

Pentecostal Theological Education in the Majority World: A Century of Overcoming Obstacles and Gaining New Ground

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Historically speaking, Pentecostals are no strangers to theological education. Granted, some early Pentecostals were skeptical toward an overly intellectual approach to the faith, but Bible schools and training institutes have played a prominent role in Pentecostalism right from the beginning of the movement.¹ After all, it was at Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, founded by Pentecostal pioneer Charles F. Parham (1873-1929), that Agnes N. Ozman (1870-1937) first spoke in tongues in 1901, thereby setting an important milestone for the Pentecostal movement.² Similarly, Pandita Ramabai (1858-1929), the key figure of the 1905 Mukti Revival in India, “formed what she called a ‘Bible school’ of 200 young women to pray in groups called ‘Praying Bands’ and to be trained in witnessing to their faith. These Praying Bands spread the revival wherever they went, and some remarkable healings were reported.”³ Other institutions of theological education were also started all over the world as early Pentecostals were eager to equip large numbers of workers and send them out quickly, an endeavor that was often propelled by a sense of eschatological urgency.⁴

Since these days at the beginning of the 20th century, the task of Pentecostal theological education has continued to evolve. This task is of particular importance in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where most Pentecostals (and Christians in general) live today. Over the years,

¹Gary B. McGee, *Miracles, Missions, and American Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 153-56.

²H. Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 90-92.

³Allan H. Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 79.

⁴Wonsuk Ma, “Pentecostal Eschatology: What Happened When the Wave Hit the West End of the Ocean,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12, no. 1 (2009): 97-99; Allan H. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 131-32; Wolfgang Vondrey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 135-36.

Pentecostal theological education in the Majority World has had to deal with both obstacles and opportunities—four of which I intend to briefly describe in this essay.

1. Much of the early work of Pentecostal theological education was initiated by western missionaries who were influenced by key developments of the 19th century, such as colonialism and various revival movements.
2. Pentecostal theological education was sometimes severely affected by political pressure, an obvious example being China when it became a communist country in 1949.
3. Once colonialism ended, the work of providing Pentecostal theological education became more indigenous and often experienced rapid growth, a growth that usually had to be managed in the context of widespread poverty.
4. More recently, Pentecostal theological educators from the Majority World have begun to speak with their own voices, thereby enriching the global theological discourse that, in many ways, is still dominated by the West.

Amid these formidable challenges, Pentecostal theological education in the Majority World has proven to be exceptionally resilient and adaptable. Consequently, throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America, there are countless success stories of how Pentecostal institutions of theological education made a tangible impact by training whole generations of committed workers who have become the leaders of a movement that today encompasses hundreds of millions of adherents.⁵

I will present here a panoramic overview of some of these accomplishments as they transpired under specific historical circumstances. I am doing so from the perspective of a missiologist from Germany who has spent several years in Asia, which is why the examples given are mostly from that part of the world—specifically from China, South Korea, North Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

⁵Younghoon Lee, “Pentecostal Mission in the Third Christian Millennium: An Introduction,” in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity: An Edinburgh Centenary Reader*, ed. Younghoon Lee and Wonsuk Ma (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2018), 2.

The 19th-Century Legacy of Early Pentecostal Theological Education

Like much of the Protestant missionary enterprise in the 19th century, Pentecostal missions in the first half of the 20th century were still heavily influenced by colonialism and its many negative connotations. Furthermore, much of the work in evangelism and church planting was initiated only by western missionaries, with most of the ministry being done by those indigenous Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans who had experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁶ Nonetheless, it also needs to be emphasized that Pentecostal missionaries from the West committed themselves to difficult pioneer work that often required great sacrifice. In particular, western teachers and funds played a crucial role when it came to more formal expressions of theological education.

Early Pentecostal theological schools throughout the Majority World were strongly influenced by the western missionaries who often started them. Those missionaries, in turn, had been shaped by the evangelical movement of the 19th century, especially as it had developed in the United States.⁷ American evangelicals were passionate about establishing Bible schools in order to spread their understanding of the Christian faith. This movement “began in the 1880s, with the founding of New York Missionary Training Institute and, most important, Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.”⁸

Early Pentecostals in the United States took their clues from their evangelical ‘cousins’, frequently imitating them and starting similar schools. However, many of these schools suffered from comparable limitations, including “few resources, minimal admissions requirements, and a short course of study.”⁹ Influenced by this legacy of 19th-century evangelicalism, Pentecostal schools developed certain characteristics, such as focusing on practical training (rather than on full-fledged degree programs), teaching a relatively insular curriculum, and emphasizing

⁶The emphasis on indigenous workers is one of the main contributions in Anderson’s book, *Spreading Fires*, a theme also highlighted in *Ends of the Earth*, as well as in *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 12-15.

