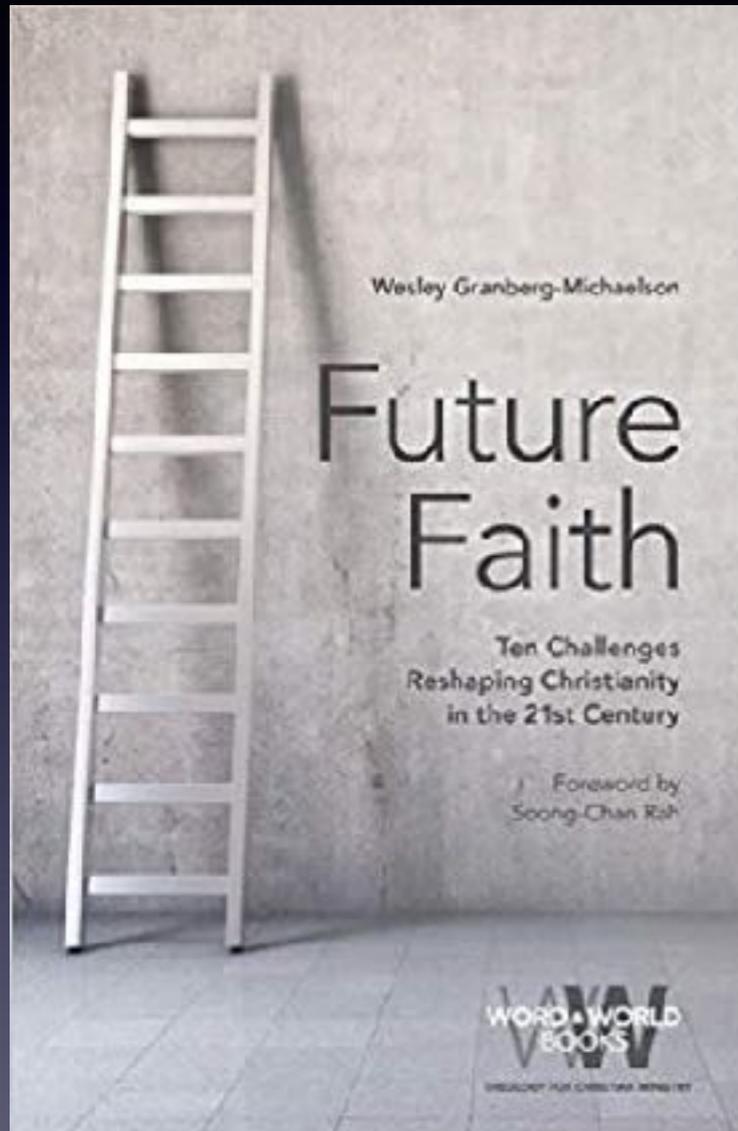


Future Faith



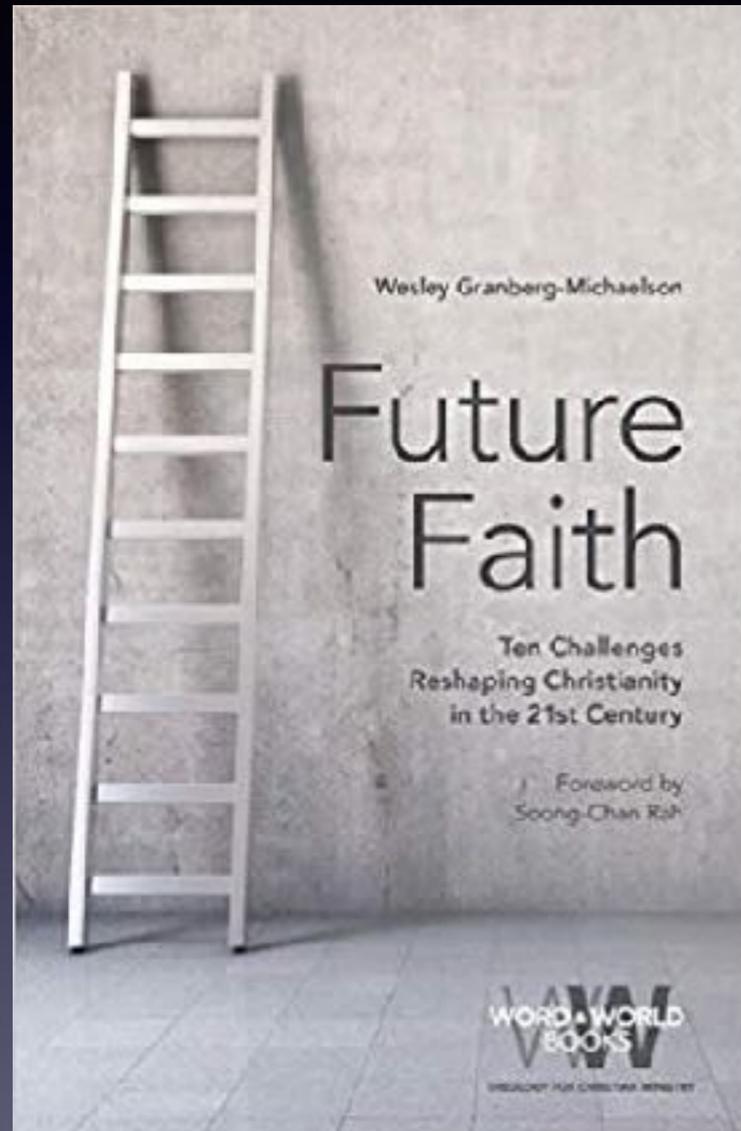
Holy Manners Bookstudy 44
ACTS - Winter 2020
St David's United Church, Calgary

Session 6

Challenge 5:
Affirming Spirit-Filled
Communities

Session # 6

- Housekeeping - Wayne
- Opening
- Ch 5 Development - Wayne
- Supplements - Jock & Brenda
- Hospitality Break
- Truth - Plato's Cave - Jock
- Chapter Discussion - Brenda
- Closing - Mike Grammer's Challenge
- UCC - A New Creed
- Appendices
 - Appx 1 - Mike Grammer's Notes
 - Appx 2 - Joan's Discussion Notes
 - Appx 3 - Further iNet Resources

