

**Theological Sources for a Pentecostal Christian Humanist Movement**

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I grew up and spent the first 40 years of my life in Midwestern American cities – Cleveland, Ohio; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Like many Americans, I come from a mixed ethnic and religious background, in a Pentecostal and Catholic Italian-American family. The compromise for me from my blended heritage was that I went to Pentecostal churches and attended Catholic schools for much of my youth. Later, for my PhD program and my early teaching career, I spent 14 years at Marquette University, the Catholic Jesuit university in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 90 minutes north of Chicago, while I also pastored an Assemblies of God church in the historically Catholic and Lutheran city's downtown for the last seven of those years.

In this mixed heritage, in the American Midwest with its American folk culture feel, often influenced by Catholicism, one figure I came to love was the medieval saint Francis of Assisi.

I also came to love the famous Prayer of Saint Francis.

It goes like this:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

To me, that prayer epitomizes so much of what it means to live and be a Christian, whether Pentecostal or Catholic or otherwise. However, like so much else with Saint Francis, the Prayer was named in honor of his Christian example rather than historically sourced in his life.<sup>1</sup> It is nevertheless a beautiful representation of what the Christian life is to be.

While reading Augustine Thompson's biography of Saint Francis—often considered the leading recent history of his life written in English—this past year, however, I came to find that the wealthy merchant son from Assisi, who renounced the family wealth in a quest to form a way of life that renounced the world and took up the call to follow Jesus had written a powerful prayer which may seem “trivial at first glance”<sup>2</sup> and yet was actually novel for his time. Francis was known for this prayer.

It went like this:

“May the Lord give you peace.”

Francis's biographer explains, however, that this was “not a command or a didactic instruction; it was a prayer.” The prayer, to our modern surprise, says his biographer, had no contemporary parallel. It was not a known prayer. The only evidence that we have that Francis of Assisi may have had with someone who prayed a similar prayer was a record of a religious vagabond who passed through the towns of central Italy, including Assisi, declaring “Peace and Good” loudly to all as he went, and this may have influenced him.

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<sup>1</sup> The Prayer of Saint Francis was associated with Saint Francis as, though it was first seen in print in 1912 in the French spiritual magazine *La Clochette* in 1912, it began to be printed on prayer cards with a picture of Saint Francis on the front and the prayer on the back, beginning around 1920 in France. Scholars are unclear who originally wrote the prayer, yet Father Esther Bouquerel, who was the founder of The Holy Mass League in France, which published *La Clochette*, is closely associated with its origins. In 1936, a Disciples of Christ minister, Kirby Page, published an English translation of the prayer in *Living Courageously*, which attributed the prayer to Saint Francis, seemingly because of its place on the back of prayer cards with the Saint's name on it, and subsequently the prayer became attributed to Saint Francis. See Christian Renoux, “The Origin of the Peace Prayer of Saint Francis,” *The Franciscan Archive* (retrieved 18 June 2026) <https://www.franciscan-archive.org/franciscana/peace.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 36.

Francis, however, claimed that God taught him this prayer directly—*how Pentecostal* of him—though he later justified its use using Scriptures from Numbers 6:24-26 and Luke 10:5-6. For Saint Francis, this was a prayer to God in the presence of the hearer that God would grant to them peace.

The use of this by Francis's first group of brothers, surprisingly to us, elicited a negative response among some hearers of the prayer, as they took the prayer to mean that they required to do penance in order to know the peace of God. However, what Francis's biographer notes here in particular is that the prayer for peace for others was without agenda beyond whatever the peace of God was in the lives of the hearers, "that Francis claimed no authority over others, that he had no particular religious program to impose, and that he passed no judgments on hearers' behavior" so that "the greeting worked an unexpected effect. Combined with Francis's presence, it effected an inner peace in many who heard it."<sup>3</sup>

With that meaning, I am here today to say to you all, "May the Lord give you peace."