⁷William K. Kay, *Pentecostalism* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 25-41; Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 36-44; Harlyn Graydon Purdy, *A Distinct Twenty-First Century Pentecostal Hermeneutic* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 30-60.

⁸William Vance Trollinger, Jr., “Independent Christian Colleges and Universities,” in *Religious Higher Education in the United States: A Source Book*, edited by Thomas C. Hunt and James C. Carper (London: Routledge, 1996), 522.

⁹Trollinger, “Independent Christian Colleges and Universities,” 523.

holy living within a community devoted to serving the Church and spreading the gospel.¹⁰

Pentecostal schools not only looked like their evangelical counterparts, they also taught and promoted a similar theology. For example, because Pentecostals had almost no publications of their own, they used popular books within the evangelical movement as their textbooks, including the influential Scofield Reference Bible.¹¹ In this way, early Pentecostalism was heavily influenced by theological currents of the 19th century, such as revivalism, the Keswick movement, and the healing movement. While these influences included positive elements, there were also negative effects, such as the impact of fundamentalism, anti-intellectualism, and a pessimistic eschatology based on dispensational theology.¹² Unfortunately, western Pentecostal missionaries brought these influences with them when they established Pentecostal institutions of theological education in the various mission fields of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.¹³

In addition to these historical and theological factors, Pentecostal Bible schools also suffered from a limited availability of funds, considering that most early Pentecostals came from a lower socio-economic background.¹⁴ The combination of these factors led to certain limitations and weaknesses that influenced development of Pentecostal theological education for decades to come, both in the United States and in the Majority World.

The Obstacle of Political Pressure

At the beginning of the 20th century, many Christian missionary efforts were directed toward China—and understandably so, considering that it was (and remains) the world’s most populous country.

¹⁰Paul W. Lewis, “Explorations in Pentecostal Theological Education,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 10, no. 2 (July 2007): 170-173; Teresa Chai, “Pentecostal Theological Education and Ministerial Formation,” in *Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, ed. Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 347.

¹¹Gerald W. King, *Disfellowshipped: Pentecostal Responses to Fundamentalism in the United States, 1906–1943* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 37, 96, 113, 120.

¹²Gerald T. Sheppard, “Pentecostals and the Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism: The Anatomy of an Uneasy Relationship,” *Pneuma* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1984): 5-26; Rick M. Nañez, *Full Gospel, Fractured Minds? A Call to Use God’s Gift of the Intellect* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 89-111; King, *Disfellowshipped*, 207-19; Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 261.

¹³Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 133-37; *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 245.

¹⁴I discuss this combination of factors in more detail in my article “Fundamentalism, Marginalization, and Eschatology: Historical, Socio-Economic, and Theological Factors Influencing Early Pentecostal Theological Education,” *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 99-119.

Pentecostals likewise identified China as a top priority in terms of foreign missions so that, by 1920, “There were more foreign Pentecostal missionaries in China than in any other country.”¹⁵ These missionary efforts included investments in theological education.

One notable example was that by George (1888-1975) and Margaret Kelley (1889-1933), who received God’s calling in 1909 to serve in China and arrived in Hong Kong a year later.¹⁶ In 1914, they opened for “our converts who wish to be workers for the Lord”¹⁷ a school which by 1917 had turned into a “two- to three-year training school for Chinese preachers.”¹⁸ It was affiliated with the Assemblies of God (AG) and was located in the southern part of China in Sainam (near Guangzhou).¹⁹

Another example was that by William W. Simpson (1869-1961), who had gone to China in 1892 as a Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) missionary.²⁰ However, he became interested in Pentecostalism and in 1918 returned to China with his family as AG missionaries. Only two years later, he reported having twenty-four students at his Bible school in Minzhou, Gansu Province.²¹ In fact, assisting in the training of ministers became a large part of his ministry, especially through the North China Truth Bible Institute, which he founded in Beijing in 1922.²²

Simpson’s Bible school continued its work until the early 1950s, when Mao Zedong (1893-1976) forced all foreign missionaries to leave. This was a major blow, especially as Mao’s Communism became even more oppressive in the 1960s, when he attempted to eradicate all religions in China. However, as Pentecostal educator Teresa Chai explains, the political oppression taking place in the People’s Republic

¹⁵Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 142.

