Granted, we may all be growing weary of megatrend analysis as we hurtle toward the next millennium. But there are two large-scale shifts underway that no one can afford to ignore. One is the implacable sweep of what its exponents call “the market revolution” into even the most remote and secluded provinces on the globe. It is a revolution that like all previous instances of that genre carries banners embossed with millennial promises, very few of which have as yet come to pass. Instead of the rising tide lifting all boats, we have seen instead a steep plunge in the already sparse living standards of the impoverished majority of humankind.

Today, 358 billionaires—many of them the citizens of “poor” countries—control more wealth than the total national income of countries comprising 45 percent of the world’s population. Paying the interest on their loans has become the largest item in the budgets of some poor countries. In 1996, the government of Uganda, to take only one example, spent $3 per person on health care, $17 per person repaying its foreign debt. This is a country where one child in five will not reach his or her fifth birthday, largely as result of diseases that could be prevented through a modest investment in primary health care.

The key phrase in the market revolutionary vocabulary, albeit scratched in fine print on the escutcheon, is “not yet.” It is a locu-
the former Soviet republics. It has already enlisted as many people as all the other non-Catholic branches of Christianity put together and, if current growth rates persist, Pentecostals will equal Catholics in number by the third decade of the next century. If the market revolution is dramatically altering the world’s economic landscape, the Pentecostal revolution is altering its spiritual topography just as radically.

What makes the appearance of these two movements even more fascinating is that they are both thriving in the same areas of the globe, in what used to be called the Third World. While capitalism may be slowing down, some even say stagnating, in the birthplace of the first industrial revolution, it is soaring on what used to be called the periphery. A market development economist of my acquaintance recently described with considerable enthusiasm what a lift he gets from visiting China, where the construction cranes swivel under floodlights all night and “you can almost smell the growth.”

When he said that, I was reminded of a visit I recently made to South Korea, where people pray all night by the thousands on a holy mountain and you can almost smell the growth of Pentecostalism. From a minority of 5 percent just after the Korean War, Korean Christians now claim about 35 percent of the population. They are still growing rapidly and almost all the growth is attributable to Pentecostalism. The Yoido Full Gospel (Pentecostal) Church at the center of Seoul is the largest single Christian congregation in the world. It has 650,000 members. A colossal church building seating 24,000, where a symphony orchestra accompanies the hymns, is filled six times every Sunday.

The same amazing proliferation proceeds apace elsewhere as well. A million people gather for the Easter service of a Zion church in South Africa. In Brazil on any given Sunday, more people are worshiping in Pentecostal churches than in Catholic churches. It is becoming evident as the millennium arrives that the venerable old term “Christendom” has become obsolete. The majority of Christians are now black, brown, or yellow and live outside the Western world.

Only Connect
In contemplating these two megatrends, the great puzzle is why so few ask the question that is staring us in the face: what is the connection between them? The mystery of this strange inattention deepens when one remembers that those great founders of social science Max Weber and Emile Durkheim could scarcely have conceived of analyzing either one of these current social tidal waves without probing its relationship to the other. It is the singular merit of the book under review here that its authors have taken on this formidable task and have made their case with welcome readability and an impressive, if not always infallible, grasp of both the religious and economic dimensions involved.

Wisely, the authors have not opted for one of the superficially plausible theories of the correlation between the two trends that have sometimes been advanced by scholars who lack either their broad interdisciplinary competence or their capacity for nuanced cultural insight, or both. One such theory of the connection, now almost universally discarded, was that a nefarious conspiracy clearly existed. Multinational corporations were scheming hand in glove with evangelical missionaries to uproot hapless natives from their quaint indigenous rites and at the same time immunize them against the virus of liberation theology. The goal of this malicious strategy, it was alleged, was to destroy the two major barriers to capitalist expansion—rooted traditionalism and religious equalitarianism—so that the target populations, like AIDS victims, would lack the white corpuscles needed to resist the market.

Another theory held that the leaders of the Pentecostal-charismatic juggernaut were
really entrepreneurs in clerical drag. They were in it only to peddle their tracts and shake down their naive marks. Admittedly, Jim Bakker’s bilking of thousands of his pious viewers by selling them nonexistent condominiums in his Christian theme park lent a certain surface plausibility to this Elmer Ganry theory. It is also true that televangelism is the quintessential capitalist achievement, in which the line between program and commercial, always thin at best throughout the industry, disappears completely.

