

Birmingham Academic Investigates Godly Love in America

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A University of Birmingham academic has been awarded \$150,000 (£103,000) to investigate the concept of Godly love among Pentecostals in the United States.

Dr Mark Cartledge, from the University's Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies at the School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion, has been awarded the two-year research grant by the John Templeton Flame of Love Award. He will work with Dr Kimberly Alexander from the Church of God Theological Seminary, Tennessee.

The research project also involves Dr James P. Bowers, from the Centre for Pentecostal Leadership and Care, at the Church of God Seminary, Tennessee.

The award is one of five grants funded under the Templeton Flame of Love scheme in partnership with the University of Akron, Ohio.

Dr Cartledge has been a founding member of the International Society for Empirical Research in Theology and has also developed the empirical research of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity.

His project will specifically investigate how Godly love is understood and motivates action in one of the largest pentecostal churches in America - the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee.

Dr. Cartledge will carry out a survey of members and pastors of the Church in order to test measures of Godly love and develop a socialization scale that he has previously constructed.

According to Dr. Cartledge, "Socialization will therefore be the main theory through which Godly love will be investigated and will be interpreted by means of the theological concept of traditioning. The research combines sociological conceptualization correlated with theological reflection in order to investigate the impact that socialization has on measures of Godly love and Christian vocation."

The research findings will contribute new knowledge to the theories of socialization, attitude formation, and the motivation behind vocation choices and goals.

The department of Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham is one of the largest and most comprehensive departments in Britain. Students from more than 20 countries are currently studying here.

It has an international reputation for carrying out research in the fields of Religion in the Contemporary World, Inter-cultural Theology, Textual Studies, Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Inter-religious Relations, Islamic Studies and Quaker Studies.

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