

ABSTRACT

Toward A Theology of Solidarity: The Jamaican Pentecostals

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Considering the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in Jamaica and the constant quest of most Jamaicans for a fulfilled life, this study seeks to explore the extent to which the Jamaican Pentecostals in their doctrines, philosophies, principles and practices contribute toward a Theology of Solidarity. The method used is to critically analyze data arising from a research conducted within the Jamaican context, primarily among Pentecostals and also utilizing data from my own observation and association with the Pentecostal Churches.

The findings suggest that while Pentecostalism in Jamaica has created some problems for the Jamaican ecclesiology and the making of a Theology of Solidarity, especially with their dualistic outlook of religion, this Movement provides a greater possibility in articulating and practicing a Theology of Solidarity. The study also highlights the need for this religious group to be contextually relevant if it is to avoid becoming an agent of oppression or delusion, instead of liberation. Rightly considered however, Pentecostalism in Jamaica is a reflection of the creative and inspired will of a people searching for meaning, understanding and hope.

The research has certainly led to the revision of some preconceived ideas I had about the Pentecostals and has reinforced in my own mind the reality that the Kingdom of God is best perceived and understood from the vantage point of the poor and oppressed.

Liberation theologians will find this religious group a useful place to start our theologies. Theologizing from this stand point, followed by appropriate praxis will enable the Christian religion not to become the opiate of the people as some may contend, but rather to serve as the home and hope for many, especially the oppressed.

Likewise, Pentecostals will find in this study more value in their religious orientation and the great possibilities this provides for the spreading of the mission.