The Landscape of Pentecostal and Charismatic Eschatology

An Introduction

Peter Althouse

THE CONTOURS OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

Making sense of the eschatological landscape is a daunting task to say the least. Eschatology is that area of Christian dogmatics that investigates the culmination of divine activity in what is traditionally called the doctrine of the last things. It deals with the issues of death, judgment, heaven, and hell as well as the end of world history, the coming of the kingdom of God, and the future cosmos. However, eschatology cannot simply be reduced to the end, but recapitulates in itself all of human history. Eschatology cannot be reduced merely to individual redemption of the soul, but includes social and cosmic dimensions in that the culmination of socio-historical life and the non human elements of the earth, and indeed the entire universe will be transformed by God. Theological concepts related to eschatology include apocalypticism—the belief in divine revelation of the end through the ongoing historical struggles between good and evil; millennialism—a thousand year reign at the end of history; and messianism—the belief in a divine savior who will bring about a better age.[1] The meaning of apocalyptic can vary, however, depending on whether one is denoting an ancient Near Eastern literary genre, theological notions of divine disclosure or unveiling in revelation, or the event of the end itself.

1. Collins, McGinn, and Stein, "General Introduction," ix–x.

On the one hand, evangelical eschatology tends to be inundated with millennial views of the end. Taking the one thousand year reign of Christ at the end of the age as significant, millennialists argue that God will come to judge the world and establish the divine reign on this earth. Yet millennial views vary substantially. Historically, premillennialism can be traced back into the second century in Tertullian and Montanism. Two female prophets Priscilla and Maximila, predicted that the world would end in their lifetime, but their prophecies were disconfirmed with Maximila's death in CE 179. However, Tertullian's response was that since the church was in the age of the Comforter, believers were given prophetic insight that all biblical prophecies must be fulfilled before the coming of Christ and the end of the world. Tertullian criticized the Roman elite of his day, placing Christian hope in the eschatological age to come, thereby establishing the pattern of millennialism.[2] Twelfth-century theologian Joachim of Fiore likewise proposed a millennial eschatology. He argued that salvation history was divided into three ages: the age of the Father (creation to birth of Christ), which he believed to have been seven thousand years earlier, the age of the Son (from the incarnation until the return of Christ), and the age of the Spirit (which would begin with the eschaton). Interpreting the book of Revelation historically, Joachim believed the church was living through tribulation, specifically seven tribulations. Six had already been fulfilled in history, starting with Nero and Herod and including Saladin's defeat of the Christian Crusaders. The last tribulation would be that of the Antichrist, whose reign was foretold, Joachim insisted, in the book of Daniel. Although Joachim resisted predicting a specific time for Christ's return, expectations were high in CE 1200 and some of his followers identified CE 1260 as the end of the world, forty-two generations from the birth of Christ. Significant for the pre-Reformation era, Joachim claimed that as the second age drew to a close the papacy would experience moral decline.[3] For the next three hundred years, there was an expectation that the Antichrist would arise through the papacy, providing a powerful internal critique for moral and papal reform within Roman Catholicism but also providing the basis for Martin Luther's Protestant criticism of the papacy and its identification with the apocalyptic end of the world.[4]

2. Stackhouse, *End of the World?* 35–40.

3. Ibid., 41–45.

4. See McGinn, "The Last Judgment in Christian Tradition," 361–401; Rusconi,

Prophets of millennial expectation and predictions of the imminent end arose occasionally throughout the next four hundred years. Predication became the fodder of millennialism as charismatic prophets interpreted biblical prophecy according to current historical events and offered predictions as to the exact time for Christ's return. During the Reformation, a radical fringe of Anabaptist prophets asserted a chiliastic eschatology, and ultimately alienated itself from the Lutheran Reformation. Anabaptist Melchior Hoffman expected the start of the millennium in Strasbourg in 1533 and Jan Matthys believed that Münster would be the site of the New Jerusalem. His vision was thwarted by his own death, the Roman Catholic siege of the Anabaptist radicals, and the disillusionment of the city's inhabitants, who eventually opened the city gates to the Roman bishop.[5] Later German Pietist Johann Albrecht Bengel also adopted chiliastic beliefs and expected the imminence of the coming kingdom in the parousia. Using elaborate prophetic calculations, Bengel predicted the coming of Christ and the end of the world to occur in 1836.[6] During the nineteenth century, millennial expectations brought with it numerous predictions of the coming of Christ and the end of the world. Millennial preaching of the coming of God grew intense, especially in the American postbellum period, as religious sentiments became increasingly antagonist against the American establishment. Disciples of Christ leader, Alexander Campbell proclaimed the imminent return of Christ in millennialist and cataclysmic categories. However, it was William Miller, a self-taught Baptist and founder of the Millerites (later to form the Seventh-day Adventists Church), who using a historicist approach to prophetic interpretation and developing complex calculations, predicted that Christ would return in about 1843, later to be refined to October 22, 1844. Miller's disconfirmation resulted in the movement's denunciation, though its anti-government rhetoric and cynicism regarding human efforts for social betterment in the present (the basis of both modernist theologies and nineteenth-century evangelicalism) was carried into subsequent millennial thinking, and provided

"Antichrist and Antichrists," 287–325; Anderson, "A Catholic and Ecumenical Response to the *Left Behind* Series," 209–30; Obermann, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, 42–44.

5. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol 2. *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 57–59.

6. Macchia, *Spirituality and Social Liberation*, 9–11.

impetus for theological changes in evangelicalism. Evangelical theology shifted from postmillennial hope with its emphasis on social transformation and successes such as the abolition of slavery, human rights and emancipation, and women's suffrage, to premillennial dispensational pessimism with its withdrawal from efforts for social transformation.[7] Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, which eventually incorporated into the Jehovah's Witnesses, likewise adopted a historicist interpretation to argue that the millennium had already dawned in 1874, but that Christ's return would occur forty years later in 1914.[8] Russell's heterodox teachings of the separation of Christ from Jehovah and elimination of the Spirit as deity, belief in the 144,000 saints of God, and annihilation of the unregenerate would place him on the radical fringe (though one can see his influence on early Pentecostal Charles F. Parham), but his apocalyptic and millennial teachings created disillusionment with modernity's optimism in progress and social reconstruction typical in mainstream Christianity.[9]

Disconfirmation, that is, the disillusionment that comes to expectant Christians when the return of Christ does not occur as predicted, has placed millennialism in a minority position in the broad contours of Christian eschatology. The disappointment that Christ did not return as expected and that the world was still continuing as always created disbelief among believing Christians and secular onlookers alike. The problem of disconfirmation would change, however, with the rise of nineteenth-century dispensationalism. Beginning with a small group of theological thinkers at Oxford University and Trinity College Dublin, and popularized through the efforts of John Nelson Darby and the publication of the *Scofield Reference Bible*,[10] the problem of millennial disconfirmation was resolved with the inclusion of a secret and unexpected rapture for the faithful church saints, at which point prophetic calculations, having been suspended for a time beginning at Pentecost with the age of the church, would resume. Speculations of the end would then come to fruition. In other words, prophecy calculations of the old covenant did not apply to the age of the church, because God was acting in grace to redeem the

7. Boyer, "The Growth of Fundamentalist Apocalyptic in the United States," 145–46; also Moorehead, "Apocalypticism in Mainstream Protestantism: 1800 to the Present," 82.

8. Forty is a common number in prophecy calculations and symbolically significant in Scripture.

9. Boyer, "Growth of Fundamentalist Apocalyptic," 157–60.

10. Gribbens, *Writing the Rapture*, 5–7.

church. At the rapture, however, a seven-year tribulation would commence in which the Antichrist would arise and the post-rapture saints (however defined) would be persecuted, culminating in the defeat of the Antichrist and the forces opposed to God in a battle at Armageddon. The genius of dispensational premillennialism was that the imminent expectation and prophetic predictions could be maintained, but without the embarrassing problem of disconfirmation. Fundamentalist thinkers could argue over the details of the Tribulation without reprisal—and argue they did, over when the rapture would occur, what type of tribulations the world would experience, the specific calculations of certain prophecies, who would be raptured and who would be left behind. The rapture was an unpredictable wildcard in the dispensational schemata, but everything else could be calculated. Dispensational millennialism has taken root in the fertile ground of evangelicalism, though with varying degrees of success. For the most part, premillennial dispensationalism has been affirmed mostly in the modern West, as well as perhaps in areas of Western missionary expansion, and tends to be proclaimed in the USA more in the southern states than in the northern ones.[11]

Although premillennial dispensationalism has had a major influence on the Pentecostal movement, particularly in the mid-twentieth century, on the horizon of eschatological options, millennialism has played a fairly minor role. A thousand year period is mentioned only once in the entire New Testament (Rev 20) and is perhaps implied in the redemption of the 144,000 (Rev 14), but the literary style of the book of Revelation is highly symbolic. Other eschatologies have emerged historically within the traditions of Christianity and are part of the theological make-up of Christianity today. Reginald Stackhouse argues, for instance, that throughout the history of Christianity three types of eschatology have emerged: (1) millennialism (above), which uses a literal interpretation of Scripture to understand the end as a historical event in time and space; (2) the pastoral, which understands eschatology as the present activity of God in human beings and the church militant, i.e., the church presently here on earth. This approach is more psychological in helping people of faith prepare for their spiritual development and their own mortality; and (3) the social, which understands the eschatological as the promise of the new age in the present, the end of the present social order

11. Gribbens, *Writing the Rapture*, 53, 64, 160; Boyer, "Growth of Fundamentalist Apocalyptic," 159.

and the beginning of a new age. Social change is the outcome of eschatological imagination.[12] In the pastoral and social types of eschatology the Apocalypse of John is taken to be symbolic; consequently, imposing a "literal" thousand year reign would distort New Testament eschatology. Although within the millennial traditions alternatives to *pre*millennialism can be found—namely, *post*millennial (the manifestation of God on the earth after a period of societal construction according to the ideals of the kingdom of God), and *a*millennial (an understanding of eschatology in non-millennialist, or realized-millennialist, terms)—those outside the millennialist traditions would unlikely even use the terminology. Yet even in the premillennial camp, the expected and imminent reign of God on the earth often functions symbolically.[13]

