

“PENTECOSTALISMS”

The suffix *-ism* is often defined to refer to a distinctive system of beliefs, myth or set of teaching or doctrine that shapes the thinking and behavior of those belonging to a movement, institution, class or group. This issue to a certain extent reflects various expressions of Pentecostalism in sometimes contrasting contexts. Contributors for this issue include three from the US (two are based in the Philippines and one in Latin America), one each from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Much like the previous issue, most articles came out of two events in 2007: the Asian Pentecostal Society meeting held in Surabaya, Indonesia and the Asia Pacific Theological Association Theological Forum which met in Manila, Philippines. What is worth noting in this issue is the increasing participation of Asian Pentecostal writers. It can certainly be said at this point that the challenge is being taken seriously by the Asian Pentecostal intelligentsia! For quite sometime now, Pentecostal scholars, particularly those coming from the West, have demonstrated through their writings that they are capable of engaging in theological discourse. But the advance of scholarship undertaken by Asian Pentecostals themselves has been slow, but not insignificant.

The dominant subject so far in Asian Pentecostal scholarship has largely revolved around biblical/theological discussion on Lukan pneumatology and, most recently, around Pentecostal hermeneutics. An insightful article written by Ekaputra Tupamahu from Indonesia, for example, compares the theological methodologies and formulations of Robert Menzies and Simon Chan. Tupamahu argues that despite the two scholars' obvious differences in their approach, both affirm the doctrine of initial evidence and subsequence which are the hallmarks of classical pentecostalism. Yee Tham Wan from Malaysia proposes a fuller Pentecostal pneumatology which is not necessarily captive to the earlier Luke-Acts emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in the church today. Yee posits that a Matthean approach is valuable to Pentecostals since it provides wider material for constructing

theological paradigms that are not limited to biblical exegesis as polemic to pentecostal experience.

Roli dela Cruz provides a thoughtful article on Pentecostal preaching from a Filipino Pentecostal perspective. Pentecostalism in the Philippines from its incipient stage has been vibrantly committed to the experience of the Spirit for the purpose of evangelism. Dela Cruz informs us that “The history and the doctrine of the PGCG (Philippines General Council of the Assemblies of God) depict the clear understanding of and emphasis upon the mission of the church as an eschatological community” (p.216).

Pentecostal scholarship in Asia is not at all possible and will not go very far without academic mentors from various parts of the world. In this issue we appreciate them for their commitment to the development of Asian Pentecostal scholarship. Paul Lewis' authoritative review of pentecostal theological education makes the important point that “Pentecostal doctrinal distinctives are not the only inclusions into a curriculum” (p.176). He argues that a more integrative approach is necessary for a Pentecostal theological educational philosophy. Richard Waldrop provides Pentecostal perspectives on Holistic Church Mission by using a wider biblical/theological framework in doing missions focusing on the “missionary character of the Triune God.” Shane Clifton's thoughtful article provokes the question of whether Pentecostals in their pursuit to preach a “full gospel” should include a public dimension to their message. Clifton argues that his proposed theology and philosophy for political engagement is not “antithetical to key elements of Pentecostal self-understanding.” Finally, Todd LaBute's essay review of Gregory Boyd's *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church* presents an insightful critique regarding the church's role in socio-political involvement.

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