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THE JOURNAL SEEKS TO PROVIDE A FORUM: To encourage serious thinking and articulation by Pentecostals/Charismatics in Asia in all disciplines within the field of Pentecostal studies; to promote interaction among Asian Pentecostals/Charismatics and dialogue with other Christian traditions; to stimulate creative contextualization of the Christian faith; and to provide a means for Pentecostals/Charismatics to share their theological reflections.

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A Time of Celebration: the 25th Anniversary of the Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

With this edition, the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* (AJPS) completes its 25th year of continuous publication, making it the longest running journal of its kind in the English language in the Majority World. We thank God for his faithfulness to us. I would also like to express my thanks to my predecessors, William Menzies, Wonsuk Ma, Joseph Suico and Paul Lewis, upon whose shoulders I now stand, as well as all the editors, formatters and others, past and present, who have worked so hard to make this happen.

In honor of this momentous occasion, we asked Drs. Glen Menzies and Bob Menzies, the two sons of the late Dr. William Menzies, the founder of the Journal, who had a vision for providing opportunities for Asian Pentecostal scholars a place to publish their work and reflect on the issues of the day, as they saw them, to write about their father’s theological legacy for this edition. For William Menzies, this was part of a larger vision that he had embraced years before as a co-founder of the Society For Pentecostal Studies and its journal, *Pneuma*, whose contribution to the Pentecostal/Charismatic (PC) movement and, especially, the development of Pentecostal academic publications, is beyond calculation. Over the years, the AJPS has gained wide acceptance as a leading voice in Asian Pentecostalism, for which we are eternally grateful.

The beginning of the AJPS must be seen as part of Menzies’ other significant contributions to the pioneering and development of a research culture at the school we represent, the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary. In 1993, an annual lectureship, which now bears his name, was begun to promote Pentecostal theology in Asia.\(^1\) The APTS Press was founded in 1995 and has gradually gained acceptance as a Pentecostal publisher in Asia.\(^2\) The Asia Pacific Research Center was also begun in the 1990s as an archive for historical materials on the various Assemblies of God church bodies in the region.\(^3\) With the later

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2Ibid., 104.
3Ibid., 85.
addition of the post-graduate programs after the Menzies departed, APTS has become a respected center for Pentecostal research, reflection, training and practice in the Asia Pacific region.

But our task of reflecting and writing about Asian Pentecostalism is far from being finished. All signs show that the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement, in all its variations, continues to grow at a healthy rate in Asia. Like any other Christian movement in history, it has accomplished great things but has also demonstrated a tendency towards schism, doctrinal error and any number of other problems. This is compounded by the fact that over 90% of Asians follow false religions and ideologies. As teachers in the church (Ephesians 4:11,12), our responsibilities and opportunities to guide, instruct and mentor have perhaps never been greater.

The rest of this edition reflects some central Pentecostal themes, some of which occupy much space in Pentecostal literature, both popular and academic. Following the article on William Menzies, Luke Wesley, a veteran global worker in China, writes about the house church movement in that vast land. Beginning with a comparison between the house churches and the government recognized church, known as the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) in English, he contends that the house church movement will prevail. According to Wesley, it will prevail because of its rich diversity in worship styles, theology and church structures. In other words, it will do so because it is indigenous, not contrived, forced and impacted by the West as he claims the TSPM to be.

The next two articles, one in the northern Philippines and the other in northeastern Thailand, reflect Pentecostal engagement in animistic cultures. Halka Sitabayashi, a recent APTS graduate from Japan, writes within the context of the northern Philippines about a ministry in which she was a student here. In this article, she explores the worldview of the Kankan-ey tribe of the northern Philippines and draws heavily on the work of Julie C. Ma, a pioneering writer in the field, and deals with issues related to spiritual formation of believers there. In doing so, she taps into the area where Pentecostals have often interacted with animistic worldviews, spiritual power, especially divine healing.

Wolfgang Sue, an Australian Assemblies of God missionary among the unreached Isan people of northeastern Thailand, takes on the always challenging issue of ancestor worship among folk Buddhists. Among the Isan, this is seminal research about the Isan in which he outlines the people’s fear of evil spirits and angry ancestors. The problem is compounded by the practice of early missionaries to encourage the few Christians to isolate themselves from the rest of the community. Here, Sue searches for a better way of contextualization whereby the Isan can
remain fully integrated in their communities and completely Christlike. Perhaps the most significant value of Sue’s reflection here is that it reveals the honest struggle of a missionary among an unreached people group (UPG) where the Church has not been well established and issues like these have not been resolved. As the Body of Christ continues to focus on UPGs many missionaries will be able to relate to his struggle.

Finally, we present two articles on Pentecostal history in East Asia. Christian Nathen Ng traces the origin of the Assemblies of God in Hong Kong in the 20th century claiming that while the churches there have had strong growth and are among the largest denominations there, they have received little academic attention, according to Ng. Furthermore, he responds to what he claims are inaccurate Pentecostal stereotypes and responds to questions that reveal the multifaceted realities of Assemblies of God churches in Hong through some cases studies.

We conclude this edition with the story of four pioneers among Assemblies of God missionaries in China, William Wallace Simpson and his wife, Harold and Josephine Baker, Les and Ava Anglin and Marie Stephany. All of them did evangelism and church planting and at least three of them also engaged in meeting the physical needs of the people they served. All of them persevered against great odds over many years of faithful service.

On a personal note, this year reflects a personal milestone for me as I complete my 10th year as the managing editor of this journal. I am thankful to God and give him glory for what we have been able to do over the past decade and look forward with great anticipation of what the future holds.

Warmly,
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William Menzies’ Theological Vision for the Founding of the AJPS
by Glen and Robert Menzies

At the outset of the second year of the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*’ existence, its co-editors, William Menzies and Wonsuk Ma, wrote an editorial assessment of the journal’s first year. In their short editorial they said, “It seems fitting that we review the intended character and goals of this young publication.”¹ Now, twenty-five years later, my brother and I have been entrusted with a similar task, one that is equally fitting for this silver anniversary edition. We were asked to outline the theological motivations (the vision, if you will) that motivated our father, William Menzies, to initiate, along with Wonsuk Ma, the *AJPS*.

We believe the answer to the question—Why produce the *AJPS*?—reveals a lot about our father’s understanding of the Pentecostal movement both in Asia and around the world. The answer also illuminates the value he had placed upon theological reflection and why he felt this noble undertaking was important for the life and vitality of the church.

With this brief explanation of the task before us, let us identify and discuss what we feel were the four main ‘C’s (purposes) that motivated our father to establish this journal—conservation, contextualization, captivation, and charity.

**Conservation**

William Menzies was a church historian. He loved to speak of the value of studying church history and often described the rich truths and important perspectives that flowed from his study. When it came to the emergence of the modern Pentecostal movement, our father was quite clear. He emphasized that the unusual experiences that marked the Azusa Street Revival and later Pentecostal gatherings were not unique. Indeed, he pointed to over twenty charismatic movements that appeared throughout the church’s history, most of which experienced similar

phenomena.\textsuperscript{2} Prophecy, healing, exorcism, speaking in tongues, etc., are not new or novel, nor did they first manifest just one hundred years ago. These kinds of charismatic experiences have punctuated the life of the church in diverse places and among different groups at various times over the past 2,000 years. No, the modern Pentecostal movement in this regard is not unique. This is true of the Pentecostal movement in Asia as well as its other expressions around the globe.\textsuperscript{3}

“What is unique about the modern Pentecostal revival,” our father would say with a gleam in his eye, “is that it has survived.” Indeed, it has not only survived but has become an integral part of Evangelical Christianity. You see, in studying the twenty-plus charismatic movements of the past, we find that, sadly, none of them ended well, one classic example being the Montanists.\textsuperscript{4} While most of these movements started well, they all remained on the periphery of the life of the church. In time, due to an over-emphasis on the charismatic gifts and a lack of grounding in Scripture, these groups went astray. A charismatic leader or self-proclaimed prophet would arise and lead the group into self-destructive fanaticism and heresy.

However, as our father would say, here is where the modern Pentecostal movement is different and where we find its uniqueness.\textsuperscript{5} The modern Pentecostal movement has survived long enough to become a part of mainstream Christianity and did not remain on the periphery. Indeed, as Bob’s book, \textit{Christ-Centered: The Evangelical Nature of Pentecostal Theology},\textsuperscript{6} chronicles, this particular Pentecostal movement began with a strong sense that it was a part of the larger Evangelical


\textsuperscript{3}Lora Timenia, \textit{Third Wave Pentecostalism in the Philippines: Understanding Toronto Blessing Revivalism’s Signs and Wonders Theology in the Philippines} (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021).

\textsuperscript{4}It also had a significant impact on the larger Church for a short time, but then a hard break against it quickly followed.

\textsuperscript{5}Perhaps a second uniqueness should also be mentioned, although in some ways it simply helps explain why the Pentecostal Movement has lasted and thrived. This was the theological innovation of understanding speaking in tongues to be the outward “Bible sign” of an empowering for witness, what Pentecostals usually call “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” Between the Apostolic Age and beginning of the twentieth century, it is not clear that any other charismatic group noted this connection. Moreover, as Vinson Synan has argued in several forums, since the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, groups embracing evidential tongues have grown much more rapidly than those denying or remaining noncommittal on this issue. See, for instance, Vinson Synan, “The Role of Tongues as Initial Evidence,” 67-82 in Mark Wilson, ed., \textit{Spirit and Renewal: A Festschrift in Honor of J. Rodman Williams}, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 5 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

church, even though some segments of Evangelicalism (or Fundamentalism) did not initially welcome Pentecostals into the family. Over time, however, relationships with the broader church deepened and matured. The result was (in our father’s view) a wonderful cross-pollination—we Pentecostals influencing our Evangelical neighbors and, in turn, being impacted by our Evangelical brothers and sisters. One especially positive aspect of this Evangelical influence was an affirmation of what had been present from the beginning—a strong commitment to the Bible as the standard and measuring rod for doctrine, practice, and spiritual experiences.