But this theory also fails to persuade. The vast majority of the people who are drawn into Pentecostalism come not because of a televangelist but because a neighbor or relative has invited them. Once having sampled it, they obviously find something they have been looking for. Furthermore, it is difficult to believe that nearly half a billion people have become Pentecostals because they are pushovers. There is something else happening here.

A third and far more sophisticated view of the link between the market revolution and the Christian religious upsurge holds that it is a kind of late-twentieth-century reprise of the role earnest Methodists and Baptists played in the first industrial revolution. This theory, advanced at one time by sociologist Peter Berger, among others, suggests that what the Pentecostals are doing is providing the same kind of work ethic of thrift, punctuality, and sobriety that supplied the reliable workforce for the Satanic mills of Britain and the industrial expansion of the United States. In commenting on the zephyr-like spread of Pentecostalism in Latin America, for example, Berger writes, “What one may expect is that the new Protestant internationale will produce results similar to those of the preceding one: to wit, the emergence of a solid bourgeoisie, with virtues conducive to the development of capitalism.”

The authors lay even this appealing (to some) theory to rest. They demonstrate soundingly that there are critical differences, not only between the current global industrialization and the previous one, but also between the kind of religion that seems fused to today’s market revolution and the previous spurt of sectarian Calvinist pietism. Further, the more one ponders Singapore and mainland China, the clearer it becomes that despite the hopeful rhetoric about “free markets and free elections,” and the allegedly self-evident correlation of democracy with capitalism, the two seem all too easily separable in many places.

A LIttle Help from Its Friends
Instead of opting for one of these shaky theories of the critical link between the market revolution and the eruption of third-stream Christianity, the authors of this book prefer something similar to what social scientists call “selective affinity.” I applaud the direction in which they are moving, but I also suspect that the connection may be even more subtle than they imagine. I agree with them that what differentiates the present economic megatrend from the first industrial revolution is that it is happening much faster, that it is not being generated by national elites but by multinationals, and that the present high-tech industrial wave does not require workers with a puritan worldview (an observation that is especially crucial when one considers the kind of religious ethos it does require).

But why, one might ask, does a market economy require any kind of religious worldview at all? Why not just count on those sturdy old-fashioned virtues of greed and self-aggrandizement? Once again, Peter Berger’s work on “economic culture” moves us toward an answer, although it does not move us far enough. Capitalism, Berger points out, just does not generate enough “mythopoetic” energy. It has never, one might say, inspired the songs it needs to celebrate its own qualities. And despite the valiant efforts of advocates like Michael Novak of the American Enterprise Institute to
Crank up a theology of capitalism, nothing very convincing has ever come of the effort. Consequently, faced with contending mythic visions that hymn the glories of egalitarianism, socialism, or liberation, capitalism seems lackluster. It needs a little help from its friends. It is precisely the purpose of the book under review to demonstrate how the ethos of the new Pentecostal-charismatic movement supplies just the cultural values the market revolution needs and without which it would falter.

Transforming the Third World
The greatest strength of this book is that after three helpful introductory chapters on the historical sources and theology of the new worldwide Christian movement, the authors include one chapter on each of four specific cases: Guatemala, the Philippines, South Korea, and Liberia. These case studies are impressive. They are clearly based on a firsthand knowledge of these countries and a remarkable grasp of the literature about them. One might of course argue that Brazil, given its sheer size and vast if unfulfilled economic potential, rather than Guatemala, might have provided a more exemplary Latin American case.

Admittedly, the Guatemala story is riveting and tragic. But the country is also unique in many ways. It has a higher proportion of indigenous peoples (more than half) than any other Latin American country. Consequently, since indigenous peoples seem even more open to Pentecostal conversion than Latinos, and since the new industrial wave hit the country much more recently, Guatemala's is not a "typical" case.

Choosing the Philippines on the other hand was a stroke of genius. Something of an embarrassment to the market-is-the-answer economists because it had not "taken off" as early as the other tigers of the Pacific Rim, it is an invaluable example of how the cultural/religious factor must enter into all economic development equations. One could also suggest that Liberia, with its unique relationship to the United States as the refuge of freed slaves, might not be the best African example.

In the chapter on Korea, I would have preferred much more about David Yonggi Cho, the immensely talented and energetic leader of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, and an increasingly powerful figure in the world organization of the Assemblies of God, the largest global network of Pentecostal churches. Cho is a far more significant figure than Sun Myung Moon, whose self-referential messianic theology is not compatible with Christian Pentecostalism and whose sun may be setting anyway, even though his organization still controls the Washington Times. Still, since a global country-by-country survey would have been impossible in such a volume, the authors have done a fine job of describing the examples they have chosen.