Now, that may all sound strange because I am about to put forth something of a new program for a Pentecostal social ethic—a Pentecostal Christian humanism. Yet that program is really about acting in the simultaneous humility and boldness that Saint Francis operated from, and that is why I am starting by pointing to him and his ongoing influence as a Christian icon.

Francis' prayer seems to indicate that he understood he was one small person in the world who could not fathom what God was actually doing in the life of another person, and therefore he decisively and boldly witnessed one core thing—the peace of God. If one wonders if such simple boldness can have influence, that might be refuted by the life of St. Francis who went on to start one of the most influential Christian movements in history. Perhaps just as influentially,

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<sup>3</sup> Thompson, *Francis of Assisi* 37.

Francis himself became an icon of what it means to be a Christian who is dedicated to loving others and being a witness to the world, loving the world as God's creation, including animal life as well. St. Francis represents simultaneous boldness and humility and God's love for all.<sup>4</sup>

What I love about Saint Francis is not the idealized saint so much as the real holy man behind the icon. As his biographer put it: "I found a man who could not be assimilated to some preconceived idea of 'holiness,' especially if it suggested that a 'saint' never has crises of faith, is never angry or depressed, never passes judgments, and never becomes frustrated with himself or others. My Francis's very humanity made him—for me and for many readers of my biography—more impressive and challenging than the saint who embodied that (impossible) kind of holiness."<sup>5</sup>

This blessing, "May the Lord give you peace," with the meaning that St. Francis spoke it with, is also related to the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber's I-Thou relationality as a mode of being in the world as compared to an I-It relationality. Martin Buber was an influential philosopher and poet who deeply influenced many Christian theologians in the twentieth century.

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<sup>4</sup> On the trajectory of Francis's theology of creation as a "community of creation," see Daniel P. Horan, OFM, *All God's Creatures: A Theology of Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Augustine Thompson, "A Quest for the Historical Saint Francis," *Church Life Journal* (2 October 2020) <https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/a-quest-for-the-historical-saint-francis/> (accessed 18 June 2026). Of "The Prayer of Saint Francis," Thompson says this in the above cited article: "Like Jesus, Francis belongs to everyone, so everyone, or almost everyone, has his or her own Francis. And this is probably the way it has to be. In years of university teaching, I have often been astounded at how unhappy students can be when they encounter a Francis different from the one they expected. Oddly enough, the most painful moment usually comes when they discover that Francis did not write the 'Peace Prayer of St. Francis'—a popular hymn best known by its opening words 'Make me a channel of your peace,' and sung to a tune by Sebastian Temple. Many are quite shocked to find that this song is not identical to Francis's 'Canticle of Brother Sun,' from which Zefferelli took the name of his movie. The 'Peace Prayer' is modern and anonymous, originally written in French, and dates to about 1912, when it was published in a minor French spiritual magazine. Noble as its sentiments are, Francis could not have written such a piece, focused as it is on the self, with its constant repetition of the pronouns 'I' and 'me,' the words 'God' and 'Jesus' never appearing once. We all have our own 'Francis.'"

Buber offered a personalism rooted in the Hebrew Bible that understood what it means to be and what it means to be in relation to others in light of God as the “Absolute Thou.”<sup>6</sup>

For Buber, I-Thou and I-It relationality are the two modes of our own being in which we encounter all else. We are either in a relation of instrumental or transactional value for what an It provides for us or we are in a relation of a Thou or of limitless value. And when we are in an I-Thou relationality we are in an encounter with another with our whole being and their whole being. When I encounter another person, I could operate with an understanding that that person is simply of instrumental value to me or I might see that someone as a Thou of limitless value, whose life and being are rooted in the Absolute Thou. This attitude considers that what God is doing in you is far beyond what I can ever myself understand, that you are God’s holy mystery, and I see this as part of a Christian understanding of being encountering being in the world, an ontology as we call it in philosophy, that is also blended in together as a spiritual-moral agapeism.

