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Special Issue Reprint

Syncretism and Pentecostalism in the Global South

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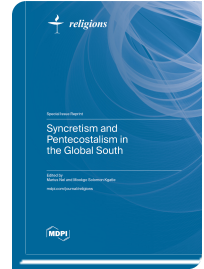
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Syncretism is a significant factor in the phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal movement, especially in the Global South. Theologically, Neo-Pentecostalism is influenced by prosperity theology, emphasizing material blessings and personal wealth as a sign of God's favor while exploiting vulnerable individuals. Ethically, prosperity theology has established a culture of consumerism, constituting a hierarchical leadership reflecting authoritarian leadership structures that concentrate power in the hands of pastors or prophets, potentially leading to abuse and exploitation and the selective interpretation of scripture, cherry-picking verses to support its teachings, neglecting the broader context and potentially distorting the overall message. Socioculturally, it promotes traditional gender roles by some members, which are limiting and oppressive for women and hinder gender equality. International Pentecostal scholarship has lacked an evaluation of syncretism and its influence and potential threat to this movement. This reprint investigates the influence of syncretism on Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism in its various forms, linking syncretistic practices to traditional religion and worldviews in the different contexts of the Global South. Can its popularity be linked to incorporating some syncretistic features within Pentecostal practice, and does it fit into the ethos and paradigm of Pentecostalism? The contributors utilized practical, systematic, sociological, and hermeneutical theological perspectives to focus on the theological values or dangers with which these practices may be associated.



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