

If Pentecostals believe that homosexuality is a sin, as I do, then relating to homosexuals and transgenders as somehow fundamentally different from others separated from God by sin by invoking Old Testament categories of purity and separation is counterproductive to our goal of loving them and sharing the gospel with them. Also, I wonder if some of my students who struggle with the issue of whether or not homosexuality is a sin owe at least part of their uncertainty to having been told, either implicitly or explicitly, that gays are "unclean," only to learn from personal experiences and through relationships that they are, after all, simply people in need of Christ.

Concluding Remarks

Pentecostals are known for their testimonies, for the stories they tell of the God who they meet. Also, they do not simply read the stories of the Bible but seek to find a place in them. Like the psalmists we read, we, too, tell the old stories, we encounter God anew, and we stand before the assembly and add to the tale. Pentecostals, and indeed all Christians, are called not simply to understand biblical stories, but to bring to them their own experiences of encounter with God and to attest to the reality that in the same Spirit we all live and move and have our being.

Chapter 8

Nothing to Sneeze at

Receiving Acts 19:11-12 in the Canadian Pentecostal Tradition

MARTIN W. MITTELSTADT

God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. (Acts 19:11-12)

WORLD-WIDE DAY OF PRAYER—2ND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
DAILY PRAYER MEETING AT HEAD OFFICE EACH MORNING AT 8:45
— SEND PRAYER REQUESTS —
ANOINTED HANDKERCHIEFS SENT TO SICK UPON REQUEST¹

When my father-in-law passed away in the fall of 2001, my wife Evelyn and I discovered among the family keepsakes an anointed cloth previously distributed by Evelyn's great-aunt, Regina Dudman. Since I had become somewhat jaded by the shenanigans of preachers and their hankies, I thought little of the cloth and tucked it away. A few years ago, I rummaged through the family ephemera in search of the handkerchief. On the envelope, Auntie Dudman wrote: "In Jesus Name. Anointed Kerchief. Acts 19:11 & 12. Return to Regina Dudman when used enough, kindly," and on the back, she directed, "not to be sent around from one place to another as it is for the person only." I questioned family members and learned that the handkerchief dates to the early 1960s. While family members enjoyed lengthy conversations concerning the handkerchief, little did they know that the handkerchief would provide

1. *PT* (April 1, 1943–November 15, 1944).

the impetus for this study, my first attempt to examine a biblical text through the lens of reception history.

Anthony C. Thiselton defines reception history as the Bible's *nachleben* (literally, its "afterlife" or post-history), and Ulrich Luz speaks of the Bible's "history of influence," specifically, the "actualizing of text in media other than a commentary; e.g., in sermons, canonical law, hymnody, art and in the actions of sufferings of the church."² Given the recent success of period-based reception histories, such as the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture and Reformation Commentary on Scripture, and Pentecostals' irrefutable impact upon twentieth-century Christianity, the time is ripe for Pentecostals to share our contributions to the ongoing life of a biblical text.³

My interest in reception history parallels my growing dissatisfaction with the never-ending exegetical quest for original meaning and binding application. As I move further into reception history, I find the adventure incredibly refreshing, but not without its challenges. At times, I remember my struggle to own the Pentecostal heritage of my youth, not least because we live in a tradition marked by teachings founded upon narrative texts, such as Luke-Acts. In his *Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*, Roger Stronstad, not only helped me survive as a Pentecostal, but also opened my theological eyes to a new world. By introducing me to Luke the theologian, possibilities of normativity, and narrative's didactic potential, Stronstad provided me with the foundational resources to stave off Pentecostal opponents unwilling to allow the cumulative outcome of Lukan stories to serve as a basis for doctrine and practice. Pentecostals, like Stronstad, worked hard to defend normative doctrines and practices based upon narrative. Reception history, however, forces scholars to assess Pentecostal beliefs and practices based upon narratives that fail to meet his criteria. In this essay, I reflect on *one* such example. How is it that Luke's single and descriptive reference to the use of handkerchiefs for healing provides the impetus for Pentecostal practices?⁴ As a tribute to Roger and his native land (and length restrictions), I limit my survey to accounts among Canadian Pentecostals.