What does this all have to do with Pentecostalism today? Well, I am proposing a Pentecostal Christian Humanism as a theological ethic for contemporary global Pentecostalism. And I see St. Francis as a medieval forerunner of this, and I see his blessing as a model of what it means to truly encounter another person in an I-Thou relationality.

Pentecostal Christianity has now emerged as the second largest Christian tradition in the world, if we include charismatic and independent Pentecostal Christians, now constituting two-

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (originally German *Ich und Du*, 1923). Buber notably begins the text with: “To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude. The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks. The primary words are not isolated words, but combined words. The one primary word is the combination *I-Thou*. The other primary word is the combination *I-It*; wherein, without a change in the primary word, one of the words *He* and *She* can replace *It*. Hence the *I* of man is also twofold. For the *I* of the primary word *I-Thou* is a different *I* from that of the primary word *I-It*,” 3.

thirds of a billion people around the world and just surpassing global Protestantism numerically.<sup>7</sup> Christian humanism is a movement of Christian benevolence and intelligence, with human flourishing that aligns with God's transcendence as its end goal, that is sourced in Scripture and the entire history of the Christian tradition. Today, it can take on new forms, new wineskins among Pentecostal Christians in the late modern, globalized world today.

While the concept of a Christian humanism is especially rooted in early modern Western movements associated with the Protestant Reformation, especially the movement led by Erasmus of Rotterdam, it has been exemplified by figures throughout Christian history from many figures in the ancient church to Saint Francis in the medieval era to Pentecostal pioneers like Mark and Huldah Buntain in modern times. The core ideas of a Pentecostal Christian humanism are already present in Pentecostal theology today, exemplified by the work of theologians such as Daniela Augustine, Ivan Satyavrata, Frank Macchia, and Amos Yong.<sup>8</sup>

Most of all, I interpret Jesus of Nazareth as modeling this way for us, through his wisdom and his compassion, his teachings and actions. I see this as a Christian ethic that is derived from the Sermon on the Mount (in Matthew 5-7), Jesus's core ethical teachings to his disciples. They begin with The Beatitudes which tells us things like the kingdom of heaven is bestowed on the poor in spirit, that the meek will inherit the earth, that peacemakers are called children of God, and God blesses those who are persecuted for righteousness's sake with His kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount turns us inward to our heart's motivations, cultivating love for God and

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<sup>7</sup> See the numbers from *The World Christian Encyclopedia* in their annual database, which number Pentecostal and charismatic Christians, of all kinds, at 664 million, available in the report "Status of Global Christianity, 2025, in the Context of 1900–2050," <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/resources/>.

<sup>8</sup> See Ron Hembree, *The Mark Buntain Story* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1979); Daniela Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good: Shared Flourishing in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2019); Ivan Satyavrata, *Pentecostals and the Poor: Reflections from the Indian Context* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017); Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006); and Amos Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco, Tx: Baylor University Press, 2012).

love for others together, as an exposition of The Great Commandment from Jesus to love God with our whole being and our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus's parables teach us this way as well. The parable of the Good Samaritan came in the context of Jesus being asked how to attain eternal life. He answers with this parable after first giving The Great Commandment as his answer.

This way, the way of Pentecostal Christian humanism, provides Pentecostals with a way forward that embodies a spiritual personalism that values human lives each in their God-given holiness and eschews instrumentalizing, dehumanizing, and even violent ideas and ways in our world today. Pentecostal Christian humanism can rise up in Asia and around the world as a Christian social ethic of loving action that participates in God's healing work in the world.