Jürgen Moltmann argues that four types of eschatology have emerged in theological discourse: personal, social-historical, cosmic, and divine. Personal eschatology probes the question of the ultimate destiny of the individual, not in terms of the platonic ascension of the soul devoid of material life, but as body and soul together in the resurrection of the dead. Social-historical eschatology probes the question of the ultimate destiny of the socio-political developments of history, the end of world history and the beginning of the kingdom of God. Cosmic eschatology probes the question of the ultimate destiny of the earth and the entire universe, in which God's creation finds its divine fulfillment. Divine eschatology probes the question of divine being, in which the dynamic Trinitarian self-giving will be glorified and God will be all in all.[14] Moltmann also makes a distinction between historical millenarianism and eschatological millenarianism. The former is the premature location of the reign of God in a particular historical-political reality (i.e., papal reign in the Holy Roman Empire, or the policy of manifest destiny of the USA in which the kingdom of God is

12. Stackhouse, *End of the World?* 26–27.

13. While Gribbens argues that premillennial dispensationalism functions as a critique of modernity by appropriating and supporting modernist ideology (Gribbens, *Writing the Rapture*, 4–5), Damien Thompson's socio-scientific analysis of a Pentecostal congregation in Great Britain argues that one needs to distinguish between predictive millenarianism, which is a prophetic proclamation of the impending apocalyptic doom, and explanatory millenarianism, which functions as a rhetorical narrative addressing current social issues as a means to reduce anomie and stabilize social institutions. Thompson, *Waiting for the Antichrist*, 22–31.

14. Moltmann, *Coming of God*, *passim*.

equated with its civil religion). However, in the end historical millennialism succumbs to socio-political and economic powers and creates other forms of oppression. The latter is legitimate hope in the reign of God on this earth as a sovereign and free act of God. In millennial terms, historical millenarianism is a form of postmillennialism, while eschatological millenarianism is a form of premillennialism. Yet, whereas the current American dispensational premillennialism encourages passive withdrawal in the hope of escape from the present, apostolic premillennialism inspires resistance to the oppressive powers in hope for the coming reign of God.[15] Moltmann's eschatology of hope would fit into Stackhouse's social type owing to its emphasis on critical, political theology as a reflection of eschatological hope.

Bernard McGinn's investigation into apocalyptic themes of the Middle Ages demonstrates that the apocalyptic themes of the monastic traditions brought reform, in which the religio-political beliefs and practices were used either to reform and to support the social order, or to subvert it.[16] Even in the Antenicene era, apocalyptic literature was subversive of the political order of the Roman Empire initially, and to dominating powers thereafter. Once Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the harsh critique of the status quo found within apocalyptic literature fell out of favor with many of the early Christians, adding to delayed acceptance of the book of Revelation in some parts of the Christian world. Nevertheless, the apocalyptic literature proved to be resilient and found popularity, especially among the marginalized sects.

Apocalyptic images both inform and transform the socio-political contexts inside and outside Christianity. In the modern context, apocalyptic images informed the subversion and reforms of the dominating powers of monarchies and the church hierarchies, in order to establish new systems of power around rationality. Robin Barns' insightful thesis argues that the changes brought about by apocalyptic themes contributed to the rise of modernity. "The broad outlines of this picture suggest that the changes commonly associated with emerging 'modernity,' including the religious reformations, the rise of experimental science, and even the development of political liberalism, were themselves intimately related to the continuing evolution of Western prophetic and apocalyp-

15. Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 146–78.

16. McGinn, "Apocalypticism and Church Reform: 1100–1500," 74–109.

tic visions."[17] Dealing with the tensions between pessimistic despair and optimistic hope, early modern apocalypticism contributed to the rise of modernity in transforming millennial hope at the end of the age to a "forward-looking" hope in historical progress. Progress therefore acts as a variation of providence, in which the Spirit is present in the historical process. Conversely, apocalyptic despair contributed to the practical use of skeptical reason and methodological atheism.[18]

Likewise, Altizer argues that it was Hegel who brought the apocalyptic thrust of modernism to the fore in his declaration of the end of history and the self-negation of the divine. His dialectic method of negation proposed that consciousness itself was evolving from sense certainty to absolute knowing, in which the events of history are fundamentally the evolution of absolute Spirit, represented in the New Testament category of the kingdom of God. *Phenomenology of Spirit* is an apocalyptic work in that it locates absolute knowing as the death of God.[19] For Hegel, the kenosis in the cross, which touches the divine as well as the human in Christ Jesus, is the realization of divine self-negation. The cross is, for Hegel, the death of God and as such the beginning of secularization, in that self-consciousness is now certain of itself as absolute freedom. In the dialectic of negation, the essential is itself negated and the subject becomes totally free. However, in the freedom of the self through the negation of divine essence death itself is emptied of significance so that in absolute freedom the self realizes the terror of its own negation in death.[20] ". . . [D]eath is objectively meaningless and insignificant. But it is subjectively more real than ever before, and thus death becomes the one and only portal to a full and final subjective and interior resolution and fulfillment. Hegel's term for this form of consciousness that realizes itself by losing all the essence and substance of itself is the Unhappy Consciousness, a consciousness which realizes itself by interiorly realizing that *God Himself is dead* (author's emphasis)."[21] For Hegel, the French Revolution embodied the end of history and the terror of death in the vacuous abstraction of God, the death of God, but in that event there is a new beginning, the beginning of modernity. Yet the death of

17. Barns, "Images of Hope and Despair" 143–84.
18. Ibid., 166–71.
19. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*.
20. Altizer, *Apocalypticism and Modern Thinking*, 329–31.
21. Ibid., 332.

