialism* (ed. Robert Eric Frykenberg and Elaine M. Low; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 148-49; Jayachitra Lalitha, "Postcolonial Feminism, the Bible and Native Indian Women," 75-87 in *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations: Global Awakenings in Theology and Practice* (ed. Kay Higuera Smith, Jayachitra Lalitha and L. Daniel Hawk; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 82. For missionaries' insistence on local women covering their breasts, see also e.g., Clifford Putney, *Missionaries in Hawai'i: The Lives of Peter and Fanny Gulick, 1797-1883* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2010), 41.

⁴⁶ Marvin K. Mayers, *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Crosscultural Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 204 (cf. 207).

⁴⁷ The kiss was a form of greeting widely practiced in ancient Mediterranean culture (e.g., Homer *Od.* 21.224-27; Euripides *Androm.* 416; Virgil *Georg.* 2.523; Ovid *Metam.* 2.430-31; Artemidorus *Oneir.* 2.2; 1 *Esd* 4:47; t. Hag. 2:1); see in more detail my “Kiss, Kissing,” 628–29 in *Dictionary of Background*. For head coverings, see comment in the earlier note.

⁴⁸ See e.g., my *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), Matthew, 89-94; idem, “Marriage,” 680-93 in *Dictionary of Background*, on betrothal, dowry, and other customs.

⁴⁹ Cf. Jonathan J. Bonk, “Missions and the Liberation of Theology,” *IBMR* 34 (4, Oct. 2010): 13-94. An increasing number of theologians today do write in the context of the new global church, e.g., Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: how the global church is influencing the way we think about and discuss theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007); Amos Yong with Jonathan A. Anderson, *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014).

⁵⁰ On resurrection in the OT, see especially Mamy Raharimanantsoa, *Mort et Espérance selon la Bible Hébraïque* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006); for debates about Persian influence on this belief, see e.g., Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Persia and the Bible* (foreword by Donald J. Wiseman; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 303, 452-61.

⁵¹ The experience appears at greater length in Glenn Ustry and Craig S. Keener, *Black Man's Religion: Can Christianity Be Afrocentric?* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 126-28; cf. also http://www.huffingtonpost.com/craig-s-keener/learning-the-reality-of-racism_b_1510468.html.

⁵² Minority churches have valuable cultural distinctives and in some areas integration is demographically impossible (whether in rural Iowa or for the nearly all-black church we attended in Philadelphia). Of greater concern is the stark political polarization—and lack of honest dialogue concerning it—between Christians of different racial groups who share nearly identical theologies (compare evangelicals and the mainstream Black church in e.g., Corwin E. Smidt, *American Evangelicals Today* [Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013], 104, 111, 116, 189, 194, 196, 199).

⁵³ Craig S. Keener and M. Daniel Carroll R., “Introduction,” 1-4 in *Global Voices: Reading the Bible in the Majority World* (ed. Craig Keener and M. Daniel Carroll R; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2013), 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* These statistics are from Jason Mandryk, *Operation World* (7th ed.; Colorado Springs: Biblica, 2010), 3, 5; Jehu J. Hanciles, Jehu J. *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2008), 121 (noting also that by 2050 “only about one-fifth of the world’s Christians will be white”); see further Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity, 1910–2010* (Edinburgh: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2009); David B. Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2nd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and the regular updates in *IBMR*.

⁵⁵ Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church: History, Trends and Possibilities* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011), 113.

⁵⁶ Johnstone, *Future*, 125.

⁵⁷ Moonjang Lee, "Future of Global Christianity," 104-5 in *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 105.

⁵⁸ Robert Bruce Mullin, *A Short World History of Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 211; cf. similarly Mark A. Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2009), 32.

⁵⁹ Peter L. Berger, "Four Faces of Global Culture," pages 419–27 in *Globalization and the Challenges of a New Century: A Reader* (ed. Patrick O'Meara, Howard D. Mehlinger, and Matthew Krain; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 425. Cf. Stephen Tomkins, *A Short History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 220: "the fastest-growing form of Christianity ever." For massive church growth associated with miracles already by 1981, see Christiaan Rudolph De Wet, "Signs and Wonders in Church Growth" (MA thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1981); since then, e.g., Hwa Yung, "The Integrity of Mission in the Light of the Gospel: Bearing the Witness of the Spirit," *Mission Studies* 24 (2007): 169–88 (here 173-75); J. P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle: Recover the Christian Mind, Renovate the Soul, Restore the Spirit's Power* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 166–67.

⁶⁰ Todd M. Johnson, David B. Barrett, and Peter F. Crossing, "Christianity 2010: A View from the New Atlas of Global Christianity," *IBMR* 34 (1, Jan. 2010): 29–36 (here 36); see further Johnson and Ross, *Atlas*, 102; more cautiously, Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11.

⁶¹ Mark Laing, "The Changing Face of Mission: Implications for the Southern Shift in Christianity," *Missiology* 34 (2, April 2006): 165–77 (here 165).

⁶² Indeed, ethnocentric assumptions are embedded not only in some historical-critical interests but also in some of their approaches. Thus for example some suggest that the late dating of laws in the traditional Documentary Hypothesis reflects ethnocentric Hegelian assumptions rather than the actual development and dating of laws in ancient Near Eastern cultures; see e.g., discussions in Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 21; G. Herbert Livingston, *The Pentateuch in Its Cultural Environment* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 227, 229-30; cf. R. N. Whybray, "The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study (*JSOTS* 53; Sheffield, U.K.: JSOT Press, 1987), 46-47; Bernard M. Levinson, "Introduction," 1-14 in *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law: Revision, Interpolation and Development* (ed. Bernard M. Levinson; *JSOTS* 181; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 10-11.

⁶³ E.g., Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); idem, "Assumptions in Historical Jesus Research: Using Ancient Biographies and Disciples' Traditioning as a Control," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9 (1, 2011): 26-58.