Saint Francis stood at the cusp of the modern world we now live in. This may surprise people as he lived at the turn of the thirteenth century on the Western calendar. But that time, that period is when the fundamentals of Western modernity that funded so much of globalized modernity coalesced and began. In the West, there's a tendency to see the age of Plato and Aristotle, 2500 years ago, as a founding age for our civilization. However, for all of globalized modernity, it seems that we will find many of its roots, at least its Western ones, will have been found to have come through the age of St. Francis and Thomas Aquinas and then the Renaissance, Reformation and early Enlightenment figures of the 12th-17th centuries, the very ages that modernity claims to have broken from seeded it with its principles and trajectories, as some leading scholars like Louis Dupré, Hartmut Rosa, Charles Taylor, and Stephen Toulmin have provided accounts for.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press,

Now, I want to merge this picture of the Christian life with some challenging realities that we face in this transitional era we are living through right now in the late modern age as it transitions into the age of information and globalization, an age that is both late modern and postmodern in its tendencies. We are facing unprecedented times and changes, and the disruptions, the generalized anxiety, and the traumas that this transitional age have been imposing on humankind have led to calls to retrieve traditions and spiritual orders of transcendence amid these changing times, times which seem dominated by these devices in our pockets and on our desks, which are both incredible tools and which have also led to a demanding panoptic that has been crushing human souls.<sup>10</sup> Psychological research showing how anxiety is skyrocketing today due to our social existence in the late modern, globalized-glocalization, information and image-saturated world is a problem for our day and generations to come.<sup>11</sup>

Much of my purpose today is to envision some key elements of our Pentecostal spiritual tradition for a renewed Pentecostal social vision and ethic in a Pentecostal Christian humanism that resources the riches of our Pentecostal faith, engages the world through intelligence and use of disciplinary knowledge from all valid sources, and works towards a vision of human flourishing across cultures and across the world that is resourced in the Scriptures and our spiritual tradition as it resonates in various cultural traditions from around the world.

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2007); and Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> David H. Rosmarin, Kenneth I. Pargament, Harold G. Koenig, "Spirituality and Mental Health: Challenges and Opportunities," *The Lancet, Psychiatry*, vol. 8 no. 2 (2021): 92-93.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* (New York: Penguin, 2024).

My contention is this: What if the Pentecostal social witness around the world was characterized and known by three core things: 1) a deep resourcing of ourselves in the power of God's Spirit that filled us with faith, hope, and love for God's mission in the world, 2) a core commitment to human flourishing across multicultural contexts and human traditions that makes it way through embodied Christian social action in cooperation with anyone of good will, and 3) an intelligence and a deep commitment to honesty in our accounting for both the natural and social worlds that integrated our faith and our general knowledge?

This is the Pentecostal humanism I am talking about here today and proposing as a way forward for a Pentecostal theology of social being and action. The rest of what I am going to share with you today is about the theological understanding that supports a Pentecostal Christian humanism. But let me first say a few words about what I mean by humanism.

In the Western tradition, humanism was a movement that rose up in the Renaissance era just before the time of the Protestant Reformation that offered a vision for human flourishing by reenvisioning human existence through education and growth that enriched human lives. It initially had its origins in Italy as an educational movement but it quickly made its way up to northern Europe where Erasmus of Rotterdam became its icon and nicknamed "The Prince of the Humanists." The famous phrase of the Christian humanists of this era was "back to the sources" (*ad fontes* in Latin) which meant back to the Bible in its original languages and back to some of the great sources of literature and morality in the Western tradition. With all the focus on education, some might think that this would lead to dogmatism, but instead it led in a direction that sought to follow Jesus's life and example. As in his *Enchiridion*, Erasmus and other Christian humanists challenged Christians to first work on their inner persons and spiritual lives. Later on in the modern world, humanism as a label came to represent a philosophy that sought to

value human worth and flourishing without a religious or metaphysical support system for it. But what I am referring here to is a tradition of Christian humanism that has a particular coalescence around the year 1500 and which I think can help us as Pentecostals today as our numbers have climbed to nearly two-thirds of a billion as a common social ethic.