Canadian Pentecostals and Their Handkerchiefs

Luz is obviously not a Pentecostal. I say this because his media list for reception analysis of biblical texts fails to include "testimonies." For my examination of Pentecostal use of handkerchiefs, I turn first and primarily to testimonies in newsletters; in so doing, I seek veiled exegesis and insight in stories told for edification. In *The Apostolic Faith (AF)*, the official newsletter of the Azusa Street revival, editors report receiving

2. Thiselton, "Holy Spirit," 209; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 95.

3. See Mittelstadt, "Receiving Luke-Acts."

4. I began collecting such stories before I stumbled on the invaluable essay by Thomas, "Anointed Cloths." I not only add to the primary data on Acts 19:11-12, but accept his invitation to further this conversation.

daily prayer requests from around the world. In response, they and participants at Azusa Street assure readers that in return, "Handkerchiefs are sent in letters to be anointed and blest for healing."⁵ When readers respond with the practice's results, editors waste no time in sharing specific testimonies of such healing. A number of these accounts come from Canadians. S. A. Morrisburg of Ontario exclaims: "Received the handkerchief all right, and God sent two distinct waves of power over us. The lady had been recovering for some time and was helped by the laying on of the handkerchief. All glory be to God who does the work. She has taken no medicine, but is healed by faith. Hallelujah!"⁶ Across the country, E. W. Johnson of Stockholm, SK, shouts:

I feel led by the Holy Spirit to testify to the glory of God what He has done for me and my wife. The Lord has wonderfully healed me from catarrh of nine years standing. Glory! glory! glory! glory be to my dear Redeemer's name! Soon as I received the handkerchief, or as soon as I opened the letter, such power went through my whole being as I have never felt before, and I praise Him, I feel the healing balm just now go through soul and body. Glory to King Jesus, the great Physician of soul and body.⁷

Finally, a report on meetings in Manitoba:

Winnipeg, Can.—There was a great Pentecostal Convention in Winnipeg beginning November 15th. Preachers and workers from all parts of Canada were present. A band of workers who were in Portland at the time received a call from God to go to Winnipeg, and they were present at the convention: Sister Crawford and Mildred, Sister Neal, Brother Conlee and Brother Trotter. About twenty were baptized with the Holy Ghost and many were healed. The people brought handkerchiefs and aprons to be blessed as in Acts 19:12, and the Lord did wonderful signs through the simple faith of the dear ones that brought them. The Lord healed one young man of the tobacco habit, taking all the desire for the stuff away from him, through an anointed handkerchief, and he was saved in his own room. Demons were cast out of those bound by them.⁸

These testimonies warrant initial comments. First, the practice of requesting, sending, and receiving handkerchiefs by mail finds early support at Azusa Street and at the Winnipeg convention. Second, though the editors publish only a handful of testimonies in conjunction with anointed handkerchiefs, nearly half come from Canada. Canadian readers responded favorably. Third, healing comes not only for physical ailments, but brings freedom from addiction and the demonic. Finally, neither those who submit testimonies, nor the editors, include instruction for or defense of the

5. *AF* 1.4 (1906) 1, 3; 1.5 (1907) 1; 1.6 (1907) 1.

6. *AF* 1.6 (1907) 3.

7. *AF* 1.9 (1908) 1.

8. *AF* 1.12 (1908) 1.

practice. Indeed, most of the reports do not reference Acts 19:11–12. The closest defense in the *AF* comes from the pen of Nora Wilcox of Denver, CO:

People are being healed of scrofula, salt rheum, curvature of spine, locomotive ataxia, diseases of the eyes, ears, etc. . . . People of all ages with all manner of diseases are coming for healing, and the deaf, lame, and blind. *The Acts of the Apostles are being repeated here now.* Handkerchiefs are being blessed and sent to sick people in other places, and children of God are getting handkerchiefs blessed for unbelieving husbands and children and for sick folks here in and around Denver.⁹

Other American newsletters convey similar accounts. In *The Household of God* (Dayton, OH) editor (and traveling evangelist with roots in the Apostolic Faith Mission) William Manley receives and publishes the testimony of Mrs. Ellen Romilley of Toronto:

Dear Sir:—Praise the dear Lord for His love to me for healing me while attending your meetings. I have had a very weak heart all my life and for years I have been suffering with an abscess in my left ankle.

