

CRAIG S. KEENER

For All Peoples:

*A Biblical Theology
of Missions in the
Gospels and Acts*

Foreword by Wonsuk Ma

Book 2 of the APTS Press Occasional Papers Series

***For All Peoples: A Biblical Theology of Missions
in the Gospels and Acts***

by Craig S. Keener

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Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press
444 Ambuklao Rd.
2600 Baguio City
Baguio City, Philippines

Published by

Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press

Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press
444 Ambuklao Rd.
2600 Baguio City
Baguio City, Philippines
www.aptspress.org / apts.press@apts.edu

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Printed in Malaysia

Cover design and layout by *Mil Santos* (milsantos.tla@gmail.com)

ISBN 978-971-_____

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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE
TO THE OCCASIONAL PAPERS SERIES

This book is the second in the *APTS Press Occasional Papers Series*. The first book, *Pentecostals and the Poor: Reflections From the Indian Context*, by Ivan Satyavrata, is available through our website, www.aptspress.org.

The purpose of this series is to produce smaller books comprised of articles that deal with theological, anthropological and missiological issues relevant to serving God in Asia. From time to time, other sciences may also be so employed. As the title suggests, the books will be published as articles of interest to our readers become available.

For further information on this series or other work of the APTS Press, including our journal, the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, please contact us through the website.

Sincerely,

Dave Johnson, DMiss

Series Editor

FOREWORD

Today, Christian missions is in the blessed state of utter confusion! The claim “evangelization of the world in our generation” represented the “holy confidence” of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference (1910) among the western mission leaders. This “confidence” may have been confused with the western political or colonial power. Ironically, as the colonial system broke down, global Christianity shifted radically and grew exponentially. With almost two-thirds of world Christians now living in the three southern continents, and their immigrant communities bringing new energy to the waning churches in the North, a large space has opened up for creative rethinking of Christian witnessing. Hence, the rethinking and revisioning process of mission urges us all to go back to the Scripture afresh, devoid of any cultural lenses but listening to the Holy Spirit.

Given this unique locus of today’s church, this book takes us back to the foundational teachings of Jesus on missions: the Great Commission (Gospel of Matthew) and the Messianic Commission (Gospel of John). Although these two passages are “universal” in grounding Christian mission, Professor Keener wants to assure that the role of the Holy Spirit is central to Christian living and acting as God’s witnesses. The chapter on Pentecost is an important contribution not only to Pentecostals in missions but the entire Christian church. The growth of Pentecostal Christianity, which has fueled the radical shift in and expansion of the global church, will find that this chapter serves as the firm foundation for Spirit-empowered witnessing. The last chapter presents the fundamental and equally challenging feature of global missions: crossing barriers. This drive to embrace diversity and desire for unity appears counter-intuitive and even counter-norm. This

seeming contradiction can take place only when Christ's followers invite the work of the Holy Spirit into their life! At the end of this rather short reading, one is left with a deep sense that we have been commissioned to live, work, and proclaim in this world as Christ's witnesses through the power of the Holy Spirit. Implicitly, the book also urges the readers to redefine missions in the Spirit!

Wonsuk Ma, PhD

Dean, Distinguished Professor of Global Christianity
College of Theology and Ministry, Oral Roberts University

ENDORSEMENTS

Craig Keener, one of the finest and most prolific NT scholars of our day, has produced another gem. *For All Peoples: A Biblical Theology of Missions in the Gospels and Acts* blends together rich scholarly insights, rooted in an unsurpassed knowledge of the first-century world, with an edifying and pastoral eye that is always focused on the radical nature of Jesus' call to follow him in his redemptive mission. Successive chapters illuminate the seminal contributions that Matthew, Luke, John, and Paul make to a biblical theology of missions. The final chapter, rooted in the narrative of Acts, appropriately ties together these themes by describing Paul's Macedonian vision as a call for the Church to take the gospel from its place of origin in Asia to the mission field of Europe. After almost two millennia, Keener reminds us just how relevant this call remains for the growing and vibrant churches of Asia today.

Robert P. Menzies, PhD
Kunming, China

“This is Craig Keener at his best—thoroughly expositional and passionately missional.”

Dave Johnson, DMiss
Managing Editor
Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

Introduction

It was a special privilege for me to be the speaker for the annual William Menzies lectureship at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio, Philippines, on January 27-30, 2009, on the theme “For All Peoples: A Biblical Theology of Mission.” I developed this material from earlier lectures on this theme at two previous institutions: a 2008 Spring Lectureship at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Missouri, USA (Jan. 15-17, 2008), and the 2002 Ritter Lecturer for Evangelical Theological Seminary, Myerstown, Pennsylvania, USA.

Although I was working on my Acts commentary at the time I spoke at APTS, it had not yet begun to be published; my John and Matthew commentaries, however, had already been published, with Hendrickson (now with Baker Academic) and Eerdmans, respectively. The articles thus reflect the state of my academic work as it was in 2009—the ideas that went into the Acts commentary are here, but I do not cite it because I wrote the articles first.

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies graciously published the lectures as the following articles:

- “Matthew’s Missiology: Making Disciples of the Nations (Matt 28:19-20).” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12 (1, Jan. 2009): 3-20.
- “Sent like Jesus: Johannine Missiology (Jn 20:21-22).” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12 (1, Jan. 2009): 21-45.
- “Power of Pentecost: Luke’s Missiology in Acts 1—2.” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12 (1, Jan. 2009): 47-73.

- “One New Temple in Christ (Eph 2:11-22; Acts 21:27-29; Mk 11:17; Jn 4:20-24).” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12 (1, Jan. 2009): 75-92.

I had earlier published a different article in *AJPS*:

- “Between Asia and Europe: Postcolonial Mission in Acts 16:8-10.” *AJPS* 11 (1-2, 2008): 3-14.

This article offers an example of a specific mission passage in Acts with special relevance to mission in Asia. I hope that I have not overenthusiastically read too much into the passage, but it offers, in any case, a preliminary exploration of a relevant mission question in the New Testament. It thus can provide, in a sense, a fitting climax for the other essays in this volume by illustrating an approach to a particular passage.

I am grateful to the friends at APTS who contributed to the initial journal publication of these studies (Paul Lewis and others), and am grateful to Dave Johnson, who suggested to me the incorporation of these studies into a book on the theme of missiology in the New Testament. Dave and I attended the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary together in Missouri back in the twentieth century, and we discussed the idea for this book when we reunited at the Society for Pentecostal Studies meeting in Cleveland, Tennessee, in March of 2018.

Obviously one could elaborate on this theme in the New Testament at greater length, but my hope is that as a short book (admittedly not typically a trademark of Craig Keener) this one can provide a contribution, on a basic level, to discussion of biblical theology of mission, possibly as a supplemental text in Pentecostal, charismatic or other Spirit-valuing schools.