So, while the experiences (prophecy, healing, tongues, etc.) of the modern Pentecostal movement are not new, the fact that it is seen as a part of mainstream, orthodox Christianity—and indeed, as a vital part of the global Evangelical church—is unique. Herein lies the modern Pentecostal movement’s significance and incredible promise. For the first time in the history of the church, a charismatic movement has become mainstream and significantly impacted the Church universal for much more than a few years. This is no doubt the case because the early leaders of the modern Pentecostal movement were committed to judging their theology, practice, and spiritual experiences according to the Word of God. The warm relationships that developed over time with their Evangelical brothers and sisters have clearly facilitated this healthy posture and highlighted a common commitment to Scripture as the ultimate authority. If these early leaders had departed from a firm commitment to judging their message and experience against the standard of the Bible, history tells us that the movement would have become marginalized from the larger body of Christ and spiraled downward into irrelevancy due to heresy and excess. Thankfully, this was not the course of the modern Pentecostal movement and, for the most part, has not been the course of the Pentecostal movement in Asia.

A central reason that our father loved serious study of the Bible, careful examination of church history, and the theological reflection that these endeavors stimulate was conservation. He felt that development of a balanced and articulate Pentecostal theology, firmly rooted in Scripture, was essential if the fruit of the Pentecostal revival was to be conserved. As a result of his study of church history and personal observations gleaned through his own ministry (both in Asia and in other parts of the world), he was convinced that any vision of the Pentecostal movement that pits experience against serious study of the Bible is destined to fail.

In his preaching and teaching, our father proclaimed that vital spiritual experience, being an essential emphasis of the Pentecostal movement, must be guided and directed by the biblical record.
Pentecostal experience flows from a desire to embrace the biblical record *mutatis mutandis* as well as to encounter God in Christ through the Holy Spirit as the apostolic church did. Indeed, a Pentecostal approach to the Bible may be summed up in the simple statement—“Their stories are our stories.” This approach has enabled the Pentecostal movement in Asia to bring together an emphasis on experience with a commitment to the authority of the Bible. Rather than being in competition with one another, most Pentecostals in Asia see these twin themes as complimentary.

In the editorial at the outset of year two (1999) cited above, a central reason the *AJPS* was brought into being was stated as follows—“for the purpose of encouraging serious theological thinking and articulation by Pentecostals/Charismatics in Asia.” Serious theological reflection in the mind of our father was inextricably linked to conservation of the rich harvest of Pentecostal revival in Asia. Thus, in order for Asia’s Pentecostal movement to flourish and accomplish its divinely appointed purpose, it must be rooted in and guided by a biblically-informed, balanced theology that addresses the contemporary needs of the church. The journal was established to encourage precisely that kind of theological reflection—one attuned to the needs of the church. This leads us to our father’s next motivation.

**Contextualization**

William Menzies was certainly a passionate and committed Pentecostal. Nevertheless, he rejected any sort of Pentecostalism that minimized the importance of either Scripture or Christ. Or said another way, his Pentecostalism was both bibliocentric and Christocentric. While Pentecostals affirm the importance of spiritual experience, our father insisted that all spiritual experience be judged by the standards of Scripture. He was also skeptical of any emphasis on the Spirit that minimized the importance of Christ. He was not the sort of theologian who looked for parallels between Buddhist mysticism and Christian experiences of the Spirit. He believed the Holy Spirit was the Spirit of

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7The qualification *mutatis mutandis* (“necessary changes having been made”) is a recognition that there was no New Testament as a collection of books during the Apostolic Age. The Old Testament canon and the deposit of teaching mediated by the apostles functioned in the Apostolic Age as our Old and New Testaments function today.


9Robert Menzies, *Pentecost: This Story is Our Story* (Springfield, MO: GPH, 2013), especially chapter 1.

Christ and would always point to Christ, who is the anchor that grounds any attempt to discern which Spirit/spirit is of God and which is not.

In 1989, William Menzies became president of Asia Pacific Theological Seminary. In the preceding twenty years, he had made summer trips to teach in various missionary settings, often in Manila or Seoul. So, in some ways his appointment at APTS was a natural extension of this part-time missionary activity. He had long proven that he had a missionary’s heart.

Moving to the Philippines gave our father a new jolt of enthusiasm and energy. He relished the challenges of cross-cultural ministry and leadership. Also, the fact that some of his students faced the very real prospect of imprisonment or martyrdom constantly reminded him of how much was at stake.

As a result of his years of ministry (particularly those in Asia), our father was very sensitive to the fact that theological reflection must be tied to the needs of the Church. These needs, although often similar, also included questions and challenges that were unique to each cultural context and age. Or expressed another way, the Pentecostal churches’ theology should be characterized by diversity in the midst of unity. In different locales, the theology of the church has distinctive emphases because each expression of the church faces unique questions and challenges. At the same time, because Pentecostal churches throughout Asia (and around the globe) base their theological reflection upon the Bible, there is a striking commonality that unites them. Furthermore, it is the basis of our common commitment to Scripture and the triune God revealed in it that enables churches in different settings to encourage and learn from one another.

Stimulating contextualization, when understood in this sense of affirming the unique aspects of a church’s context and its need to address the related questions in a manner both relevant and faithful to Scripture, was another desired result of the AJPS. Again, the editorial cited above states the matter clearly—one of the journal’s objectives was “to stimulate creative contextualization of the Christian faith.”11

Discussions about the nature of contextualization are very much related to a more fundamental question, that being, How shall we do theology? Thus, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen states, “All theology is contextual and ‘locational.’”12 Of course, this statement is formally true. Every statement is made in a specific language and by a person located in a specific culture and time. Yet, it is also true that we would be wary of accepting this statement as definitive without qualification. Does this mean that we are unable to convey the essence of the gospel clearly

12Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “Pneumatology of Religions,” 177.
across cultures? Does this mean that we are hopelessly trapped in our own cultural “ghetto,” unable to communicate in a meaningful way with other Christians around the globe?

Certainly, such was not the perspective of our father. In fact, he tended to highlight not the differences that link human beings together, but rather our similar aspirations, weaknesses, fears, and needs (chief among them, alienation from God) and the power of the biblical message to communicate to people of diverse cultural settings. The biblical worldview, which affirms that the omnipotent Creator is immanent and active in our world, resonates with people around the world; and Pentecostals have been successful in their evangelistic and church-planting efforts precisely because we take this worldview and the related Good News seriously.

These commonalities are even greater among people of “like precious faith” (2 Pet. 1:1). Among the first generation of Pentecostals in the United States, a common slogan was “We may not yet have achieved unity of the faith, but we have achieved unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3, 13). In other words, we recognize that God has touched our lives similarly, and we all accept the authority of Scripture; but we just have not yet worked through in every detail a common understanding of what Scripture teaches.

The real question is, then, How great is the cultural divide? The greater we see the divide, the more we feel the need to translate or reconstruct the message. Historically, this has led many mainline churches to depart from declaring the apostolic message and, in some cases, to abandon the very notion of sharing the gospel across cultural boundaries. Our father rejected this perspective. In one of his first forays into writing, a 22-year-old William Menzies described the Pentecostal revival as providing a striking contrast to churches that had departed from orthodoxy on the one hand as well as those who had succumbed to dead orthodoxy on the other. The former proclaimed a social gospel and represented a Christianity without Christ. The latter preached the gospel but without the power of the Spirit, making God “appear to be so far away that poor souls can barely reach him.”

Neither is up to the task that faces the church in these last days. A Pentecostal church that emphasizes the power of the Spirit to enable followers of Christ to

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13 As Jonathan Leeman states, “The Holy Spirit is more powerful than culture...Yes, we all read Scripture and write doctrine through our cultural experiences, but Scripture remains the foundation of the church’s unity.” J. Leeman, “Soteriological Mission: Focusing in on the Mission of Redemption” (and his responses), in Four Views on the Church’s Mission, ed. Jason S. Sexton (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 139.

overcome every conceivable barrier (whether political, cultural, or spiritual) with the gospel is the thing that’s needed.

Our father maintained that a Pentecostal approach to the theological enterprise understands the challenge of crossing the cultural divide as a manageable undertaking. This is the case because we are mindful of the promise of the Spirit’s enabling (Acts 1:8). Our job is not to reconstruct the message, but rather to translate and apply it so it can be clearly understood and appropriated. And the Spirit must always be our guide in this translation process, for he can mediate truth in ways that are simply beyond unaided human ability.

The issue of authority is central here, for the greater we see the divide, the more we are likely to focus on analysis of the contemporary culture rather than the biblical witness. In many World Council of Churches circles that have spoken of contextualization, the perceived needs or concerns of the contemporary culture quickly took precedence over the apostolic message. In contrast, the Pentecostal approach to contextualization advocated by our father is infused with a sense of optimism and mission rooted in a conviction that the dynamic of the book of Acts may be recreated today. This was expressed well by a Chinese house-church leader, who some years ago declared, “Acts is the pattern for the mission of the church. If our church does not follow the path of the early church, we will lose our way.”

William Menzies recognized the need for a realistic but optimistic approach to the challenges different cultural contexts present for the task of applying God’s word to our lives in a manner that is both relevant and faithful. But he also recognized that this task must be taken up by Asian Pentecostals living and embedded within these contexts. Thus, he saw the AJPS as meeting a very significant need—namely, “to promote interaction among Asian Pentecostals/Charismatics.” There is an important note of humility here.

