

Orthodox rites: both Natasha Rostov in *War and Peace* and Levin in *Anna Karenina* fast and attend church daily before going to confession and communion at key turning points in their lives. Such evocative accounts likely left more of an impression than ‘What I Believe’ or ‘The Gospel in Brief’. Russian Orthodox Christianity’s chief opponent thus inadvertently became one of its caretakers. With *Heretical Orthodoxy*, Kolstø has conveyed both the details and the passion of one of the most venomous and bracing modern Church *versus* art feuds in modern European cultural and intellectual history.

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*Unorganized religion. Pentecostalism and secularization in Denmark, 1907–1924.*

By Nikolaj Christensen. (Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 42.)

Pp. xiv + 262 incl. 4 figs and 2 tables. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2022. €55 (paper). 978 90 04 50989 4; 1876 2247

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Nikolaj Christensen’s book on the early history of Pentecostalism in Denmark is a significant contribution to the field. A product of Allan Anderson’s prodigious work at Birmingham University, it not only opens up a story about a minority revivalist tradition in a secularising setting (with the necessary scholarly nods to the opposing poles of secularisation theory), it contributes to two of the largest ‘moot’ questions which afflict the literature on the area. Indeed, its contributions in the latter are perhaps more significant than those debates of yesteryear which remain in circulation as prentice pieces for young scholars. The real contributions lie in its facility with Pentecostalism as a cross-cultural reality, and secondly, the remarkable impact (in a globalising world) of minority traditions across distributed networks. As much of the source base on Pentecostalism is either oral, or in languages other than English, Christensen (along with many of Anderson’s students) demonstrates the subtle inflexions in national stories which push back against the Anglo-American narrative, and gives the lie to assessments based purely on numbers. This is a Western story, but one with a difference.

Secondly, the case studies of those Danish Pentecostals who were propelled by their faith to break out of the state Lutheran bubble and to work all around the world are excellent. Indeed, they perhaps say more about the norm they left than the author has had space to explore in this book. The tendency to want to answer the question about numerical growth (or not) in various places misses the point that these studies communicate. It answers a question important to European research funders, but which perhaps was less important to Pentecostals themselves. Pentecostalism after all is a rhizomatic, mobilising form which propagates across boundaries. To be surprised that it did not propagate as well within boundaries – either formal, as in Lutheran state religion, or the tacit boundaries imposed by low levels of pluralisation – is to prove the positive case without exploring the alternatives. This is not really a question for Christensen’s book, of course – he is laying the basis for a scholarly discussion yet to come. It is an important conversation to have, however, as much for what

is has to say for Italian, Romani, German or other European Pentecostals, as for the number crunchers in ivory towers. The author is to be commended for an excellent work.

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*China and the true Jesus. Charisma and organization in a Chinese Christian Church.*

By Melisa Wei-Tsing Inouye. Pp. xx + 385 incl. 24 ills and 1 map. Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. £25.99. 978 0 19 750734 6

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In the pre-pandemic summer of 2019, I was exploring historic religious sites in a second-tier interior Chinese city with a fellow historian when we came across a reconstructed early twentieth-century house of worship belonging to the True Jesus Church (TJC). As we stood on the street admiring the architecture, we were approached by an older woman asking if we were TJC members. After many years as an active congregant of the large registered church in the centre of the city, she had recently moved to the city's much smaller True Jesus fellowship. She was drawn by the intimacy and mutual support of the tight-knit local TJC community as well as their sincere belief in and prayerful pursuit of miracles. She spoke with admiration of the timely and unexpected provision of a new set of plastic stools for the congregation of twenty-plus worshippers ('an answer to prayer!'), and then invited us to join them at their next gathering.

Though the TJC is not well known outside academic circles, this large independent Chinese Pentecostal Church today operates in over sixty countries with perhaps as many as three million believers. In *China and the true Jesus*, Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye looks at the growth and development of the TJC, paying special attention to the factors that contributed to its endurance. Inouye's historical research is exemplary, sifting through many different and at times incomplete documentary strands, weaving together a convincing and engaging narrative of the TJC, rich with compelling characters. Using insights from contemporary scholarship on global Pentecostalism and religious experience as well as on the role of cultural technologies such as print media, authority structures and organisational governance, she skilfully elucidates the rise and persistence of the TJC. This careful historical reconstruction of the TJC's development never strays far from the importance and reality of charismatic experiences for the members of the TJC. Rejecting the more common deprivation and religious continuity theories of religious conversion, Inouye follows the lead of recent scholars of world Christianity, emphasising the agency of local Christians by treating these Chinese believers as 'living human beings, flesh and blood Chinese people who also are Christians with real faith experiences'.<sup>1</sup> The resulting study greatly advances our understanding of the TJC and its origins, while also bringing

<sup>1</sup> Peter Tze Ming Ng, 'Foreword', to Tao Feiya 陶飞亚, 中国基督教乌托邦研究—以民国时期耶稣家庭为例 [Research on Chinese Christian utopias—taking the republican era Jesus Family as an example], Beijing 2012, 4. Translation mine.