



## BOOK REVIEW

**Simatupang, Florian M. P. *The Eucharistic Spirit: A Renewal Theology of the Lord's Supper*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2025; xviii + 213.**

In the introduction, Florian M.P. Simatupang poses the central question this book seeks to answer: What kind of experience of grace does the Holy Spirit offer to Pentecostal communities in their celebration of the Eucharist? To explore this question, Simatupang structures the discussion across several chapters. The first chapter outlines the research problem and introduces the SET method (Search, Encounter, and Transformation), developed by Mark J. Cartledge, as a tool to reinterpret the Eucharist in conversation with broader theological traditions. Drawing from recent scholarship by Pentecostal as well as Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox theologians, Simatupang analyses diverse views through a Pentecostal lens. He aims to develop a constructive Pentecostal theology of the Eucharist by employing Hans-Georg Gadamer's concept of the "fusion of horizons" with the spiritual insights of the SET framework.

In the second chapter, Simatupang analyses various perspectives from Pentecostal churches and Pentecostal theologians, particularly within the field of systematic theology concerning the Eucharist. According to Simatupang's concluding remarks in this section, Pentecostal theological writings on the Eucharist often lack meaningful engagement with systematic theologians from other traditions. Moreover, they tend to emphasize intellectual categories over the experiential and reflective dimensions that are more characteristic of Pentecostal spirituality. Nevertheless, this study reveals the richness and diversity within Pentecostal theology, which offers no single, uniform perspective on the Eucharist. While Simatupang's reading of Pentecostal systematic theologies in chapter two is insightful, one area that would benefit from further clarification is his use of the SET method, originally developed by Cartledge, an Anglican charismatic theologian. While the boundaries between Pentecostal and charismatic

approaches are often blurred, it would help to explain why this particular method is appropriate for a distinctly Pentecostal framework.

In the third chapter, Simatupang explores ecumenical perspectives on the Eucharist, engaging with views from the Eastern Orthodox Church (particularly through the work of John Zizioulas), the Roman Catholic tradition, and major Protestant reformers such as Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin. Simatupang argues that Pentecostal theology has much to learn from these traditions, particularly concerning the concepts of *anamnesis* and *epiclesis*. For instance, *anamnesis* is not merely a historical recollection but a Spirit-led remembrance, made manifest through *epiclesis*, the communal invocation of the Holy Spirit during the Eucharist. Simatupang sees the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation as an embodiment of Pentecostal faith (p. 83), mediated by the Spirit and pointing to eschatological and soteriological realities. From Protestant theologians, Pentecostals are invited to become a “Eucharistic people,” recognizing the Holy Spirit as the sympathetic climate animating the Eucharistic celebration. Ultimately, this chapter emphasizes that Pentecostal theology stands to gain richly from engaging ecumenically with other Eucharistic traditions. What is needed, Simatupang suggests, is a pneumatological imagination, a way of re-envisioning these inherited concepts through a distinctly Pentecostal framework.

In chapter four, Simatupang revisits key biblical texts related to the Eucharist. These include Paul’s teachings in 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 and 11:17–34; the Synoptic accounts of the Lord’s Supper (Matthew 26:20–30, Mark 14:1–26, and Luke 22:14–20); Jesus’ feeding miracles (Matthew 14:13–21 and John 6:11–14, 51–58); and the road to Emmaus narrative in Luke 24:13–35. The interpretation of these texts is shaped by Gadamer’s hermeneutical approach, which emphasizes a readiness to encounter the unfamiliar and a willingness to compromise with the text. Simatupang finds this spirit of openness resonates with Pentecostal hermeneutics, particularly the dynamic triad of text, community, and Spirit. From these biblical readings, Simatupang identifies certain characteristics of a Spirit-filled community, as also reflected in Acts 2:42: the teaching of the apostles, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers (p. 136). These elements are understood through the SET framework as part of an interpretive process where “Search” and “Encounter” operate simultaneously, which results in a community experiencing “Transformation” (see below). Once again, Simatupang emphasizes the fluidity of Pentecostal hermeneutics, a method that remains open to the transformative movement of the Spirit.

Chapter five presents Simatupang's constructive contribution, which he terms *a Renewal theology of the Eucharist*. This chapter marks the "Transformation" phase of the SET framework, where insights gained from re-reading Scripture and engaging with diverse traditions are synthesized into a more transformational Pentecostal theology. Simatupang proposes seven theological dimensions through which the Eucharist may be understood: solidarity, justice, the satisfaction of hunger, healing, missional impulse, eschatological anticipation, and *apokatastasis*. The first three dimensions are explicitly social and political, fulfilling Simatupang's earlier commitment to develop a prophetic and politically engaged Eucharistic theology (p. 11). The fourth and fifth themes draw more deeply from Pentecostal categories, yet with renewed interpretation. For example, healing is not limited to personal restoration but includes communal healing—bringing *shalom* to a world wounded by structural sin—and cosmic healing, in which all creation shares in *Christus Victor* through the Eucharist; mission is reimagined as hospitality and eschatological hope, areas that are rarely emphasized in traditional Pentecostal missiology. The sixth and seventh dimensions are theologically more provocative. The eschatological reflections adopt an amillennial perspective, which Simatupang acknowledges differs from the prevailing eschatology of his peers within the Assemblies of God (p. 169). Likewise, his exploration of *apokatastasis*, the idea of the ultimate restoration of all things, is recognized as a position likely to be rejected by much of the Pentecostal tradition.

As an Indonesian Pentecostal theologian myself, I remain cautious about whether this book should gain broad acceptance within the Indonesian Pentecostal scholarly community. In the limitations section, Simatupang himself admits that his theological project is "unfinished," and extends an open invitation to Indonesian theologians to continue developing this theology in more contextualized forms (p. 24). He also recognizes that many of his perspectives diverge from the dominant currents of Pentecostal thought, particularly within the Indonesian context (p. 141). Simatupang takes bold steps in addressing themes such as public theology, justice, and social hunger, topics that are rarely explored in Pentecostal theological discourse. Even more provocatively, he engages with the presumably objectionable idea of *apokatastasis*. Yet, he remains hopeful about the future of Pentecostal theology. As he writes, "Pentecostalism today is regarded as one of the most exciting places to be as a constructive theologian" (p. 191). This shows his hope that Pentecostalism is open enough to welcome new and even unconventional theological contributions.

Overall, this book is compelling in its presentation of a Pentecostal theology that is both fresh and unconventional. Adding to the works of influential Pentecostal theologians such as Amos Yong, Daniela C. Augustine, Wolfgang Vondey, and Frank D. Macchia have pioneered forward-thinking developments in Pentecostal thought, Simatupang offers a refreshing perspective by engaging with Eastern Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant traditions, viewed through a distinctly Pentecostal lens. Simatupang introduces a renewed way of “imagining pneumatology,” what he calls “pneumatological imagination,” by inviting dialogue with theological perspectives often considered foreign, while remaining grounded within the unique contours of a Pentecostal worldview. This approach not only enriches Eucharistic theology but may also offer new pathways for engaging other theological themes that are relevant for the ongoing development of Pentecostal thought.

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