His two sons (the authors of this article) would like to take some credit for our father’s humble approach at this point. You see, as teenagers, we always felt that we had a “sacred responsibility” to keep our father humble. Dad was anything but a social or professional climber. Although he always dressed nicely (our mother saw to that!), he was never overly concerned about his clothes. In that sense, he was a child of Azusa Street—i.e., not a self-promoter, not trying to stand out.

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15 Robert Menzies, March 27, 2014, interview with Uncle Zheng of the Zhong Hua Meng Fu Church.

16 Editors, “Journal Reflections,” 1. It should be noted that William Menzies, as a historian, encouraged ground-breaking historical studies on various national Pentecostal movements in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, AJPS published many pioneer historical studies of various Pentecostal groups.
Generally, his clothes were neat, conservative, and simple. So, whenever Mom would buy something new or maybe a bit trendy, we immediately noticed. When Dad came to the breakfast table wearing his new “fancy duds,” we’d break into a chorus: “Bill Menzies goes mod [as in ‘modern’].” This is one way we fulfilled our sacred obligation.

One practical implication of our father’s humility was his understanding that he was not the right person to do everything. In some things, he was the right one for the moment, but he always looked for others better equipped who would come along to succeed him. For example, he was very interested in promoting Asian leadership at APTS and in fostering the success of rising Asian scholars.\(^{17}\) He saw himself, an American providing leadership in Asia, as being very much in a transitional role. In other words, he was ever trying to work himself out of a job! In any event, our father understood that the task of producing authentically Asian Pentecostal theology must be done by Asians. The journal was created, in part, to facilitate that task.

**Captivation**

William Menzies’ vision for the AJPS included assisting Pentecostal churches in Asia develop a clear and convincing theology that would help the movement conserve the fruit of the ongoing revival sweeping through countries like the Philippines, Malaysia, South Korea, and China. His vision also included encouraging Asian Pentecostal church leaders and scholars to engage in the important task of producing a contextualized theology—a theology that speaks to the current needs of their churches and does so in a way that is faithful to the biblical witness.

Yet there is another purpose of the AJPS that must be noted. From the outset, the vision for the journal was to bless the broader body of Christ. Thus, one purpose articulated by the editors was to encourage Asian Pentecostal scholars to “dialogue with other Christian traditions.”\(^{18}\) Indeed, in his inaugural editorial, our father identified ecumenical relationships—that is, how Pentecostals relate to other church traditions—as a key topic for future discussion in the pages of the journal.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{17}\)William Menzies first served as the president of APTS in an interim capacity from 1984-85, filling in for Everett McKinney during his furlough year. At that time, Dr. Menzies laid a solid foundation for academic excellence at the seminary by initiating the faculty development program and supporting the initial effort to launch a journal, which resulted in publication of the first and only issue of *Horizon: A Communication Paper of the Far East Advanced School of Theology* 1 (March 1985).


This vision to *captivate the hearts and minds* of other Christians in Asia, including non-Pentecostals, flowed from his conviction that respectful, attentive dialogue within the body of Christ would produce rich fruit and serve to bless the entire Church. This was how he assessed the growing ties that linked Pentecostals with Evangelicals in the later part of the twentieth century, and it was also how he envisioned the relationships forged and strengthened through the dialogue facilitated by the *AJPS* could serve the broader church in Asia. The editorial that looked back on the journal’s first year put it this way:

You will note that in the second issue of the journal, at least two articles appeared that were written by Evangelicals who are not strictly identifying themselves with Pentecostals. The reason for this inclusive policy is so that lively discussion and interaction, even debate, may be engaged in a friendly environment. Our belief is that competing views thus expressed…will sharpen insights…and clarify the message of believers in days to come.20

Our father’s desire to facilitate open communication between born-again Christians committed to the authority of the Bible, regardless of denominational affiliation or perspective, was strengthened by the prospect of mutual enrichment. He was confident that, through honest, open discussion centered on God’s word and enlivened by the Holy Spirit, Christians might understand the divine purposes for their lives more clearly.

This confidence extended to the truth of the Pentecostal message. Our father was convinced that the Pentecostal movement has an important theological contribution to make to the broader, global Church. In his view, this contribution was rooted in the recognition that Luke has a unique and significant contribution to make to a holistic biblical theology of the Spirit.

Luke’s pneumatology is different from, although complementary to, that of Paul. Whereas Paul highlights the interior work of the Spirit, Luke emphasizes the Spirit’s expressive ministry. In other words, Luke’s pneumatology is missiological rather than soteriological in nature. The Spirit of Pentecost is, in reality, the Spirit for others—the One who empowers the Church to bring the Good News to a lost and dying world. This Lukan missiological perspective gives rich texture to the Pentecostal understanding of the Holy Spirit and his work. Pentecostals certainly recognize that the Spirit is active in conversion, regeneration,
and sanctification. Yet our father felt justified in speaking of a baptism in the Spirit, distinct from conversion, as being an anointing for service, for he saw this as an accurate reflection of Luke’s theology.

Protestant churches have tended to read Luke in the light of Paul.21 This helps explain why Protestant discussions of the Spirit have centered more on his work by the Word and Sacrament as well as his inner witness and less on his mission to the world. God is often presented only or at least primarily as working in the background, behind the scene, so to speak. And while he certainly does work in ways that are invisible to humanity, Pentecostals also affirm the visible manifestations of his power and grace.

Protestant theologians tend to associate the Pentecostal gift with conversion and regeneration, which effectively blunts the clarity and focus of Luke’s message. When the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit is understood in salvific terms, Luke’s missiological focus is lost. Yet Luke calls us to remember that the Church, by virtue of its reception of the Pentecostal gift, is a prophetic community empowered for a missionary task.

Our father was convinced that this Pentecostal message needed to be heard. And in order to be heard, its biblical basis must be clearly articulated, with the objections of others addressed in a respectful and thorough way. In our father’s mind, the AJPS, as a scholarly journal, offered the perfect forum for this kind of open, ecumenical engagement.

Charity

For dialogue to be fruitful, it must be undertaken in an open, honest, and respectful manner. In short, it must be pursued in a spirit of love or, better, with an attitude shaped by the Holy Spirit and thus filled with love. Once again, William Menzies was confident that God, through his Spirit, could help produce this kind of dialogue—one marked by charity. Furthermore, in his own relationships with other scholars (even those

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with whom he disagreed) and particularly in his writings, he exemplified that kind of honest and charitable approach.

Our father was famous for the triangles he often drew on chalkboards or whiteboards. The many ideas and relationships those triangles illustrated are beyond counting. However, one illustration we vividly remember was the way he charted out the role of theology or doctrine. He would draw a triangle on the board and at the three points would write in succession—Theology, Experience, and Behavior. He would then proceed to explain how our beliefs, our experience, and our actions are all interrelated. What we believe will inevitably impact our actions, and what we experience (or at least, our interpretation of it) will impact what we believe (and vice versa). This was his way of emphasizing that theology is important and connected to every aspect of our lives. If we ignore doctrine or theology, we do so at our own peril.

This understanding of the importance of theology—of its influence on our lives and on the lives of others—was an important motivation for establishing the *AJPS*. Yet this conviction also had significant implications for the Christian life and how the journal would function. In William Menzies’ view, we could not simply talk about theology; rather, our theology must be expressed in how we live, worship, and interact with one another. It is vitally important that charity is expressed in both the content and manner of our theological discussions. One might argue that this is especially the case for Pentecostals; for, at its heart, Pentecostal theology is always doxological (directed in worship toward God) and missiological (directed in witness to others). Recognition of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of Pentecostal theology reminds us of the importance of our discussions in the *AJPS*. What is said is important, for there is much at stake. But how the message is presented is also vitally important. The apostle Paul put it well—“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Cor. 8:1).

In 1970, our father, along with Vincent Synan and Horace Ward, established an academic society designed to promote research among Pentecostals. Many will regard the founding of the Society for Pentecostal Studies (SPS), which today draws hundreds of scholars from around the world to its annual meetings, as one of our father’s signal achievements. He served as the society’s first president and first editor of its scholarly journal, *Pneuma*.

At the time the SPS was founded, little Pentecostal scholarship had been produced, and there was only one Pentecostal graduate program of theology in the United States. Furthermore, that program had been in

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22 Although it officially aspires to be international in scope, the annual meetings of the SPS have always taken place in North America or Mexico.

23 The inaugural issue of *Pneuma* was published in the spring of 1979.
existence less than a year. Thus, one of the primary purposes for creating the SPS was to stimulate Pentecostal scholarship. Exposure to differing perspectives and cross-fertilization of ideas are very important when greater biblical precision and more theological clarity are the goals. Therefore, formation of a scholarly society was considered key.

Although the structures were slightly different, formation of the SPS and *Pneuma* in some ways can be viewed as forerunners of both APTS and the *AJPS*. The same basic goals and convictions lay behind the founding of both organizations and both journals. Given the rapid growth of the church in Asia and the trajectory of the Pentecostal movement, we wonder if future generations might look back on establishment of APTS and the *AJPS* as being more significant achievements than their North American counterparts.

In 1970, when the SPS was founded, there was a lot of distrust of scholarship and academic pursuits in the American Assemblies of God. Nevertheless, somehow our father was able to disarm those suspicions, doing so largely because of his godly character, humble spirit, and encouraging manner. After meeting William Menzies, people would often think, “Well, I guess these scholars aren’t all bad.” He won people over, in this way helping change attitudes within the Pentecostal movement towards higher education and scholarship. In short, he paved the way so that others could follow. We would like to think that his godliness and humility had a similar effect in Asia.