God is realized in Spirit's self-alienation and self-negation from itself and the fulfillment of kenosis. "Thus it is dialectically and apocalyptically necessary that Spirit become wholly estranged and alienated from itself before it can realize and effect its own death or self-negation. Yet this is the ultimate apocalyptic event, one finally releasing an absolutely new world, but only insofar as it is the actual death of God."[22] The logic of Hegel's dialectical method is progressive, forward moving, open to a new future, and therefore eschatologically progressive, but at the cost of the apocalyptic dislocation of God and the end of history.[23]

Hegel's philosophy was influential on subsequent philosophical and theological thinkers. On the one hand, the forward movement of Hegel's dialectical method informed biological and social evolutionary theories. It also informed the social critique of Feuerbach, who inverted Hegel's dialectic to reflect a more humanist perspective, and Marx, who argued for a materialist understanding of history that borrowed from Hegel's dialectic in which the means of production is progressing through feudal, industrial, and communist modes. Marx also embodied Hegel's apocalyptic view in both a collapse of transcendence as the "opiate of the people" and the revolutionary end of history in the communist revolt, which establishes a utopian society as the *telos* of history. On the other hand, Hegel's philosophy influenced the nihilistic developments in existentialism. The one is teleologically open to the future as human or social self-realization, the other apocalyptic in vacuous transcendence, the collapse of essence into pure existence.

We can therefore speak of secular eschatologies rooted in the Christian tradition and inherent within modernity. The scientific age embodied an eschatological outlook that resisted apocalyptic despair and death, and sought to change the future age by applying the principles of rationality to the betterment of the plight of humanity. In order to accomplish this task, the dominance of the political and religious powers were challenged, their "myths" deconstructed, in order to assert the authority of scientific reason. Hans Schwarz notes a number of scientific perspectives with eschatological impulses. The positivism of Auguste Comte attempted to explain natural phenomena as subject to natural laws, and these rules of scientific materialism could be applied to

22. Ibid., 333.
23. Ibid., 335–37.

social and human betterment.[24] Both J. Robert Mayer's postulate of the law of conservation and Julien Offray de la Mettrie's naturalistic views of humanity explained nature as the totality of matter (including the so-called spirituality of the soul), in which the future is merely modification of the past.[25] Ludwig Feuerbach modifies Hegelian thought and reinterprets the resurrection, arguing that no disembodied existence is possible in material life. Notions of an immortal soul or heavenly existence deny bodily, material existence in which the human ceases to be human. Christianity has cheated humanity, argues Feuerbach, because it denies the human ability to apply rationality to its own problems and seek its own solutions.[26] Suffice it to say, the point is that scientific materialism contributed to a type of secular eschatology, which sought its own fulfillment in the application of reason to the orders of nature in which the future betterment of humanity would be accomplished through human progress.

According to Schwarz, the evolutionary theory proposed by Charles Darwin can also be viewed as an eschatological perspective. Although Darwin's developmental theories attempt to understand the causal connections between organisms by examining their biological histories without assertions regarding their future states, he hints at an eschatological goal. In the conclusion of *Origin of the Species* he writes: "And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, *all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress toward perfection*."[27] Had Darwin limited his examination to an understanding of the development of biological life based in the fossil records of the past, he would have remained within the realm of the natural sciences. However, in suggesting biological life was progressing toward a *telos*—perfection, Darwin insinuates forward-looking possibilities.[28] The evolutionary view was a paradigm shift that influenced many areas of research. While some attempted to remain strictly scientific based on biological present and past conditions, others applied his progressive theories to both biological and social spheres in an effort to change the future. The application of eugenics, for instance, was an attempt to produce a more perfect hu-

24. Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 174.
25. Ibid., 175–76.
26. Ibid., 176–78.
27. As quoted in ibid., 186 (my italics); cf. Darwin, *Origin of the Species*, 528.
28. Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 185–88.

man race. The dark side of this approach was the rise of Nazi Germany and its program to exterminate undesirables, though eugenics was also used in North America to justify selective sterilization of physically and mentally disabled individuals.[29] Eugenics is also the theory supporting current efforts to map the genome and develop genetic therapies for overcoming inherited diseases.

From a theological perspective, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin can be taken as representative of an evolutionary eschatology, though he was heavily criticized. Teilhard de Chardin believed that the universe is evolving toward an ultra-human state of increased consciousness. The evolutionary process was not simply naturalistic in the biological advancement of life, but a Christological process in which the teleological goal is the "Christification" of the universe. Through the cosmic Christ, redemption and fall are not limited to humans but extend to the whole cosmos. The evolution of humanity to its fullest potential is the precondition for the parousia, but both an anthropogenesis ascent and the permeation of the Christogenesis descent form a unity in salvation history.[30] The details of Teilhard de Chardin's theology are not important here, except to note that he offers an eschatological proposal that includes the evolutionary process.