At the heart of the Christian faith is an agapeism. Christianity cannot be anything less than an agapeism, though, sadly, too often Christian churches and persons fail at this. Of course, our theological anthropology that we are sinners necessitates this. But love of God and neighbor is central to Christian faith. To be a Christian is to be a vessel of God to love your neighbor as yourself—to be on a mission from God. And that mission often goes awry because we have grandiose notions that we project onto others which might be constrained by the humility we see embodied in Saint Francis and engaged in by the Christian humanists of the Renaissance-Reformation Era as a quest to serve God and the world through inner spiritual discipline, Christian humility, the use of general knowledge in learning, and Christian social action that operates with humility and agapeism.<sup>12</sup> A Pentecostal humanism also operates on the fundamental affirmation of God's gift of full personhood to each human being. Each human being is a gift of God to the world whose life is to be guarded and the flourishing and care for that life is a shared responsibility.

The Pentecostal humanism I am putting forward to you as a way of life together includes the following tenets:

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<sup>12</sup> Both Erasmus and Luther, who contested with one another during the Reformation, were originally Augustinian monks. Both left, at midlife, as Luther broke from the Roman Church, of course, and Erasmus was released from his vows at age 50. They were both budding Augustinian scholars who, as one of Erasmus's biographers put it, spent their days "in prayer, at meals, reading, copying manuscripts and in conversation with his fellow monks," William Barker, *Erasmus of Rotterdam: The Spirit of a Scholar* (London: Reaktion Books, 2021), 37.

- The first tenet: Pentecostal faith that is centered in Spirit-baptized love that forms Pentecostal persons in community;
- The second tenet: human flourishing for all as a core immanent goal of the social ethic of Pentecostal communities; and
- The third tenet: the cultivation of human intelligence for wisdom and understanding in a Pentecostal hermeneutic that integrates general and theological knowledge together.

The Pentecostal setting of all this is the event of Pentecost itself which fills the disciples with the transformative power and love of God that erupts in a multicultural use and hearing of language that becomes the community of Acts 2:42-47 and the community of 4:32-37, sharing together in a proleptic foretaste in the now of the not yet of God's coming kingdom, while Acts 5:1-11 shows us how human control and self-interest often attempt to imitate and hijack the work of the Spirit in communities and end in a disaster. As we see in Paul's visit to Athens and his Areopagus speech in Acts 17:16-34, much of the task of the Christian in mission is to understand the thought forms of the cultures and their forms of knowledge and then engage them with the gospel in a way that values the good things each culture already knows and affirms.

Nothing I am sharing here with you here is particularly new, though the whole package may be. These three tenets have, in fact, often been put forward in some of their most developed forms by some of our friends here at this Summit along with some others with whom you may be familiar.

Pentecostal humanism has to be sourced in Pentecostal faith and spiritual life or, simply put, it is not Pentecostal humanism. A Pentecostal humanism is resourced in faith and practices that produce the kind of communities and agents that will be filled with Godly love for humankind. Pentecostal communities are to represent Pentecost rather than Babel, as healing

communities that act as a blessing to all, representing the grace of God and salvific will of God to all humankind, with the love of the Father. An I-Thou personalism where humans are an end rather than a means, so that the goal of our communities to embody the love of God to others, is at the core of what I mean by a Pentecostal humanism.

Christian formation is formation into the love of God, that agapeic love that is central to the New Testament. I John 4:8 and 16 of course tell us that “God is love.” Christianity is nothing less than an agapeism. The Christian philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff considered Christian love as “care for the well-being of others” following the theologian Karl Barth’s understanding of Godly love as *being* for the other.<sup>13</sup>

While many versions of Spirit baptism focused on being empowered for mission or were related to eschatological frameworks, other prominent versions of the doctrine focused on the divine love that occurs in those who are baptized in the Spirit of God. If there is a founder of the diverse movement that was early Pentecostalism, it was William Seymour, a monocular African-American Holiness preacher who led the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles (1906-09) which was the “Grand Central Station” of early Pentecostalism, an interracial, male-and-female-led revival that defied oppressive social norms (harkening to the Apostle Paul’s defiance of ethnicity, class, and gender in Galatians 3:28). While for a short time Seymour focused on Spirit baptism’s relationship to speaking in tongues, which he never came to deny, he quickly came to see it as a baptism into divine love that changed the very heart of a person towards having deep love for God and other humans. Displaying hatred or malevolence towards others was a sign one

