

Tavita Pagaialii, *Pentecost "to the Uttermost": A History of the Assemblies of God in Samoa* (Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, 2006), paperback, x pp. + 190 pp., ISBN: 978-971-8942-10-9, US\$ 8.00.

With over 20,000 adherents in 100 churches, the Assemblies of God in Samoa (including both American Samoa and the Independent State of Samoa) claims about nine percent of the residents on these Pacific islands. From the introduction of Pentecostalism to the islands in 1928, the Assemblies of God has become the largest evangelical body in Samoa. Like many of the rapidly-growing Pentecostal churches in non-Western nations, little scholarly attention had been paid to the history and development of the Assemblies of God in Samoa. That is, until now.

Tavita Pagaialii, a veteran Samoan Assemblies of God educator and now General Superintendent of the Samoa Assemblies of God, has written a remarkable book, *Pentecost "to the Uttermost": A History of the Assemblies of God in Samoa*. The author's undergraduate studies at South Pacific Bible College in Fiji (1975-77) and graduate studies at Far East Advanced School of Theology in the Philippines (since renamed Asia Pacific Theological Seminary) (1979-82) sparked curiosity in the young student concerning Pentecostal origins in his homeland. His alma mater (APTS) has published the results of his research, which likely will serve as the church's standard history for years to come.

*Pentecost to the Uttermost* is divided into five sections: 1) history of Christianity in Samoa; 2) history of the Assemblies of God in Samoa; 3) development of Assemblies of God Bible schools; 4) challenges facing the Assemblies of God in Samoa; and 5) the conclusion that the Assemblies of God is addressing a significant need.

Pagaialii begins by placing Samoa's Pentecostal origins in the context of the islands' Christian history. Herman Winkleman, the first Assemblies of God missionary, arrived in 1928. The church quickly matured and indigenous leaders emerged. The author outlines local histories, then identifies larger themes visible in the grassroots accounts. Since 1978, missionaries have faded into the background, and three Bible colleges have been established.

He notes the nation's proud Christian heritage and that in past years the nation's mainline Protestant churches sent many missionaries to other nations. As these churches grew more liberal, the Assemblies of God became the primary evangelical group. With the Samoan

diaspora (there are almost as many Samoans in the United States as in Samoa) came new opportunities to spread the faith among their people in new lands. Today, Samoan Assemblies of God churches are found throughout the Pacific rim, including in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

In addition to recounting the history of the Assemblies of God in Samoa, Pagaialii discusses challenges it faces. Unlike other evangelical and charismatic groups, the Assemblies of God has rejected many traditional Samoan cultural practices. In addition to these cultural challenges, the author avers that the Assemblies of God needs to develop and support educational institutions and overcome anti-intellectualism. He also encourages ecumenical engagement, citing William Menzies' admonition to the church to find ways to "function well within their own constituency" and to "relate constructively to other church bodies." Finally, Pagaialii laments the lack of concern among Pentecostals for social, political, economic, and environmental issues. How have Pagaialii's views been received? Wayne Cagle, President of APTS, writes that "[t]he author is to be commended for bringing up such issues that traditionally, Pentecostals have tended to leave to the more 'liberal' branches within the Christian movement" (x).

*Pentecost to the Uttermost* is the first written history of the Assemblies of God in Samoa, except for a short narrative penned by missionary Maurice Luce in 1988. Pagaialii's account is admirably researched and well-written, and also provides a challenging assessment of what issues need to be addressed in the future. It is an important work for Samoans at home and in the diaspora, as well as for scholars who wish to better understand the complexity of Pentecostalism in a non-Western context. *Pentecost to the Uttermost* belongs in every university and seminary library.

Darrin Rodgers