This silver anniversary of the founding of the *AJPS* is a cause for celebration! By his contribution to its founding (along with his very capable co-founder Wonsuk Ma), we believe William Menzies has given us all (but particularly those living in Asia) an enduring invitation to follow in his footsteps. As we are inspired by our experience of God through the Spirit, let us seek to think rightly and act charitably.

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24 For a detailed account of the founding of the SPS (and the history of its golden anniversary), see Glen W. Menzies, “The First Fifty Years of the Society for Pentecostal Studies: A Brief History,” *Pneuma* 42 (2020) 335-369.

25 Dr. Menzies, along with Vinson Synan, also participated in and encouraged the founding meeting of the Asian Pentecostal Society (1998, Seoul, Korea).
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The Future of the Church in China: Why China’s House Churches will Prevail
by Luke Wesley¹

When Christians from North America or Europe visit the Holy Trinity Church in Kunming, China, the architecture of this beautiful, stately structure immediately reminds them of home, of traditional churches in the West. It even has a steeple. The atmosphere of quiet reverence will also seem familiar to western visitors, especially to those with roots in mainline Protestant churches. They will also recognize virtually all of the hymns. Of course, most Westerners will not understand the Mandarin lyrics, but the music will immediately call to mind the well-known verses of these historic songs. The choir will also sing tunes that are comfortably familiar. The visitors will very likely hear a clear, biblical message that reflects a more conservative theology than that found in most mainline pulpits in the West.² The closing prayer will be uttered by a member of the TSPM clergy,³ a select group trained in seminaries modeled after their western counterparts and appointed to lead virtually every segment of church life. The worship service will almost certainly end without any specific call for response on the part of the members of the congregation apart from silent prayer. The conclusion will thus mirror the fact that the congregation has little or no opportunity, apart from singing the prescribed hymns, to participate in the service. In short, Christians from mainline churches in the West who visit this church or other urban, TSPM churches in China, will be quite comfortable, for it will all seem very familiar.

When Westerners participate in a house church service, their experience will be different. They will likely enter into a city apartment

¹Luke Wesley is a pen-name used to safeguard the identity of the author. The author is a missionary who has lived and served in China for most of the past three decades.
²Since 2018 the Chinese government has increasingly sought to tighten its grip on religious affairs, so the extent to which this generalization reflects current reality could change. For more on this see my forthcoming Themelios article, “Church-State Relations: Lessons from China” (August, 2022).
³TSPM stands for “The Three-Self Patriotic Movement,” the organization that oversees and unites the government-sanctioned churches of China. There is also a parallel organization called the “China Christian Council,” but there is much overlap in both the leadership and the functions of these groups. For the purposes of this paper will refer to the TSPM to designate the churches recognized and sanctioned by the Chinese government and the leadership structure that governs and unites these churches.
or a village home. They will be greeted by a group of ten to twenty believers, possibly more. When the service starts, they will quickly be surrounded by the sounds of lively, earnest singing. The songs will flow from music quite different from anything that they have ever heard. The lyrics, if they were able to understand them, would seem equally strange. They highlight themes from what appears to be another world. Utilizing largely rural imagery, the lyrics evoke a world of struggle and persecution, sacrifice and mission, courage and hope. The service will include the sharing of testimonies and prayer requests. This is a time that inevitably culminates in corporate prayer. Everyone is given an opportunity to contribute; everyone is expected to participate. The preaching that follows will center on a passage from the Bible and seek to apply this text to the life of the believers. This biblical message typically will be followed by much discussion. Various members of the church will share what they feel God is saying to them through this message. The service will often conclude with a specific call to action and always with prayer. After the service has concluded, the believers will share a meal and joyful fellowship. In short, it will all seem very different from traditional church services back home. The nature of the music, the structure of the service, the expectation that everyone participates, the character of the message, the discussion that follows, and the intimacy of the fellowship will all take visitors from the West by surprise. The visitors will recognize that they are in the presence of believers, but the unique (and, perhaps, if they are astute, the uniquely Chinese) character of what has taken place will be very clear.

The contrast between typical worship experiences in TSPM churches and their house church counterparts could not be more striking. Whether one attends a TSPM church in Kunming or Beijing, the experience will be remarkably similar to many Protestant worship services around the world. However, when visitors from the West attend a house church service, while they may never know exactly what to expect (each house church has its own distinctive flavor), they can rest assured that their experience will be quite different from past experiences of worship in traditional mainline churches. In the midst of the diversity that characterizes the house church settings, one constant unifies: the service will reflect the musical styles, the felt needs, and the familial relationships that characterize the Chinese context.

This is the real beauty, in my opinion, of the house church movement in China: it allows for the rich diversity that characterizes the body of Christ, and it does so in an authentically Chinese way. Worship in the house churches is more diverse in nature than in the TSPM churches, and it is also much more indigenous. A “one size fits all” approach to church life simply cannot contain the wonder and beauty of
the body of Christ, globally or in China. This is true of worship styles, but it is also true of theology and church structure. It is especially true when the apparent uniformity is forced and contrived.

The artificial and contrived nature of the TSPM churches’ “post-denominational unity” was illustrated for me in vivid fashion by a friend, Pastor Huang, who pastors a local house church. Pastor Huang is associated with the China Gospel Fellowship (CGF), one of the larger house church networks in China. Pastor Huang told me that early in 2016 the leader of the CGF, Uncle Shen, met with the President of China, Xi Jin Ping. In this conversation, Xi Jin Ping purportedly asked Uncle Shen, with respect to the government’s policy toward Christianity, which of three paths he would prefer China to travel. The first path would eliminate the TSPM and only allow for house churches. The second path would allow for both the TSPM and the house churches, with each on equal footing. The third path would call for the house churches to become a part of the TSPM. Apparently, Uncle Shen answered, “Not path one, not path three, but path two is my preference.”

I must admit that I am skeptical of this story’s veracity. Certainly, recent events suggest that Xi Jin Ping and his government have no desire to allow the house church movement to compete on equal footing with the TSPM. If the new regulations governing religious activity may serve as our guide, it is apparent that China’s leaders are intent on restricting further the limited space that currently exists within China for house church groups to operate. Nevertheless, I find this story interesting because it raises an important question: What would happen if the TSPM and the house churches were actually allowed to exist on equal footing? The reality is that if this were to happen, the TSPM churches would experience tremendous change or they would cease to exist. Let me put it another way, when the dust settles and the Chinese church is allowed to openly pursue its own path, the TSPM churches will be radically transformed. They will follow a more indigenous model, that of the house churches, in structure, in theology, and in practice, or they will largely fade away.

In this essay I want to explain why I feel this to be the case. More specifically, I will describe why I believe the house church movement reflects a more indigenous expression of the faith in China and, as a result, why I believe that it ultimately will prevail. I will do so by

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4 Throughout this article I often use pseudonyms to protect the identity of my sources.

comparing the TSPM churches and the house churches in three key areas: church structure, theology, and worship patterns.

**Church Structure**

The TSPM

About six years ago a student at the local TSPM seminary approached me and asked if I would be willing to mentor and teach him. He was frustrated by his courses at the local TSPM seminary. He feels that the seminary’s “post-denominational” curriculum, which describes various positions on theological topics (e.g., Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc.), is confusing for young students. The various positions, which appeared to him to be contradictory at times, left most students confused and bewildered. “They don’t know what they should believe,” he stated. This young man yearns for a tradition, a clear and consistent body of doctrine, upon which to base his ministry. So, he came to me and said, “I want to know what you believe.”

My friend also noted that many within the TSPM are now openly saying that they made a mistake in following the “post-denominational” route. Indeed, he said that there is a “hui gui chuan tong” (“back to tradition”) movement that is calling for a reconnection with the denominational traditions of the past and their corresponding churches abroad. In short, many are fed up with the restrictions, the coerced and artificial uniformity, and the entrenched mimicking of the western Christianity of a previous era, yet without any real freedom or substance. Many are frustrated with the seminaries and their training methods that are devoid of any clear doctrinal stance. As a result, my friend thinks that there will be a significant break on the part of many from the TSPM. It may be that many churches will simply leave. It appears that a number of Christians are ready to be more open about their disapproval.

This story highlights an important fact. The post-denominational unity of the TSPM church is artificial. It is forced and contrived. The “unity” of the church is imposed through a strong, hierarchical institutional structure. This structure is maintained by carefully limiting the way that church leaders are selected and trained.

The path for becoming an ordained, TSPM minister is extremely narrow. A prospective minister must, above all, study at a TSPM seminary. This is tremendously limiting since educational levels in the countryside are often too low for admission, the prospective student must have recommendations from a TSPM pastor and thus prior experience in a TSPM church, and the number of students admitted into TSPM seminaries each year is ridiculously low due to government restrictions.
After graduation, the young believer often serves an apprenticeship in a designated church under designated leadership. Given the mixed character of the TSPM, this can be a very challenging experience for earnest young believers. Finally, the ministerial candidate must be viewed as acceptable by both church and government leaders in order to be ordained.

A leading TSPM pastor once told me about his own struggles navigating the complexities of life in the TSPM. He described a number of the challenges that he, an Evangelical minister, faced as he sought to follow God’s call on his life within the confines of the TSPM. As he considered all of the struggles that he had faced, he said the greatest was this: he was compelled to ordain pastors that he knew should not be ordained. Clearly, this minister found that spiritual qualifications were not enough or even primary considerations for leadership within the TSPM.

