In *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*, Miller and Yamamori analyze the evolution of what they refer to as "Progressive Protestantism," specifically focusing on its orientation towards social engagement. For their research, the authors observe a range of churches and organizations meeting the following 4 criteria: (1) rapid growth, (2) located in the Global South, (3) active social services addressing local needs, and (4) self-supporting, indigenous movements. The authors then provide snapshots of the various churches and organizations observed over the course of their four-year research period, lauding their heroic, seemingly superhuman achievements while simultaneously calling for a deeper understanding of "how social systems work."[1] Strengths of Pentecostalism include its egalitarian, democratic nature which stems from the concept of all mankind as created in God's image and Jesus' identification with the poor. The dynamic worship experience is identified as the defining characteristic and driving force behind Pentecostals' lifestyle and faith, including their social action, marked by a distinctive "residual spirit of joy."[2] Furthermore, the authors suggest a correlation between Pentecostalism and upward mobility, as well as capitalism. Here, the authors also draw parallels and clear distinctions between Pentecostalism and, say, Liberation Theology. It would be remiss for Miller and Yamamori to conclude a discussion of Pentecostalism without mention of the "S" factor, or the Holy Spirit, which Progressive Pentecostals claim inspires them toward social engagement by means of divine encounter and personal transformation. As such, many Progressive Pentecostal movements are spearheaded by a creative visionary, typically with a radical conversion experience and subsequent vision or divine calling, which spurs them into action. The authors conclude by stating that Progressive Pentecostals are paving the path toward a more holistic understanding of the gospel, becoming increasingly more socially engaged,

1 Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 67.
2 Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 222.

basing their model off Jesus who "not only preach[ed] about the coming kingdom of God, but also ministering to the physical needs of the people he encountered."[3]

The implications of the authors' argument for Global Christianity are immense. The rise of Pentecostalism, particularly within the Global South, is changing the face of Christianity as a whole, quite literally speaking. Philip Jenkins, a scholar on global Christianity, predicts that by 2050, there will be more Christians of color than non-Hispanic Whites.[4] This means that we must begin paying attention to and centering non-Western voices and expressions of faith within Christian studies, conferences, and even missions. There may be a time and day, if not already here, in which the primary direction of missions will move from East to West and South to North. In addition to the expanding diversity within Global Christianity as a result of Pentecostalism, there is also a developing orientation towards social engagement and holistic outreach. Indeed, this is the subject of the authors' focal argument. Upon setting out to conduct their studies following the aforementioned four-fold criteria, the overwhelming majority–85 percent–of the nominations they received were Pentecostal or charismatic churches.[5] Progressive Pentecostals view the need to address the physical, tangible needs within their communities as their God-given mandate as God's representatives on earth and fellow stewards of creation. Furthermore, they take seriously the two greatest commandments outlined in Scripture: to love God with all one's heart, mind, and strength and to love one's neighbor as oneself. Thus, social engagement is not merely a byproduct, but rather a direct expression of their Christian identity. Merely focusing on personal development or inward transformation to the neglect of one's neighbor is "a truncated version of the gospel."[6]

3 Miller and Yamamori, 212.
4 20. Miller and Yamamori, 20.
5 Miller and Yamamori, 6.
6 Miller and Yamamori, 34.

Pentecostalism has historically been seen as "inherently conservative" and "socially regressive" due to its association with political conservatism as well as speaking in tongues and supernatural healing.[7] Yet, this is to ignore the fact that Pentecostal and charismatic Christians are actually "often more progressive than liberal Protestants—especially when it comes to organizational structures and contemporary forms of worship."[8] In fact, the authors go so far as to say that perhaps Pentecostalism is not so much a "premodern worldview" or "protest against modernity" as a "postmodern phenomenon."[9] In other words, not only do Pentecostals combine ecstatic worship with state-of-the-art technology and contemporary musical forms, but also they reject the notion that the spiritual realm and material must be divided or are irreconcilable. Such an amalgamation of seemingly contrasting elements is only seen as contradictory by those "modernists" who separate spirituality from reality. Furthermore, the authors consistently find within their research that it is this very "S" factor, or Spirit, and the accompanying dynamic worship experience that motivates Progressive Pentecostals towards social action. Thus faith is not counterproductive towards, but rather the very means through which social action is achieved within Progressive Pentecostalism.