⁶⁴ For postcolonial criticism of the contexts in which traditional historical-critical methods originated, note observations by Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 119-32, as cited in Efraín Agosto, "Foreword," xiii-xvi in *Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial*

Eyes (ed. Christopher D. Stanley; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), xiv. Many Western scholars today also challenge the objectivity of the historical-critical paradigm; see e.g., the summary in David G. Horrell and Edward Adams, "Introduction: The Scholarly Quest for Paul's Church at Corinth: A Critical Survey," 1-43 in *Christianity at Corinth*, 42.

⁶⁵ Davina C. Lopez, "Visualizing Significant Otherness: Reimagining Paul(ine Studies) through Hybrid Lenses," 74-94 in *Colonized Apostle*, 76, citing R. S. Sugirtharajah, "Catching the Post or How I Became an Accidental Theorist," in *Shaping a Global Theological Mind*, ed. Darren C. Marks (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 176-85; see also the concern in Robert S. Heaney, "Conversion to Coloniality: Avoiding the Colonization of Method," *IntRevMiss* 97 (384-385, Jan. 2008): 65-77 (here 68-69, 77). Today many voices challenge dominant paradigms' pretensions to objectivity; see e.g., Kathryn J. Smith, "From Evangelical Tolerance to Imperial Prejudice? Teaching Postcolonial Biblical Studies in a Westernized, Confessional Setting," *Christian Scholar's Review* 37 (4, 2008): 447-64; Christopher D. Stanley, "Introduction," 3-7 in *Colonized Apostle*, 3; Jae Won Lee, "Paul, Nation, and Nationalism: A Korean Postcolonial Perspective," 223-35 in *Colonized Apostle*, 223; Teri R. Merrick, "Tracing the Metanarrative of Colonialism and Its Legacy," 108-20 in *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations*.

⁶⁶ Watchman Nee in Angus Kinnear, *Against the Tide: The Story of Watchman Nee* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1978), 152. Even some who do not share belief in spirits themselves argue that exorcism might constitute the most culturally sensitive therapy for those for whom possession is the most culturally intelligible explanation for their condition; see e.g., Alfonso Martínez-Taboas, "Psychogenic Seizures in an Espiritismo Context: The Role of Culturally Sensitive Psychotherapy," *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 42 (1, 2005): 6-13; Irving Hexham, "Theology, Exorcism, and the Amplification of Deviancy," *EnQ* 49 (1977): 111-16; Michael Singleton, "Spirits and 'Spiritual Direction': The Pastoral Counselling of the Possessed," 471-78 in *Christianity in Independent Africa* (ed. Edward Fasholé-Luke et al.; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 478; Ruth-Inge Heinze, "Introduction," 1-18 in *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on the Study of Shamanism and Alternate Modes of Healing*, Held at the St. Sabina Center, San Rafael, California, September 5-7, 1987 (ed. Ruth-Inge Heinze. N.p.; Independent Scholars of Asia; Madison, Wis.: A-R Editions, 1988), 14.

⁶⁷ See on the Jesuits, e.g., Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1984); Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1964), 162-65, 183-94; Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 59-66. On William Carey, see e.g., *Christian History* 36 (1992); on Hudson Taylor, see e.g., *Christian History* 52 (1996).

⁶⁸ For instances of missions' linkage with colonial conquest, see e.g., Enrique Dussel, *A History of the Church in Latin America: Colonialism to Liberation (1492-1979)* (trans. Alan Neely; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 41-44, 59; Klaus Koschorke, Frieder Ludwig, and Mariano Delgado, eds., with Roland Spliesgart, *A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450-1990: A Documentary Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 277-89; Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *Modern Christianity from 1454-1800* (vol. 2 of *History of the World Christian*

Movement; Markynoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2012), 11-21; Pablo A. Deiros, "Cross & Sword," *Christian History* 35 (1992): 30-31.

⁶⁹ See e.g., John S. Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 60-61; Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1991), 371.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa from Antiquity to the Present* (Lawrenceville, NJ: Africa World Press; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 75.

⁷¹ Cf. e.g., Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 36, 167; Yusufu Turaki, "The British Colonial Legacy in Northern Nigeria" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1982); Isichei, *History*, 233; Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 341.

⁷² Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 140. For church teaching being used for both colonialism and anticolonialism in different periods, cf. e.g., John Stuart, *British Missionaries and the End of Empire: East, Central, and Southern Africa, 1939-64* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 193-94.

⁷³ See e.g., accounts in Heaney, "Conversion to Coloniality," 73; L. Daniel Hawk and Richard L. Twiss, "From Good: 'The only good Indian is a dead Indian' to Better: 'Kill the Indian and save the man' to Best: 'Old things pass away all things become white!': An American Hermeneutic of Colonization," 47-60 in *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations*, 47-54; Gregory Lee Cuéllar and Randy S. Woodley, "North American Mission and Motive: Following the Markers," pp. 61-74 in *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations*, 63-69.

⁷⁴ See e.g., my "Between Asia and Europe: Postcolonial Mission in Acts 16:8-10," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 11 (1-2, 2008): 3-14, which suggests that Acts 16 depicts the reversal of Greek and Roman colonialism as an Asian faith moves into Europe.

⁷⁵ See e.g., Aliou Cissé Niang, *Faith and Freedom in Galatia and Senegal: The Apostle Paul, Colonists and Sending Gods* (BIS 97; Leiden: Brill, 2009); David A. deSilva, *Global Readings: A Sri Lankan Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade, 2011).