With these factors in mind, we can understand why so many gifted young believers gravitate to house church settings. Here is an environment where they can exercise leadership gifts without going through a rigorous process that in most cases is not open to them anyway. Many opportunities to explore and develop their sense of calling are available in small group settings. And, while underground training opportunities are increasingly available to house church Christians, strong emphasis is placed on practical ministry. This tends to foster and strengthen the development of spiritual gifts. In the house church, anyone may emerge as a leader. The only qualifications are spiritual in nature.

It is important to note that TSPM churches tend to be dominated by the clergy. They do not feature participation or ministry on the part of the laity. If possible, professional clergy always lead the Sunday worship services. Furthermore, small group meetings where lay leadership might be encouraged and developed are often not tolerated. Meetings must take place at designated places, at designated times, and with designated leadership. This limitation seriously impacts the life of the church, for these are precisely the contexts where gifts of the Spirit might be exercised and the body built up.

The House Churches

The house churches are very, very different. Virtually everyone participates and anyone may contribute a song, a testimony, or a prayer. When I attend TSPM churches I am always encouraged, but generally I know that I will not be an active participant in terms of edifying the larger
group. When I attend a house church service, I always go with a sense of expectancy, knowing that I will have many opportunities to share, to pray, and to encourage others.

These contrasts are not unique to the churches of China. Many traditional and state churches around the world insist that their ministers go through a rigid path of professional training. They also emphasize a clear path of hierarchical authority that features accountability. This kind of institutional approach may foster stability, but it also encourages conformity and stifles flexibility, creativity, and risk-taking. Fundamentally, the ministry is often viewed differently: it is seen as a profession to pursue rather than a calling to follow.

The ethos of the house church movement is noticeably different. We may sum up by saying that the house churches are the “free market capitalists” in the economy of church life in China. Rigid control from a central bureaucracy is generally not possible and rarely tolerated; rather, the calling, gifting, and vision of every believer is affirmed and encouraged. Churches are thus planted with little or no encouragement or financial support from denominational or network leaders, often by surprising people with a strong sense that God has called and empowered them for the task at hand. It matters not if they are young, unschooled, or female. Their call and their spiritual gifting are paramount.

Some time ago house church leaders from two different networks met together in my home. It was fascinating to watch how these leaders interacted with one another. Three key questions were asked. It was apparent that these three questions touched upon matters they viewed as significant and foundational for church leadership. First, they asked about their conversion experience. Second, they wanted to know about their call to ministry. Finally, they asked about their experience of persecution (that is, their time in prison). Their conversion, their call, and their suffering – these were the marks of a true minister. I could not help but compare this list with the list of qualifications we generally look for in church leaders in the West. There was something very basic, very compelling, and very New Testament about their approach. It was all reminiscent of Acts 4:13, “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.” Christians in the house church movement see this life-transforming encounter with Jesus as the essential ingredient for effective ministry.

Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule. I have found that rural churches, even those associated with the TSPM, are often quite independent and appear to experience more freedom. This is especially true of churches comprised of minority (i.e., not Han) believers in remote regions.
Since other qualifications fade into insignificance by comparison, everyone is potentially a pastor, evangelist, or missionary.

Many in the TSPM point to the obvious risks inherent in this rather loose approach to church structure. An emphasis on strong, visionary leaders easily can lead to “apostolic” authoritarianism.\(^7\) This danger is somewhat mitigated by the emphasis on the gifts and calling of every member in the congregation. However, tensions between strong leaders can often lead to division and church splits. What about the obvious potential for schism? This is certainly a natural and perhaps inevitable consequence of the house church movement’s more organic, charismatic approach to church life. Yet this weakness also contains within it an important strength. While churches tend to become more bureaucratic over time, the seeds for renewal are always germinating and ready to burst forth into fragrant life.

There is also another important point that should be noted. The house church meetings and structure, with their emphasis on participation, relationships, fellowship meals, and a pragmatic approach to leadership, fit the Chinese context beautifully. It reminds me of a comment that a house church leader once made. We were discussing church life in China and he noted, “We meet in house groups out of a sense of necessity. However, when things change and we have more freedom, I sure hope we don’t lose this.”

**Theology**

**The TSPM**

The theology of the TSPM churches, especially at the grassroots, tends to be conservative and Evangelical. Many might find this hard to believe, but it is nevertheless true. This being the case, it would appear that here we might find significant similarities between the TSPM and the house churches. While this is often the case, there are still important differences.

Perhaps the most significant difference is the fact that the TSPM leadership and the leading TSPM seminary in Nanjing, in striking contrast to the majority of believers who sit in the pews, have been strongly influenced by liberal Protestant thought in the West. The best

\(^7\)In his book on the charismatic movement in Britain, Nigel Scotland chronicles a litany of problems related to authoritarian tendencies in church leadership. Although past extremes appear to have sobered the movement and much progress has been made, the abuse of “apostolic” authoritarianism is clearly a key concern for the future (*Charismatics and the Next Millennium: Do They Have a Future?* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995], see chapters 4 and 5). I understand why many might see the house church movement in China as susceptible to the same kind of problem.
example of this is Bishop Ding Guangxun, who for decades sought to impose the liberal perspectives he gleaned from his student days at Union Theological Seminary (New York) upon the Chinese believers under his supervision. Bishop Ding is perhaps best known and criticized for advocating “justification by love” rather than “justification by faith.” Ding clearly sought to downplay the distinction between Christians and non-Christians as well as the need for evangelism.

Some years ago I took a visiting overseas Chinese friend to the local TSPM bookstore to look at the various books on sale there. I saw about six copies of Bishop Ding’s most recent book (as I recall, a collection of his writings) on the shelf and suggested that my friend, who is a scholar and researcher, might be interested in buying one. He thought this was a good idea and added it to the small stack of books that we had accumulated.

When we attempted to purchase these books, the lady in charge of the store, the wife of a TSPM pastor, immediately told my friend that Bishop Ding’s book was not a good book and that he should not buy it. She proudly indicated that although the authorities forced them to put the book on the shelves and sell it, they had not sold any copies in the last month. In fact, she said that they had only sold a few copies in the past year. This earnest lady continued by explaining how she always warns unsuspecting believers that they should not buy this book for it contains many errors and false teaching. I responded by noting that my friend was a researcher and merely interested in Bishop Ding’s book for academic purposes. The lady in charge shrugged and indicated that this was acceptable. She made it clear, however, that she did not want new believers to be confused or to think badly of their bookstore because of Ding’s book.

This encounter illustrates how out of touch Bishop Ding was (he died in 2012) and his theology is with mainstream Christianity in China, even within the TSPM. However, it also illustrates the theological tensions that exist within the TSPM and reminds us that church leaders are often forced to promote ideas that they find harmful or dangerous.

Not long after this incident I bumped into a good friend of mine who happens to be a TSPM minister and leader. He described how he and other local TSPM leaders were supposed to promote “Bishop Ding Thought.” Thus, a local gathering of TSPM ministers in the province had been arranged. With a wink, however, he told me that they would not be featuring Bishop Ding’s theological agenda; rather, they would highlight other more edifying themes.

Here we see the nature of the challenge that many TSPM pastors face. They often have to serve under leaders and instructions that are rooted in a non-Christian, Marxist view of the world. These challenges
did not end with Bishop Ding’s death. They are an ongoing part of life within the TSPM. Some years ago I spoke with a leader in one of the larger TSPM seminaries in China. This individual spoke of a contemporary movement within the TSPM that calls for the transformation of Christian theology so that it is more compatible with the prevailing ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This movement for theological revision not only follows in Bishop Ding’s footsteps, it was also encouraged more recently by Wang Zuoan, a senior official for religious affairs. In 2014 Wang declared that “the construction of Christian theology should adapt to China’s national condition.”

The call in TSPM circles to embrace a theology more amenable to the party line is in reality an attempt to steer Chinese believers away from their own conservative, Evangelical (and Pentecostal) roots and towards western liberal thought. In other words, the liberal theology espoused by TSPM leaders like Bishop Ding is far from indigenous. It is rather an attempt to impose unvarnished Protestant liberal thought from the West on the Chinese masses. Given the fact that China’s ruling Communist Party has borrowed heavily from western thinkers such as Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, this fact should not surprise us. Nevertheless, this deviation from the strong, historical underpinnings and ethos of Chinese Christianity in lieu of advocacy of perspectives appropriated from the West is striking. The fact that these liberal theological views are largely alien to the Chinese context (both in terms of its history and culture) perhaps explains why they have not been readily accepted by the vast majority of the believers, even in the TSPM churches.

I conclude with one final example of the theological dissonance one finds in TSPM settings. In the summer of 2011 a friend, let’s call him Brother Wang, told me that an urban TSPM church would be hosting a preaching competition. Brother Wang at that time was serving as a member of the church’s ministerial staff. Brother Wang was excited about the preaching competition. This would be the first of its kind in our area. Christians from all over the province were preparing to come and participate in the preaching competition. A panel of judges, including the church’s pastor and other church leaders, would award prizes. Four young men from the local church planned to participate,

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including Brother Wang, as well as many others from distant parts of the province.

Later, however, Brother Wang told me that he was disappointed. He had worked hard on his sermon, “My Hope is the Second Coming of Jesus.” When the local pastor heard the title of his sermon, he told Brother Wang that he should preach on another topic. The pastor said that although he did not have a problem with this topic, there would be a number of government officials in attendance. He indicated that many would find this topic problematic and thus it would inevitably have a negative impact on the judges. Brother Wang was clearly surprised by this turn of events and felt badly. He later left the TSPM church and returned to his house church roots.

