

Issues in New Testament Studies Part III

With the publication of this edition, the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* completes its 20th year of publication. While we did not plan anything special for this anniversary, I think it is fitting, given the Pentecostal emphasis on the NT charismata, an increased focus on the ministry of women and a passion for missions that came with the Pentecostal movement, that we should focus on these NT themes in the six articles presented here. All papers were originally presented at the 25th Annual William W. Menzies Lectureship Series held on the APTS Baguio campus on January 30-February 3, 2017.

Lora Embudo leads off this edition with a two-part article denoting the current debate, which she describes as a storm, on the place of women in the prophetic ministry. One side claims that Luke validated the prophethood of women, the other says that he purposely discouraged women from it. A smaller minority, according to Embudo, hold that Luke was ambiguous about the subject. This debate is delineated in Part I. In Part II, Embudo attempts to identify Luke's stance on the issue through biblical exegesis of specific related texts in the Lukan corpus.

Following Embudo, veteran NT scholar Waldemar Kowalski deals with the alleged disconnect between what Paul says about women's role in ministry and what he actually allows them to do. Kowalski contends that Paul's teaching should be understood as being consistent with what he actually did and what he actually did actually reveals more of his position on the matter than what is commonly understood of his instructions. He then deals with the women actually mentioned in his writings, starting with the women mentioned in Romans 16: Phoebe, Priscilla (with Aquila), Mary (v6), Junia, and, to a lesser extent, the other women who appear elsewhere in his writings.

He then presents a second article, *Does Paul Really Want All Women to be Silent? I Corinthians 14:34-5*. In noting the clear evidence that Paul allowed women to pray and prophesy in public (1 Cor 11:3-16), is he contradicting himself? Is he saying that the rule of silence applies to only

certain functions in the worship service? Noting that scholars continued to be perplexed by the issue, he proceeds into weighing the issue from all sides.

Kowalski represents fairly the views of major scholars on the issue and his disagreements are honest. In dealing with the issue, he issues a clarion call to observe the first rule of exegesis of interpreting Scripture in the contexts of its original readers. This, he says, many scholars fail to do. Another problem, according to Kowalski, is that some translations either split I Corinthians 14:33 into two verses, while others leave it whole, thus complicating the exegetical picture. Like a surgeon with a scalpel, he then proceeds to cut through the quagmire and present some well thought through conclusions.

In both articles, he makes some excellent application to his and his wife, Dr. Rosemarie Kowalski's, current international church planting effort in Bandung, Indonesia, reflecting on how they understand and apply these issues within their own ministry and how their position on these issues connects with the international community that they serve.

Finally, Hirokatsu Yoshihara dives into the thorny issue of the alleged post mortem evangelistic passage of I Peter 3:18-20 and 4:6—a passage from which is drawn the teaching of the Apostles' Creed that Jesus, “descended into Hell.” This is not simply an academic issue for Yoshihara. As he explains, his native Japan, like most Majority World cultures, has a long history of ancestor veneration and love for the dearly departed, which he contends has been one of the major obstacles to the gospel in his homeland. To complicate the matter further, some Protestant ministers are now teaching that Jesus gives people a second chance to hear the gospel after they died by advocating that the gospel is still available to those in the intermediate state. The implications for this teaching are enormous. If this is so, then the entire teaching on the lostness of man without Christ might have to be reevaluated and the urgency of the biblical basis for missions and evangelism would be called into question.

Understandably, Yoshihara raises question as to whether the said Petrine passages actually teach a “Second Chance Salvation,” and, if not, what a proper response might be to those who advocate this doctrine. To address the issue, he names those involved, both Japanese and westerners, and states their positions on the matter. He then proceeds to

exegete the passages in question in response, sustaining the biblical claims of the need to accept the claims of Christ in this lifetime.

Now a word about the future. As we look now to the third decade of our Journal, we will begin to specifically target cultural themes in Asia and reflect biblically on them. Future plans call for an edition dedicated to Shame and Honor in Asia, a Biblical Perspective on Folk Religious Practices and an edition on current issues in Islam. Ideas and submissions for future editions are always welcome.

As always, feel free to contact me through www.pts.edu. I welcome your input.

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