⁷⁶ See Stephen D. Moore, and Fernando F. Segovia, *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (London: T&T Clark, 2005); Jeremy Punt, "Postcolonial biblical criticism in South Africa: Some mind and road mapping," *Neotestamentica* 37 (1, 2003): 59-85; F. England, "Mapping Postcolonial Biblical Criticism in South Africa," *Neotestamentica* 38 (1, 2004): 88-99; for examples, see Stanley, *Colonized Apostle*, the surveys in Werner Kahl, "Akademische Bibelinterpretation in Afrika, Lateinamerika und Asien angesichts der Globalisierung," *Verkündigung und Forschung* 54 (1, 2009): 45-58; Volker Küster, "Von der Kontextualisierung zur Lokalisierung: Interkulturelle Theologie und postkoloniale Kritik," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 134 (3, 2009): 261-278; for the Gospels and Acts, Judith A. Diehl, "Anti-Imperial Rhetoric in the New Testament," *Currents in Biblical Research* 10 (1, 2011): 9-52; for newer approaches in general, e.g., Anders Runesson, "Bringing Out of the Treasure What Is New and Old: Trajectories in New Testament Research Today," *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* 87 (1, 2011): 2-13.

⁷⁷ See e.g., C. I. D. Joy, “Transitions and Trajectories in the Early Christian Community in the Context of Pluralism and Mission in Acts: A Postcolonial Reading,” *BiBb* 32 (4, 2006): 326–41; Stephen D. Moore, “The Empire of God and the Postcolonial Era,” *Reflections* 95 (1, 2008): 69–71; idem, “The ‘Turn to Empire’ in Biblical Studies,” *Scuola Cattolica* 35 (1, 2012): 19–27; Jeremy Punt, “Empire as Material Setting and Heuristic Grid for New Testament Interpretation: Comments on the Value of Postcolonial Criticism,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 66 (1, 2010): 330, 7; Raimundo Cesar Barreto, “How Who I Am Affects What I See: Reading Mark with Latin American Eyes,” *Review & Expositor* 107 (3, 2010): 395–410.

⁷⁸ See already William M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1904; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 231–32, 283, 366–67, 410.

⁷⁹ See arguments in Gosnell L. Yorke, “Hearing the Politics of Peace in Ephesians: A Proposal from an African Postcolonial Perspective,” *JSNT* 30 (1, 2007): 113–27; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1799–1800; and most clearly on 1 Thess 5, on which see e.g., Jeffrey D. Weima, “‘Peace and Security’ (1 Thess 5.3): Prophetic Warning or Political Propaganda?” *NTS* 58 (2012): 331–59.

⁸⁰ See e.g., Lazare S. Rukundwa, “Postcolonial Theory as a Hermeneutical Tool for Biblical Reading,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 64 (1, 2008): 339–51.

⁸¹ See helpfully here Lopez, “Visualizing,” 93; idem, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul’s Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 10.

⁸² Lopez, *Apostle*, 10, rightly warning that when the approach is applied with hostility toward Scripture, it ends up undermining Scripture’s potential for liberating and transforming people. Wheaton professor Gene Green, who supports an evangelical postcolonial approach, also warns that the approach must be constructive as well as critical. He further raises the need for genuinely evangelical interpreters to balance postcolonial criticism with evangelical “commitments to Scripture and Christ” (Gene Green, “A Response to the Postcolonial Roundtable: Promises, Problems and Prospects,” 19–28 in *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations*, 22).

⁸³ See Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, “Carneades and the Conceit of Rome: Transhistorical Approaches to Imperialism,” *Greece & Rome* 57 (1, 2010): 1–20.

⁸⁴ See Karl Galinsky, “The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider?” 1–21 in *Rome and Religion: A cross-disciplinary dialogue on the imperial cult* (ed. Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan L. Reed; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011).

⁸⁵ Robert H. Gundry, “Richard A. Horsley’s Hearing the Whole Story: A Critical Review of its Postcolonial Slant,” *JSNT* 26 (2, 2003): 131–49, contends that Richard Horsley wrongly reads Mark’s Gospel as anticolonial, but Horsley (*JSNT* 26 [2, 2003]: 151–69) challenges Gundry’s reading of Horsley’s book.

⁸⁶ See discussion in Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (LNTS 340; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 14–34; cf. idem, “Mission amidst Affluence and Affliction,” *Doon Theological Journal* 5 (1, 2008): 21–42, here 27–28.

Cf. the warning in Stephen D. Moore, “Paul after Empire,” pages 9–23 in *Colonized Apostle*, 21–23.

⁸⁷ See A.-J. Levine, “The Disease of Postcolonial New Testament Studies and the Hermeneutics of Healing,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20 (1, 2004): 91-99.

⁸⁸ Gilberto Lozano and Federico A. Roth, “The Problem and Promise of Praxis in Postcolonial Criticism,” 183-96 in *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations*, 187-88, following Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 358; and Vinoth Ramachandra, *Subverting Global Myths: Theology and the Public Issues Shaping Our World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008), 240-42.

⁸⁹ For postcolonial theory’s ability to accommodate multiple and at times even competing perspectives, see e.g., Lawrence M. Wills, “A Response to the Roundtable Discussion ‘Anti-Judaism and Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation,’” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 20 (2, 2004): 189-192.

⁹⁰ For concerns that theological reconstructions from Western-trained elites often neglect the actual grassroots beliefs of Majority World Christians, see e.g., Simon Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 22-27; cf. Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (2nd ed.; Regnum Studies in Mission; Oxford: Regnum, 2014), xiv.

⁹¹ For examples of various readings from different social locations, see e.g., Barreto, “Affects What I See”; Keener and Carroll, *Global Voices*; Daniel Patte, ed., *Global Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004).

⁹² Cf. Matt 23:8: when we make disciples, it must be for Jesus, not for ourselves.

⁹³ Given Jesus’s teachings, a hybridized evangelical postcolonialism, like any other expression of Christian faith, must start with Christ as unrivaled Lord (cf. Usry and Keener, *Religion*, 140n4); an academic approach or an ethnic loyalty dare not become so hegemonic that it replaces Christ for Christians. The Jerusalem church effectively contextualized (Acts 21:20) but nationalism and ethnocentrism limited proper unity with other (in this case, Gentile) Christians (21:21; see discussion in Keener, *Acts*, 3:3118-32).