While Teilhard de Chardin represents an evolutionary cosmic eschatology as a counterbalance to secular evolutionary perspectives, Hegel's methodological progressivism and apocalyptic nihilism influenced the development of a number of existential eschatologies of both secular and theological stripes. On the one hand, various secular existential philosophies formally hold to an atheistic methodology that eschews any form of metaphysical impositions. Nietzsche picks up on the death of God in Hegel to argue that nihilism is the consequence of Western history, beginning with the death of God at Golgotha. For Nietzsche, the death of God is a historical event and an ultimate event, in which the collapse of transcendence brings the inauguration of absolute immanence. Thus the will to power is the energy of life in its "becoming."[31] Consequently, death becomes a leitmotif in existentialist philosophy in that nothing beyond death has any bearing on our existence, and therefore we must

29. See for instance, Black, *War Against the Weak*; and Bruinius, *Better for All the World*.

30. Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 189–94; Moltmann, *Way of Jesus Christ*, 292–96.

31. Altizer, "Apocalypticism and Modern Thinking," 342–43.

live authentically in this present life. Existential meaning is not generated from outside of us, but from "Being-in-the-world" (Heidegger), from radical "freedom" from metaphysical reference points (Sartre), or nihilistic absurdity (Camus); living for something beyond our own existence would be inauthentic. For Camus, evil does not emerge from unjust social institutions, but from the human heart. Camus does claim that human help can come only from human solidarity serving human purposes, and not from metaphysical sources, prompting Hans Schwarz to suggest that implied in Camus' claim is the idea that a metaphysical purpose can serve to fulfill a human need.[32] Nevertheless, death can be seen as a negative apocalypse on human life, the cessation of human existence and therefore an apocalyptic annihilation on all life.

On the other hand, Christian existentialism proposes the eschatology of the eternal in-breaking into the present. Rudolph Bultmann was perhaps the most influential Christian existentialist in the last century. Drawing on the philosophy of Heidegger, Bultman understood eschatology as the personal decision of faith in the crisis of the present. The existential encounter with Christ is a decision of faith in the moment that is devoid of biblical mythologies or historical realities. What is important is "my history," in which eternity breaks into my present existence, enabling me to live authentically. However, Moltmann notes that for Bultmann the future collapses into the present, making judgment and resurrection a present reality.[33] Where death becomes an apocalyptic pronouncement of annihilation for secular existentialism, in Christian existentialism the anxieties over the annihilation of death point to the crisis of faith as a radical moment of faith in order to live an authentic life. However, nothing survives the apocalypse of death. Curiously, Karl Barth's crisis theology can also fit into this existentialist model, though Barth would have resisted such a comparison; he sees death as the gateway to life hereafter. For Barth, the breaking of eternity into present life calls people to a radical decision of faith. The eternal moment overcomes chronological time because there is no past or future in God, but once again the future is collapsed into the now.[34]

The problem of eschatology therefore is the problem of navigating the tension between the present and the future, or more accurately, the

32. Schwarz, *Eschatology*, 210–16.

33. Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 19–21.

34. Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, 92; cf. Moltmann, *Coming of God*, 13–15.

tension between the already and not yet of the coming kingdom of God. The eschatological tension between the present age and the future age to come can be collapsed into the present, relegated to the distant future, or held in tension. Correlate to the already and not yet tension is the comparable concepts of hope and despair. The eschatological vision of the coming of God can bring great despair in the dread of divine judgment on this world and the creatures that inhabit it, or the eschatological vision can bring great hope in the culmination of divine purposes in the spiritual and material redemption of humanity, the world, and the cosmic orders of the universe.

The landscape of eschatology ranges, therefore, between the present and the future, on the one hand, and hope and despair on the other. If one were to organize the eschatological options on a grid, the x axis consisting of present on the left and future on the right, and the y axis consisting of hope in the upper position and despair in the lower, one can start to make sense of the theological options of eschatology. The upper left quadrant of present hope could include various secular eschatologies with the modernist hope of progress and emancipation. Marxist materialism and utopian visions, and social Darwinianism are all secular versions of Christian hope. This quadrant could also include the Christian eschatologies of Karl Barth's eternal in-breaking, realized eschatologies, Christian evolution, and Christian existential eschatologies. The upper right quadrant of future hope might include such eschatology as secular futurism, postmillenarianism, latter rain eschatology, and Moltmann's theology of hope, though some of these can span the upper left quadrant. In fact, a number of eschatologies hold the present-future in tension, such as inaugurated or covenantal and proleptic eschatologies. Shifting from hope to despair, the lower end of the graft entails anxieties regarding apocalyptic judgment. The lower left quadrant could include explanatory premillennialism, existential nihilism, ecological and political holocausts of both secular and Christian varieties, whereas the lower right quadrant could entail futuristic millenarianism with its tribulationist theories, predictive millennialism or apocalyptic nihilism in the divine, human, or even cosmic destruction of the world. However, these eschatologies can span across quadrants, so that premillennial dispensationalism, which is predominantly a function of future despair (lower right) can spur hope in escape through a secret rapture (upper right). Another example could be an ecological apocalyptic seen

in present concerns over pollution or nuclear waste (lower left), which can operate as signs pointing to future apocalyptic of world destruction through nuclear holocaust (lower right), or conversely could span into the upper left quadrant in the offer of hope through liberation in socio-political activity of hope. The point is that while some eschatologies offer hope and others lead to despair, some are futuristic and others are present, none truly fit one type exactly but span across quadrants. Needless to say, the grid we are suggesting is a heuristic tool, a kind of ideal type. When one starts to look into the nitty-gritty details, the differing eschatologies can span across multiple quadrants of the grid, and it therefore starts to break down. However, this grid is helpful for understanding the contours of eschatological options.