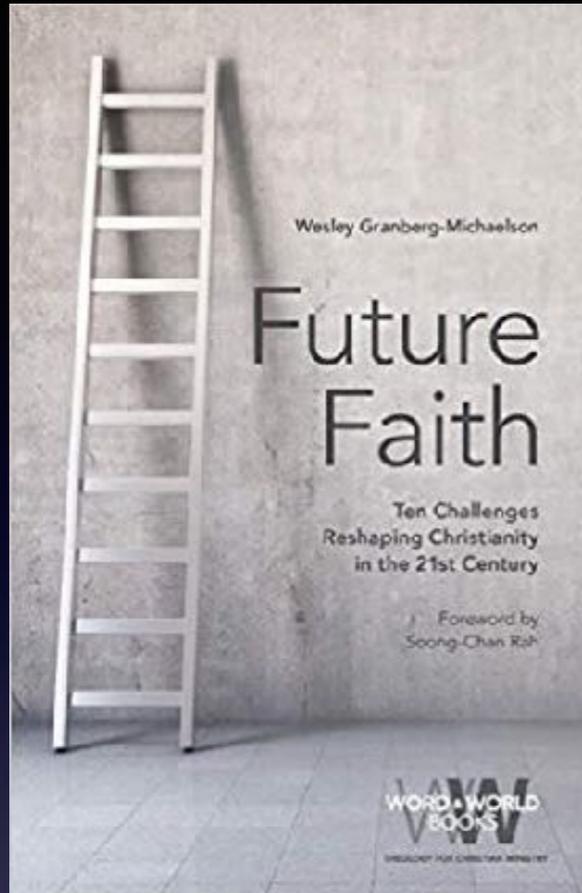


Housekeeping

Wayne



Opening



Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

First Remarks & Discussion



After reading this chapter and thinking both globally and locally, what kinds of people would seem to be attracted to pentecostalism?



Discussion

- "We're different" - is how many pentecostalists describe themselves.
- "We represent a new form of Christianity" - that's another descriptive used by pentecostalists.

What do these terms convey to you?



Personalized Meanings with Pentacostals

Unpacking the pentecostalist terms -

"Narrative Theology" and "Experiential Faith"

Compare Pentecostalism with:

"Charismatic Christianity" and "Evangelical Christianity"

Discussion



Mainstream Protestant Worship

We tend to focus on -

- a "rational" liturgy and reflection/proclamation
- our service order and expression is formalized
- discuss



For pentecostalists, being "spirit-filled" means following original Christianity and the biblical narrative which was guided by God and not human intervention.

For them, the "mind" and "formality" in worship can become a hindrance to the working of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals are united - "not by doctrines or tradition, but by a spiritual awareness of the living God" (99)



Holy Scriptures

Pentecostalism follows the Protestant tradition that places special authority in the Holy Scriptures and a direct relationship between God and the believer (no priestly intermediary)

For this they are true followers of the reformers. But they have a different understanding of revelation, or of how God speaks to us.

- discuss



Mainstream Protestants

So -

Mainstream Protestant Worship emphasizes

"rational" liturgy and proclamation

- service order and expression is formalized

For us, God tends to speak through reason and order, doctrine and tradition, that stand the test of time.



Pentecostal Theology

Pentecostal theology claims equal status -

"Pentecostal spirituality" has been part of the
christian experience for 2,000 years (101)

Remember Pentecost?

- discuss



Pentecostalism Today

Today, pentecostalism seems poised to become a unique and major contributor to world Christianity (101)

Would you agree? discuss.



Pentecostalism Today

- We need to find ways to dialogue with our new Christian neighbours, and not only new Canadians of other faith traditions.
- There is a need for dialogue between pentecostalists
- and the traditional ecumenical denominations.
- What can these different traditions offer each other?

discuss.



Finding commonalities -

Spiritual guides like Richard Rohr can support the dialogue with his focus, for example, on the relationship between contemplation and charismatic expression -

"a common experiential awareness of spiritual things" (98)

discuss.

Incarnation is the oldest Christian story.

Through Christ, God is pouring God's self into all of creation.

To be a Christian, then, is to see Christ in every one and every thing.

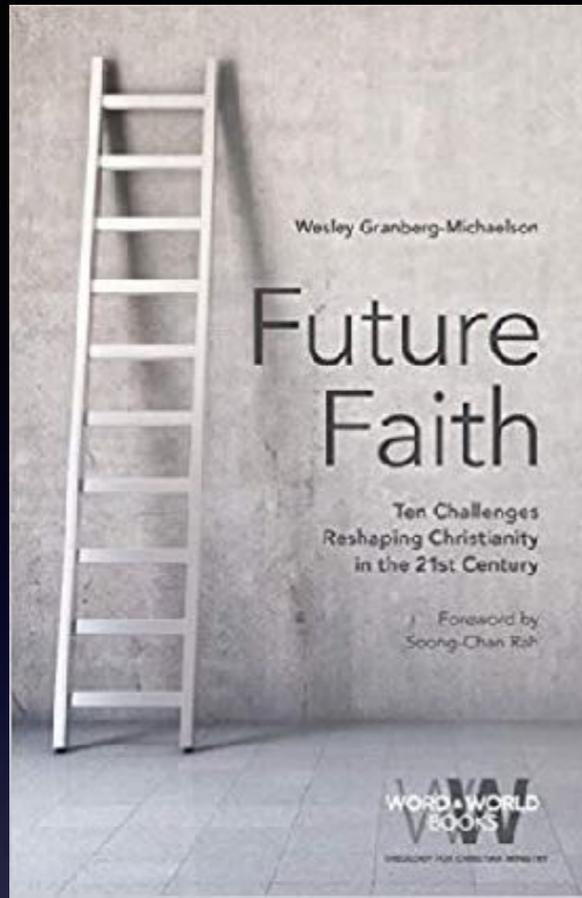
—Richard Rohr

"The Universal Christ" by Richard Rohr

a poem

3m18s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcoN2K5alkU>



Asusa Street Church The Birth of the Pentacostals 1905

In a time of severe segregation and racial discrimination, this church was colour blind. From the outset, their experience was that of the original Pentacost in Acts, where diverse peoples were possessed by the Spirit of God.

