

BOOK REVIEWS

Alexander, Paul. *Peace to War: Shifting Allegiances in the Assemblies of God*. Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2009. 432 pp. Paper, \$26.95.

In addition to speaking in tongues and healing, early Pentecostals associated “the power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the power to be a cross-carrying, enemy-loving, Jesus-following crucifist” (115), writes Paul Alexander with regard to the starting point of the dramatic historical trajectory he traces in this volume. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, the just-organized Assemblies of God, which eventually became the largest of the Pentecostal denominations, affirmed pacifism—the refusal to engage in “destruction of human life”—as its officially favored position. By the 1960s, however, combatant military service had become not only allowed, but supported in denominational statements and literature. From the 1970s, military combatancy has gone on to become “highly promoted, as ideal, honorable, and what any ‘conscientious’ Christian would do” (261).

Indeed, after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the board of regents of the Southwestern Assemblies of God University passed a resolution to “express concern regarding any faculty member taking a public stand in opposition to the war situation currently facing America” (277). Alexander, whose research on the history of Pentecostal attitudes toward war and peace had prompted him to initiate the formation of “Pentecostals and Charismatics for Peace and Justice” in 2001, was on the university’s faculty at the time. When the institution declined to renew his faculty contract in 2006, he accepted a post at another Assemblies of God university, Azusa Pacific in California.

Peace to War provides an account of the Assemblies of God’s transition from pacifism to promilitary fervor that is forcefully nuanced and grounded in extensive primary sources and is expertly contextualized. While some scholars have argued that pacifist conviction never ran deeply enough to be truly dominant in early Pentecostalism, Alexander makes an impressive case that it was, in fact, the majority position in the early years of the Assemblies of God, attested not only by published statements and articles but by the disproportionately high percentage of conscientious objectors in World War I who identified with the new denomination.

At the same time, World War I marked the beginnings of a shift in which loyalty to the government began to take greater prominence than loyalty to Christ’s commandments and kingdom in denominational statements. During the years between the world wars, articles advocating pacifism and critiquing militarism and religious nationalism occasionally appeared in Assemblies of God periodicals, and conscientious objection remained the favored position. By World War II, though, pacifism clearly had become the minority position in practice, though the minority that *did* seek noncombatant forms of service when conscripted appears to have been substantial.

It was during the Cold War and the local hot wars it involved—most notably in Korea and Vietnam—that articles linking the nation’s success in the military struggle against Communism with the fortunes of the church’s mission began to pervade denominational periodicals. Then, in 1967, the

General Council took a momentous step, making participation in combat entirely a matter of individual conscience. No impediment remained to the comfortable companionship of a promilitary ethos with fervent, individualistic faith that characterized the Pentecostalism in which Alexander grew to adulthood. The pacifist heritage was all but forgotten.

While he does not attempt in-depth social scientific explanations for the underlying causes of the great shift, Alexander's narrative includes valuable analytical insights on the forces at work. He notes the appeal of military service to culturally marginal groups as a way of gaining acceptance while maintaining distinctive identity and doctrines. For the Assemblies of God, the draw of the religious mainstream went together with the appeal of patriotism in an era when the overwhelming majority of Americans felt certain about the basic righteousness of the nation's military causes. The denomination's membership in the National Association of Evangelicals, formed in 1941, also marked the beginning of a crucial turn toward embracing American exceptionalism. Also, support for military chaplaincy grew in the post-World War II decades. By 1969, the Assemblies of God had forty-five military chaplains, and four decades later the number had increased to more than three hundred, a growth that Alexander sees as "inversely proportional to the decrease in concern for a Pentecostal peace witness" (283).

Alexander also charts striking changes in the usage of passages and themes drawn from Scripture. New Testament references to Christ—his example, teaching, divine authority and kingdom—pervade early Assemblies of God documents speaking to matters of war and peace. By the latter part of the twentieth century, these largely disappear, with OT references and the passage concerning governmental authority in Romans 13 taking the controlling position. One book widely touted in the denomination as a source of guidance to young men facing the possibility of military service argued that Romans 13 mandated an obedience to government that could require Christians to serve as its agents in punishing evil. Though that role "includes the taking of life," said the author, "it does not contradict God's law of love but somehow fulfills it" (231).