PRESENT HOPE	FUTURE HOPE
Secular Eschatologies Marxist materialism Darwinism–natural and social varieties	**Secular Eschatologies** Futurism
Christian Eschatologies 19th century evangelical postmillennialism Amillennialism Social Gospel Existentialism	**Christian Eschatologies** Theology of Hope Historic millennialism Latter Rain eschatology

Bridging Eschatologies
Covenantal, Proleptic, and Inaugural Eschatologies

PRESENT DESPAIR	FUTURE DESPAIR
Secular Eschatologies Existential nihilism Cosmological and ecological nihilism	**Secular Eschatologies** Secular apocalypticism
Christian Eschatologies Explanatory premillennialism Doomsday cults	**Christian Eschatologies** Premillennial dispensationalism Predictive millennialism

PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC ESCHATOLOGIES

What then is the landscape of Pentecostal eschatology? In this volume Pentecostalism is broadly defined to include its classical, charismatic, and independent or non-denominational expressions. Classical Pentecostalism—which has its American roots in the Azusa Street Mission but finds its global expressions in Wales, India, Korea, Toronto, Germany, etc.[35]—consists of some of the oldest Pentecostal denominations such as Church of God (Cleveland), Church of God in Christ, Assemblies of God, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and a variety of Apostolic denominations. To varying degrees, these denominations have been influenced by the development of dispensational premillennialism, though its earliest expressions were closer to the tripartite millennialism of Joachim of Fiore mediated through Wesleyan sources, and covenantal eschatologies, articulated as the theology of the latter rain. Instead of passive withdrawal from society in anticipation of a secret rapture and the expression of divine judgment on the wicked, early classical Pentecostals anticipated an intensification of the charismatic outpouring of the Spirit in expectation of a final, glorious harvest of souls prior to the coming of the Lord. Fundamentalist forces would soon be felt among Pentecostals and they would abandon their latter rain eschatology for dispensational premillennialism, yet at the cost of the foundation of their dearest doctrine—speaking in tongues as the expression of the baptism of the Spirit. Dispensationalism is undergirded by a cessation doctrine, which argues that all the spectacular charismatic gifts ceased in the apostolic age.[36] The problem of wedding dispensationalism to Pentecostal pneumatology is immediately obvious, and, as Gerald Sheppard skillfully argues, undercuts Pentecostal ecclesiology and the doctrine of Spirit baptism. The meaning of the Blessed Hope thus changed from the advent of the Second Coming to this new view of the rapture.[37] Passive withdrawal from society thus replaced the original vision of hope in Pentecostal eschatology.

Charismatic expressions of Pentecostalism officially began in 1960 with Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett at St Marks in Van Nuys,

35. Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 24, 35–37, passim.

36. Althouse, *Spirit of the Last Days*, chapter 1; Althouse, "Left Behind—Fact or Fiction," 187–207.

37. Sheppard, "Pentecostalism and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism," 5–34.

California. Although Pentecostal forms of spirituality and glossolalia were finding expression in the historic traditions prior, Bennett's public announcement became a symbolic focus for the origins of the Protestant Charismatic Renewal. By the early 1960s, experiences of glossolalia and other charismatic demonstrations were finding their way into every major Protestant denomination. The official beginning of the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal was in 1967 in Duquesne University and the University of Notre Dame. Unlike its Protestant counterpart, the Catholic Charismatic movement was among educated Catholic laypersons and later priests in the renewal context of Vatican II, and was therefore theologically nuanced.[38] While the Charismatic Renewal adopted Pentecostal-like spirituality and practices such as glossolalia and healing, participants remained within their own traditions and interpreted their new practices within the context of their traditional theologies. Thus glossolalia, healing, and spontaneous worship were read through the lens of an already given eschatology. In the late 1970s and 1980s, non-denominational or independent expressions of Pentecostalism emerged with an emphasis on networks of trans-congregational leaders and fellowships. The non-denominational charismatic movement includes diverse groups and networks such as the National Leadership Conference, People of Destiny, the House Church Movement, Covenant Ministries, International Convention of Faith Ministries, the Vineyard Fellowship, and its offshoot known as the Toronto Blessing, or New Frontiers International and Salt and Light in the United Kingdom. It also includes charismatic personalities such as Ken Sumrall, Charles Simpson, Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland, Pat Robertson, Earl Paulk, Steven Strang, Oral Roberts, John Wimber and Peter Wagner, Randy Clark, and John Arnott, to name only a few.[39] The emphasis in these networks vary greatly, but often include the five-fold apostolic and prophetic ministry, exuberant worship, healing and charismatic gifting. Pentecostalism in this work is taken in the broadest sense to include classical, Charismatic and non-denominational varieties, and as its expressions vary, so too does its eschatology.