Two or three times a year I was forced to keep my room and bed for two weeks or longer at a time. Since you cast the demons out and laid hands on me in the name of Jesus I can truthfully tell every one I was healed while attending divine healing meetings. Praise the dear Lord, all pain has left me; not even the least soreness left for me to bear now.

I was sure the Dear Lord wanted to heal me, because He has been so good to me in sending one of the sisters to my home to see me while I was suffering from this weak ankle. The dear sister told me to get up and come down to your meeting and get healed. I told her I would love to do so, only I could not walk. I gave her a handkerchief to take to you to pray over and to put the healing power into it.

Two of the sisters returned about 5:30 p.m. with the handkerchief, blessed and pinned it upon my very sore ankle. The moment it was applied to the sore it seemed to make it better.

Next day the sister was on her way to see me. I met her coming to my home. We went to the mission together. I went with the crowd to the upper room and there the Lord wonderfully healed me. Praise His dear name forever!¹⁰

Still in Toronto, an ecstatic mother writes to *AF*, now highjacked to Portland, OR:

Praise God for the wonderful cure! Some time past I mailed you a letter containing a handkerchief for a little girl. She had cataracts grown all over her eyes and her mother said she would spend her all if she could only cure her

9. *AF* 1.8 (1907) 1 (emphasis added).

10. Romilley, "Heart and Limb Healed," 10.

darling. She was brought to Toronto, and, oh, the torture those doctors gave that little baby. Six years passed and she was no better. I told my daughter that I was going to ask the saints to pray over the baby, and, praise our dear Lord, the Blood healed her and her lovely eyes are well and strong.¹¹

And a reader from Collingwood, ON, reports, "God wonderfully blessed me when I received the anointed handkerchief and put it on my afflicted body, and now the healing stream abounded. My husband was afflicted in body and he put it on and got healed. I have been healed many times."¹² The final remark suggests the couple used the handkerchief repeatedly.

Since this newsletter installment receives an array of testimonies from the United States and Canada, *AF* offers explanation for use of a handkerchief. The issue includes a headline titled "Anointed Handkerchiefs for Healing," followed by an Acts 19:11–12 citation, and references to the use of handkerchiefs for healing and exorcism. The editors then draw the following parallel:

The woman who had suffered with an issue of blood twelve years was perfectly healed by touching Jesus's clothes. And through faith and prayer and the laying on of hands of holy persons, filled with the Holy Ghost, a handkerchief or paper can be anointed with the same power today.¹³

As to the use of handkerchiefs received and sent out from the mission,

The saints always lay them on the Bible, usually opening it to Acts because that is the foundation of our faith. They anoint it with anointing oil for the sick and lay their hands on it and pray the prayer of faith, and God honors His Word and heals a great many. They should be laid on in faith and prayer by one that is right with God. Some saints will wash them when soiled and lay them again on the sick and the power of God continues to heal. To God be all the glory.¹⁴

A turn to Canadian publications yields similar commentary. A. H. Argue, editor of the *Apostolic Messenger*, offers a pithy and polemical refrain: "Much is said against praying over handkerchiefs for the sick in this present day. Acts 19:12: 'So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out of them.' Verses 13–16 show that there was truly counterfeit and evil spirits to contend with just the same as today."¹⁵ Though the lack of context for this statement makes it difficult to ascertain Argue's purpose, he appears to defend "extraordinary" healing in an ancient city marked by "extraordinary" forces.

11. *AF* 19 (1907) 3.

12. *AF* 19 (1907) 2.

13. *AF* 19 (1907) 2.

14. *AF* 19 (1907) 2.

15. *Apostolic Messenger* 1.1 (1908) 4.

