

Asian Theological Issues Part 1

With this edition, we begin a series on Asian theological issues—an intentionally generic approach that allows the authors themselves to define what these issues are.

William Toh, in his two-part article, notes that the explosive growth of the Pentecostal movement over the last century, with its emphasis on church planting, has yet to produce a robust ecclesiology. The main reason he gives for this is that Pentecostals are much more inclined toward doing than thinking, reflecting and writing. The result, then, in Toh's way of thinking, has been an ecclesiology that has not been well developed. Given that the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement shows no signs of slowing in growth, Toh is keen to see a stronger ecclesiology developed and his article is directed to that end.

His paper is presented in two parts. Initially, Part 1 looks at the biblical definition and Pentecostal understanding of the Church. This is followed by a discussion of three Pentecostal ecclesiological concepts, christological, pneumatological and sociological, as well as some of the issues that can result from a weakened form of these concepts. The first two are presented in Part 1. Part 2 leads off with a discussion of the sociological concept of ecclesiology and is followed by the Toh's conclusions on the topic, which are partially directed toward his location context in Singapore.

Following Toh, Filipino theologian Lora Embudo Timenia contributes a two-part article on a case study of Hiram Pangilinan, a prominent pastor in the Third Wave signs and wonders movement in the Philippines, who Timenia sees as emblematic of the movement itself.

In part 1, she reviews the background of the Third Wave movement and its antecedents, the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. She then proceeds to give a brief biography of Pangilinan. Part 2 presents a synthesis and critique of Pangilinan's theology as well as her conclusions and further implications of this study.

The third two-part article, written by Bernard Koh, is entitled "Constructing Chineseness in Ministry: A Contextualized (Re)thinking with Special Reference to Chinese Church in Indonesia and Singapore." Considering all of the variations among the Chinese, Koh finds it necessary to ask, "What does Chineseness mean?" A corollary question

would be “How does one do theology related to Chineseness?” Koh then sets out to answer these questions, focusing on Indonesia, where the Chinese are a minority group and Singapore, where the majority of people are Chinese.

In Koh’s own words, “Part 1 deals with a methodological consideration when doing local theology related to Chineseness. This is followed by a discussion of Chang Yau Hoon’s paradigm, which is a model for constructing Chineseness in the Christian church in Indonesia” and which, according to the author, can be used to construct Chineseness in Singapore, as well. The remainder of Part 1 discusses constructing Chineseness in ministry in Indonesia.” Part 2 “examines the issue of constructing Chineseness in ministry in Singapore. The issue of bilingual services will be explored using three Christian churches as examples. This part will conclude with the author’s recommendations and global applications.”

Over the last few years, there has been a greater call for unity and ecumenism in the Body of Christ. While many in the Assemblies of God, of which our seminary is a part, have been leery of groups such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Assemblies of God in the USA and other Pentecostal groups have refused to participate in the WCC, a softening of hearts and greater openness to dialogue can now be seen. Two recent dialogues in which the Assemblies of God and other Pentecostals have participated have been the Reformed-Classical Pentecostal dialogue and the Lutheran-Pentecostal Dialogue. Both dialogues have been international in scope and participation and have recently issued press releases, which we are pleased to publish here as our way of being more ecumenical.

As always, questions and comments may be directed to me through our website, www.aptspress.org.

Respectfully,

Dave Johnson, DMiss
Managing Editor