There are a few points on which one might differ. In the chapter on Guatemala, they write, "Guatemala has been transformed in the past thirty years from one of Latin America's most secular nations to one of its most religious." This is hardly an accurate description if one remembers that although the country had a secular, anticlerical government, the vast majority of the population, especially the Indians, were always deeply religious. In fact, it is precisely this indigenous religiosity, not just in Latin America but everywhere in the world, that often provides the richest soil for Pentecostal expansion.

All over Latin America one can find men and women, who a few years ago were curanderos, practicing one or another form of folk healing rooted in traditional religion. Today, many of these folk healers are Pentecostal preachers and healers, still practicing a healing art that stands both in continuity and in conflict with what they previously did.

In South Korea, the folk religion is shamanism and, as the authors recognize, significant elements of shamanistic lore, such
as trance, exorcism, and mystical flight, have been swept up into Pentecostal worship.

The same assimilation is going on in sub-Saharan Africa, where dancing, drumming, and ancestor veneration, generally discouraged or forbidden by Protestants and Catholics, are welcomed into Pentecostal services. In many of these places it is "speaking in tongues" that opens the way for this backdoor syncretism. After all, from a psychological perspective, tongue speaking itself is an example of ecstatic utterance, possibly also a form of mystical trance.

Through a Glass Darkly

My main difference with the authors is that they want to call the current global Christian revival "fundamentalist Americanism," but I think this term obscures more than it clarifies. Pentecostalism was born in the United States, but the forms of it that are spreading most rapidly today are the ones that have least connection with North America. Moreover, although Pentecostalism resembles fundamentalism in some superficial ways, the differences between the two are more important than the similarities.

The centrality of ecstatic utterance is a case in point. Fundamentalists simply do not stand for it. To this day, the moment any Southern Baptist congregation allows tongue speaking it is immediately excluded from the Southern Baptist Convention, whose leaders apparently recognize quite clearly something the authors of this book discern only through a glass darkly, namely, that Pentecostalism is not a mere extension of fundamentalism. It is something quite different that, were its inner logic to play itself out, could completely subvert text-mediated religion. Pentecostals probably have more in common with Saint Catherine of Siena than with John Calvin.

It is understandable that many observers are misled about the uncanny assimilative powers of Pentecostalism, which contribute to its rapid growth. Pentecostal preachers often passionately inveigh against local indigenes...
The reason why trying to understand the Pentecostal-charismatic movement as a new expression of fundamentalism turns out to be misleading is that it can obscure the main reasons for its spectacular worldwide success. The difficulty surfaces in this book when the authors seem to puzzle over why previous attempts to export American fundamentalism have not been all that successful, whereas the current export product is booming.

One example of their perplexity appears when they are discussing Guatemala. Why, they ask, did Protestantism fail so miserably to make any impact for such a long time? First there were the Presbyterians and Episcopalians. Then came the fundamentalists in the early 1900s. But nobody even scratched the surface. When the Pentecostals arrived in the 1970s, however, a spiritual earthquake took place almost immediately. Today, the country may be as much as one-half Pentecostal, and the movement is still growing. Furthermore, the authors agree that, contrary to the American conspiracy theory, many of the churches that expanded so rapidly had little or no affiliation with churches, groups or monies from the United States.

Why did it happen? Again, numerous and often contradictory theories flourish. It was because the nation was being devastated by a violent civil war, say some, with the army torturing, dismembering, and murdering suspected subversives and regularly burning and massacring entire Indian villages. The apocalyptic theology of the Pentecostals matched the appalling reality the people lived with every day. After all, it is not too hard to believe in the lake of fire described in the biblical book of Revelation when your own village and all the ones within miles are going up in flames.

It is a plausible explanation, but something is still missing. Why, then, did the Indians who had already crowded into the cities with their noses pressed against the shop windows of Guatemala’s nascent bourgeois consumer culture also flock into every Pentecostal temple that opened its doors? And why did the same movement grow so quickly in other regions of the world where conditions were different from those in Guatemala?

Others suggest that Pentecostalism grows fastest not among the most downtrodden but among the lowly who aspire to move higher, a logical target audience for the marketers. The health and wealth gospel preached by some Pentecostals seems to confirm this. But explaining the power of Pentecostalism both as a comfort to the afflicted (as the old compensation theories of religion once did) and also as a helpful staging area for transition into the world of the shopping mall also leaves a lot to be desired. If Pentecostalism thrives both when things are getting better and when they are getting worse, its appeal must come from a deeper source.