Jock

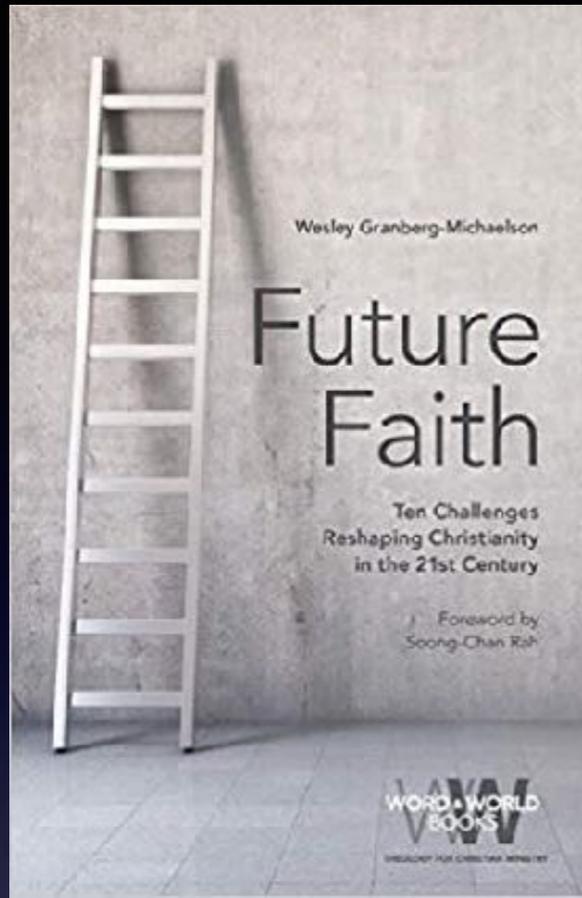




Azusa Street Church, Los Angeles
2 folks that witnessed the birth of the Pentecostal Movement in 1903

2m clip from 30m interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8Kjc6Qdtko>



Nigeria

Post-indigenous and post-colonial emergence.
How Pentecostalism has grown in Nigeria.

Reference:

The Pew Research Center - Religion & Public Life
Spirit and Power - a 10 - Country Survey of
Pentecostals

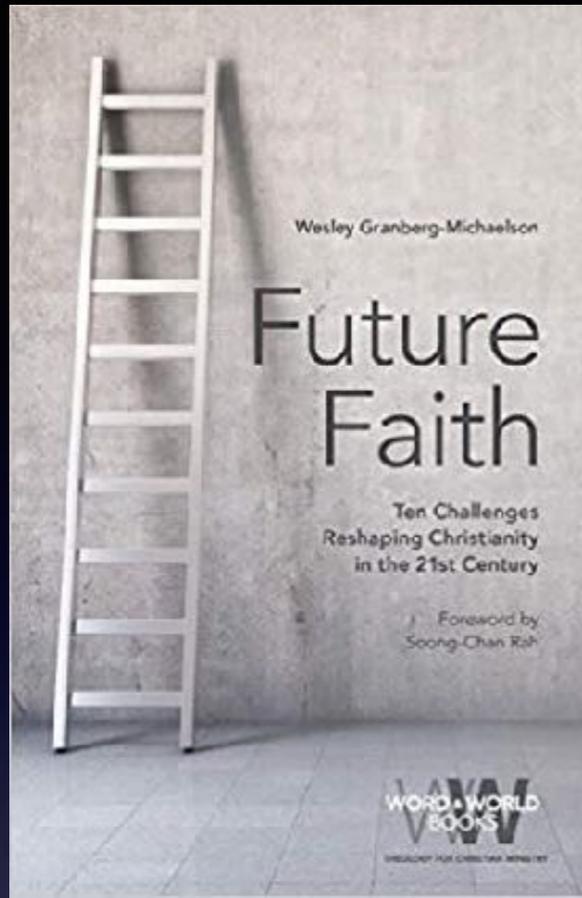
Section:

Historical Overview of Pentecostalism in Nigeria
Origins and Growth

<https://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/historical-overview-of-pentecostalism-in-nigeria/>