⁹⁴ While appreciating and employing the new approaches, Stephen D. Moore, “A Modest Manifesto for New Testament Literary Criticism: How to Interface with a Literary Studies Field That Is Post-Literary, Post-Theoretical, and Post-Methodological,” *Biblical Interpretation* 15 (1, 2007): 1-25, points out that they do not offer new methodologies in the sense traditionally understood during the literary turn in biblical studies.

⁹⁵ I articulate this concern more fully in my “Biblical Fidelity as an Evangelical Commitment,” pages 29-41 in *Following Jesus: Journeys in Radical Discipleship. Essays in Honor of Ronald J. Sider* (ed. Paul Alexander and Al Tizon; Regnum Studies in Global Christianity; Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 34-37.

⁹⁶ Interestingly, many early Christian abolitionists and feminists offered essentially liberationist readings that followed the tenor of Scripture itself, e.g., La Roy Sunderland, *The Testimony of God against Slavery; or, A Collection of Passages from the Bible Which Show the Sin of Holding Property in Man, with Notes* (Boston: Webster & Southard, 1835); Catherine Mumford Booth, *Let the Women Speak: Females Teaching in Church* (1861; now Liskeard: Diggory, 2007).

⁹⁷ See again the complaint of Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology*, 22-27. This observation is not meant to diminish the value of the academic voices, but to consider a wider range of perspectives.

⁹⁸ Here I am selectively adapting various material from Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, Appendix B (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 788-856, passim, with permission from Baker Academic.

⁹⁹ Paul G. Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle," *Missiology* 10 (1, Jan. 1982): 35-47 (here 43). This omission of the preternatural that he notes is traced more fully in Lorraine Daston, "Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Autumn 1991): 93-124 (100-113).

¹⁰⁰ Simon Kemp, "'Ravished of a Fiend': Demonology and Medieval Madness," 67-78 in *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health*, 75.

¹⁰¹ John J. Pilch, *Visions and Healing in the Acts of the Apostles: How the Early Believers Experienced God* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2004), 17.

¹⁰² Erika Bourguignon, "Spirit Possession Belief and Social Structure," 17-26 in *The Realm of the Extra-human: Ideas and Actions* (ed. Agehananda Bharati; The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1976), 18; cf. also idem, "Introduction: A Framework for the Comparative Study of Altered States of Consciousness," 3-35 in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change* (ed. Erika Bourguignon; Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973), 17-19; Raymond Firth, "Foreword," ix-xiv in *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa* (ed. John Beattie and John Middleton; New York: Africana, 1969), ix; I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971), 100-26; C. R. Chandra shekar, "Possession Syndrome in India," 79-95 in *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health: A Cross-cultural Perspective* (ed. Colleen A. Ward; Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1989), 80; Soheir A. Morsy, "Spirit Possession in Egyptian Ethnomedicine: Origins, Comparison, and Historical Specificity," 189-208 in *Women's Medicine: The zar-bori Cult in Africa and Beyond* (ed. I. M. Lewis, Ahmed Al-Safi, and Sayyid Hurreiz; Edinburgh: International African Institute, Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 189; Janice Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994): 407-34 (here 409).

¹⁰³ Bourguignon, "Spirit Possession Belief," 19-21; idem, "Appendix," 359-76 in *Religion, Altered States, and Change*.

¹⁰⁴ Colleen A. Ward, "Possession and Exorcism: Psychopathology and Psychotherapy in a Magico-Religious Context," 125-44 in *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health*, 126; John J. Pilch, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1999), 81-82.

¹⁰⁵ See, e.g., Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 44; cf. also Maquet, “Shaman,” 3; Larry Peters, *Ecstasy and Healing in Nepal: An Ethnopsychiatric Study of Tamang Shamanism* (Malibu, Calif.: Undena, 1981), 11–16, 46–47, 50.

¹⁰⁶ James McClenon and Jennifer Nooney, “Anomalous Experiences Reported by Field Anthropologists: Evaluating Theories Regarding Religion,” *Anthropology of Consciousness* 13 (2, 2002): 46–60 (here 47).

¹⁰⁷ Sean C. Kim, “Reenchanted: Divine Healing in Korean Protestantism,” 267–85 in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (ed. Candy Gunther Brown; foreword by Harvey Cox; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 270–73.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen Neill, “Demons, Demonology,” 161–62 in *Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission* (ed. Stephen Neill, Gerald H. Anderson, and John Goodwin; Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), 161.

¹⁰⁹ Samuel Escobar, *Changing Tides: Latin America and World Mission Today* (American Society of Missiology Monograph 31; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2002), 86.

¹¹⁰ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophies* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 253–56.

¹¹¹ Felix Augustine Mensah, “The Spiritual Basis of Health and Illness in Africa,” 171–80 in *Health Knowledge and Belief Systems in Africa* (ed. Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton; Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2008), 176.

¹¹² Koschorke, Ludwig, and Delgado, History, 223–24; Jehu J. Hanciles, “Conversion and Social Change: A Review of the ‘Unfinished Task’ in West Africa,” 157–80 in *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century* (ed. Donald M. Lewis; Grand Rapids, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), 170.

¹¹³ E.g., Johnson, Harmon A. “The Growing Church in Haiti” (Coral Gables, Fla.: West Indies Mission, 1970), 55–56; Abraham T. Pothén, “Indigenous Cross-cultural Missions in India and Their Contribution to Church Growth: With Special Emphasis on Pentecostal-Charismatic Missions” (PhD diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1990), 305–8; Julie C. Ma, “A Close Encounter with the Transcendental: Proclamation and Manifestation in Pentecostal Worship in Asian Context,” 127–45 in *Asian Church and God’s Mission: Studies Presented in the International Symposium on Asian Mission in Manila, January 2002* (ed. Wonsuk Ma and Julie C. Ma; Manila: OMF Literature; West Caldwell, N.J.: MWM, 2003), 136; see more fully idem, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits: Pentecostal Ministry among the Kankana-ey Tribe in the Philippines* (Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 118. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, Wien, 2000).