¹⁶George M. Kelley, “The Gospel in Foreign Lands,” *The Pentecostal Evangel* (April 1929): 10.

¹⁷Quoted in McGee, *Miracles, Missions, and American Pentecostalism*, 163.

¹⁸Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 116.

¹⁹I acknowledge my bias of listing several examples of Pentecostal theological education from within the Assemblies of God in this essay, considering that I received my MA from Global University while I lived in China and my MDiv from TCA College in Singapore. Having said this, “It is interesting to note that the Assemblies of God internationally has more Bible schools and training institutions than any other world Christian fellowship” — Robert W. Houlihan, “Assessing Missional Ministries in the Pentecostal Church,” in *Theological Education in a Cross-Cultural Context: Essays in Honor of John and Bea Carter*, ed. A. Kay Fountain (Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, 2016), 85.

²⁰Remarkably, the Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity describes Simpson as a “Missionary in China and Tibet with a focus on training Chinese clergy,” thereby highlighting his role in theological education (<http://bdcconline.net/en/stories/simpson-william-wallace>).

²¹Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 132.

²²Chai, “Pentecostal Theological Education,” 348.

of China (so called since 1949) had a beneficial effect on some of the work in other countries in the region:

Following the evacuation of the missionaries, many relocated to neighboring countries where they could still use Mandarin and other Chinese dialects they had acquired or just to continue to serve in Asia. As a result from the mid-1940s through the 1950s, a total of twelve theological institutions were established in Indonesia (5), Philippines (3), Hong Kong (1), Australia (1), Korea (1), and Japan (1). Today these numbers have grown by leaps and bounds.²³

In addition, the work of theological education in China continued to develop as well, even in the absence of western missionaries.

Granted, in communist China, when it came to more formal institutions like Bible schools, many of the buildings that had been built in the early years were destroyed. In fact, the only seminaries that can operate openly today are those associated with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the nation's official Protestant church, which is directly controlled by the Communist Party. Pentecostals who desire to remain independent must conduct their theological education in unregistered training institutes.

Nevertheless, throughout China, independent house churches are flourishing; and as the research of Luke Wesley has shown, many of them have a Pentecostal orientation.²⁴ House church networks, such as the True Jesus Church and China for Christ, now have millions of members, which means they need to find ways to train large numbers of pastors and leaders. This often occurs in informal or semi-formal settings, providing a form of training that traditionally was of a short-term nature; however, more recently there has been a growing interest in receiving more established forms of theological training.²⁵

Political pressure and persecution has been an obstacle to formal Pentecostal education in other countries as well. For much of the second half of the 20th century, this kind of pressure was primarily due to Communism, which controlled not only China, but also the Soviet Union and all of Eastern Europe. Although the influence of Communism has significantly decreased since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and

²³Ibid., 349.

²⁴Luke Wesley, *The Church in China: Persecuted, Pentecostal, and Powerful* (Baguio City, Philippines: AJPS Books, 2004).

²⁵Selena Y. Z. Su and Dik Allan, "Self-Narration and Theological Formation of Contemporary Chinese House Church Networks," in *Asia Pacific Pentecostalism*, ed. Denise A. Austin, Jacqueline Grey, and Paul W. Lewis (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2019), 61-84.

disintegration of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, it continues to be an oppressive force in countries like Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea. And of course political restrictions are also affecting the work of Pentecostals in many Islamic nations.²⁶ In countries like Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia, the number of indigenous Pentecostal believers continues to be minuscule; and given the authoritative nature of Islamic regimes and cultures, it is almost impossible to conduct any kind of systematic theological education.²⁷

Managing Growth with Scarce Resources

Much of the growth of the Pentecostal church in the Majority World took place after countries in the Global South gained political independence. In the post-colonial age, indigenous churches and their leaders grew in confidence that God's Spirit had empowered and commissioned them to reach their fellow citizens and neighbors, while also teaching and training a new generation of pastors. Consequently, there was also notable growth in the area of theological education. Besides the quantitative growth in the years after World War II, qualitative growth occurred as well. And while in the colonial era pioneering Pentecostal missionaries had often only started short-term training institutes, now many indigenous leaders took steps to upgrade the existing schools by offering entire degree programs.²⁸

Indonesia, for instance, declared independence in 1945, a move that the Dutch, who had colonized the archipelago, accepted in 1949. However, already in 1935, Bethel Temple missionary W. W. Patterson

²⁶According to the World Watch List published by Open Doors, the countries with the most severe persecution of Christians are North Korea, Afghanistan, and Somalia (<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/>).