Jock

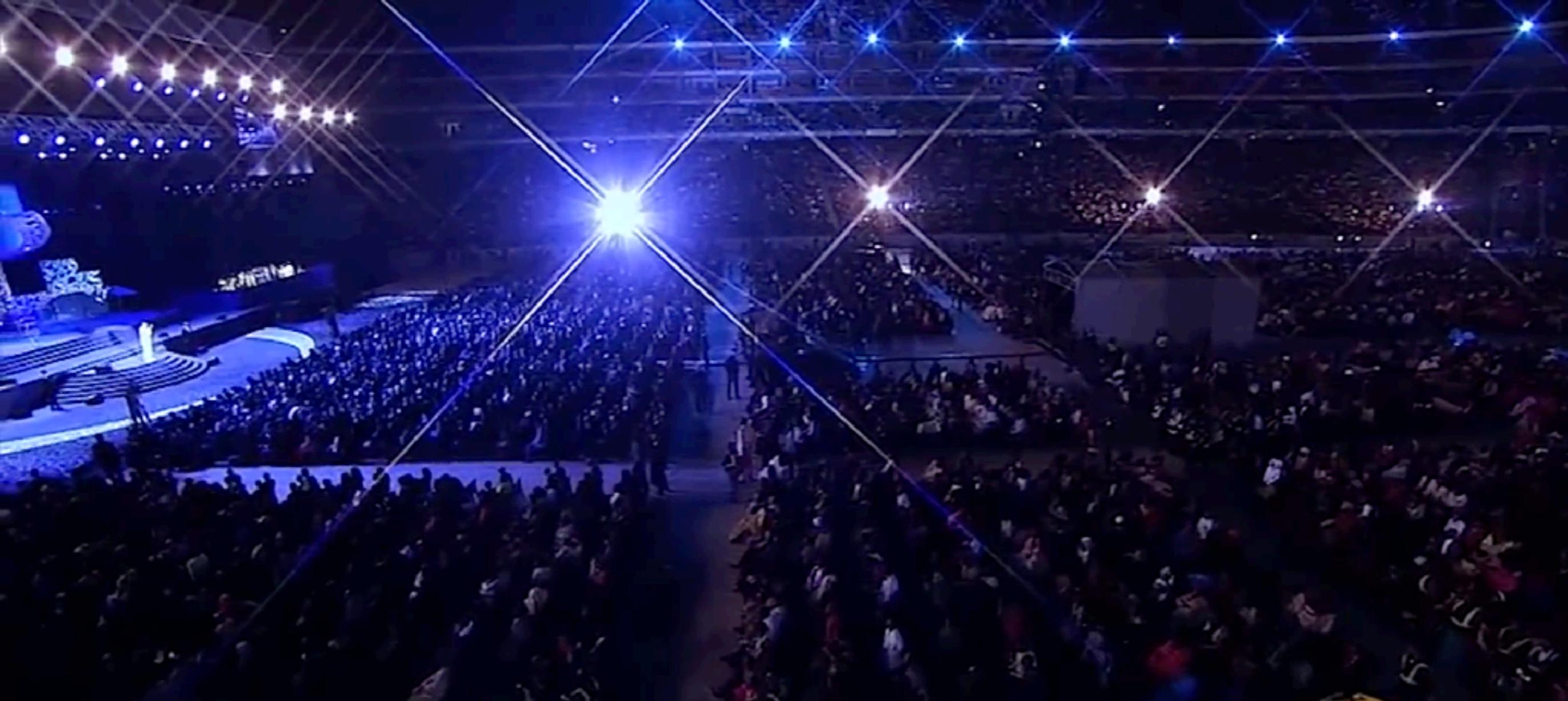




Nigeria

The Gospel of Prosperity & Flagrantly Rich Pastors





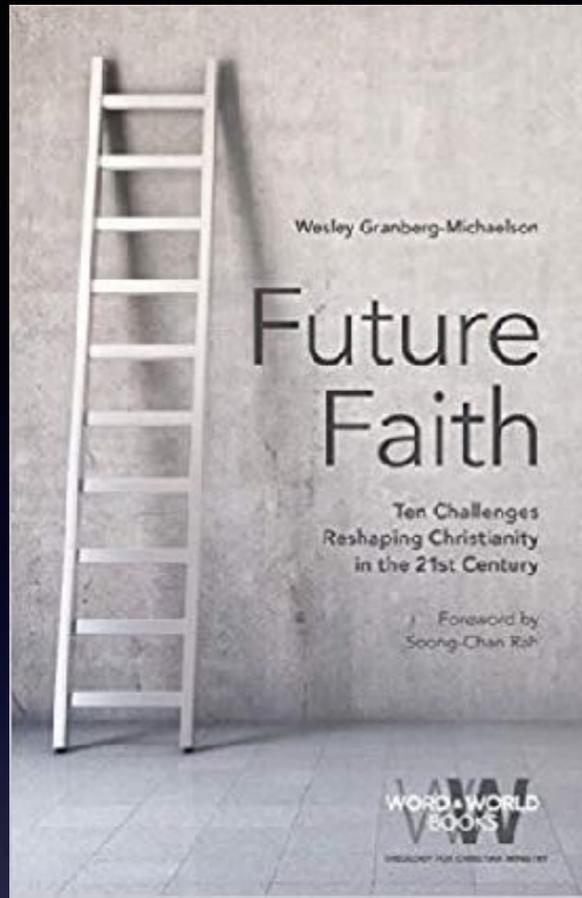
Top 5 Richest Pastors in Africa & Their Networth



A couple of the Richest Pastors in Africa

1m clip from 5m

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_lqFTYLc_4



Brazil

Recently, a news report indicated that within a few years, Pentecostals will outnumber Roman Catholics in Brazil.

For some time Brazil has had the largest Catholic population of any country in the world. Why is this change happening?



Jock



The beginnings of the Pentecostal Revival in Brazil, 2011.

5m

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc9dn9Qle_s

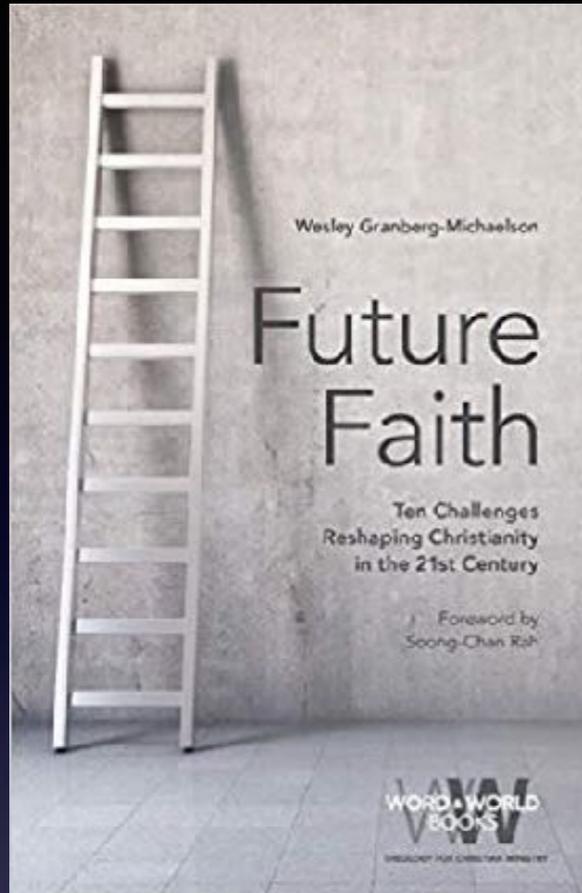


Brazil - a report from France - Bolsonaro and far right politics.