38. Hocken, "Charismatic Movement," 481.

39. Ibid., 487–89.

PURPOSE AND OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

The collection of essays in this volume addresses the question of Pentecostal eschatology from biblical, theological, and contextual perspectives. The first section is a biblical evaluation of eschatology, under the premise that while the whole of the biblical canon must be taken into account in the construction of theology, each of the biblical authors has particular theological points of view, and therefore one can observe variances in eschatological perspectives. The approach taken here is not intended to be comprehensive, but biblical snapshots that provide contours for understanding biblical eschatology. William Raccah's inaugural chapter "Early Jewish Eschatology" nicely summarizes and places eschatology within the context of the ancient Jewish worldview. Creation itself is made meaningful in its eschatological culmination. God as Creator transcends creation, but also chooses to covenant with the people of Israel in history. The messianic hope was a hope for Israel, the world, and creation, to which other eschatological symbols point. Blaine Charette explores the Lukan question of Israel's destiny in "Restoring the Kingdom to Israel: Kingdom and Spirit in Luke's Thought." In response to the disciples query regarding the restoration of national Israel, Jesus offers the eschatological Spirit depicted in the event of Pentecost. The kingdom is restored to Israel in so far as the Spirit of God is restored to the people of God in entirety, and the gift of the Spirit is eschatologically significant in that the signs of the kingdom are present among God's people. In "Seven Dispensations or Two-Age View of History: A Pauline Perspective," John Bertone explores the Pauline corpus to argue that dispensationalism is incongruent with Paul's emphasis on the multiplicity of the spiritual gifts. Where dispensationalism teaches that the charismatic gifts ceased with the age of the church, Paul clearly advocates the edifying purpose of these gifts as the work of the one Spirit. Significantly, for Pentecostals, dispensationalism lacks biblical support and severely undercuts the logic for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. Robby Waddell offers biblical support for an ecologically responsible eschatology in "Apocalyptic Sustainability: The Future of Pentecostal Ecology." He eschews the notion of a cataclysmic destruction of the earth, not only because of his ethical concerns that apocalyptic destruction is incongruent with social ministry and justice, but because the biblical tradition points to the renewal of the earth thereby supporting ecological responsibility. John Christopher Thomas', "The Mystery of the Great Whore: Pneumatic Discernment of

Revelation 17," concludes the biblical section with a biblical appraisal of the Whore of Babylon. The Great Whore alludes to a socio-political critique of the worldly powers (Rome) by reference to earlier cities of destruction (Egypt and Sodom). Yet God will bring about the demise of the Whore and by implication the demise of ungodly rulers.

The next section engages Pentecostal eschatology in historical and theological dimensions. In "Early Pentecostal Eschatology in Light of *The Apostolic Faith*, 1906–1908," Larry McQueen seeks to uncover the eschatology that emerges from *The Apostolic Faith*, the periodical connected to the Azusa Street Mission and its relation to Pentecostal spirituality, in order to assess whether or not early Pentecostal eschatology aligned with classical dispensationalism. The theology of Azusa Street was holistic and contingent on the outpouring of the Spirit. It was apocalyptic in the sense that heaven was believed to be a future state, but also an experience that could be partially realized in the present activity of the Spirit's gifting. He argues that Azusa Street's eschatology cannot be understood as another type of dispensational premillennialism. Murray Dempster explores the relationship between eschatology and social ethics in "Eschatology, Spirit Baptism, and Inclusiveness: An Exploration into the Hallmarks of a Pentecostal Social Ethic." Integrating biblical theology with ethical insight, Dempster seeks to explore the relationship between the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism and eschatology in order to construct a Pentecostal social ethic, which moves beyond individual piety and proclamation to social transformation in identity with the work of Christ.

In "Eschatology as Soteriology: The Cosmic Full Gospel," Matthew Thompson draws on Wesleyan theology to argue for an eschatologically infused soteriology. This eschatology is neither realized nor individualistic, but progressive and cosmic in scope. It corresponds with the patristic concern for *theosis* and the divine movement of descent and ascent. Thompson then sketches how *theosis* can be applied to an understanding of the full gospel. Peter Althouse's chapter "Pentecostal Eschatology in Context: The Eschatological Orientation of the Full Gospel" dovetails nicely with Thompson's, but where Thompson proposes an eschatologically infused soteriology that is Wesleyan in orientation, Althouse proposes an eschatological reading of Pentecostal theology informed by a Reformed perspective. Althouse understands eschatology as proleptic, in which the kingdom is inaugurated in the life, death, and resurrection of

Christ Jesus, who offers the eschatological Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and will find its culmination in the eschaton. He suggests an eschatological reading of the fourfold gospel[40] informed by Moltmann, Barth, and N. T. Wright rather than the continental tradition. Daniel Castelo's chapter "Patience as a Theological Virtue: A Challenge to Pentecostal Eschatology" argues that Pentecostals would do well to reassess their frenetic emphasis on eschatological immediacy with an appropriation of the theological tradition of patience. By looking to the virtue of patience, Pentecostals can maintain the expectancy of the eschatological coming of Christ, while at the same time surrendering to the mystery of the coming kingdom as a divine act, with all the ambiguities, tensions, frustration, and hope the coming kingdom entails.