Catholics without Priests

My own work on global Pentecostalism has convinced me that each of these theories of its astonishing growth helps explain it. But not very much. The reason I balk (as the authors politely point out) in seeing Pentecostalism as a new edition of fundamentalism is that the power of Pentecostalism can be understood most clearly precisely at the point where it differs from classical fundamentalism. Indeed, when Pentecostalism first emerged in its present form during the famous Azusa street revival that began in Los Angeles in 1906, first among black custodians and domestic servants, and soon attracting lower-class whites as well, the fundamentalists were among its most vociferous critics.

One of these antagonists, using a phrase Pentecostals have not forgotten over the century, called them “the last vomit of Satan.” Spurned and ridiculed by the downtown churches as “holy rollers,” they were
attacked even more vehemently by fundamentalists who were afraid that the Pentecostal belief in a direct, unmediated experience of God would undercut the authority of doctrine. This should not come as a surprise to students of the history of religion. Pentecostals are, after all, populist mystics, and text-oriented religions have had a problem with mystics for millennia.

Fundamentalists and conservative Christians also stridently disagreed with the Pentecostals' claim that miracles still take place in the present age. The authors point out this difference between Pentecostals and such fundamentalists as Jerry Falwell, but they seem not to attach all that much importance to it. They believe the current Pentecostal-charismatic movement is a layer on top of the old fundamentalism, but this ignores important tensions that were there from the start and still persist.

Not long after the Pentecostals appeared on the scene, one stern Princeton Presbyterian naysayer declared that because they believed in contemporary miracles they were just as bad as Catholics. In this judgment, incidentally, he foreshadowed some more recent sociological analyses that suggest that Pentecostals, especially in Latin America, might better be understood as a mutation not of evangelical Protestantism but of popular folk Catholicism.

Pouring into the huge, intimidating cities of the continent from the impoverished countryside, they reconstitute fragments of their previous life, including its popular Catholicism, as best they can. In the midst of the jarring urban confusion, in one of the Pentecostal congregations, they can still find miracles, healing, and a welcoming company of new brothers and sisters to replace the compadres left behind in the village. The pastor becomes the surrogate patron, and they can even reclaim some of the exhilaration of the fiesta in the dancing and singing of their nightly prayer meetings. The Mexican religious historian Jean-Pierre Bastian demonstrates considerable insight when he calls the Pentecostals "Catholics without priests."

The Age of Miracles
The dispute may sound esoteric to modern secular ears, but it is utterly crucial to grasping the appeal of Pentecostalism today. It is in large part because Pentecostals are experiential and not as text-oriented, and because they believe that the age of miracles did not end with the apostles, that they are making such headway. It is easy to make mistakes in this slippery area. I know full well that Pentecostal preachers love to prowl the stage—and often the aisles as well—with a large Bible in hand. But they rarely actually open it. The Bible is a symbol of authority, not a text to be explained. Also, having now attended perhaps 150 Pentecostal services on four different continents, I know that the testimonies and prophecies are heavily laced with biblical allusions.

But this is just the point. Pentecostalism represents a massive "re-oralization" of a religion—namely Christianity—that was originally oral but soon became fixated on texts. Its style is narrational, not disquisitional. Sermons are not lectures sprinkled with a few anecdotes, but stories, often dramatically reenacted, with an occasional doctrinal observation interjected.

The authors, in their chapter entitled "Spreading the Word: Organizational Techniques, Theological Emphases," recognize the importance of the orality of the cult. But they believe it is important mainly because it makes worship available to semi-literate people. That is certainly true, but a whole lot more is also at stake. Pentecostal worshipers not only speak, they speak "in tongues." They dance and whirl and sometimes run around the church. Although there is not as much of it as their critics once claimed, they sometimes do collapse (they call it being "slain in the Lord") and roll on the floor.

But this is hardly new in the history of religion, even in biblical religion. One need
not turn to whirling dervishes or Hindu fa-
kirs for precedents. Reading between the
lines of the Old Testament prophets will do
it. Also, when Saint Paul warns the Corin-
thians against too much ecstatic expression
in worship, it suggests that something of
the kind was certainly going on at the time
in Corinth. Even when warning against ex-
cessive speaking in tongues, the apostle lets
it slip that he too speaks in tongues "more
than you all," an aside Pentecostals love to
quote to Bible-pounding fundamentalists.