3m44s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzt-bBcP2iQ>

Christian mission "in reverse"



How new Canadian Christians are making their presence felt here (e.g. through the Calgary Alliance for the Common Good).

We need to find ways to dialogue with our new Christian neighbours, and not only new Canadians of other faith traditions.



Brenda



**We're in both a
Post-Denominational mode;
and a
Post-Christendom mode.**

All of those things have shifted
just as surely as they did 500 years ago or 1,000 years ago.

People under 40 are non-hierarchical, and afraid of institutions.

They want to spread out horizontally and to be communal.

They're actively involved in social justice - their way.

They're "glocal".



45-65 age group

Mergents

The first thing is to turn attention to the pastoral care of a very significant and real need in the 45-65 age group.

Able financially to continue to support the institution, they value the institution, unlike the people at either ends.

Presby-mergents or Metho-mergents or Luther-mergents or Bapti-mergents or Angli-mergents are going to perpetuate the tradition but not the institution.



Denominations - Irrelevant

Christianity - Emergent

Divisive denominations need to join forces with each other.
Concordat - Lutheran [ELCA] and Episcopal Church.
sharing pulpits, facilities, parishioners,
a common ministry.

There is a future out there.

The denominations are going to have to step into it.

Emergence Christianity is going to have to deal with some very serious and very intellectual questions.



**An Obligation
to help people through.**

You help them through by educating them.

This is the first time we've gone through one of these upheavals
that we've known what was happening.

Fanciful theology is simply no longer relevant.

An informed parish is not fearful.
Educate, educate, educate.



Real Estate and Emergent Christians

“The minute you own a piece of real estate, then you have to have somebody to clean it, then you have to have somebody to be sure that it gets clean, then you have to get somebody to be sure that it’s insured, and the next thing you know, you’ve got a bishop.”

It’s a hierarchy built-in, bound to happen.



The Holy Spirit & Love

No church or denomination has an exclusive contract with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is Love!
And the Holy Spirit's miracles are all summarized in one word:

Love.

Pentecostalism is where people learn to depend on God and on each other through love.

<https://pcpj.org/2018/02/18/hijacked-pentecostalism/>



Pentecostalism Promotes Dialogue.

“I long for a Pentecostalism that reaches the peoples and cultures of the world in their own contextual settings. Finding the elements of Christ in every culture, and even in other religions, is a great challenge and one that the early Church practiced diligently. It is for this reason why the Apostle Paul claimed to be a Jew when among Jews, a Greek with the Greeks, and a gentile with the gentiles: in order to reach them.”

... Samuel Lee



Pentecostalism Promotes Social Justice

The Book of Acts says to care for the widows, orphans and migrants.

Samual Lee longs to see a Pentecostalism that promotes justice, and becomes a voice for the voiceless, with voices united for justice and grace, who will risk their lives to save those in danger, even when they disagree with or disapprove of their ideology or lifestyle.

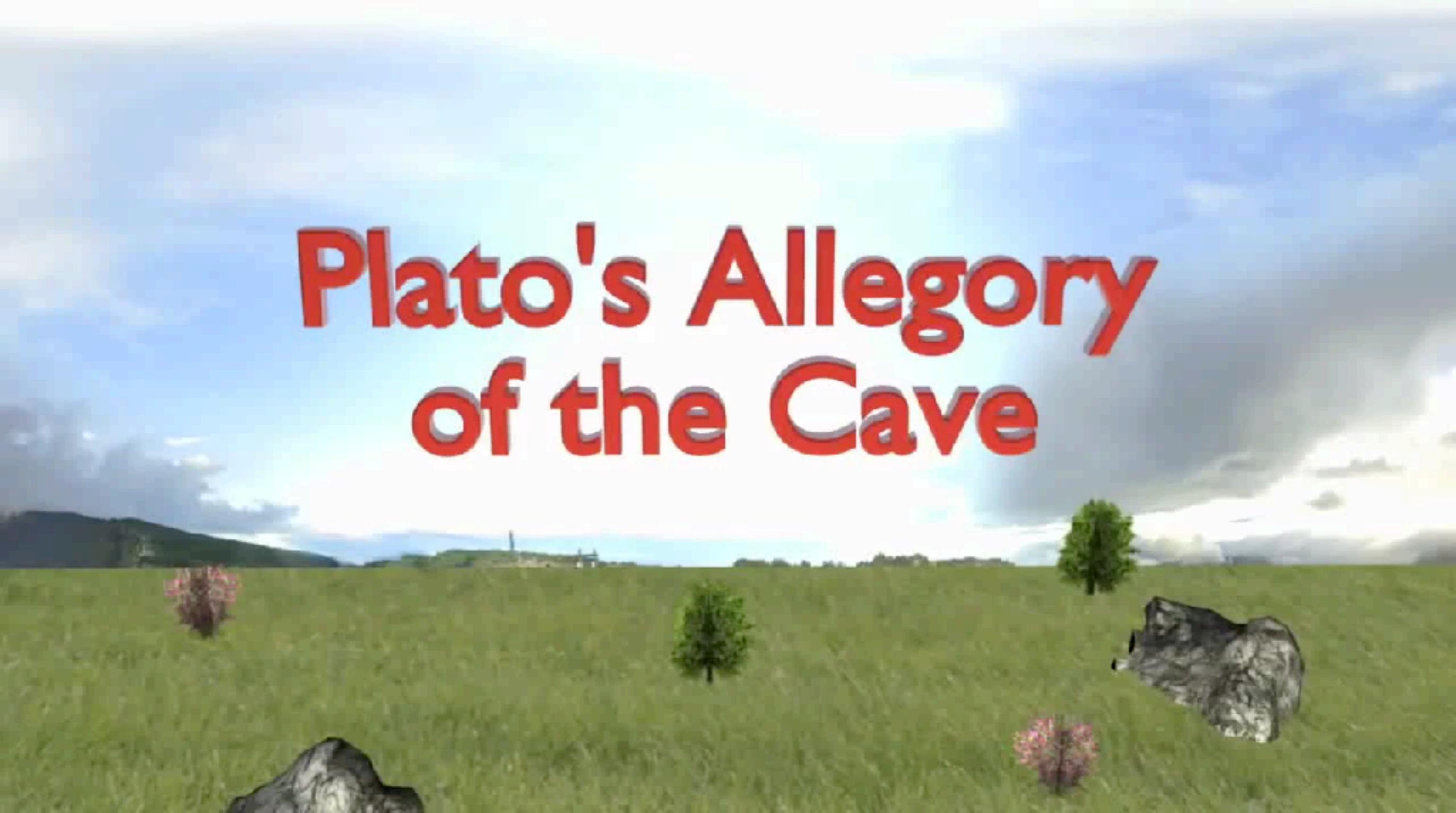
Injustice does not know nationality or religious background.





