

*Pentecostal Catholics: Power, Charisma, and Order in a Religious Movement*, by MEREDITH B. MCGUIRE. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982, 270 pp. \$25.00.

The sociologist of religion must steer between the Scylla of reductionism and the Charybdis of parochialism. Too heavy-handed a use of sociological tools explains away rather than explains religious beliefs and practices; too much emphasis on authentic description results in findings of little relevance or interest to the larger sociological community. Meredith McGuire has accomplished this feat with apparent ease in the account of the Pentecostal movement among Catholics which is rich in both general sociological insight and phenomenological description.

The Pentecostal movement began to spread among Catholics in the United States at the end of the 1960s. McGuire observed the activities of a number of local prayer groups over a six year period during the 1970s, conducting in addition nearly 200 interviews among the largely middle class membership. The Catholic Pentecostal movement seems to have adapted pentecostal piety to a middle-class style of expression and helped legitimate a more diffused charisma within a church otherwise known for the priestly monopoly of the Gifts of the Spirit.

Pentecostalism has long proven an attractive research topic for sociologists. It allows them to examine issues of central sociological significance: the role of routine, mundane practices in establishing a sense of the facticity of the world; the interplay between individual spontaneity and free will and the objectivity and determinism of social structures; the role of the group in establishing and maintaining individual identity; and the impact of beliefs and values on group structure and process. Pentecostalism is a living laboratory in which to study the paradox of controlled spontaneity, a paradox which, in muted form, is represented in any stable social order.

*Pentecostal Catholics* conforms approximately to the standard format for studies of sects but each chapter stands on its own as a source of knowledge about the Pentecostal experience. The beliefs which guide and inform that experience revolve around the themes of order and power, an order that is conceived dualistically and a sense of accessible and deployable power that borders on the magical. Converts to Pentecostalism adopt much more than a new set of beliefs, however; rather, they find a whole new way of experiencing the world and themselves. The experiential dimension of religion is particularly well illustrated in this study.

In a succession of chapters McGuire conducts us through the different facets of the Pentecostal experience. The prayer meeting, the focus of religious practice, is carefully analyzed, the role of prayer, witnessing and prophecy in ordering social relations in the group adroitly revealed: the section on the social control functions of silence in prayer meetings is fascinating. The phenomenological awareness revealed in the analysis of the prayer meeting is deepened in a chapter on religious speaking and hearing in which Schutz's ideas on multiple realities are skillfully employed to demonstrate the differences between everyday and Pentecostal methods of uttering, hearing and validating speech.

The analysis broadens in two long chapters on Pentecostals' beliefs about healing. Phenomenological analysis is combined with anthropological wisdom to throw light on the social construction of categories of health and illness, culminating in an intriguing comparison between the legitimation for healing failure among Pentecostals and the medical establishment in which very similar techniques are seen being used, the difference being that the Pentecostals' legitimation serves to protect the healing power of God; the medical doctor's protects his own power and that of his profession.

The book provides no picture of the overall structure of Catholic Pentecostalism as a social movement, nor does McGuire concern herself with speculation about the kind of social conditions which spawn such movements. Nor is there much attention paid to the manner in which the sect has been shaped by the attitudes of the Catholic hierarchy and by competition from Protestant Pentecostals. Rather more surprising, we get little sense of how Catholic Pentecostalism fits into the everyday life of its adherents, how it informs and is informed by their family, work and leisure lives. But these are minor reservations. This study complements Fichter's *Cult of the Paraclete* on Catholic Pentecostalism and possesses the same ethnographic quality of Schwartz' *Sect Ideologies and Social Status* on Protestant Pentecostals. However, in suggesting these parallels I do not wish to suggest that this book's appeal is limited to sociologists of religion. The acuity of McGuire's observations and the lucid prose with which she reports them provide an object lesson for all sociologists whatever their field of specialization.

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