The ethical implications of eschatology also shifted. In 1916, Stanley Frodsham set the kingdom of God over against the warring kingdoms of the present age, and asked, "Is any child of God going to side with these belligerent kings? Will he not rather side with the Prince of Peace under whose banner of love he has chosen to serve?" (146). In the 1990s, the principal significance of apocalyptic eschatology with regard to peace and war was that violence and warfare must continue in the evil world until Christ establishes his future kingdom. In the meantime, deplorable though war may be, "accountability, sensibility, and responsibility" may require Christians to participate on America's behalf. Such eschatology, in Alexander's distillation, declares, "Jesus is coming back soon, but just in case he doesn't we need to kill our enemies" (276, 338).

Along with its obvious interest to Pentecostals, *Peace to War* should be particularly instructive to adherents of other American-born movements

who find their identity and mission in restoration of the “everlasting gospel,” thereby preparing the way for the return of Christ, and whose history includes refusal to participate in military combat in the name of loyalty to that gospel.

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Beit-Arieh, Itzhaq. *Horvat ‘Uza and Horvat Radum: Two Fortresses in the Biblical Negev*. Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 2007. vi + 349 pp. Cloth, \$60.00.

This volume comprises the final report of the excavations conducted, with some interruptions, from 1982 to 1996 at Horvat ‘Uza and Horvat Radum, two Iron Age II sites in the eastern Negev that were reoccupied as paramilitary posts during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It must be noted that Horvat ‘Uza should not be confused with a site that shares the same name located east of Akko in the Galilee, which was also recently excavated and published (N. Getzov, R. Liebermann-Wander, H. Smithline, and D. Syon, *Horbat ‘Uza: The 1991 Excavations, Vol. I: The Early Periods*, Israel Antiquities Authority Reports 41 [Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2009]; N. Getzov, D. Avshalom-Gorni, Y. Gorin-Rosen, E. J. Stern, D. Syon, and A. Tatcher, *Horbat ‘Uza: The 1991 Excavations, Vol. II: The Late Periods*, Israel Antiquities Authority Reports 42 [Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2009]).

The author, I. Beit-Arieh, served as director of this joint Tel Aviv University and Baylor University excavation project. Beit-Arieh was also a student of the late Yohanan Aharoni and, following in his master’s footsteps, has spent much of his career excavating and surveying sites in the biblical Negev and the Sinai. One of the reasons Aharoni and his disciples were drawn to this arid region was their recognition of its well-preserved remains, coupled with the strategic importance of the Negev in antiquity. The book under review is the third in a series of final reports of Negev sites excavated by the author and follows volumes on the Edomite Shrine at Horvat Qitmit (I. Beit-Arieh, *Horvat Qitmit: An Edomite Shrine in the Biblical Negev* [Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 1995]) and the fortified town at Tel ‘Ira (I. Beit-Arieh, *Horvat Qitmit: An Edomite Shrine in the Biblical Negev* [Tel Aviv: Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology, 1999]).

Chronologically, the excavators have dated both ‘Uza and Radum firmly to the seventh and early sixth centuries B.C. They present their case on the basis of datable pottery forms (120) and the lack of multiple phasing, indicating a relatively brief occupational history. Interestingly, Aharoni (*Arad Inscriptions*, trans. J. Ben-Or from Hebrew, ed. cccs rev. A. F. Rainey [Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1981], 147) claims to have recovered sherds from the tenth to the seventh centuries B.C. during his earlier survey work at ‘Uza. Freud’s comparative study of the Iron Age pottery includes clear photos of whole forms and the usual diagnostic profiles (77-121, 318-322). She draws parallels from a wide selection of Judahite and Edomite sites with seventh-