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<sup>13</sup> Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).

was not Spirit baptized. In contemporary Pentecostal theology, some of Pentecostalism's leading systematic theologians have since developed a Seymourian theology of Spirit baptism.<sup>14</sup>

Frank Macchia's *Baptized in the Spirit* spends an entire climatic chapter in the book developing this, considering that "There is nothing more important to theological reflection on Spirit baptism than divine love," and that "Love is absolute to the nature of God. It is the essence of God and the substance of our participation in God" (p. 259).<sup>15</sup> Among Amos Yong's thirty or so monographs is his *Spirit of Love*, which draws upon Seymour and Macchia, among others, in considering Spirit baptism as a baptism in to divine love as the "fulcrum" of his theology of love. Spirit baptism, for Yong, "converts them [Christians receiving it] ...back to the world" as "already seen in the boundary-crossing power in the Azusa Street Revival" as an empowerment in "a nonviolent way of life, one that is suggestive of the kind of love energy that might be harnessed in the cause of promoting greater benevolence in an otherwise hostile world...altruistic behaviors motivated by charismatic experiences of the Spirit" (p. 89).<sup>16</sup> Seymour, Macchia and Yong's theology of Spirit baptism provides a spiritual-moral center for the formation of Pentecostals.

Further, as Macchia has explained, this is communal as well in a Spirit-baptized ecclesiology. "Spirit baptism gave rise to the global church and remains the very substance of the church's life in the Spirit, including its charismatic life and mission" (155). This is communal love. This is koinonia. Macchia summarizes that "The Spirit is the Spirit of communion. Spirit baptism implies communion. This is why it leads to a shared love, a shared meal, a shared

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<sup>14</sup> Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006); David Perry, *The Pentecostal Experience in Theological Focus*, GPCS 26 (Leiden, The Netherlands, 2017); David Perry, "Spirit Baptism and Social Action: The Pentecostal Experience of Spirit Baptism as a Rationale for Social Action and Mission," *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 16 (2014); and Amos Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

<sup>16</sup> Amos Yong, *Spirit of Love*.

mission, and the proliferation/enhancement of an interactive charismatic life” (156).<sup>17</sup> There are, of course, Pentecostal communities that live closely to this norming ideal, and there are those that live like this much of the time but not others, and there are others that simply do not attain to this. A Pentecostal humanism sourced in Spirit-baptized love in Spirit-baptized churches has to be resourced in the love of God. A Pentecostal humanist theological ethic is to be sourced in an agapeism that looks at another and says, “May the Lord give you peace” to those in the community.

A Pentecostal humanism is also for others beyond our communities and tribes, a will to love and embrace others in the name of God in and through the love of God. Here I find Amos Yong’s “many tongues” principle to be particularly helpful for our second tenet of Pentecostal humanism—that human flourishing is an end or goal, what has been conceptualized and called in Western terms as *telos*. That is, while Pentecostal faith sources itself in and hopes for the transcendent power of God, a Pentecostal humanism works in daily life towards human flourishing in the world, honoring a theology of creation that values and loves all of God’s creation and creatures who have been fruitful and multiplied and filled the earth with their different cultures and languages. A Pentecostal humanism that seeks to embody the ending verses of Acts chapters 2 and 4 is a Pentecostal humanism that operates with deep love for the many humans and their many tongues which God has loved and created.

Amos Yong’s “many tongues” principle, like Buber’s I-Thou, is rooted in a deep recognition of the immanent transcendence of others in our world. That is, it operates with the kind of deep humility found in Saint Francis’s blessing that recognizes that God’s peace for another is something that I may have a small part in and my conceptualization of what God’s

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<sup>17</sup> Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*.

peaceful, shalomic ends might be for them may be in some ways true, but my small concepts of another are just that, finite and limited concepts of what their world is and what God is doing in it. Yong has stressed, perhaps more than any other Pentecostal theologian, the value of difference and the way God uses different kinds of persons, varying cultures, disciplines of knowledge, and ways of being human—and not all could be pleasing to God, of course—so that God is there in the tongue and culture and situation of each.