²⁷With less than 0.1% followers of Jesus (including Pentecostals), Afghanistan, Yemen, and Morocco are the countries with the lowest Christian population in the world, according to Operation World (<http://www.operationworld.org/hidden/highest-christian-population>). As the Assemblies of God World Missions reports, there are 26 countries without a single AG church, which means there is an even larger number of countries without any AG Bible schools (<https://warehouse.agwm.org/repository/flipbook/vital-statistics/>).

²⁸For example, one Pentecostal scholar from Indonesia writes regarding the situation in his home country: "When missionaries were in the top leadership position (i.e., presidents) of Bible schools, most of these schools only offered a three-year diploma program. Indonesian Bible schools nowadays, however, have begun to concentrate on offering higher degrees of education. Many of these schools have developed master's degree programs, and some now even offer doctorate programs."—Ekaputra Tupamahu, "American Missionaries and Pentecostal Theological Education in Indonesia," in *Global Renewal Christianity: Spirit-Empowered Movements Past, Present, and Future*, vol. 1, *Asia and Oceania*, ed. Vinson Synan and Amos Yong (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2016), 251.

had opened a Bible school in Surabaya, a port city on the island of Java.²⁹ After World War II, more theological institutions were established, such as the Jakarta Bible Institute and Bethel Bible Institute in Maluku. The one in Maluku was started with the help of the AG missionary Ralph M. Devin (1898-1951) in 1949; and as that work continued to grow, his wife Edna (1898-1982) reported in 1956: “Our five Bible schools are trying to train enough workers to reach the eighty million souls in Indonesia.”³⁰ As this quote demonstrates, the means available to early Pentecostals were often insufficient, especially in comparison with the magnitude of their task.

In many cases, expansion of theological institutions in the Majority World took place in the context of widespread poverty and was therefore supported with finances and scholars from western countries, as the following example of the Far East Advanced School of Theology (FEAST) in the Philippines demonstrates.³¹

Planning for this important institution began in 1960, when it was recognized that “the continued development of the rapidly growing Assemblies of God national churches of Asia Pacific could only be realized through the training of leaders beyond the level of the three-year Bible institutes then operating in many countries.”³² Initially located in Manila, FEAST opened on July 29, 1964, “having accepted six of the seventeen applicants for study,” its founding president Harold Kohl (1923-2005) reported.³³ In 1978, the school introduced master’s programs; in 1986, it moved to Baguio City (compared to Manila, less expensive); and in 1989, it changed its name to Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS). Today, considered one of the best Pentecostal

²⁹Daniel A. Reed, “From Bethel Temple, Seattle to Bethel Church of Indonesia: Missionary Legacy of an Independent Church,” in *Global Pentecostal Movements: Migration, Mission, and Public Religion*, ed. Michael Wilkinson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2012), 100.

³⁰Quoted in Tupamahu, “American Missionaries,” 245.

³¹For the crucial support and leadership provided by Korean and American scholars, see Dynnice Rosanny D. Engcoy, “A Historical Sketch of Wonsuk and Julie Ma,” in *A Theology of the Spirit in Doctrine and Demonstration: Essays in Honor of Wonsuk and Julie Ma*, ed. Teresa Chai (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014); “Fulfilling a Vision: Reaching and Training in Many Nations,” in *Training Asians to Reach the World: Essays Honoring Everett and Evelyn McKinney for 50 Years in Missions*, ed. Dave Johnson (Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, 2019).

³²John F. Carter, “Reflections of the Current President,” in *Reflections on Developing Asian Pentecostal Leaders: Essays in Honor of Harold Kohl*, ed. A. Kay Fountain (Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, 2014), 39-40.

