Where the Spirit Leads: Pentecostalism and Freedom

Donald E. Miller
Center for Religion and Civic Culture, University of Southern California

Distinguished scholar of religious movements Donald Miller demonstrates the energy, vitality, and entrepreneurial resourcefulness of Pentecostal and charismatic congregations. With one-quarter of the world’s Christians, this movement represents a pivotal renewal force within global Christianity, fueled by religious zeal, bold vision, adaptability to local context, and non-hierarchical organization. Miller documents the widely varied initiatives of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians in numerous communities of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. These include the provision of food and clothing for the impoverished, youth programs, high-quality schools in slums, medical clinics, blood banks, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, and mental health programs. Miller finds that those who embrace the conservative moral ethic of Pentecostalism experience upward mobility and the sense of agency that flows from that. While often facing discrimination or persecution, Pentecostals are learning how to work creatively with government officials in pressing for their right to religious freedom.