In 1927, the *Pentecostal Testimony* (PT), the official organ of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), recounts a successful evangelistic campaign at Sixth Avenue Pentecostal Tabernacle in Vancouver under Smith Wigglesworth and his daughter, Sister J. Salter. After reports of Spirit baptisms and healing, the commentary concludes: "At the final service, scores of handkerchiefs were anointed and prayed over," and participants returned home with ready-to-use handkerchiefs.¹⁶ In his *Ever Increasing Faith*, Wigglesworth reflects briefly (not unlike Nora Wilcox) on the reason for this practice:

In some places there are 200 or 300 who would like us to visit them, but we are not able to do so. But I am so glad that the Lord Jesus is always willing to come and heal. He longs to meet the sick ones. He loves to heal them of their afflictions. The Lord is healing many people today by means of handkerchiefs as you read that He healed people in the days of Paul. You can read this in Acts 19:12.¹⁷

Apparently, vast need gives rise to a straightforward reading and response based upon Acts.

A decade later, J. A. Hughes, District Superintendent of British Columbia, describes a mission under the leadership of Brother Stewart. Shortly after Stewart commits to faith, his wife contracts tuberculosis. When Stewart requests prayer from friends in Prince Rupert, BC, and Portland, OR, he receives an anointed handkerchief "with instructions that he and his wife should separate from all that was worldly and displeasing to God and come out and out for the Lord." After a week, Sister Stewart "was up and around and on her way to recovery."¹⁸ The Stewarts soon received Spirit baptism and began a successful Pentecostal mission.

The use of anointed cloths also proves favorable among early PAOC leaders. In the minutes of an Eastern District Council held in 1932, the recorder remarks on the field report given by Bro. Wilson of Ayton, ON: "a handkerchief was anointed and prayed over by the conference on behalf of one of Bro. Wilson's assembly who was at the point of death. We believe that God still answers prayer."¹⁹

And what about the headline at the beginning of this essay? In thirty-seven consecutive issues on the inside cover of PT from April 4, 1943, until November 15, 1944, the PAOC executive leadership solicits prayer requests for a monthly day of prayer and distributes anointed handkerchiefs upon request.²⁰ At least two subsequent testimonies chronicled in PT refer directly to the efficacy of this practice. First, in an

16. "Vancouver Campaign," 2.

17. Wigglesworth, *Ever Increasing Faith*, 54–55 (emphasis added).

18. Hughes, "British Columbia's Indian Believers," 8.

19. The title of the document reads: "PAOC Eastern District Conference now convening in Calvary Tabernacle. Toronto," and serves as *Minutes* (August 23, 1932).

20. PT (April 1, 1943–November 15, 1944).

anonymous testimony in the May 1, 1943, publication, a woman from Caledonia, ON, describes persistent head pain, subsequent diagnosis of "poison in my system," and treatments that failed to bring relief. Satan further taunts her until: "One day as I was reading the Pentecostal Testimony, I saw where it said that they would send anointed handkerchiefs to the sick, as we find it in the Word of God, Acts 19:12." She chooses not to cite this verse, but continues: "When the handkerchief came, I put it on my forehead believing in our Lord Jesus that He would heal me, and the pain left. Praise the Lord for all His goodness toward me! I hope that some sick person will do the same, that God's Name may be glorified!"²¹

The second testimony appears in PT's January 1, 1944, issue. Mr. Huskins of MacDowall, SK, recounts violent pains after a major surgery. He writes: "I am writing to let you know that I received the anointed handkerchief which you sent to me on request. . . . When I retired at night I placed the handkerchief on my body, and prayed in the Name of Jesus for healing. Next morning the pain was gone . . . and has not returned. Praise His Wonderful Name."²²

Despite the early American and emerging Canadian newsletter accounts revealing the geographical reach of this practice among Canadian Pentecostals and the mid-century emphasis on the ritual by PAOC leaders, reports of anointed handkerchiefs wane in the second half of the twentieth century. Having said this, I discovered a recent account. On April 23, 2017, at Bethel Pentecostal Church in Sarnia, ON, pastor Tim Gibb and congregants prayed for two women. The congregation gathers around a man whose wife was watching live at home and suffering from a "tormenting" rash. Gibb, a PAOC minister, prays for the ailing woman and anoints a cloth to be placed upon the woman by her husband. Gibb then anoints and prays over a second cloth that he would take later in the week to a woman diagnosed with cancer. In his brief theological comments, Gibb suggests that Acts 19:11–12 should not be "confined for history books." Instead, the text presents a model for a contemporary "transfer of anointing." Gibb also proposes a parallel to Acts 5:15 and Peter's shadow: "every person here has a shadow . . . and the Lord wants to use you to touch them." According to Gibb, believers should not seek such agency, but he encourages openness to the "extraordinary."²³