When I heard Brother Wang’s story, it confirmed my own suspicions rooted in my experience in TSPM churches over the years. In all my years in China, I have yet to hear a sermon on the return of Christ in a TSPM church. I have always felt that there is a sort of unwritten policy in TSPM churches that pastors should refrain from preaching on this topic. The Marxist critique of Christianity has always emphasized that Christianity is “an opiate of the people” largely because it calls us to think of the future as well as the present and of other, spiritual realities rather than simply the physical realities that we can feel and see. Of course, Brother Wang’s topic reminds us that true hope and an eternal perspective have an important impact on how we live our lives today. China desperately needs this kind of hope and perspective, but sadly CCP leaders are often blind to this fact. Sadder even still is the willingness of some TSPM leaders to avoid preaching and teaching on this topic because of pressure from government officials.

The House Churches

Perhaps the clearest indicator that the TSPM churches and the house churches reflect significantly different theological orientations is their approach to evangelism and missions. The house churches live and breathe missions.

In 2010 a Chinese house church leader, Brother Zhang, spoke in the chapel of an “underground” Bible school affiliated with the house church movement. After an inspiring service, he met personally with Sister Ma, a Christian from a Muslim family and people group. Sister Ma explained that she felt called to take the gospel to her people. I still remember Brother Zhang’s words of exhortation. He told her there were “three fears” that she must overcome in order to share the gospel with her people. First, she must not fear “poor living conditions.” Second, she must not fear “difficult work” (that is, ministering among unresponsive
people). Finally, she must not fear “going to prison.” Brother Zhang concluded, “If you overcome these fears, the Lord will use you in a powerful way.” Sister Ma was encouraged by these sobering words.

This attitude of total abandonment to the purposes of God and His mission is also reflected in the songs that flow from and permeate the worship of the house church movement. I have included below my English translations of two songs found in Lu Xiaomin’s collection entitled, Sounds of the Heart. Lu Xiaomin and her songs are known and loved by house church groups throughout China. I asked one Chinese friend how many believers knew about these songs. He exclaimed, “All the house churches sing them!” Sounds of the Heart is an updated and expanded version of Songs of Canaan, Lu Xiaomin’s previous and hugely popular songbook. Sounds of the Heart contains 900 songs and is the closest thing to an “official” songbook that exists in the house churches in China today. In view of their popularity and impact, the songs penned by Lu Xiaomin are an important insight into Chinese Christianity. I have found them to be quite different from most Christian songs in the West, but powerful and full of inspiration. They are also intensely missional. I believe the following songs capture well the ethos of the house church movement.

*We Do Not Fear Strong Wind and Rain*

We do not fear strong wind and rain  
For the one with us is Jehovah  
We do not fear strong wind and rain  
For the one with us is greater than ten thousand  
We will not cast our nets in the narrow, shallow stream  
Nor will we cast our nets in the tranquil lake  
Small trees survive violent winds and savage rain  
They grow into tall trees that reach to heaven.⁹

*We are an Invisible Army*

We are an invisible army  
We are evangelists without names  
If God helps us, who can stand against us?  
‘Charge forward’ is our battle cry  
The blood of martyrs spilled over thousands of years,  
Cries out to those of us who follow  
The throng of saints over thousands of years,  
In ragged clothes, drifting, yet not discouraged

⁹Lu Xiaomin, Sounds of the Heart, 455 (Song #404).
On the battlefield these soldiers were tested
In strong winds and waves these helmsmen were tried
In these last days we will face even greater trials
So we constantly ask the Lord for His guidance.\textsuperscript{10}

By way of contrast, I have yet to see TSPM leaders at a high level openly talk about missions; that is, taking the gospel to other people in other cultural groups or nations. I have heard, however, many stories of how TSPM pastors who are too active or aggressive in reaching out to other communities are reprimanded and punished. Can a church that does not view missions (proclaiming the gospel to those who are not Christians, especially those who have not heard) as a central part of its purpose really be considered the church? Does it have a future?

\textbf{Worship Patterns}

\textit{The TSPM}

The rural church was packed with people. They listened attentively as the minister, a Chinese pastor from Hong Kong with charismatic leanings, spoke passionately about the work of the Holy Spirit. A TSPM pastor and friend had brought us to this place to meet with local believers and speak to them. As the minister from Hong Kong came to the end of his sermon, he challenged the congregation to seek the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

He then did something that, in my almost 30 years of experience in the church in China, I have never seen a TSPM minister do. He called for anyone who wanted to be filled with the Spirit to come forward for prayer. The believers streamed down to the front of the church. The visiting minister then encouraged our TSPM pastor-friend and me to join with him as he prayed for the people who now filled the altar area. I joined him and together we began to pray with and for the believers. Many began to cry out and pray in loud voices.

I glanced at my TSPM friend, who was still standing in his place among the pews, and wondered how he would respond. I knew that what was happening was unique for most TSPM churches, which tend to shy away from any hint of emotion in their services. As the volume of prayer grew and the prayer time reached its climax, our TSPM friend strode to the front of the church and in a loud voice began to pray a concluding prayer. The message was clear: he was not comfortable with what was

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 585 (Song #524).
happening and felt that he needed to stop the meeting. The believers quickly dispersed back to their seats and the service came to an end.

Again, this story illustrates a striking difference between the TSPM and the house churches. The TSPM church lives with very real restrictions. The manner in which these restrictions are followed and enforced varies widely, depending on the local government and church leadership. But the restrictions are there nonetheless and they do impact the life of the church.

We have already noted that the government does influence the selection of leaders and it does restrict the settings in which the church can meet. But the government also influences the theology and practice of the church in a more subtle way. If compliance with government regulations is a key concern for church leaders, then will they not naturally be more controlling in their handling of church life? Will they not inevitably be less open to allowing Spirit-led people to engage in ministry for fear that they might break the rules?

Certainly, many ministers in traditional churches in the West are reluctant to give opportunity to untutored lay people to speak or exercise public ministry in the church. It is often viewed as simply too risky. However, when much more is at stake than simply suffering through an embarrassing moment or facing a disgruntled parishioner, how will leaders respond? Understandably, the context of church life in the TSPM encourages leaders to avoid taking what may be viewed as unnecessary risks. It encourages them to exercise more control.

This sort of posture, of course, puts them squarely at odds with believers who feel led by the Spirit to minister beyond the confines of the limitations imposed upon them. I have watched TSPM leaders struggle with how to deal with earnest, eager believers who feel led to engage in ministry or evangelism in ways considered illegal in China. It is not easy for these leaders to maintain their integrity as Christians and at the same time stay out of trouble. In this context, the temptation to avoid taking risks or to allow others to do so must be strong.

There are undoubtely a variety of reasons for the largely controlling stance of TSPM churches, but one cannot avoid feeling that this characteristic of TSPM church life is exaggerated by the need to comply with government regulations. The government wants safe, reliable people controlling the church and its meetings, people that it can depend on not to cause problems or transgress the party line. In the TSPM, too much fire and fervency are problematic.

This assessment is supported by the conclusions and tone of perhaps the most significant work published on the Holy Spirit within TSPM circles, *The Work of the Holy Spirit (Sheng Ling de Gong Zuo)* by Jing
Jiu Wei (TSPM of Hebei, 2002). Pastor Jing concludes with this warning:

“... the Chinese church blindly advances the cause of the charismatic movement. I still believe this is not appropriate, for if we compare the quality of the faith of Chinese believers with that of the overseas church, there is still a relatively big difference. There are still not enough [in China] who have grasped the truths of Scripture, and in this way, they seek the Holy Spirit without being watchful. My great fear is that they may go astray” (my translation of Jing, Sheng Ling de Gongzuo, 375).

One result of this conservative and controlling approach is a largely rational (non-emotional) approach to worship. I find this very uncharacteristic of Chinese people in general. The experience of the indigenous church movements prior to 1949 and the experience of contemporary Chinese churches in the large cities of Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Taiwan point in a different direction.11

The House Churches

Once again, my experience in house church settings has been very different. House church services are marked by joyful worship, indigenous songs, testimonies, and fervent prayer. The songs, testimonies, and prayers are frequently spontaneous and initiated by lay believers. The services often result in strong, emotional responses. Crying, weeping, and emotionally charged prayers are not unusual. The most pervasive emotion, however, is generally a strong sense of joy. All of this is evident in the following description of one of my early experiences in a house church worship service.

Rays of sunlight sliced through the tall trees, bringing warmth and light to the hill that our group of fifty occupied. A gentle breeze blew across the face of the lake that stretched out before us. The lake’s quiet waters reminded us that the city was far away. But we were not here to enjoy the scenery. It was Easter morning. We had come to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord.

We found our place on the side of the hill as the musicians began to lead us in songs of praise. The time of worship was very special, as normally we were not all able to meet together. In a small apartment in the city space is limited and often the volume of praise must be contained. But now, together and out in the open, the joy was visible, almost tangible, and the praises rang. And then, as the worship reached its crescendo, as if one voice we all shouted in Chinese, “Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed!”

At that moment I began to thank the Lord for the way in which he had led and blessed my family these past years. I was reminded that this service, this incredible scene, was an answer to prayer. To worship together with this wonderful group, to declare the reality of the resurrection surrounded by Chinese brothers and sisters—this was truly the fulfillment of a dream.

As the time of worship came to a close, two Chinese adults expressed their desire to commit their lives to Christ. A Christian brother, himself a government official, had brought them to the meeting. The two visitors were moved by the purity of the fellowship and the sincerity of the worship. They had also been challenged by the proclamation of the risen Christ. I had the joy of leading our two new friends in a prayer of repentance and consecration. When I opened my eyes, I saw their faces reflecting the new reality: they had entered into the kingdom of God.