¹¹⁴ E.g., De Wet, “Signs,” 84–85; Kurt Koch, *God Among the Zulus* (trans. Justin Michell and Waldemar Engelbrecht. Natal, R.S.A.: Mission Kwa Sizabanu, 1981), 136–37, 143–44, 144–45, 147–48, 150, 153; Pothén, “Missions,” 189; Myung Soo Park, “Korean Pentecostal Spirituality as Manifested in the Testimonies of Members of Yoido Full Gospel Church,” 43–67 in *David Yonggi Cho: A Close Look at His Theology and Ministry* (ed. Wonsuk Ma, William W. Menzies, and Hyeon-sung Bae; Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, Hansei University Press, 2004), 52–53; Chin Khua Khai, “The Assemblies of God and Pentecostalism in Myanmar,” 261–80 in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (ed. Allan Anderson

and Edmond Tang; *Regnum Studies in Mission*, Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies 3; Oxford: Regnum; Baguio City, Philippines: APTS, 2005), 269; Bård Løkken Knapstad, "Show Us the Power! A Study of the Influence of Miracles on the Conversion Process from Islam to Christianity in an Indonesian Context" (ThM thesis, Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology, 2005), 83–85. Some converts have, however, retained significant values from their previous practice (Johannes Merz, "I Am a Witch in the Holy Spirit: Rupture and Continuity of Witchcraft Beliefs in African Christianity," *Missiology* 36 [2, Apr. 2008]: 201–17 [here 203, 213]).

¹¹⁵ For the prominence of spiritual power in African exegesis, see e.g., Grant LeMarquand, "African Readings of Paul," 488–503 in *The Blackwell Companion to Paul* (ed. Stephen Westerholm; Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 496–97.

¹¹⁶ R. E. K. Mchami, "Demon Possession and Exorcism in Mark 1:21–28," *Africa Theological Journal* 24 (1, 2001): 17–38 (here 17; while conceding that East African interpretation could use more exegesis).

¹¹⁷ Paul Stoller, "Eye, Mind, and Word in Anthropology," *L'Homme* 24 (3–4, 1984): 91–114 (110; as cited in Edith Turner, "Advances in the Study of Spirit Experience: Drawing Together Many Threads," *Anthropology of Consciousness* 17 [2, 2006]: 33–61 [here 41]).

¹¹⁸ Turner, "Advances," 42.

¹¹⁹ Graduate Research Professor in anthropology at the University of Florida, visiting professor at the University of Chicago and University of California at Berkeley; and past president of the American Ethnological Society and of the Society for Applied Anthropology.

¹²⁰ Solon T. Kimball, "Learning a New Culture," 182–92 in *Crossing Cultural Boundaries: The Anthropological Experience* (ed. Solon T. Kimball and James B. Watson; San Francisco: Chandler, 1972), 188–92.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 189–90.

¹²² Turner, "Advances," 37. For other claims of apparitions, see James McClenon, *Wondrous Events: Foundations of Religious Belief* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), xiii, 70, 72.

¹²³ Edith Turner, *The Hands Feel It: Healing and Spirit Presence among a Northern Alaskan People* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), xxii; *idem*, *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing* (with William Blodgett, Singleton Kahoma, and Fideli Benwa; Series in Contemporary Ethnography; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 149, 159; *idem*, *Among the Healers: Stories of Spiritual and Ritual Healing around the World* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 1–23.

¹²⁴ *Idem*, "The Reality of Spirits," *Shamanism* 10 (1, Spring–Summer 1997) (from a pro-shamanist perspective).

¹²⁵ Turner, *Experiencing Ritual*, 4.

¹²⁶ Alan R. Tippett, "Spirit Possession as It Relates to Culture and Religion: A Survey of Anthropological Literature," 143–74 in *Demon Possession: A Medical, Historical, Anthropological, and Theological Symposium* (ed. John Warwick Montgomery; Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1976), 143–44. For a brief historical overview of anthropological approaches to spirit possession, see Raymond Prince, "Foreword," xi–xvi in *Case Studies in Spirit Possession* (ed. Vincent Crapanzaro and Vivian Garrison; New York: Wiley, 1977), xi; Vincent Crapanzaro, "Introduction," 1–40 in *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, 5–7; more thoroughly for recent studies, Boddy, "Spirit Possession," 410–14.

¹²⁷ Erika Bourguignon, *Possession* (Chandler & Sharp Series in Cross-Cultural Themes; San Francisco: Chandler & Sharp, 1976), 14. Some scholars warn of the impropriety of applying some western diagnostic categories cross-culturally, since some behaviors considered disordered by therapists in one society may be norms in others (Louis Hoffman and Marika Kurzenberger, "The Miraculous and Mental Illness," 65–93 in *Parapsychological Perspectives* [vol. 3 of *Miracles: God, Science, and Psychology in the Paranormal*; ed. J. Harold Ellens. Westport, Conn.; London: Praeger, 2008], 84–85).

¹²⁸ Crapanzaro, "Introduction," 7 (emphasis his; cited also by others, e.g., Stevan L. Davies, *Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance, and the Origins of Christianity* [New York: Continuum, 1995], 23); for those including any state indigenously interpreted as possession, cf. Bourguignon, *Possession*, 7; I. M. Lewis, "Correspondence: Spirits and the Sex War," *Man*, n.s., 2 (4, Dec. 1967): 626–28 (here 627).

¹²⁹ Thus Mary Keller, *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power, and Spirit Possession* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 39–40, notes that earlier anthropologists tended to explain possession in psychosocial terms, not commenting on possessing agents, but more recent research "does take seriously the agency of possessing ancestors, deities, and spirits."

¹³⁰ See Boddy, "Spirit Possession," 408, 410–14, 427.