Making Sense of Handkerchiefs

Historians have grappled with understanding the practice of anointing handkerchiefs. Canadian historian, James Opp, provides a socio-historical assessment. An outsider to Pentecostalism, Opp recounts a *Toronto Star* reporter's visit to meetings at Trinity Pentecostal Assembly in 1919. The reporter describes the two-hour experience akin to

21. "My Testimony of Healing," 17.

22. PT (January 1, 1944) 15.

23. Gibb, "April 23rd AM." Thanks to Caleb Courtney for alerting me to this event.

"having visited another planet,' the 'strangest' yet 'happiest' sect he had ever visited."²⁴ He witnessed pre-service prayer, a rousing song service, a lengthy end-times sermon, and extended altar prayer. As the focus turned to the sick, the reporter continues:

Three handkerchiefs were laid on a table on the platform, and three men laid their hands on them. There was another burst of vehement prayer from all sides. By the laying on of hands those handkerchiefs became charged with divine power, and when they are slipped beneath the pillow of the sufferers to whom they belong the patients will be cured or at least relieved of their maladies.²⁵

Summarizing this and other newspaper reports, Opp concludes that participants show no interest in who prays, only that the cumulative effect of God's presence among the faithful is transferred to the handkerchief.

If Opp observes that "Handkerchiefs served to incorporate the bodies of others within this spiritually charged environment,"²⁶ R. Marie Griffith goes a step further. Griffith, a humanities professor at Washington University in St. Louis, MO, contends that when Pentecostals carry an everyday handkerchief "associated with wiping away tears or sweat or mundanely blowing one's nose" into sacred space, the consecrated cloth no longer functions to remove bodily excretions; it now serves as a carrier of divine power.²⁷ At the same time, Griffith views the shared handkerchief as an expression of "human kindness and generosity. You can see the power of asking someone for a handkerchief out of desperation—when you have tuberculosis or some degenerative disease—and all these handkerchiefs flood into you from this widespread community of people you may never have met before."²⁸ In summary, handkerchiefs move through the hands of a praying and hospitable community.

While Opp and Griffin provide insight into the practice, anointed handkerchiefs are notably absent in Canadian church historian Ronald Kydd's study of *Healing Through the Centuries*.²⁹ Kydd, a former Pentecostal-turned-Anglican, categorizes six types of healing. For examples of revelational healing (God-given insight), he refers to William Branham and Kathryn Kuhlman, and for soteriological healing (healing in the atonement), he points to Oral Roberts. In his turn to the reliquial model (the use

24. Opp, *Lord for the Body*, 142.

25. Opp, *Lord for the Body*, 142.

26. Opp, *Lord for the Body*, 143.

27. Griffith, "Female Devotional Practices," 197. See also Griffith, "Prayer Cloths"; Hornik and Parsons, *Acts of the Apostles*, 206. From the various testimonies, Griffin offers a similar refrain. When women place or apply the cloth to their bodies, they often experience an immediate reaction. Also noteworthy, these handkerchiefs would not generally be associated with the hands of powerful Pentecostal preachers.

28. Griffith, "Prayer Cloths."

29. Kydd, *Healing*. He argues for six healing models: confrontational, intercessory, reliquial, incubational, revelational, and soteriological.

of objects in conjunction with healing), however, Kydd marches through examples as early as the third century, follows with testimonies from Ambrose and Augustine, and provides a detailed account of healings at St. Médard on the grave of Jansenist François de Paris (d. 1727). He includes, however, no examples of Pentecostals and their use of material objects. In my recent conversation with Kydd, he reflected: "I may have felt intuitively that assumptions underlying conventional (read 'Catholic') reliquial practice and what Pents. [*sic*] have done were too dissimilar. However, I repeat, that never floated to the surface in my thinking as far as I can remember."³⁰ Kydd provides the first and most extensive study of healing by a Pentecostal, and admits his failure to draw on a healing category well-known across the Pentecostal spectrum.

