

“Pentecostalism, Power and the Exercise of Authority”

On September 8-9, 2009, Alphacrucis University of Sydney, Australia, hosted the Asia Pacific Theological Association’s Theological Commission’s symposium on the topic of ‘Pentecostalism, Power and the Exercise of Authority.’ From the original call for papers, the parameters were set as follows:

The fundamental question is ‘What is the theology and practice of power in local churches, between churches up to denominational level, between denominations and movements and their surrounding societies, and with regard to Pentecostalism in the Asia-Pacific region?’ Additional questions are: With an emphasis on Holy Spirit power, and power from above, how is power defined? How does this power relate to authority? What are the appropriate edges of the use of power and authority in Pentecostal churches? And in what way do these ‘edges’ relate to their political and economic contexts?

The symposium was attended by teachers and students from around the Asia Pacific region with a large turnout from Australia and the South Pacific islands.

The first four essays and the two responses in this issue are from the symposium. This first essay of this journal is by Stephen Fogarty entitled, “Gender and Leadership Behavior Among Senior Pastors,” which was an empirical study on senior pastors, comparing gender differences and noting leadership-style differences. The empirical research was taken within Australia. Lily Arasaratnam responds to the Fogarty essay. Shane Clifton presents an essay on the topic “Empowering Pentecostal Women,” which looks at the current state of women within the Pentecostal church. He further argues that “What is needed, then, is a more active and deliberate effort among Pentecostal communities to follow the lead of the Spirit and seek to raise up women leaders.” Michelle Facey responds to this essay. John F. Carter examines the topic “Power and Authority in Pentecostal Leadership” extolling the value of ‘Servant Leadership.’ The following essay by Julien M. Ogereau delineates “Apostolic Authority and

Pastoral Leadership in the Johannine Epistles” as a biblical analysis of leadership within John’s letters. From these essays, and the symposium the importance of these studies as well as the noticeable need for future research was clear.

An additional essay on the development of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, India, by Wessly Lukose, describes the foundations and atmosphere by which the Pentecostal movement grew in Rajasthan. This essay lays the foundation as part one of the two parts on this topic.

Editors