

EDITORIAL

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Back in the 1990s, some fellow students of mine conducted an impromptu survey on the streets of Leipzig, asking people passing by whether they were religious or not. A particularly memorable answer was given by a middle-aged woman. Shrugging her shoulders, she replied in the broad local dialect: “Oh. I don’t know what I am. I guess I’m normal!”

At the time we took this puzzled answer as an example of the pervasive cultural presence of secular agnosticism in East Germany, but perhaps it also points to the frequent mismatch between research agendas and “normal life” that may affect the study of Pentecostalism. By the nature of our inquiry, we are primarily interested in particular ideas and practices identified as Pentecostal, and may end up interpreting much of what people do from an ascribed religious subjectivity. Yet, this may not always be the perspective of our research participants, most of whom live a “normal life” in multiple social settings rather than assiduously pursuing a narrow Pentecostal existence. As such, any “incoherence” between spiritual demands and lived practice should not be a problem to explain, but can form the starting point for a different research agenda.

This special issue of *PentecoStudies* explores how a “lived religion approach” may enhance the study of Pentecostalism. I am very grateful for the work of our guest editors Julia Kuhlin and Yonatan N. Gez, who organized a special panel on this topic at our last GloPent conference in Basel in 2019, and saw contributions from this panel through to their publication in this issue. I will leave it to them to introduce the topic and the articles in depth, but want to emphasize that this volume once again shines a spotlight on the geographical and disciplinary breadth of our network, as we are presented with novel fieldwork and analyses from Kenya, India and Norway.

Before I hand over the pen to our guest editors, I would like to close with two announcements. First, our next GloPent conference will be held in Cambridge, UK on 1–2 April 2021, organized by David Maxwell and myself. We are planning for a hybrid event and very much hope that it will be possible for most participants to attend in person. Our call for papers has been published, so do consider submitting an abstract for what is shaping up to be a fascinating conference. Second, I am very pleased to report that *Brill's Encyclopedia on Global Pentecostalism*, edited by Michael Wilkinson, Connie Au, Todd Johnson and myself, is now available. It is the first comprehensive reference work on Pentecostalism that is truly global and interdisciplinary in scope and outlook – an encyclopaedic embodiment of the research ethos of GloPent.