Pentecostals, Handkerchiefs, and Modern Hermeneutics

With the reflections of historians in the background, I remain most intrigued by implications for biblical studies. I cannot help but consider this practice alongside the evolving hermeneutics over the last one hundred years. As mid-twentieth-century Pentecostals, whether for good or ill, begin their quest for acceptance among Evangelicals, they slowly find their way into Evangelical institutions of higher learning, where they encounter Evangelical methodologies and battles. On the one hand, Pentecostals align with emerging Evangelicals to defy Enlightenment-like challenges to core Christian beliefs, such as the nature of revelation, Jesus's virgin birth, and resurrection. On the other hand, these same Evangelicals champion cessationism. Though Pentecostal students and future educators under such influence reject cessationism, they certainly embrace the Evangelical quest for the biblical story's historical reliability and the subsequent pursuit of moving from "what the text meant" to "what it means today." For many of these Evangelicals, if reliability meant that "then" included miracles, "now" no longer requires them. When biblical scholars begin to read the Scriptures through the lens of formalism in the 1970s, perhaps no tradition benefits more from this turn than Pentecostals. Even if a pioneer like Stronstad shows little methodological interaction with formalists across university hallways, he, nonetheless, reads Luke-Acts, not only for historical reliability, but also as theological story. Though Stronstad and fellow Pentecostal scholar Gordon Fee battle over questions of narrative as theology and the possibility of patterns and normativity, the Stronstadian impulse prevails, and Pentecostals join with narrative critics across the academy in a quest to read Luke-Acts for theology and praxis. Surely a victory for Pentecostal scholars!³¹

This trajectory applies straightforwardly to Acts 19:11–12. Should Luke's account of healing through use of Paul's handkerchiefs be taken at face value? While many "enlightened readers" would dismiss this account as an impossibility, Evangelical

30. Ronald Kydd, email with the author, January 31, 2018. See further Kydd, "Healing in the Christian Church."

31. See Mittelstadt, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 46–80.

cessionists would defend the account's reliability, but deny modern equivalency. In response to such denial, I need not give a grand review of the Pentecostal penchant for healing, but state simply the "Jesus did it then, and he can do it now" approach.³² With literary criticism's arrival, Pentecostal scholars defend modern-day healing as normative by way of the Gospels and Acts; Jesus's paradigmatic healing ministry extends to the new apostolic community, and subsequent—including contemporary—faith communities. For these defenders of contemporary healing, conversation and debate generally centers on questions such as the importance of faith, the healing agent's role and proximity, and the laying on of hands. To answer these questions, Pentecostal literary scholars agree that the healing accounts found in the Gospels and Acts leave readers with plenty of gaps. Having said this, how is it that Pentecostal scholars find in Luke-Acts good reason for diverse healing practices to be taught and experienced, yet say so little of handkerchiefs?³³ In my search for answers, I return to Pentecostal stories and storytellers, and find only more questions.

First, if the end of the twentieth century marks a highpoint for literary analysis, the new century brings an array of new interpreters. Among the recent invitees to the methodological guild are feminist, cultural, social-scientific, post-colonial, and global/glocal readers. But what about the Pentecostal "interpreters" represented by the testimonies and reports cited above? Since many of the more recent interpreters represent formerly-muted voices, could it be that the Pentecostals represented by testimonies and sermons remain muted because they speak and write outside the methodologies that rule the day?³⁴

Second, I call attention to Pentecostal scholars, a specific extension of the larger academy, for they pay little attention to the kind of (Canadian) Pentecostal interpreters represented in the aforementioned testimonies.³⁵ If Pentecostal newsletter editors saw fit to record even the occasional use of anointed cloths for healing, do they (and other Pentecostal communities) not deserve the tag of an interpretative community as much as concurrent historical critics? Is it judicious to relegate *testifiers* not recognized as "professional, scientific, objective, scholarly, and critical" to the status of inferior interpreters? Are uneducated, eccentric, and marginalized voices unable to produce valid readings and application? Also, what about the unspoken yet inherent