Pentecostal theological ethics of human flourishing are being developed around the world and are just beginning to show some of the first fruits. For example, Daniela Augustine's *The Spirit and the Common Good* shows us how to produce a thoroughgoing Pentecostal theological ethics that understands various sociological and political systems yet norms Pentecostal ethics in God's love for humanity as expressed in the biblical texts and themes in Christian theology such as working for the common good, God's power to create anew, the self-giving God in the Eucharist in our modern consumerist spaces, and in God's work of forgiveness amid our violent world.<sup>18</sup> Ivan Satyavrata's *Pentecostals and the Poor* expresses, to me, so much of the best of Classical Pentecostal theology as he explicates how it has produced the kind of Pentecostal social action that Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori wrote about in their *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Action*. Further, Pentecostals are integrating concepts such as *ubuntu* and *umoji* and *harambee*, African notions of flourishing and togetherness for the common good, just as Westerners have used concepts like *koinonia* and justice. Pentecostals are entirely capable of producing a powerful embodied social ethics that will not be monolithic but speak with and for and by the many tongues of Pentecost.

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<sup>18</sup> Daniela Augustine, *The Spirit and the Common Good: Shared Flourishing in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans).

Finally, we cannot do this without growth in intelligence and education. As Wolfgang Vondey has pointed out in his *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Pentecostalism has birthed a scholarly and intellectual tradition, one which, we might say, we are all participating in here this week, and yet an anti-intellectualism has persisted, often strongly so, nonetheless. The good affirmation that God can speak and work through anyone, no matter their intellectual or educational levels or abilities, has often now become an excuse for pragmatic interests and a lack of diligence to have its way. Yet Pentecostal humanism is based on a new era in which Pentecostal thought can engage in the breadth of human knowledge about the world and integrate it as it appreciates God's creation as an unfolding, dynamic mystery to be explored in an integrative connection with God's special revelation of Himself to us in salvation history. It may seem far-fetched right now, but we have seen this before when Pentecostals were seen as just a small sect of Protestantism just a half century ago, but I think it is possible that Pentecostals can find ways to be truth seekers and tellers in every discipline of knowledge and not considering such a threat to a Pentecostal way of life. Instead, it is to consider Pentecostalism as a tradition that can pick up the Erasmusian mantle and go forward with it. I think we already have scholars, such as Amos Yong, who have already laid the groundwork for this, for example, and my own work in Pentecostal hermeneutics was a subtle if thoroughgoing attempt to do this for the ways in which we culture and language and our being shape what we know.

In our 2023 editorial in *Pneuma* on Pentecostal theologies of the Three Articles of the Creed – which included contributions from our friends Frank Macchia and Amos Yong, who are here – my then co-editor and still good friend Nimi Wariboko, whom I consider one of the great Pentecostal thinkers of our day, made the claim that Pentecostal theology has already stepped up to now offer a full Christian theology that could represent the ecumenical Tradition of the

Christian Church, much thanks to our leading theologians, though not only.<sup>19</sup> What I am now suggesting is that we build a theological social ethic and movement, what I am labeling a Pentecostal Christian humanism, that will more robustly fund Pentecostal Christian social action and Pentecostal life so that they will know that we are Christians by our love, our goal of human flourishing, and our efforts to intelligently understand God's world and the many human structures that have become in it.

Thank you, and May the Lord give you peace.

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<sup>19</sup> L. William Oliverio, Jr. and Nimi Wariboko, "Pentecostal Theologies of the Three Articles: The Theological Maturation of a Tradition," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*, vol. 45, no. 3-4 (2023): 341-52.