It is fortunate that the authors of this
study do not make the common error most
social scientists do when they scrutinize the
influence of a religion on society. Most are
so intent on studying the "social teachings"
of churches that they neglect the obvious
and more basic connection between cult and
culture. These authors do not. They believe,
rather, that the authoritarian structure of
the Pentecostal polity habituates its mem-
bers to accepting the same authoritarian
style in the society at large.

Since capitalism at this early stage of its
development must not be burdened with
"an excess of democracy," this religiously im-
bued deference to those in charge helps it
along. They believe that since Pentecostal-
ism cultivates a direct relationship with
God, it promotes the individualism the mar-
ket requires as well. Its highly emotional
worship also encourages a kind of immedi-
ate gratification, a spiritual disposition
whose material equivalent the consumer
market can cash in on at the local supermer-
cado. They believe, in short, that Pen-
tecostalism is almost tailor-made for the
market-consumer culture, just as ascetic
Protestantism was suited to an earlier stage
of capital accumulation.

It all sounds very plausible, but it still
leaves many questions unanswered. Given
the fact that these writers are so attuned to
the actual worship practices of Pentecostals,
I regret that they did not delve more thor-
oughly into the intriguing question of
"speaking in tongues" or "praying in the
Spirit," or, as it is termed in the bloodless
idiom of comparative religion, "glossolalia."

It is clear to me that this massive return
of ecstasy in contemporary Christianity is
not just an outgrowth of fundamentalism
(which is after all a modern phenomenon)
but an eruption of something far more an-
cient, more experiential, and more universal.
I have called it "primal spirituality."

If this proves to be the case, then the
relationship between the new Christian
expansion and the market revolution may
be far more complex than it appears to
be, and this raises a whole new set of ques-
tions. The standardization and homoge-
nization of mass capitalist culture famously
deprives people of genuine experience. How
is this connected to the massive return of ex-
periential religion?

That same mass culture also thins out
community and encourages individualism.
Although Pentecostals are sometimes ac-
cused of fostering individualism, what con-
verts report time and time again is that they
have discovered a new and powerful sense of
belonging. They often describe their congre-
gations in familial language. Through its
cessless advertising onslaught, market cul-
ture relies heavily on pandering images of
the life it says we should all aspire to. But
part of the power of Pentecostalism is its at-
tack on the perverse values of "this fallen
age."

Although they have compromised on
this conviction more recently, the early Pen-
tecostals were determined not to be seduced
by the wiles of this world. Recently, some
Pentecostal leaders have tried to revive this
rejection of "worldliness" as a critique of
consumer culture. All this indicates that
there are elements in the Pentecostal world-
view that do not comport well with market
capitalism.

But there is another side to the story,
and it is one the authors dwell on. Pen-
tecostalism also has its cadres of "name it and
claim it" preachers who tell their people
that if they are not rich it is their own fault
for not trusting God enough. Pentecostalism—as the authors of this book show—is dangerously subject to authoritarianism, much more so than was the earlier wave of Protestantism. And when Pentecostals become middle class, they often forget that their original mission was to the poor. Although their movement started on the wrong side of the tracks among penurious whites and even poorer blacks, many Pentecostals would prefer to forget that history and climb up the echelons of power and privilege, stepping on the kinds of people they used to be.

An Unfinished Story
In short, just how the Pentecostal-charismatic movement will relate to the new late-capitalist revolution is an unfinished story. The movement obviously enables millions of people to cope with the jarring world of modernity without severing their ties to traditional culture completely. This may be the most basic reason for its growth. Also, to recall Saint Paul again, Pentecostalism is somehow "in but not of this world." It nourishes important countercultural values. As one who is not completely comfortable with the projected global triumph of market-consumer civilization, I welcome the fact that some Pentecostals have begun to cultivate these values more energetically as a hopeful sign.

Unlike fundamentalists, Pentecostals have now begun to produce a critical tradition. Young Pentecostal pastors and theologians are studying social ethics and liberation theology. In sharp contrast to fundamentalists, they are attending what their forebears in the faith would have condemned as modernist seminaries and divinity schools. Many are cooperating in ecumenical organizations and working with other churches in social action programs.

The Pentecostals who do so are often criticized for their efforts by their more conservative coreligionists, but they in turn warn those colleagues against aligning themselves with the Christian right. In short, the Pentecostal-charismatic movement today is not a phalanx but a battlefield.