32. See Alexander, *Pentecostal Healing*.

33. Some scholars have suggested possible parallels to the woman healed by touching the hem of Jesus's garment (Luke 8:44) or the sick brought to cross the path of Peter's shadow (Acts 5:15). See Thomas, "Anointed Cloths"; Tipei, *Laying on of Hands*, 145–47. Concerning the accounts among modern Pentecostals, gaps prove even more difficult. How does this practice gain traction? Where did believers find common interest in the practice? How did they interpret the Scripture? What about opponents to the practice? Due to space to limitations, I must leave such questions for further study.

34. See Sawyer, "Role of Reception Theory," his go-to essay to promote reception history and the Blackwell series.

35. For Pentecostal models of effective history, see Archer, "I was in the Spirit," 68–118; Green, *Lord's Supper*, 74–181.

elitism concerning the uneducated? Must legitimate interpreters have formal education and theological training to gain an audience in the academy?³⁶

Third, if Acts commentators and hermeneutics professors—including many Pentecostal scholars—find little reason to pause on Acts 19:11–12, reception historians will not resist the opportunity to scour our one-hundred-year history on the *nachleben* of any text too often ignored. I certainly recognize the methodological boundaries on display in commentaries and retain my ongoing concern for disciplined interpreters and sound preachers (believe me!), but is it not time to listen more carefully to our received story? Is it truly impartial for scholars to employ the impact of patristic, medieval, Reformation, and other period-/tradition-based interpretations for their contributions to doctrine and practice, yet ignore insiders of the Pentecostal tradition? Indeed, why do scholars fail to recognize or acknowledge that contemporary go-to commentators and hermeneuticians are themselves products of post-Bible interpretative communities? In other words, how is it that *modern* interpreters engage in twentieth-century "criticism" (think scholars), a legion of diversity, yet ignore our Pentecostal voices? At the very least, I suggest that our accounts deserve a place in the *nachleben* of Acts 19:11–12.

Fourth, I suspect some Pentecostal scholars, myself included, prefer to disregard certain voices because of disappointment over theological misinterpretation and abusive practices within our tribe. Do we distance ourselves out of shame? Are these accounts concerning handkerchiefs better ignored among those of us who seek to promote a Pentecostalism that has come of age? I suspect the waning use of handkerchiefs among certain Pentecostals reflects the commercialized and abusive shenanigans of prosperity preachers, but I feel little such concern over the stories cited earlier. Though most accounts show little context, they demonstrate no signs of commercialization. Moreover, testimonies typically refer to the efficacy of a praying community; those who employ anointed handkerchiefs do not identify them with specific individuals or ministries.³⁷

36. Having said this, some of these newsletters undoubtedly derive under editors with theological education, and concerning those who send in their stories and reports, we know little of their educational backgrounds.

37. Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, traces the long history of such concern. For example, while the Council of Trent (December 1563) affirms authentic healings proclaimed as "extraordinary deeds" of God and not to the efficacy of the cloth or even the saint, John Calvin cautions "as if Paul sent his handkerchiefs that men might worship them and kiss them in honour of them. . . . Yea, rather, he did choose most simple things, lest any superstition arise by reason of the price or pomp" (Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 204). Similarly, the sarcastic disdain of English deist Peter Annet: "how long these aprons or handkerchiefs must have been with the holy Paul, to be thus impregnated with this healing quality: and if they resisted sweat, or could stand a lather" (Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 204). And the recent concern of Justo González: "The reference to Paul's handkerchiefs and aprons has provided some supposed evangelists with an opportunity to make money by selling handkerchiefs and other items they have blessed" (Hornik and Parsons, *Acts*, 206).

Hornik and Parsons could have easily cited similar concerns regarding the rise of mid-twentieth-century North American prosperity preachers. A. A. Allen (Miracle Valley, AZ) distributes pamphlets

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Pentecostal Voices

Essays in Honor of Professor Roger Stronstad

EDITED BY Riku P. Tuppurainen

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