The next section explores various Charismatic developments in eschatology. Written from a Roman Catholic Charismatic perspective, Jeffrey Gros' chapter "Hope for Eternal Life: Perspectives for Pentecostals and Charismatics" bridges the Pentecostal and Catholic perspectives on eschatology in order to encourage ecumenical dialogue. Noting those eschatological elements both Pentecostals and Roman Catholics have in common, though with varying degrees of emphases, Gros unpacks the role of popular piety and imagination in forming eschatological beliefs, and how these create misunderstandings between the two traditions. In order to move forward in the process of reconciliation, an investigation of each other's popular beliefs, and their role, if any, in forming core beliefs, needs to be determined. Gros then unpacks the historical developments of dispensational and millenarian views from as far back as the patristic era, in order to discuss the rise of Roman Catholic popular piety. The chapter is an invitation for a Pentecostal response to further the dialogue. In "'Discerning the Times': The Victorious Eschatology of the Shepherding Movement," David Moore explores the historical developments and eschatological perspectives of five independent charismatic leaders who willingly submitted themselves to each other's authority, in an effort to produce moral reform. The eschatological leaning of the Shepherding movement was restorationist: in the

40. The major difference between Wesleyan Holiness and Reformed Pentecostal perspectives is their view of sanctification. The former assumes Wesley's theology of entire sanctification, whereas the latter follows William H. Durham and believes sanctification is objectively "finished on the cross" though with an accent on its progressive development throughout the Christian life and fully realized in glorification.

last days God was restoring the five-fold ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. While controversial for other Pentecostal and Charismatic groups, the Shepherding movement's apostolic brand of leadership and authority, which encouraged people to submit to a leader's authority, was inherently coherent with its restorationist eschatology. Michael McClymond's chapter "Prosperity Already and Not Yet: An Eschatological Interpretation of the Health and Wealth Emphasis in the North American Pentecostal-Charismatic Movement" probes the eschatological understanding of that brand of charismatic Christianity labeled the "Prosperity Gospel." McClymond argues that the Prosperity Gospel must be interpreted in the context of the Latter Rain Revival of the 1940s, in which the restoration of prophets and apostles and an optimistic eschatology shapes the idea of the church as the dominion of God's reign and demonstrates a partial realization of the eschaton. Both Moore and McClymond's chapters can be seen as companion pieces revealing the eschatological thrust of two representatives of the independent charismatic movement.

Section four looks at how Pentecostal eschatology has been ethnically and geographically contextualized. Nestor Medina leads the section with "The New Jerusalem versus Social Responsibility: The Challenges of Pentecostalism in Guatemala." Medina offers a socio-political critique of Pentecostalism in Guatemala, in which the paradoxical tension between an otherworldly eschatology retards constructive socio-political engagement, but the emphasis on the missionary expansion of Christianity brings Pentecostals squarely into a socio-political arena. Guatemalan Pentecostals are generally conservative, though at times they have periodically supported repressive regimes and democratic reforms. Sammy Alfaro investigates the funeral rites of Hispanic Pentecostals in "'*Se Fue con el Señor*': The Hispanic Pentecostal Funeral as Anticipatory Celebration," as an anticipatory celebration of hope in the coming kingdom, which at the same time brings liberation to the present. Funeral rites bring comfort in the hope that God will triumph over sin and death in the age to come, but that the faithful can also receive a present foretaste of the heavenly kingdom in signs of healing, salvation, and even liberation. In "Constructing an African Pentecostal Eschatology: Which Way?" J. Ayodeji Adewuya reflects on the contributions of African Pentecostal eschatology. Cautioning that African worldviews cannot be taken as monolithic and therefore neither can African

Pentecostalism, Adewuya draws from his Nigerian roots to argue that African Pentecostal eschatology must start with reflection on an African worldview. This worldview points to hope beyond this world, salvation as relief in time of distress in which healing, deliverance, empowerment, and successful life are important elements, death is the only portal into continued human existence, and especially a core belief in the Holy Spirit in a context of a cosmology of spirits and demon possession. Added to this mix is the influence of dispensationalism through the proclamations of Western evangelical missionaries. This influence brings typical eschatological elements such as the return of Jesus Christ, the certainty of a future resurrection, and the defeat of Satan. However, Adewuya insists that Africa cannot oscillate between Western eschatological views and its own worldview, but must construct its own eschatological voice. Finally, Frank Macchia's chapter "Jesus is Victor: The Eschatology of the Blumhardts with Implications for Pentecostal Eschatologies" offers a European Pentecostal eschatology. Though prior to the outbreak of charismatic worship at Azusa Street in the USA, Johann and Christoph Blumhardt emphasized a Pentecostal-type spirituality in the stress of divine healing and social transformation. Their recovery of eschatology under the concept of the kingdom of God influenced major German theologians such as Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, and Jürgen Moltmann. Moltmann even claims that the "Pentecostalism of Blumhardt" can be a corrective to the futuristic eschatology of dispensationalism.[41] Macchia's contribution is to investigate how Johann's emphasis on divine healing was transformed into an emphasis on the liberating activity of social action and justice with the theology of Christoph, in which the eschatology of the kingdom of God played a significant role. The implication for Pentecostal eschatology is that the liberative reign of the kingdom of God must shift away from narrow piety and futuristic events, in order to focus on the renewal of life in all its diversity and global dimensions.

The chapters that follow are a modest and preliminary contribution to the developing Pentecostal scholarship, in an effort to trace the vast and diverse landscape of Pentecostal eschatology, and to contribute to its further development. We hope that you will be encouraged, inspired, and even challenged by these chapters, as you reflect on the meaning of Christian hope.

41. Moltmann, Foreword, in Althouse, *Spirit of the Last Days*, viii.