After the service, we all gathered together to share a meal of fellowship. The believers brought a rich assortment of food—nothing is as varied and interesting as a Chinese meal. When the eating and conversations subsided, the group moved down to the lake and the baptismal service began. Songs and prayers punctuated the powerful testimonies of the fourteen people who were baptized that day. After each testimony, the waters rippled as young believers publicly declared their allegiance to Christ. Warm sunshine and a soft breeze greeted the Christians emerging from the water. It was Easter, a day to remember.

Conclusion

The future of the church in China is destined to follow the path established by the house churches. This is true in terms of church structure, theology, and worship patterns. Undoubtedly, there will be significant diversity. The “post-denominational unity” currently touted in TSPM circles will be revealed for what it is: contrived and forced. I see this diversity as a strength rather than a weakness. It is a natural expression of the richness of the body of Christ and its own distinctiveness. It is also a natural expression of the “not-yet” or “incomplete” nature of our present experience of God’s salvation. “Now
we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face” (1 Cor. 13:12). This diversity, when coupled with recognition of the richness of the body of Christ, should be welcomed and celebrated.

This expression of church life will also be much more rooted in Chinese culture than that of today’s TSPM churches. The music, preaching, and worship will be expressed in forms and ways that are authentically Chinese, not simply borrowed from the West. The structure of the church will be more organic, relational, and charismatic: the church will be viewed as a large family. The term jia ting jiao hui is actually more accurately translated “family church” rather than “house church.” It is noteworthy that house church believers refer to their leaders with the term, “uncle.” They also speak of fellow believers as their “brothers” and “sisters.”

The theology of the Chinese church will be rooted in the Bible and have a strongly missional and pragmatic emphasis. The church will be marked by an emphasis on conversion, prayer for the sick, exorcism, joyful worship, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. The church will view discipleship largely in terms of involvement in the mission of the church and the Chinese church will become a powerful force in cross-cultural missions.

If this vision of the future is realized, then the Chinese church will also face significant challenges. The path I envision is full of risk. It is a path that may lead to conflict with the government. It is a path that will likely lead to misunderstanding and ridicule. However, it is a path that follows closely in the footsteps of Jesus and the apostles. I firmly believe it is a path that God will richly bless.
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Reformation from Below: Looking at Münster Anabaptism Anew Through Korean Minjung Theology

YOUJIN CHUNG

Foreword by Dion A. Forster
Beliefs of Kankana-ey and a Contextualization of the Gospel
by Haruka Sitabayasi

Introduction

While engaged in a master’s program at the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary in Baguio City, Philippines, I served in an Assemblies of God church in the mountains surrounding the city. In order to minister there effectively, I began to ask the following questions: What are the worldviews of the people? How can churches and missionaries present the gospel in a way people can understand? What kind of transformation has the church brought? To answer these questions, I chose to focus on the Kankana-ey tribes and Pentecostal ministry by the Assemblies of God (AG). The first part of this article will focus on a brief explanation of the historical and religious background of the Philippines and the people of the mountain ranges of northern Luzon and a cultural exegesis of the Kankana-ey. Comparison with the biblical text will then be provided. The second part will explore the spiritual formation found among Kankana-ey Pentecostals based on the basis of the work Julie C. Ma, a noted scholar in the field.¹

Background

Together with other ethnolinguistic groups, the Kankanay are known as Igorots, which means, “mountaineer.”² The Kankanay consists of two subgroups: the northern Kankanay and the southern Kanakanay.³ The northern Kanakanay are also called Kankanai. In this paper, the word “the Kankanai” refers to the northern Kankanay and “the Kankana-ey” to the southern Kankanay, according to the wording of Jesus T. Peralta.

While each ethnolinguistic group has a unique culture, there are common beliefs and values held by many, if not all, people groups in the

¹Julie C. Ma, When the Spirit Meets the Spirits: Pentecostal Ministry among the Kankana-Ey Tribe in the Philippines, Studies in the intercultural history of Christianity vol. 118 (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: P. Lang, 2000).
³Florendo, “Ethnic History (Cordillera).”
Philippines. One of such common elements is kinship. Melba P. Maggay introduces a metaphor to describe Filipino sense of selves and interconnectedness in this way: “If you fry many eggs in one large pan, the whites are seamlessly connected to each other. While there are individual yolks, you don’t know where one egg ends and the next begins. This mirrors the Filipino sense of self, always connected, always part of a larger sakop.”

This sense of interconnectedness generally involves the relationships with dead ancestors, a significant element of Filipino animistic beliefs. It is commonly believed that the living people are connected with the dead who move to an invisible realm through religious rituals. Most Igorots also believe in the existence of the supreme god and other lesser gods. People appease the deities and spirits by sacrificial gifts and offerings. Reuel A. Almocera states that the motivation of Filipino people to worship them is mainly fear.

Catholicism is another important element of Filipino culture. Roman Catholicism was widely spread to the Philippines from the time of Spanish colonization (1565–1898). Nationally, 79.5 percent of national household populations are Roman Catholic, including Catholic Charismatics. In Benguet, the Catholic population is lower, 59.4 % and Leonila L. Taray, a Benguet Kankana-ey Catholic Christian states

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7 Ibid., 47.
8 Ibid., 83.
9 Ibid.
that the “marginalized people” among Catholic Christians in Benguet, also hold on to their indigenous beliefs and practices.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Setting: Indigenous Beliefs of the Kankana-ey}

Not all are in agreement as to the nature of the Kankana-ey’s religious beliefs. Julie Ma seems to indicate that they are animistic with some elements of polytheism and calls all invisible beings “spirits,” avoiding the terminology of gods and goddesses as much as possible.\textsuperscript{13} On the other hand, Taray acknowledges animistic characteristics in their beliefs and differentiates some spirits from others depending on whether or not they have godhood.\textsuperscript{14} This study takes the position that the Kankana-ey are primarily animistic but mixed with polytheism.

\textbf{Kankana-ey Indigenous Beliefs and Comparison with the Biblical Text}

\textbf{Deities and Spirits}

Among the gods and goddesses of the Kankana-ey, Kabunian (or Kabunyan) is the highest deity, the creator, and the prime sustainer of creation.\textsuperscript{15} During an interview by the author, the chairperson of Itogon Indigenous People Organization, Rosita Bergaso said that they believe this Kabunian is the almighty God of the Bible.\textsuperscript{16}

Wasing D. Sacla says, however, the maker of the universe is Adikalia, while Kabunian is the collective names of gods and goddesses rather than referring to an individual personage.\textsuperscript{17}

Other spiritual beings can be categorized into two groups: the spirits of dead persons and of natural spirits. According to Sacla, the Kankana-ey consider all spirits are generally good, however, they can be offended

\begin{thebibliography}{11}
\bibitem{13} Ma, \textit{When the Spirit Meets the Spirits}. The wording is explicit especially in chapter 4.
\bibitem{14} Taray, 167.
\bibitem{15} Ibid.
\bibitem{16} Rosita Bergaso, interview by author, Itogon, Philippines, January 16, 2021.
\bibitem{17} Wasing D. Sacla, \textit{Treasury of Beliefs and Home Rituals of Benguet} (Baguio City, Philippines: BCF Printing Press, 1987), 10, 17.
\end{thebibliography}
by human actions and therefore punish people. Curses and blessings, however, are negotiable through rituals.

There are two types of spirits of the dead. One of them is the *Ap-apo*, the spirits of ancestors who died long ago, but “now share the status of godhood.” Taray says that spirits who acquire the status of *ap-apo* are especially honorable men and women. The other type is the *kak-kading*, the spirits of the people who have just died. These spirits stay on earth because they do not have the privilege to go to the sky world and join the deities. The offering of wine during rituals and sacrifices is necessary, or the offended *kak-kading* can cause sickness. Ancestral spirits in relationship with the living people will be discussed in a following section on “human beings.”

The *anito* are underground spirits consisting of various subgroups which are identified by their dwelling places and most are considered sensitive, selfish, and easily offended, causing sickness and bad luck. The sickness caused by these spirits can be cured by performing rituals.

**Comparison with the Biblical Text**

The God of the Bible, the Creator of heaven and earth says that there is no god besides him (Isa. 45:5). He is separated from and independent of all created beings including human beings and spiritual beings like angels, and superior to the whole universe (Isa. 6:1-5; 55:8-9). A focus on transcendence alone could make him distant, inaccessible and impersonal. But the Bible says that God’s nature is both transcendent and immanent.

The incarnation of Christ demonstrates God’s immanence. Thus, Jesus came to earth as a man, experienced temptations (Heb. 4:15), sufferings (Isa. 53:5), and even death (Luke 23:46) so that he could become the one and only mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). The uniqueness of Christianity is the physical resurrection and ascension of Christ (e.g. John 21:12-14; Acts 1:9). Seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus is not a distant, inaccessible god but God who is actively present.