³³Harold Kohl, “F.E.A.S.T.—A Year of Beginning,” *The Pentecostal Voice* (May 1965): 6.

seminaries in the region, it continues to equip both Filipinos and students from other countries for the work of the ministry.³⁴

However, while celebrating the accomplishments of institutions like APTS, it is also important to highlight some of the shortcomings in the history of Pentecostal theological education. South African Pentecostal scholar Allan H. Anderson offers the following critique, which is worth quoting here in full:

Because they were such a small minority, early Pentecostals suffered from a siege mentality and shunned universities. But Pentecostal Bible schools sometimes nurtured a polemical and confrontational approach to academic theology and sought to preserve distinctive Pentecostal doctrines. The problem is exacerbated when this approach is exported outside the western world, is unrelated to Majority World contexts and is overly reliant upon foreign personnel to maintain. The result is that western conservatism and pre-millennial eschatological pessimism become “orthodoxy” in Pentecostal institutions around the world. Silence in the face of oppressive regimes, racism and ethnic cleansing are disturbing features of Pentecostalism’s recent history. Sometimes dominant foreign missions with insensitive, patronizing and even imperialistic attitudes have tended to stifle protest and constructive change. These problems are even further aggravated when newly educated Pentecostal pastors in the Majority World reproduce western forms of theologizing. New initiatives in providing relevant theological education for their own contexts are very few and far between.³⁵

Whether or not one concurs fully with Anderson’s assessment, there is widespread agreement that Pentecostals from the Majority World need to develop contextualized forms of theological education and to formulate their own theologies, both of which will be the topic of the following (and final) section of this essay.

³⁴For the funding needs of FEAST/APTS and other institutions of theological education like Bethel Bible Institute (BBI), see David M. Johnson, *Led by the Spirit: The History of the American Assemblies of God Missionaries in the Philippines* (Pasig City, Philippines: ICI Ministries, 2009), 42, 134-38, 244, 307-11, 479.

³⁵Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 243-44.

Gaining New Ground Through Efforts in Self-Theologizing

As described above, Pentecostal theological education in the Majority World usually began through the work of missionaries who started Bible schools in various parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the second half of the 20th century, these institutions grew and expanded, often under the leadership of indigenous pastors and scholars, thereby initiating a post-colonial phase of Pentecostal theological education. Nevertheless, western influences remained, particularly regarding the formulation of theology, because most theological resources (e.g., PhD programs, publishing houses, academic conferences) continued to be strongest in the West. In recent years, however, some of these dynamics have begun to change, thereby opening a new and exciting chapter in Pentecostal theological education that will increasingly be shaped by movers and shakers in the Majority World.

While Pentecostals have always been strong in starting self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating churches, the remaining challenge for the 21st century will be to have self-theologizing institutions in the Global South as well.³⁶ This fourth ‘self’ principle is particularly relevant for the realm of theological education because, as African scholar Joseph Bosco Bangura explains, “Even though much has been made about the need to contextualize theology so that it can serve the needs of churches in the southern hemisphere, little has been done to contextualize theological education itself, which is the bedrock of any contextual theology.”³⁷

One country where this is already happening is South Korea, as it boasts one of the strongest Pentecostal movements in the world today, which includes being home to Yoido Full Gospel Church (YFGC), the largest Christian congregation in the world. YFGC was founded by David Yonggi Cho, who became a pastor in 1956 after attending the Full Gospel Bible College (AG) in Seoul, which makes for an impressive example of how influential Pentecostal schools have been in raising up

³⁶The missiological principle of the “three selfs” goes back to Henry Venn (1796-1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880), while the fourth principle of self-theologizing has only been emphasized more recently. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 314, 460-63.

³⁷Joseph Bosco Bangura, “Theological Education for a Religiously Radicalized World: An African Pentecostal Assist,” *International Review of Mission* 106, no. 1 (June 2017), 163.

leaders for the Pentecostal movement.³⁸ Today, South Korea not only has some of the largest seminaries in the world but, since 1997, has also been home to Hansei University, a full-fledged Pentecostal university.³⁹ It is therefore fair to say that, in South Korea, Pentecostal theological education has come full circle—a development that has also taken place in other parts of the Majority World.⁴⁰

There are other self-theologizing ‘voices’ from the Majority World as well. Simon Chan, a theologian with an Assemblies of God background, has proposed an alternative approach to western theology, one that is based on “thinking the faith from the ground up,”⁴¹ as the title of his book states. Julie C. and Wonsuk Ma, who were Korean missionaries serving in the Philippines, are widely recognized for their contextualized reflections.⁴² And at APTS, the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, launched in 1998, has increasingly focused on contextual themes that are especially relevant for the Asian continent.⁴³

One of the reasons theology in the past was dominated by western thought is because theological education has mostly been expressed in western languages, such as English, French, and German. The lack of local resources is a challenge in a variety of countries, including Thailand, where this is a major problem . . .