¹³¹ E.g. Tobias Wendl, "Slavery, Spirit Possession and Ritual Consciousness: The Tchamba Cult among the Mina of Togo," 111–23 in *Spirit Possession, Modernity and Power in Africa* (ed. Heike Behrend and Ute Luig; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 120, criticizes psychoanalytic (Crapanzaro), sociological (Lewis) and feminist approaches for imposing grids instead of analyzing indigenous functions for possession experience.

¹³² Colleen A. Ward, "Introduction," 8–10 in *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health*, 9. Idem, "The Cross-Cultural Study of Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health," 15–35 in *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health*, 17, notes that psychologists' focus on "objective, quantifiable data" must be complemented by anthropologists' "incorporation of subjective experiential data." For a wide range of modern scientific (esp. psychiatric) classifications, see Chandrashekar, "Possession Syndrome," 82–83.

¹³³ Cf. discussion of the Gospel accounts in Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1993); idem, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007).

¹³⁴ For some tragic examples, see Keener, *Miracles*, 804-6.

¹³⁵ Aylward Shorter, *Jesus and the Witch Doctor: An Approach to Healing and Wholeness* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1985), 99; I. W. C. van Wyk, "African Witchcraft in Theological Perspective," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 60 (3, 2004): 1201-28 (here 1202); Mensah, "Basis," 171; further evidence in Keener, *Miracles*, 806-8. Witchcraft is flourishing in Africa (Jim Harries, "The Magical Worldview in the African Church: What Is Going On?" *Missiology* 28 [4, 2000]: 487-502 [here 492]; Harriet Hill, "Witchcraft and the Gospel: Insights from Africa," *Missiology* 24 [3, 1996]: 323-44 [here 323-25]; Erik Bähre, "Witchcraft and the Exchange of Sex, Blood, and Money among Africans in Cape Town, South Africa," *JRelAf* 32 [3, 2002]: 300-34 [here 300, 329]; Wyk, "Witchcraft," 1203-4). For the belief that negative shamanism is used to harm or kill, see reports in Patrick R. McNaughton, *The Mande Blacksmiths: Knowledge, Power, and Art in West Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 69; Laura Scherberger, "The Janus-Faced Shaman: The Role of Laughter in Sickness and Healing Among the Makushi," *Anthropology and Humanism* 30 (1, 2005): 55-69 (here 57-59); Godwin Ehi Azenabor, "The Idea of Witchcraft and the Challenge of Modern Science," 21-35 in *Studies in Witchcraft, Magic, War, and Peace in Africa* (ed. Beatrice Nicolini. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2006), 30-31; for the sacrifice by witchcraft of relatives to achieve success, see Wim van Binsbergen, "Witchcraft in Modern Africa as Virtualized Boundary Conditions of the Kinship Order," 212-63 in *Witchcraft Dialogues: Anthropological and Philosophical Exchanges* (ed. George Clement Bond and Diane M. Ciekawy; Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 2001), 243.

¹³⁶ Gananath Obeyesekere, "Sorcery, Premeditated Murder, and the Canalization of Aggression in Sri Lanka," *Ethnology* 14 (1975): 1-24 (here 3), noting homicidal intention but (21) doubting much effectiveness. For poisoning as well as occult means (sometimes reported by self-acknowledged sorcerers) with intent to kill, see Barrie Reynolds, *Magic, Divination and Witchcraft Among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 41-44; Joe M. Kapolyo, *The Human Condition: Christian Perspectives through African Eyes* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005), 77.

¹³⁷ See e.g., Tabona Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe: Health and Well-Being* (Vitality of Indigenous Religions; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2007), 46; Cédric Mayrargue, "The Expansion of Pentecostalism in Benin: Individual Rationales and Transnational Dynamics," 274-92 in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (ed. André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani; Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 286; Frank Hoare, "A Pastoral Approach to Spirit Possession and Witchcraft Manifestations among the Fijian People," *Mission Studies* 21 (1, 2004): 113-37 (here 127-28); Knapstad, "Power," 84, 89.

¹³⁸ P. E. H. Hair, "Heretics, Slaves, and Witches—as Seen by Guinea Jesuits c. 1610," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28 (2, 1998): 131-44 (here 140).

¹³⁹ See e.g., Nonyem E. Numbere, *A Man and a Vision: A Biography of Apostle Geoffrey D. Numbere* (Diobu, Nigeria: Greater Evangelism Publications, 2008), 136; Bruce T. Grindal, "Into the Heart of Sisala Experience: Witnessing Death Divination," *JAnthRes* 39 (1983): 60-80 (here 66); Edith Turner, "Psychology, Metaphor, or Actuality? A Probe into Iñupiat Eskimo Healing," *Anthropology of*

Consciousness 3 (1–2, 1992): 1–8 (here 5); Harry G. West, *Ethnographic Sorcery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 3–5, 9–10, 88.

¹⁴⁰ For suffering and death caused by curses, see, e.g., Raymond Prince, “Indigenous Yoruba Psychiatry,” 84–120 in *Magic, Faith, and Healing: Studies in Primitive Psychiatry Today* (ed. Ari Kiev; New York: Free Press, 1964), 91; John Dawson, “Urbanization and Mental Health in a West African Community,” 305–42 in *Magic, Faith, and Healing*, 328–29; Mbiti, *Religions*, 258; cf. Harold Remus, *Jesus as Healer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 110; F. B. Welbourn, “Healing as a Psychosomatic Event,” 351–68 in *Afro-Christian Religion and Healing in Southern Africa* (ed. G. C. Oosthuizen et al.; African Studies 8; Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1989), 364; voodoo and taboo deaths in Herbert Benson with Marg Stark, *Timeless Healing: The Power and Biology of Belief* (New York: Scribner, 1996), 40–41; especially Knapstad, “Power,” 84, 89. Widespread beliefs in curses’ efficacy appear in rural Africa (e.g., Godfrey Lienhardt, “The Situation of Death: An Aspect of Anuak Philosophy,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 35 [2, 1962]: 74–85; Mario J. Azevedo, Gwendolyn S. Prater, and Daniel N. Lantum, “Culture, Biomedicine, and Child Mortality in Cameroon,” *Social Science & Medicine* 32 [12, 1991]: 1341–49), in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Netherlands (see Hans de Waardt, “Dutch Witchcraft in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Sociologische Gids* 36 [3–4, May 1989]: 224–44) and in some parts of the west more recently (e.g., Hans Sebald, “Franconian Witchcraft: The Demise of a Folk Magic,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 53 [3, July 1980]: 173–87).

