



The Power of Integration: Challenges in Researching Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality

Rev Dr Angelo Cettolin

DMin(ACT); GDipBus(Org Dyn); BTh; BLaw

Contact: acettolin@eastern.edu.au

Abstract

Researchers are at times uncertain about the right methodology to adopt in areas such as spirituality and its associated phenomena. Researching the spirituality of pastors is a challenging exercise. How do you empirically gather and measure information in a scientifically verifiable way? Adopting qualitative methods of research may result in tentative answers, but equally, an over-concern with quantitative data may miss important links and relationships. Some elements of a qualitative approach may be impressionistic and subjective but on the other hand, a scientifically rigorous investigation employing sophisticated statistical analyses is still open to question in its procedures, choice of tools and techniques. Not everything about human beings can be understood by measurement, or in laboratories. However, integrating methodologies, although involving considerable complexity can produce reliable, interesting, and surprising results. The convergence of data in researching the spirituality of Pentecostal pastors showed that in recent years pastors in a modern Pentecostal movement were moving away from classical Pentecostal beliefs and attitudes and increasingly adopting 'Charismatic,' 'Third Wave,' and more mainline beliefs and approaches. The evidence indicated that the Pentecostal spirituality of the pastors was changing. Paradoxically, the influences of the Charismatic Renewal and 'Third Wave' movements seem to have revitalised a classical Pentecostal denomination.