. . . because of the dearth of theological writing in general and on Pentecostal theology, particularly by Thai scholars and

³⁸Anderson, *Ends of the Earth*, 108; Younghoon Lee, “The Life and Ministry of David Yonggi Cho and The Yoido Full Gospel Church,” in *David Yonggi Cho: A Close Look at His Theology and Ministry*, ed. Wonsuk Ma, William W. Menzies, and Hyeon-sung Bae (Baguio City, Philippines: APTS Press, 2004), 3-4. As Arthur B. Chesnut (1915–2008), the first AG missionary sent to Korea, reported: “There was a heavy need for a Bible school,” which was started in April 1954 and only had 18 students in its first year. Special thanks to the AGWM archives, specifically to Cathy J. Ketcher, who sent me this undated manuscript (July 28, 2020, personal communication).

³⁹See also the website of Hansei University (<http://hskli.com/eng>).

⁴⁰Progressing from Bible schools to accredited colleges and even universities is also a noticeable trend in sub-Saharan Africa, where a substantial number of Pentecostal universities (like Central University and Covenant University) have developed in recent years. Jeffrey S. Hittenberger, “Globalization, ‘Marketization,’ and the Mission of Pentecostal Higher Education in Africa,” *Pneuma* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 197-204.

⁴¹Simon Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014). Remarkably, however, Chan’s degrees are from Asian Theological Seminary, South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, and Cambridge University, while his teaching career was centered on Trinity Theological College in Singapore—none of which are Pentecostal institutions of theological education (<http://atesea.net/publication/asia-journal-of-theology-editor/>).

⁴²Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma, *Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Missiology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010).

⁴³The volumes of this journal are available through the website of APTS Press (<https://www.aptspress.org/asian-journal-of-pentecostal-studies/>).

leadership. The vast bulk of Christian material is translated from Western writers... The lack of Thai Pentecostal theological reflection is increased because so many who pursue advanced education and degrees do so in institutions that are not Pentecostal.⁴⁴

Publishing theological materials in non-western languages is therefore an important step toward building a global community of scholars and students representing various groups within the body of Christ. This includes the need for offering entire degree programs in languages like Chinese, as has been the case at the Bible College of Malaysia.⁴⁵ This school within the Pentecostal tradition began in 1960; some twenty-five years later, it established a Chinese theology department; and since 2014, it has been offering a Chinese counseling program. In Hong Kong, the faculty of Ecclesia Bible College launched the *Chinese Journal of Pentecostal Theology* in 2017—an important milestone, considering that this is “the first Chinese language journal of its kind.”⁴⁶

Conclusion

In this essay, I have presented an overview of the development of Pentecostal theological education throughout the Majority World in the past century. Specifically, I highlighted four areas with significant impact on the development of Bible schools and seminaries in various parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. *First*, early Pentecostal theological education was strongly influenced by western missionaries, who need to be celebrated for their courage and sacrifice, but also must be critiqued for their entanglement with colonialism and lack of contextualization. *Second*, Pentecostal theological education was especially difficult to establish when operating under authoritative regimes, a challenge that still exists in communist countries (e.g., China, Vietnam, North Korea) and many nations within the Islamic world. *Third*, after gaining independence from their colonial powers, many countries in the Majority World experienced rapid growth in their churches, leading to greater demand for theological education—a growth that often had to be managed with a scarcity of resources. *Fourth*, even though most theological resources continue to be allocated in the West, institutions of Pentecostal theological education in the Majority World

⁴⁴James Hosack and Alan R. Johnson, “Pentecostalism in Thailand,” in *Global Renewal Christianity*, 209.

⁴⁵See also the website of the Bible College of Malaysia (<http://bcm.org.my/home>).

⁴⁶Menzies, “Pentecostals in China,” 88.

are increasingly self-theologizing, thereby finding and expressing their own voice.

Given the vastness of this topic, I have barely scratched the surface, and much work still needs to be done in order to adequately tell the story of Pentecostal theological education in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The accounts of how early Pentecostal missionaries started Bible schools and training institutes in the Majority World and of how indigenous leaders and scholars then developed them and began new centers of theological training are important because they provide a glimpse into a chapter of global Christianity that is still being written. In this new era of interdependence and globalized connections, Pentecostal theological education plays a significant role because it provides a platform for creating and expressing a plurality of theologizing voices.

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