

Foreword by
ROBERT P. MENZIES

Third Wave Pentecostalism in the Philippines:

Understanding Toronto Blessing
Revivalism's Signs and Wonders
Theology in the Philippines

by

Lora Angeline Embudo Timenia

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Signs and Wonders Theology in the Philippines***

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Publisher's Preface

We are pleased to offer this seventh title in our APTS Press Monograph Series. This is the publication of the author's Master of Theology thesis done at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio City, Philippines. The purpose of this series is to give our readers broader access to good scholarship that would otherwise be unavailable outside of the academic community. This is part of our ongoing commitment to discipleship through publishing.

The other six titles in this series, *Theology in Context: A Case Study in the Philippines*, by Dave Johnson, *Leave a Legacy: Increasing Missionary Longevity*, by Russ Turney, *Understanding the Iglesia ni Cristo*, by Anne Harper, *A Theology of Hope: Contextual Perspectives in Korean Pentecostalism*, by Sang Yun Lee, *Business In Islam: Contextualizing Mission in Muslim-Majority Nations*, by Robert J. Stefan, and *A Multi-Media Literacy Project: Toward Biblical Literacy in Bangladesh* by Teresa Chai. All are available at www.aptspress.org. If you have any questions, you can reach us through our website. We would be happy to hear from you.

God bless you as you read this book.

THE PUBLISHER

Table of Contents

Publisher's Preface	<i>iii</i>
Preface	<i>vii</i>
Foreword	<i>xi</i>
Dedication	<i>xv</i>
Acknowledgments	<i>xvii</i>
CHAPTER 1: Introduction	1
CHAPTER 2: Review of Literature on the Toronto Blessing Revivalism	13
CHAPTER 3: Review of Literature on Historical Roots and Theological Antecedents	23
CHAPTER 4: Review of Literature on the Development of the Revivalism in the Philippines	43
CHAPTER 5: Review of Literature on the Filipino Religious System	61
CHAPTER 6: Methodology	81
CHAPTER 7: Presentation of Findings	85
CHAPTER 8: Understanding the Findings	113
CHAPTER 9: Evaluation from a Classical Pentecostal Perspective	129
CHAPTER 10: Evaluating Manifestations	141
CHAPTER 11: Conclusion and Recommendations	153
References Cited	157

Preface

Back in 2013, I was exposed to a revivalist church with a different spirituality from the classical Pentecostal church I grew up in. They espoused that manifestations of gold dust, orbs, angel feathers, miracle money, heavenly gemstones, glory cloud and the like are manifestations of signs and wonders. They called these manifestations as signs of heaven or glory manifestations. Their spirituality was more *revivalistic* and cathartic than mine. Though we shared a common acceptance of the continued miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, their teaching and experience of signs and wonders were different from what I experienced in my classical Pentecostal church.

To clarify, I am from the Assemblies of God in the Philippines. I believe in Spirit-empowerment and the continuation of miracles and signs and wonders. I have often experienced the presence of God in prayer and worship. I speak in tongues and pray for divine healing. I preach the gospel believing that signs and wonders will follow. I am very much a Pentecostal woman. But I have not experienced these “glory manifestations.” In fact, meeting people espousing these beliefs surprised and confused me.

Questions began to formulate in my mind about these revivalist churches. I asked myself: “Are these manifestations a form of biblical signs and wonders? Are these manifestations normative and safe for Filipinos, whose innate hyper spirituality often result in forms of folk religiosity?” I also wondered where these revivalist churches came from and how they formulated their theologies. All these questions percolated in my mind for a few years.

By 2015, I began teaching at Bethel Bible College of the Assemblies of God and encountered students who asked the same questions about

these revivalist churches. I saw that they too were confused by claims of unusual signs and wonders, and that they wonder about the differences between our classical Pentecostal spirituality and these revivalist churches' spirituality. In an attempt to answer their questions, I browsed books on Pentecostal/Charismatic movement in the Philippines. I asked pastors and teachers about these churches and their teachings. I also began researching about revivalism in the Philippines. What I found out surprised me. There are no books or academic literature about these churches and their theology in the Philippines. It seems that these churches, which started in the late 90s to early 2000 has steadily grown within Filipino Christianity, without academic evaluation or historical explanation. I even asked pastors of these revivalist churches, and they too could not explain when and how their movement began to spread in the country.

With this academic gap in mind, I decided to formally do a field research in an attempt to understand these revivalist churches. I had many questions in mind, but I focused on one main question: What is their theology of signs and wonders in the Filipino perspective? I also asked two sub-questions: What contributed to their historical development in the Philippines, and what are the implications of their theology to Filipino Pentecostal/Charismatics? The research then became my Master of Theology thesis in Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS). Fortunately, my thesis supervisor, Dave Johnson, decided that the work was worth publishing in book form through the APTS Press. This afforded me the opportunity to share my research to a wider audience.