¹⁴¹ See e.g., Walter B. Cannon, “‘Voodoo’ Death,” *American Anthropologist* 44 (1942): 169–81; Jerome D. Frank, *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1961), 39–42.

¹⁴² Leny Lagerwerf, *Witchcraft, Sorcery and Spirit Possession: Pastoral Responses in Africa* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1987), 14–15. Conventional western medicine cannot treat witchcraft affliction because it isolates it from its traditional social framework (16–17).

¹⁴³ Lagerwerf, *Witchcraft*, 18.

¹⁴⁴ Some African Pentecostal churches have appeared culturally relevant by addressing witchcraft (David Maxwell, “Witches, Prophets, and Avenging Spirits: The Second Christian Movement in North-East Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 25 [3, 1995]: 309–39 [here 334]); Stephen Hayes, “Christian Responses to Witchcraft and Sorcery,” *Missionalia* 23 (3, 1995): 339–54 (here 346–47, 352), views positively the approach of Zionists like Bishop Nyasha, who simply baptizes, exorcises, and reintegrates those who confess to witchcraft. Most African Catholics, Anglicans, and Presbyterian pastors condemn witchcraft, though their parishioners do not always hear them this way (Kenneth R. Ross, “Preaching in Mainstream Christian Churches in Malawi: A Survey and Analysis,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 25 [1, Feb. 1995]: 3–24 [here 12–13]).

¹⁴⁵ Recounted in *Miracles*, 854–56.

¹⁴⁶ Here I am selectively adapting various material from Keener, *Miracles*, 209–41 passim, with permission from Baker.

¹⁴⁷ See e.g., Bernard Robinson, “The Challenge of the Gospel Miracle Stories,” *New Blackfriars* 60 (1979): 321–34 (here 321); William C. Placher, *Mark* (Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 76.

¹⁴⁸ See e.g., critiques of Richard Swinburne, *The Concept of Miracle* (New Studies in the Philosophy of Religion; London: Macmillan, 1970); J. Houston, *Reported Miracles: A Critique of Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); David Johnson, *Hume, Holism, and Miracles* (Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1999); John Earman, *Hume’s Abject Failure: The Argument against Miracles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁴⁹ David Hume, *Of Miracles* (introduction by Antony Flew; La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1985), 37 (cf. 37–40).

¹⁵⁰ See C. L. Ten, “Hume’s Racism and Miracles,” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 36 (2002): 101–7; Charles Taliaferro and Anders Hendrickson, “Hume’s Racism and His Case against the Miraculous,” *Philosophia Christi* 4 (2, 2002): 427–41; Craig S. Keener, “A Reassessment of Hume’s Case against Miracles in Light of Testimony from the Majority World Today,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 38 (3, Fall 2011): 289–310.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Hume, *Miracles*, 55; more clearly, idem, *The Natural History of Religion* (ed. H. E. Root; London: Adam & Charles Black, 1956), 50–51; comment in Johnson, *Hume*, 80; James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 34.

¹⁵² See John J. Pilch, “Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts,” 181–209 in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (ed. Jerome H. Neyrey; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 183; idem, “Disease,” 135–40 in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (5 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 135; cf. Linda L. Barnes, “Introduction,” 3–26 in *Teaching Religion and Healing* (ed. Linda L. Barnes and Inés Talamantez; American Academy of Religion Teaching Religious Studies Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 6–7; Suzanne J. Crawford, “Religion, Healing, and the Body,” 29–45 in *Teaching Religion and Healing*, 31–32.

¹⁵³ See Barnes, “Introduction,” 3, and note the bibliography in Barnes and Talamantez, *Teaching Religion and Healing*, 353–78 just on religious traditions and healing (also Barnes, “World Religions and Healing,” 341–52 in *Teaching Religion and Healing*, 346–52).

¹⁵⁴ John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament: Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 35 (cf. also 14).

¹⁵⁵ McClenon, *Events*, 131 and sources cited there.

¹⁵⁶ See, e.g., F. B. Welbourn, “Exorcism,” *Theology* 75 (1972): 593–96 (here 595; African allowance of both medical and spiritual treatment); Mercy Amba Oduyoye, “The Value of African Religious Beliefs and Practices for Christian Theology,” 109–16 in *African Theology en Route: Papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians, December 17–23, 1977, Accra, Ghana* (ed. Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres; Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979), 116; Bennetta Jules-Rosette,

