

Young-hoon Lee, *The Holy Spirit Movement in Korea: Its Historical and Theological Development* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2009), hardback, xx + 174 pp., ISBN: 978-1-870345-67-5, US\$ 23.00.

Young-hoon Lee is the new senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church, which is one of the world's largest churches today. In his book he has endeavored to present the landscape of how the Holy Spirit has worked throughout Korean church history. The book discusses the process of the indigenization of Christianity and covers issues of the historical and doctrinal development of the Holy Spirit movement in much detail. Lee's work is mainly structured according to six periods of twenty years each that extend from 1900 to the twenty-first century. Most of these epochs are treated in the same way, with an initial period focusing on as well as highlighting the religious and social background with historical and theological factors. In the second chapter, the author also clarifies how the foundation for the Holy Spirit movement was prepared by previous religions such as Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism existing before Christianity had come into Korea.

Lee, an insider of Korean Pentecostalism, in the following chapters takes on the task of telling the story of how unique features of each period have been formulated pertaining to the Holy Spirit movement. Lee perceives the first period (1900-1920) that commenced in political and social chaos as the first encounter with the Holy Spirit movement for Korean Protestantism. In particular, the Wonsan and Pyongyang revivals that took place in 1903 and 1907 respectively are pinpointed as of great significance to introducing the powerful gifts of the Holy Spirit to Korean Christians (24). In this early stage, by the influences of the outstanding religious leader Sun-joo Gil, Korean Christianity was being saturated with great eschatological expectation (34). In this regard, Lee did not hesitate to state that eschatology had accelerated the apathy to social and political concerns for society by “depoliticizing Christians” (39).

In chapter four, Lee penetrating the second period (1920-1940), examines two pivotal figures, Ik-doo Kim and Yong-do Lee. The focal point of this epoch lies in “empiricism” (134). According to the author it seems to be inevitable for Korean Christians who were being persecuted by the Japanese to stress mystical experiences like divine healing. Furthermore, most Christians at that time were more interested in individual faith as described by the author with the term “internal world or spiritual world” (42). The Christians whose emphasis had never been upon political or social affairs, but were more primarily

concerned with individual affairs, acknowledged the Holy Spirit just as “some kind of spiritual force” (57). In spite of such confusion on pneumatology, many Christians could experience the power of the Holy Spirit.

Lee continually argues that the church, undergoing continuous divisions in the third period between 1940 and 1960 after Japanese occupation, could establish a foothold in the Pentecostal movement by the so-called “pseudo-Holy Spirit movement” (61). From the beginning of the fourth period (1960-1980), the Korean church had achieved explosive growth through the united efforts of churches in a variety of denominations. This chapter also gives adequate attention to the *Minjung* theology which is typically considered by liberal scholars today as a Holy Spirit movement. However, the author seeks to differentiate the *Minjung* theology from the Holy Spirit movement based on the definition of the Pentecostal movement (80). Lee also argues that *Minjung* theology is not a theological movement but a social movement in terms of where its concerns lie (83).

For the fifth period (1980-2000), more than the usual attention by surveys is given to the relevance of the Yoido Full Gospel Church to the Pentecostal movement. Lee asserts that many Christians could be actively engaged in social concerns because of the influence of Pentecostal churches (116). As a disciple of David Yonggi Cho, Lee emphasizes that Cho has played a pivotal role in the remarkable growth of Korean Christianity by introducing a “Pentecostal-type of worship and preaching” (92). For the author, Cho's Holy Spirit movement could be well contextualized due to the religious preparation of shamanism. The author, moreover, does not hesitate to state even some negative effects of shamanism for Korean Pentecostals such as unbalanced faith in healing and “material blessings.” (114). While Pentecostal trends have surfaced and been popularized in Korean Christianity from 2000 onward, Korean churches could reinforce some marginalized areas such as social care and service without abandoning “the traditional spiritual emphasis” (124). This period of time is defined by the author as the sixth period. Lee believes that Pentecostal leaders have taken the lead in “mission and social engagement” unlike previous times when the roles of the church concerning social matters had not been fully understood by most Korean churches (135). The author, furthermore, emphasizes the significance of the urgent task that Korean churches ought to develop “environmental stewardship” and create “unique mission approaches” that give them individuality in terms of Pentecostal missions (135).

Lastly, Lee expresses his concerns for the future of Korean Pentecostals addressing current challenges: “sectarianism,” the lack of “social concern,” “the lack of doctrinal standards,” and “an emotional tendency” (138-139). In this regard, the author also undertakes to conclude his book by drawing our attention to some theological issues in which “the traditional emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit among the Pentecostals should continue, but in the healthy and wider context of Christian theology” (140). In the practical and the missional arenas, Lee suggests that there should be more efforts to “develop the theological means for social engagement” and “its missionary commitment” (142-143).

Throughout the book, the writing style is quite lucid. This book generally gives adequate attention to the dynamic works of the Holy Spirit within the Korean Peninsula, regardless of denominations. The author's work has included a noteworthy survey of the religious background of the Holy Spirit movement by dealing with Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Nevertheless, it is also true that Shamanism tends to be woven into Korean Pentecostalism in oversimplified ways as is highlighted as one of the key aspects to understanding the rapid growth of the movement.

Although not nullifying its strengths, there are several weaknesses in the book. Lee's attention to the Yoido Full Gospel Church and its previous senior pastor David Yonggi Cho is certainly welcome in his work. However, the breadth of attention given to the range of material involved is somehow unbalanced. Issues of the Holy Spirit movement in Korea are presented too much from the perspectives of a Yoido Full Gospel Church minister, whereas an obvious feature of Korean Pentecostalism is the tremendous contribution of many anonymous Pentecostal ministers and missionaries not addressed in any detail in the book.

Moreover, there seems to be even some confusion due to the adoption of the controlling terms, “the Holy Spirit movement.” In his book, Lee is apparently unable to choose a consistent approach to the Holy Spirit movement as he states in the beginning of the book that the terminology, “Holy Spirit movement” is used “to embrace the conceptions” of all different groups such as “indigenous Pentecostals,” “the Third Wave,” “the classical Pentecostal movement,” “the Charismatic movement,” and even “the New Apostolic Movement” (4-5). In fact, the reader can easily misunderstand a number of presented ideas due to the confusion between the “Holy Spirit movement” and the

“Pentecostal movement.” In light of this, the word “Pentecostal movement” could be more easily used rather than “the Holy Spirit movement” because of two basic reasons: first, Lee does not need to create another term since according to some modern scholars like Allan Anderson, the terminology “Pentecostalism” has been continually redefined and broadened in its definition to embrace different Christian groups that put their impetus into the dynamic works of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, there seems to be the possibility that the readers would try to find any connection between the Holy Spirit movement that previously existed in world church history and that of Korean Pentecostalism.

However, in spite of some confusions or uncertainties taking place in the work of Lee, this book indicates that the author is well able to move from Christian intellectual history to a competent and useful synthesis of the cultural and theological sides of Korean Pentecostal history. Its inclusiveness of historical figures that are not normally considered as Korean Pentecostals is a major step toward adequately broadening the history of Christianity in Korea.

This book, in fact, is an excellent overall addition to the current choice of college and university level surveys for Korean Pentecostalism. Those especially interested in the history of Christianity and Korean Pentecostalism will do well to get a copy of this valuable book. This ambitious survey of the Holy Spirit movement in South Korea can even be a great means to enlighten and stimulate many of today's Christians in the contemporary world.

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