Time now. Please return.

Plato's Allegory of the Cave



Plato's Allegory of the Cave

1m22s

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RWOpQXTItA>

credo 4 - truth

while growing

our **truth** was received
sensible and practical
each view constrained

beauty was in the music
of our family and our tribe
in strong beats and lovely echos

goodness was authority
parent, teacher, preacher
with many words about shadows

upon leaving

our **truth** is discovered
evidential and illuminating
each vision an epiphany

beauty is revealed in sunshine and m
our satisfaction, our insight, our joy,
in play, with purpose, in engagement

goodness is found in giving and recei
with service and with sharing
with moments of bliss

having returned

our **truth** is challenging
perplexing and much misframed
each sharing perceived a heresy

beauty is in our new understandings
the bold calculus of a grander truth
and in the reverent lighting of candles

goodness is in listening and questioning
patiently and honestly
with newly free seekers

credo considers what is - after considering what is not.
this exploration entwines two of plato's notions.

first, the cave allegory from [republic](#). second, the three ideals of truth, beauty and goodness.

my journey seems well expressed with these ancient memes.

einstein contributed a helpful change to plato. he substituted kindness for goodness, for without kindness we war about beauty and truth. [essay](#)

the qumran cave becomes also a fine representation of another meme - that of modern religious scholarship.

image credit www.askabba.com

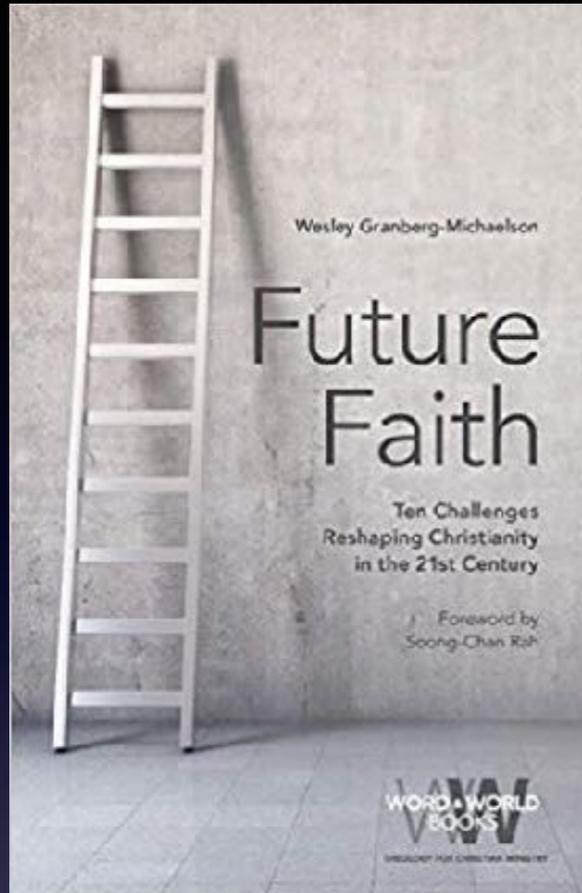
1journey.net



dec 2008 elias

A musing on Plato's famous trilogy of Truth, Beauty and
Goodness, as we journey through life ... jock

<http://1journey.net/1journey/Kirk/credo4.htm>



Discussion

Final Thoughts on
Challenge 5:

Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities



Brenda

Next Readings

Session 7 - 2 Mar 2020

**Challenge 6:
Rejecting the Heresy of Individualism**

Study Website

sduc.ca



Closing Thoughts - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- In this chapter, Granberg-Michaelson outlines the rise, change and spread of Pentecostal churches. I am going to take considerable licence to depart from our usual faith-based discussion, but with an end point in mind that starts with this statement.
- I believe there is a remarkable opportunity for the church to engage with Christians today, but that it is set against a somewhat terrifying background. The background is a hundreds-year old institution that appears to be on its way out.



Closing Thoughts - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- In this era of Trumpism, I have made this statement to many of my U.S. friends. One doesn't count Rome, where Caesars and Senators held virtually all power. One doesn't count England, where the feudal system survived well into the 20th century. The U.S. is the longest-lived democratic republic we've ever had. **HOW LONG A LIFESPAN *DOES* A REPUBLIC HAVE?** Maybe it's only 250 years. Maybe that's all we can squeeze out of it.
- This has led me to some rather dark thoughts for someone who's an optimist at his core. Rather than pose this as a question, I will declaim it as a statement.



Closing Thoughts - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- Democracy and the 21st century human condition are at odds and incompatible with each other.
- I come at this from three different streams of thought. I will talk about all 3, though the last 2 are more relevant to the potential role of the church today. First, then. In order for democracy to function, the majority of its adherents have to be willing to sacrifice materially to forego things and circumstances that would otherwise add to their self-aggrandizement and advantage for the perceived betterment of the whole community.



Closing Thoughts - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- I do not believe, in this day and age, that the majority of people are onboard with this idea, and I think, if I read between the lines of chapter 6, that Granberg-Michaelson agrees.
- Second. We adapt. I will put it more strongly, that we are addicted to adaptation at a species level. Democracy? Has been stagnant. For a long, long time. In this country, I would argue that the Constitution and the Charter of Rights were the last democratic innovations and even those were more refinements of pre-existing ideas and concepts. The human race is *bored* of democracy, has an ennui about it, and because of that, it is....a “dying religion” that has ceased to fascinate or hold interest.