“Faith Healers and Folk Healers: The Symbolism and Practice of Indigenous Therapy in Urban Africa,” *Religion* 11 (1981): 127–49 (here 128); Justo L. González, *Out of Every Tribe and Nation: Christian Theology at the Ethnic Roundtable* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 94; André Droogers, “The Normalization of Religious Experience: Healing, Prophecy, Dreams, and Visions,” 33–49 in *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (ed. Karla Poewe; Studies in Comparative Religion; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); D. S. Shishima, “The Wholistic Nature of African Traditional Medicine: The Tiv Experience,” 119–26 in *Religion, Medicine and Healing* (ed. Gbola Aderibigbe and Deji Ayegboyin; Lagos: Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions and Education, 1995); John S. Pobee, “Health, Healing, and Religion: An African View,” *IntRevMiss* 90 (356/357, Jan.–April 2001): 55–64 (here 59–60); E. Anthony Allen, “Whole Person Healing, Spiritual Realism, and Social Disintegration: A Caribbean Case Study in Faith, Health, and Healing,” *IntRevMiss* 90 (356/357, Jan.–April 2001): 118–33 (here 130–31, resisting western acculturation that suppresses traditional African interests); M. V. Bührmann, “Religion and Healing: The African Experience,” 25–34 in *Afro-Christian Religion and Healing*; D. Dube, “A Search for Abundant Life: Health, Healing, and Wholeness in Zionist Churches,” 109–36 in *Afro-Christian Religion and Healing*, 135; Cephas N. Omenyo, “New Wine in an Old Bottle?: Charismatic Healing in the Mainline Churches in Ghana,” 231–49 in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, 235–38; Gotthard Oblau, “Divine Healing and the Growth of Practical Christianity in China,” 307–27 in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*; Ma, “Encounter,” 130 (regarding Korea); Melba Padilla Maggay, “Early Protestant Missionary Efforts in the Philippines: Some Intercultural Issues,” 29–41 in *Asian Church and God’s Mission*, 34.

¹⁵⁷ “Spirit and Power: A 10–Country Survey of Pentecostals,” Pew Forum Survey (2006), at <http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal> (accessed Jan. 4, 2009).

¹⁵⁸ Noll, *Shape*, 34 (claiming “almost all” but admitting “some hyperbole”).

¹⁵⁹ “Spirit and Power: A 10–Country Survey of Pentecostals,” Pew Forum Survey (2006), at <http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal> (accessed Jan. 4, 2009).

¹⁶⁰ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 107, who also complains that westerners too often contest the legitimacy of such perspectives (on 121 offering the specific example of John Spong’s ethnocentric complaints about African Anglican bishops’ “superstitious” and “Pentecostal” “extremism”).

¹⁶¹ Noll, *Shape*, 34.

¹⁶² See Jan G. Van der Watt, “A Hermeneutics of Relevance: Reading the Bible in Dialogue in African Contexts,” 237–55 in *Miracles and Imagery in Luke and John: Festschrift Ulrich Busse* (ed. J. Verheyden, G. van Belle, and J. G. van der Watt; BETL 218; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2008), especially here 237–42, though helpfully warning of the danger of ignoring original contexts (243).

¹⁶³ Ronald W. Roschke, “Healing in Luke, Madagascar, and Elsewhere,” *CurrTM* 33 (6, Dec. 2006): 459–71.

¹⁶⁴ Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 122–31; cf. also Mullin, *History*, 279 (cf. 281); Mchami, “Possession,” 17 (on spirits); Wes Richards, “An Examination of Common Factors in the Growth of Global Pentecostalism: Observed in South Korea, Nigeria, and Argentina,” *JAM* 7 (1, March 2005): 85–106 (here 95–96); C. Stephen Evans, “Critical Historical Judgment and Biblical Faith,” *Faith and Philosophy* 11 (2, April 1994): 184–206 (here 201–2); Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 67–73, 82–83 (also noting, on 71–73, the shift among, and citing, “many western ethnographers” and anthropologists who have grown increasingly respectful toward other cultures’ approaches to the supernatural).

¹⁶⁵ Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 26.

¹⁶⁶ Rex Gardner, “Miracles of Healing in Anglo-Celtic Northumbria as Recorded by the Venerable Bede and His Contemporaries: A Reappraisal in the Light of Twentieth-Century Experience,” *British Medical Journal* 287 (Dec. 24–31, 1983): 1927–33 (here 1929), quoting J. Finlay, *Columba* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1979).

¹⁶⁷ Noll, *Shape*, 24.

¹⁶⁸ C. Roderick Wilson, “Seeing They See Not,” 197–208 in *Being Changed: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience* (ed. David Young and Jean-Guy Goulet; Petersborough, Ont.: Broadview, 1994), 202–4 (citing Loewen’s account from 1974).

¹⁶⁹ Wilson, “Seeing,” 204.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology,” 1–43 in *New Testament Mythology and Other Basic Writings* (ed. Schubert Ogden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 4.

¹⁷¹ Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2001), 84–85. Cf. also estimates of 28 percent of all Latino Christians in the United States as Pentecostal or (especially among Catholics) charismatic (Gastón Espinosa, “‘The Holy Ghost Is Here on Earth?’: The Latino Contributions to the Azusa Street Revival,” *Enrichment* 11 [2, Spring 2006]: 118–25 [here 124]); their worldview is not “over-rationalized” (Miguel Alvarez, “The South and the Latin America Paradigm of the Pentecostal Movement,” *AJPS* 5 [1, 2002]: 135–53 [141–42, 144]).

¹⁷² Ismael Laborde Figueras (interviews, Aug. 7, 8, 2010).

¹⁷³ Studies of undergraduates show that scientific training does “not reduce the frequency of anomalous reports,” in contrast to beliefs in circles of elite scientists (McClenon, *Events*, 35). Likewise, in cultures like Ghana there is no inverse proportionality between scientific knowledge and paranormal beliefs (*ibid.*, 22). The academy is an elite subculture, and cultural factors (at least sometimes related to academic politics) help shape its creeds.

¹⁷⁴ Regina Eya, “Healing and Exorcism: The Psychological Aspects,” 44–54 in *Healing and Exorcism: The Nigerian Experience* (ed. Chris U. Manus, Luke

N. Mbefo, and E. E. Uzukwu; Attakwu, Enugu: Spiritan International School of Theology, 1992), 51–52.

¹⁷⁵ Yung, *Quest for Asian Theology*, 6. This perspective fits most nonwestern cultures (Yung, “Integrity,” 173); it is Western antismaterial Christianity that is now “the real aberration” (“A 21st Century Reformation: Recovering the Supernatural,” *The Lausanne Global Conversation*, <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/11041>, accessed Oct. 2, 2010).

¹⁷⁶ Yung, “Integrity,” 173.