Earlier it was mentioned that there was a correlation between Pentecostalism and upward social mobility as well as democracy. Yet, the authors note that these may be "*indirect* results of the religion," rather than intended functions, or end goals, so to speak.[10] Traditionally, the correlation between Protestantism and capitalism has been attributed to the so-called Protestant work ethic, introduced by Max Weber by his seminal work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. According to Weber, two factors contributed to this so-called Protestant or

7 Miller and Yamamori, 34-35.
8 Miller and Yamamori, 35.
9 Miller and Yamamori, 25.
10 Miller and Yamamori, 34.

"capitalist ethic," namely Martin Luther's notion of "calling," which "sacralized the pursuit of worldly professions" and John Calvin's concept of predestination, which linked "honest and disciplined living with signs of election."[11] In contrast, most Pentecostals self-identify more with Arminian theology rather than Calvinism, although their work ethic is similar to that described by Weber. For instance, Pentecostals' serious commitment to living a life "worthy of the calling which [they] have received" results in honest business practices and less engagement in "worldly activities," such as extramarital sex, gambling addiction, and alcohol abuse.[12] This results in "surplus capital that they can invest into their businesses or the education of family members."[13] As reiterated earlier, however, financial gain is often an "unintended consequence," rather than an end goal.[14] Here, the authors mention several factors which Weber overlooks in the correlation between religion–in this case, Pentecostalism–and capitalism and by extension, upward mobility. These factors range from reinstating the individual's sense of self-worth as God's child to the "well-developed social services and educational facilities that give their members a competitive advantage over nonmembers" and the "close-knit religious community [which] can be a safety net for individuals."[15] Furthermore, even the notorious "health and wealth" churches "offer sound advice regarding lifestyle change, budgeting, family planning and business investment."[16] Thus, the correlation between capitalism, upward mobility and religion, particularly Pentecostalism, may be more complex and multifaceted than originally thought.

I have seen this firsthand in the context of the Korean-American church in which I grew up for nearly my entire life. The organizational structure of the church is quite similar to that which the authors cover in Chapter 7, "Organizing the Saints," namely consisting of a visionary

11 Miller and Yamamori, 162-164.
12 Ephesians 4:1 NIV; Miller and Yamamori, 164.
13 Ibid.
14 Miller and Yamamori, 169.
15 Miller and Yamamori, 169-170.
16 Miller and Yamamori, 176.

leader with multiple deacons and elders who support said vision and lead their own respective ministries and cell groups. While we are not a megachurch by any means, we have grown to a sizable congregation of several hundred active members. This means that, as the authors mention, it is impractical for the senior pastor to individually shepherd and steer each member towards the vision of the church individually–instead, the vision must be passed on by other leaders of the church, who in turn raise up other leaders to carry on the vision. Within the context of these cell groups, I have seen time and time again the "sound advice" regarding financial management and lifestyle changes, as well as accompanying resources and accountability. This can range from networking opportunities, job skills and training to financial support. The tight-knit community within these cell groups lends itself to times of crises and financial difficulties, providing the "safety net" to which the authors refer.

Repeatedly, the authors mention the lack of systemic or policy change within their research on Pentecostals and social engagement. While the strength of the church is its ability to impart a unique sense of self-worth based not on one's own accomplishments, but rather God's unconditional grace and love, ultimately individual conversion and charity is not enough to address systemic injustices. The authors note that as Progressive Pentecostals are increasingly represented by those who are "middle class, upwardly mobile, and highly educated," the "sophistication of their social ministries may also increase, including the possibility of addressing political and policy impediments to human well-being."[17] However, it must be reiterated that both charity, or direct ministry, and justice, or moreso policy-based reform, are needed. Miller and Yamamori also note that while secular NGO's often "lack sensitivity to local customs, and…are typically not committed for the long term."[18] On the other hand, churches are

17 Miller and Yamamori, 127.
18 Miller and Yamamori, 52.

typically “stable institutions with deep roots in the community” and are thus “well positioned to effect long-term change” within said community alongside government agencies and NGO’s.[19] Simply put, the church plays a pivotal role in acting as a bridge between awareness of people’s real needs and partnership with other organizations to create institutional reform, both from the ground up and top down.

The apparent dichotomy between charity versus justice when working in churches and, say, non-profit organizations is a personal dilemma with which I have been wrestling as I prayerfully discern where and how God is calling me post-graduation. As of the past four semesters or so, I have been partnering with a non-profit organization which works with refugees from North Korea relocated within the U.S. While I see the benefits of working with a non-profit organization that specializes in more systemic and policy-based changes, I find myself growing increasingly discontent with the lack of more “direct” ministry which would allow me to minister to the refugee population’s spiritual needs and the unique role of the church in imparting their identity as children of God first and foremost. Granted, this is something that is more easily done in a church context, rather than a non-profit, but I cannot help but similarly feel frustrated with the lack of focus on systemic issues and justice when serving in a more traditional ministry context, that is the church. Thus, I am continuing to pray and discern where God is leading me while ideally looking for something at the intersection of both justice and direct ministry. Of course, this begins with the Holy Spirit’s guidance and sense of calling “tested in relationship to…community, as well as in personal encounter with scripture…[and] daily periods of renewal in personal prayer.”[20]

**Bibliography**

19 Miller and Yamamori, 41.
20 Miller and Yamamori, 222.

Miller, Donald E., and Tetsunao Yamamori. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.