Closing Thoughts - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- Third. We must take into account the internet age we inhabit. More than any other paradigm (grin), democracy and politics have been handfasted best friends. Democracy is exercised through politics. OK, then. Politics is the study and application of influence.
- Anyone in cybersociety will be familiar with the term “influencer”. Never in our history, I argue, have we been so suggestible as a community and never have there been so many suggesters. Fueled by many sources of media, the net effect of this that I see is the fragmentation of societal norms, rules and expectations, and the dissolution of community thinking in general. Into what?



Closing Thoughts - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- Is there an opportunity for a dynamic and adaptable church to fill some of the void for Christians who may be—probably **are**--searching for a new way to remain in a community setting? I think that there is, but to do it, Christianity must do something it has rarely done...and that is engage in adaptive, empathic, cooperative leadership on a global scale. To do that, the church must transform its image first---as I've put it a few times, it has to “cool up” and be able, somehow, to hold its worshippers' attention long enough for them to believe.



Closing Thoughts - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- Yes, I use that word quite deliberately. If Christianity, in a church-based form is to make it, it must enable Christians to believe in more than the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.
- It must catalyze them to believe in the church itself. And the first question any church will need to answer is this:
- **CAN IT OFFER A BETTER, MORE REWARDING AND FULFILLING CHRISTIANITY THAN SOMEONE CAN GET ON THEIR OWN?**



A New Creed (1968)

*We are called to be the Church
...to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope...
We are not alone, we live in God's world.*

*We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.
We trust in God.*

*We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.*

*In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.
We are not alone. Thanks be to God.*

A New Creed is a brief and well-loved affirmation of faith used widely in our worship.

The United Church of Canada

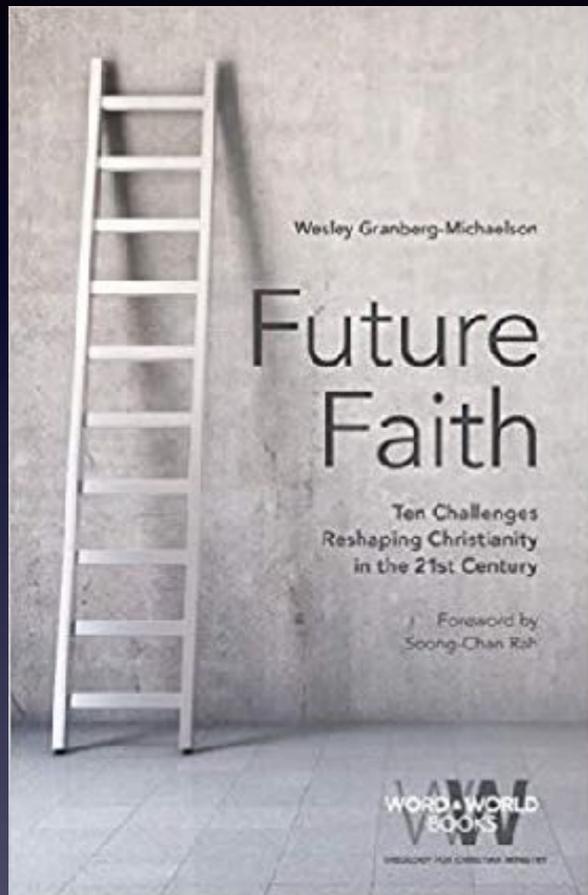
<https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/welcome-united-church-canada/new-creed>

Appendices

Discussion Notes - Joan Gray

Chapter Notes - Mike Grammar

Further Resource Links - Jock McTavish



Discussion Notes By Joan Gray - 24 February 2020 - P1

St David's Book Study - Future Faith Ten Challenges Reshaping Christianity in the 21 st Century by Wesley Granberg-Michaelson
Challenge 5 Affirming Spirit Filled Communities

Wonderful Opening Jewish prayer read by Deb C and her extensive researched written opening.

What kind of people might be attracted to Pentecostalism? Comments after Wayne asked the question

- People who do not question.
- A friend in her youth had a miraculous experience at a Pentecostal church.
- Her husband when he was a boy in Kamloops BC. A bus from the local Pentecostal church drove around and picked up the kids. Lots of fun activities for the children and youth. So his experience was positive.
- Why are we so fearful of them (Pentecostals?) They are Christians too!
- A key phrase from the book about Pentecostals - We are different, new, but there from the beginning.
- Didn't like Chapter 5 - It seemed critical of studies, critical thinking.

Nigeria

Background on Nigeria by Wayne.

Comments on Nigeria - Colin

He has been to Nigeria several times for work, mostly Central, South region. Predominately Christian. Friendly place, daytime okay. At night, everything locked up. No one goes out. Marauding gangs, jealous of the wealth of the region. All the time he had an armed guard or guards. One time he was to meet colleagues for a very early (5:30 am) breakfast at hotel. When he went to the restaurant, it was dark. No one there, no lights on. He waited in the lobby. His knowledgeable colleague came by and showed him. The restaurant was indeed, full of staff, who were sleeping under the tables. When the restaurant closed the night before at 10 pm no one went home in the dark. They were all there when they were awakened and the lights came on.

Break

Discussion Notes By Joan Gray - 24 February 2020 - P2

Background on Brazil and the difference in faith history of country. Video on mega church

Comment - Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF www.mafc.org) supports pilots in South America with fuel funds, upkeep of planes and even purchasing. These planes fly into areas of South America to isolated communities to help those in need.

Comments on miraculous healing

A combination of Tom Foolery, charismatic ministers, power of the mind.

Who's to say not.

Would not feel comfortable in a mega church like that

Young people don't like hierarchical religions. Pentecostalism is not hierarchical.

Wonderful closing comments and challenges by Mike Grammer to read more of off website.