It took some time to complete it, the delay being due to the fact that I was pregnant with my first child at the time of writing. Writing this felt like laboring and giving birth. The end product is the birth of academic literature presenting a historical understanding, a Pentecostal critique and an appreciation of a narrow stream of churches having a revivalist spirituality connected to the Toronto Blessing. Through this, I met few of the most charismatic and God-loving ministers namely, Hiram Pangilinan, Apollo "Paul" Yadao, Miguel Que, and Ronald De Asis Betiwan. They were kind enough to answer questions about their ministries and their theologies. They were humble and open minded enough to be subject to constructive critique from a Filipino classical Pentecostal. They were desirous enough to be heard and understood. I

may not totally agree with a few of their theological claims, but I recognize their unique contribution to Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in the Philippines and I appreciate their sincere desire for the world to know the glory of Jesus.

I hope that readers of this book recognize that the ultimate motivation of the study is to develop a healthy and academic understanding of this stream of revivalism in the Philippines. It also serves to dispel confusion among classical Pentecostals in the Philippines, and to provide a propositional framework of evaluating manifestations of signs and wonders.

There is still much to be researched and written about Spirit-empowered movements in the Philippines. I hope someday future researchers will embark on a journey of discovery as I did. For now, this book is my small contribution to the unfinished theological task.

Foreword

With this book, Lora Timenia provides the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement with critically-needed tools and wise counsel for evaluating unusual spiritual experiences and phenomena. Her sympathetic yet critical analysis of four influential proponents of the Toronto Blessing revivalism in the Philippines is marked by careful research, informed analysis, and a pastoral heart. Timenia's detailed research and insightful evaluation is communicated in clear language and marked by an irenic spirit. Her ability to instruct and her desire to edify shines through on virtually every page. The result is a book that not only offers valuable counsel for the burgeoning charismatic churches of the Philippines, but one that also provides much-needed pastoral perspective for the global Pentecostal movement.

Timenia's analysis takes full account of the unique cultural and spiritual dynamics that shape the Filipino context. Yet her ability to approach this study from an informed biblical perspective also makes it valuable reading for students, pastors, and church leaders around the world. Additionally, although questions about unusual spiritual phenomena associated with revival meetings are not limited to our contemporary age, the recent emergence of a host of charismatic churches connected to or influenced by the 'Toronto Blessing' revival makes the publication of this book especially timely. Indeed, every generation that has experienced the fresh winds of the Spirit has also needed wise pastoral guidance in order to navigate the resulting storms. Timenia's book provides this kind of guidance for our present generation.

Donald Gee offered sorely needed, godly advice to an earlier generation of Pentecostals. This British Pentecostal statesman was known for his balance, wisdom, and candor. His wise counsel to a

young and at times immature Pentecostal church is still worth reading. Gee noted that the more unusual or bizarre forms of behavior that often accompany the coming of the Spirit (shouting, barking, laughing, shaking, etc.) are not in and of themselves “manifestations” of the Spirit. Rather, he noted, these are human responses to the work of the Holy Spirit. The manifestations of the Spirit are, in Gee’s view, outlined by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12-14. So, Gee suggested that we should acknowledge these phenomena for what they are: human responses to God’s presence. We need not be overly concerned about them, but we certainly should not lift them up as models for all to follow. Rather, the experiences of the apostolic church should serve as our guide. Gee observed that pastoral leadership in these matters is essential; for, while these human responses are relatively common and not intrinsically wrong, they can at times inhibit what God desires to accomplish. When that happens, wise leadership will offer the guidance that is needed to maintain order.¹

Lora Timenia’s fine work will enable a new generation of Christians who are facing a fresh set of questions to offer the wise guidance and pastoral leadership that is so desperately needed today. She too calls us to evaluate our contemporary experiences through the lens of the apostolic church and provides a helpful model for doing so. It is noteworthy that Donald Gee, a European man, provided guidance on this matter for an earlier generation of Pentecostals, while the wise counsel today comes from an Asian woman. This is fitting, for it accurately reflects the nature of contemporary Pentecostalism, which is largely female and predominately located in the Majority World. It also belies the trope that majority world Pentecostals are only interested in experience, not theology or doctrine. This book represents an important contribution to the Pentecostal movement not because it was produced by a Filipina; but rather, because it is an insightful study, steeped in careful research, and rooted in solid theological reflection. I am delighted to warmly recommend this book to any and all Christians who seek to evaluate from a biblical perspective spiritual experiences

¹Donald Gee, *All with One Accord* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 24-28, 56-59; Gee, *Is it God?* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1972), passim; Gee, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1972), 86-101; Gee, *Why Pentecost?* (London: Victory Press, 1944), 37-40.

and phenomena, including contemporary “glory manifestations,” and who desire to discern what God is doing in our midst.

Robert Menzies
Easter, 2020