

## BOOK REVIEW

KIM, Kirsteen, *The Holy Spirit in the World: A Global Conversation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007; London: SPCK, 2008. 210pp. Pbk. ISBN: 978-0-281-05969-0. \$25.00.

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Inspired by the controversy at the Canberra Assembly (1991), Kim suggests that understandings of the Spirit vary from culture to culture in the postmodern world and that European theologies cannot dominate discussions of pneumatology. She explores the symbolic meanings of the Spirit in the Old and New Testaments which share similarities but also contain differences. She then elaborates on the Western pneumatologies of Paul Tillich, Karl Rahner and Karl Barth and criticizes them for neglecting the connection of the Spirit to the world. In contrast, Orthodox theology holds a more holistic view as it relates the Spirit to the liturgical and missiological aspects of the church. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to understand the Spirit contextually. She illustrates this with reference to three Indian pneumatologies concerning the challenges facing Indian Christians, such as the dominant Hindu culture, poverty, oppression and the multi-religious context. Kim suggests a response involving inculturation, liberation and dialogue. She also demonstrates how Korean theologians have interpreted the role of the Holy Spirit in a society where Shamanism, Confucianism and Daoism have been nourished since ancient times, and which suffered from Japanese colonization in the last century. Korean pneumatologies also focus on inculturation, interreligious dialogue, liberation and healing. Regarding contextualized pneumatologies, she elaborates on the theories of discernment and the Catholic, Evangelical and Feminist understandings of the Holy Spirit in a culturally and religiously diversified world. She concludes the book with the concept of reconciliation among Christians, between cultures and religions through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Kim's attempt to historically connect traditional and contemporary pneumatologies, and geographically link European and Asian views of the Spirit and spirits provides readers with an in-depth introduction to the subject. Her careful explanations of the cultural, historical, social and religious backgrounds also enable readers to understand pneumatology contextually and hence make proper evaluations. However, it would have been more helpful if she could have offered

more critical insights alongside objective descriptions. Moreover, Kim does not really achieve her ambitious goal of launching “a global conversation.” First, she presents European and non-European theologies as two distinct rather than complementary discourses. If the focus were on mutual enhancement through discussing the strengths and weaknesses of both sides, the conversation would have been more fruitful and enriching. Second, the dialogue partners involved in this global conversation do not include African, Latin American and other voices. Perhaps the geographical scope connoted in the title could be modified so as to better reflect the content.

This book’s in-depth explanations of pneumatology provide readers with a comprehensive introduction to the subject and will stimulate further study. The book also encourages readers to be more attentive to the pneumatological aspects of mission as well as the cultural particularity and spiritual universality of pneumatology. This book provides substantial theological, historical and cultural analysis for those who are embarking on pneumatological studies and for this reason it is highly recommended.