**



Chapter Notes - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- 86, this unwashed heathen needed to look up a definition of “Pentecostal”. The one I found was “relating to or denoting any of a number of Christian movements and individuals emphasizing baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing and exorcism”
- 88, top, those are numbers to pay attention to
- 89, I guess the question is how this movement has reached so many different racial and cultural groups and if the message they each hear is any different from each other
- 90-91, anything that can action hope is a powerful thing indeed, though I need to go back to refer to the discussion the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Tutu had about that concept
- 91, middle, one thing to point out from his discourse, then, is that Pentecostalism is *accessible*----to absolutely anyone. That’s a learning that we should keep in mind—in the sense that it is not (monetarily or caste-like) distant, allows for anyone to participate and is understandable. This also makes it different from the growth movement in Judaism, which is younger orthodox---and particularly Chabad. While they are eager to welcome you in, once you’re in, you play by their rules.
- 92, middle, \I appreciate how he explains the evangelical/Pentecostal distinction he makes
- 92, bottom, I suppose the question I have in all of this is a bounce off of my closing for this chapter---where does the internet and social media fit into this paradigm that he is delineating? One would do well to remember that this is its own distinct culture with its own particular adherents---and draws from a very wide population base.
-



Chapter Notes - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- 93, “we don’t want to be condescended to anymore”---it is truly interesting to see how long-lasting the effects of Western colonialism stay rooted
- 93, bottom, well-reasoned theological truths vs. inciting a spiritual excitement. There is an obvious danger to exclusively following the latter course. You remove the piece of the equation which involves thinking about your religion and considering alternatives, consequences, effects. For myself, I would rather see a fusion here which uses this approach as a gateway to excite Christians about their religion, but also introduces them to serious thinking about it too. There is balance to be struck---something that I will dwell on in the next chapter---though I see he makes some reference to this side at page 99.
- 95, bottom. He intimates this. Has Christianity been stuck in a dark age and didn’t even know it?
- 96, within its own bubble. Fine and good. But if that bubble is continuing to expand and counts one in twelve humans amongst its number, soon there won’t *be* much of an outside---everyone will be in the bubble and it’ll be the world.
- 97, bottom. One shouldn’t forget, perhaps, that some of Christianity’s greatest accomplishments have been born out of its strife and schismatic history. Sometimes, in controlled doses, conflict can be good for a religion
- 98, middle, we shy away from mysticism too---not that many Jews are fully engaged in the kabbalistic side of things
- 100-101, OK, so this seems a good start. Now....is there filtration down to the average congregant?
- 101, bottom, WOW. Isn’t that, like, 50 or so St. David’s congregations a day? Wow.
- 104, middle, yes indeed, but if you have good rootstock, flowers can indeed grow



Chapter Notes - 24 February 2020 - By Mike Grammer, Toronto

Challenge 5: Affirming Spirit-Filled Communities

- I learned that they are quite varied and expanding very rapidly. Probably the one in Kolkata stood out the most, perhaps because it has the potential to be the most impactful...and is maybe in the most unexpected spot for Christianity to flourish
- I suppose my impression is that it's in the way that the movement has been, to a degree, very inward-facing, concentrating on what it is trying to mean and do for its followers, to the somewhat unintentional exclusion of the rest of Christianity. But it's like friends. Friends have to be interested. And they have to be interesting. And they have to be both. The rest of Christianity has to want to welcome dialogue with Pentecostals
- I would guess that the truth of the critique is volume-based----the rest of Christianity has between a 400 year and a 2,000 year head-start on theology. It seems to be changing, the author says, in that a number of scholars are developing theories and theology that they are sharing with their fellow learners. Will this trickle down into the ordinary congregant? To be continued...
- Probably, from what we read here, positive fervor within a community—a belief in the church as the right medium to express one's Christianity.
- I want to discuss Pentecostalism with my close friends Dave and Andrea (who I made mention of in my last opening/closing in our last book) and get their thoughts.
-

Further Resource Links

Article - Historical Overview of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

The Pew Research Center - Religion & Public Life

<https://www.pewforum.org/2006/10/05/historical-overview-of-pentecostalism-in-nigeria>

Article - Hijacked Pentecostalism

Pentacostals and Charismatics for Peace and Justice

- <https://pcpj.org/2018/02/18/hijacked-pentecostalism/>
- Criticism of church failures in Africa, by a black pastor.

Article - BBC - TB Joshua: Nigeria's best known televangelist

- Excellent article covering the history, success and challenge
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29234245>

Living Presence Ministry

UCC variant community church.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dCTfnrLhEg>
- a blend of traditional and new church expression.

35 Canadian Megachurches

The Hartford Seminary is a non-denominational school.

- <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/canadian-megachurches.html>
- a list of churches in Canada with over 2000 members. Note, all male lead pastors.

Bearing Faithful Witness United Church—Jewish Relations Today

A 121p document approved at the 38th General Council in 2003.

The Committee on Inter-Church Inter-Faith Relations

<https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/What%20We%20Believe%20and%20Why/Ecumenical%20and%20Interfaith%20Relations/Bearing%20Faithful%20Witness%20-%20United%20Church%E2%80%93Jewish%20Relations%20Today.pdf?ID=1399>

The Black Church in Canada - Denise Gillard - McMaster University

A thorough history of blacks in Canada from the earliest colonialising.

A difficult history that needs telling and is generally not familiar.

<https://www.mcmaster.ca/mjtm/1-5.htm>

Early theological struggles with modernity - U of T

A paper reviewing the history in North America of Modernity and Fundamentalism

<http://individual.utoronto.ca/hayes/Canada/modernity.htm>

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)

A Pentecostal megachurch and denomination founded in Lagos, Nigeria.

The largest church in Nigeria with 50,000 attending on Sunday, and 500,000 once a month.

Has founded churches in other countries.

<http://rccg.org/who-we-are/history/>

Pastor E.A Adeboye Sermon @ RCCG

2020 UNILAG HOLY GHOST SERVICE - Last sunday's service.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKLYCT2DFrk>