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18 Sacla, Treasury of Beliefs and Home Rituals of Benguet, chapters 4 and 6.
19 Ibid., 4.
20 Ibid., 17; Taray, 167.
21 Ibid., 18.
22 Ibid.
24 Sacla, Treasury of Beliefs and Home Rituals of Benguet, 19.
25 Moss, 348.
26 Ibid.
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ruling over creation, while interceding for his people. A focus on immanence alone, however, could remove God’s independent status from nature and confuse him with animistic beliefs, where the gods and spirits are part of the cosmos.28

Another demonstration of God’s immanence is the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49; Jn 20:22; Acts 2:1-4),29 which is significant for Christians because he makes the Trinity personal to believers.30 The Holy Spirit regenerates believers (John 3:8), indwells and illuminates them (John 14:16-17), teaches them the truth (John 14:26, 15:26), intercedes for them (Rom. 8:26-27), and sanctifies them (Rom. 8:11-17). He also grants them gifts (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Pet. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12 and 14), which include faith healing, exorcism, speaking in tongues and prophesying.31 Such experiences take a central role in Kankana-ey Christians’ spirituality and answer the animist’s felt need for spiritual power.32

The only spiritual beings, other than God himself, are angels—good and evil ones. The Bible calls angels various names, including “holy ones” (Ps. 89:5, W 7), “heavenly host” (Luke 2:13), “spirits” (Heb. 1:14), etc.33 Although they are spiritual beings, they can take material bodies and appear before people (e.g. Gen. 19:1). However, such an appearance is only temporary and depends on God’s purpose, according to Erickson.34

In the Bible, evil angels are also referred to as demons, unclean spirits, and evil spirits,35 created spiritual beings, whose natures were originally good (Gen. 1:31), yet later became evil because they sinned against God (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).36 Their goal, led by Satan himself, is to destroy, deceive and conquer God’s creation as well as cause sickness.37

The Bible speaks of life after death (Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Cor. 15:12-31, 2 Cor. 5:1-10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18, etc.). However, Christians neither believe that the dead are invisibly present on earth nor that the dead affect living people.38 The Bible forbids worshiping any spirits, including the

28Erickson, 303.
29Ibid., 846, 872.
30Ibid., 846.
33Erickson, 438.
34Ibid., 439.
35Ibid., 447, 449.
36Grudem, chapter 19, sec. A.
37Ma, When the Spirit Meets the Spirits, 147.
38Ibid., 230.
spirits of the dead, other than God himself (Exod. 20:3-6). It also prohibits inquiring of the dead (Deut. 18:9-13).39

Human Beings

The Kankana-ey myth includes some of the Genesis account, although the gods are not named and humans are not believed to bear the divine image. Human beings dwell in the earth world, but so do spirits, making the material world and spirit world are inseparable. According to Taray, human beings and spirits are interdependent with one another. 40 Human beings are obligated to seek harmony with nature and spiritual beings by appeasing them through rituals. 41

Ancestral spirits are dependent on the living family to maintain their socioeconomic status and occupation while living, even after death.42 One way that the ancestral spirit communicates its needs with the living is through dreams and omens.43 The person who receives such signs needs to consult with a priest (mankotom) for an interpretation and prescription of the proper ritual.44 If the living family neglects the dream, misfortune—including death—will happen.45 The living family is also obligated to honor the dead through rituals so that the dead can become ap-apo.46 In other words, living an ethical life is not enough for dead ancestors to dwell in the sky world but the cooperation of the living family is necessary.

Comparison with the Biblical Text

In contrast with the Kankana-ey myth, The Bible says that people were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). While the exact nature of what this means has been long been a matter of debate, at the very least it implies that people were created to have a relationship with God. 47 When Adam and Eve sinned, the relationship was affected because “to sin is make oneself an enemy of God.”48 However, even after

39Ibid.
40Taray, 168.
42Ibid.
43Ma, When the Spirit Meets the Spirits, 226.
44Ibid.
45Ibid.
46Taray, 169.
47Erickson, 502.
48Ibid., 602, 604.
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the Fall of man and woman, God continued to have a relationship with human beings.

Furthermore, a strong sense of kinship and collectivism can be found in the Bible. This does not simply mean honoring and respecting ancestors, even though the Bible recognizes the inter-generational connections of human life.\(^{49}\) The God of the Bible is often introduced as God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob (e.g., Genesis 50:24; Exodus 3:15; Acts 7:32). Biological environment, socio-economic status, tradition, and culture have been handed down from ancestors and are to be handed down to future generations.\(^{50}\)

**Blessings, Curses and Rituals**

A ritual is a ceremomial act or actions, which may involve religion but are performed according to social custom or normal protocol.\(^{51}\) When associated with religion, it functions to show human beings the relationship between physical need and spiritual power.\(^{52}\) In Kankana-ey society, most rituals are performed to obtain blessings from the spirits and for cure and/or protection from sickness and misfortune, reflecting a worldview where spirits control these things.\(^{53}\)

**Comparison with the Biblical Text**

Conducting rituals in a way instructed by the Law was a way to demonstrate the Israelites’ obedience through interaction between spiritual and physical reality.\(^{54}\) William R. Burrows says both worship and ritual are expressions of giving honor and gratitude to God for who


\(^{50}\) Ibid.


\(^{53}\) Sacla, *Treasury of Beliefs and Home Rituals of Benguet*, 37.

\(^{54}\) Ibid.
he is and what he promises to believers.\textsuperscript{55} The Scripture says he is a jealous God (Exod. 20:5) meaning “being deeply committed to seeking the honor or welfare of someone, whether oneself or someone else”—in God’s case, his own honor.\textsuperscript{56} Therefore, the Bible strictly commands to worship no other god (Exod. 20:5; 34:14; cf. Deut. 4:24; 5:9).

In the Old Testament, rituals are tied to the covenant which binds God and his people in a special relationship.\textsuperscript{57} In this covenant relationship, the condition of blessings and curses depends on whether or not the vassal keeps the individual laws.\textsuperscript{58} The ritual laws—detailed instruction on how to carry out the practices of worship—are found in many parts of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, also throughout Leviticus.\textsuperscript{59}

Because the condition of blessings and curses is clearly determined, blessings can be defined as God’s faithfulness to keep his covenant.\textsuperscript{60} Blessings in the Bible are never about human efforts or how often rituals are conducted, but depend rather on God’s goodness and love.\textsuperscript{61} Because God is good and compassionate to all his creation including those who are outside of God’s covenant, he blesses them with rain, harvest, food, and joy (Psalm 145:8-9; Acts 14:17).

The curse was first pronounced in Gen. 3:17-19 when man and woman failed to obey God’s commandment not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17; 3:6). As the result, evil entered the originally “very good” creation (Gen. 1:31). At the same time, all creation became the subject of “futility” (Rom. 8:20, NRSB), which means the incessancy of corruption.\textsuperscript{62} In other words, diseases, calamities, and death are all the result of sin, God’s punishment of people according to what they deserve.\textsuperscript{63}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{56}Grudem, chapter 12, sec. C. 12.
  \item \textsuperscript{57}Erickson, 574.
  \item \textsuperscript{58}Ibid., 171–172.
  \item \textsuperscript{59}Ibid., 173.
  \item \textsuperscript{60}Ma, When the Spirit Meets the Spirits, 215.
  \item \textsuperscript{61}Ibid., 216.
  \item \textsuperscript{62}Ma, When the Spirit Meets the Spirits, 220.
  \item \textsuperscript{63}Ibid.
\end{itemize}
**The Kankana-ey and Pentecostal Mission**

Pentecostal Missionaries to Kankana-eyes

The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are growing among Christian Filipinos. According to one survey, more than a third of non-Catholic Christians are Pentecostal or Charismatic, while fifteen percent of Catholics are active in the Charismatic movement. These movements are characterized as a populist religion that involves the ability, among other things, to induce miracles. Christl Kessler and Jürgen Rüland explain that the reasons this movement is attracting Filipino people include 1) it answers people’s everyday questions and provides guidance for the general conduct of life, 2) it provides a spiritual experience that helps them cope with everyday struggles, 3) it gives the sense of belonging to a close-knit community, and so on. Thus, it can be said that many Pentecostal/Charismatic beliefs fit the Kankana-ey worldview.

The story of the Assemblies of God, the largest Pentecostal group among the Kankana-ey began in 1947 when Elva Vanderbout came to Baguio City as an Assemblies of God (AG) missionary. She began her ministry focused on Igorots not only in Baguio but also in Tuding Barangay, which was known for its high crime rate and poverty. More than one-hundred fifty people received water baptism within a year. The first AG church in the Cordillera mountain range was built in Tuding in 1949. From this church about thirty pastors were trained and sent to Igorot churches and more than one hundred preaching points during Vanderbout’s time of ministry. In time, more missionaries came. When the Far East School of Theology (FEAST, now known as the Asia Pacific Theological Seminary) moved from Manila to Baguio in 1986, more missionaries and seminary students came to Benguet Province, some of

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65 Ibid., 81.
66 Ibid., 84–92.
67 Ibid., 92–93.
69 Ibid., 50–51.
70 Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits*, 79.
71 Johnson, 52.
whom engaged in mountain ministries.\textsuperscript{72} Wonsuk Ma from Korea and his wife Julie were two of them.\textsuperscript{73}

Vanderbout’s ministry was blessed with manifestations of the Spirit, including numbers of miraculous healings.\textsuperscript{74} Dave Johnson writes, “When healing began to take place, people began to notice and hundreds came to know Christ when they saw his power at work.”\textsuperscript{75} The Kankana-ey Pentecostals confidently believe that the Holy Spirit will heal the sick when he is present.\textsuperscript{76} Considering taking the sick to the hospital and/or performing rituals affect the family financially to a great degree, especially in a remote area, Ma states that people “acknowledge the power and goodness of God who works healing wonders ‘without cost.’”\textsuperscript{77}

\section*{Contextualization}

Timoteo D. Gener, a Filipino theologian, says that contextualization is not a biblical technique of evangelism but the basics of mission or “doing mission in light of our cultural inheritance.”\textsuperscript{78} Paul as a missionary cared for not only spreading the gospel but also establishing a church in order for the gospel to be embodied and discerned.\textsuperscript{79} In this process, contextualization happened as soon as the gospel was preached to the Gentiles. For example, Jesus was introduced to Greeks as κυριος or Lord—the term for cult divinities of East Mediterranean religions—instead of Messiah.\textsuperscript{80} The gospel is universal yet needs to be told in a way people from different cultures understand. As Romans 1:20 says, God has revealed his power and nature through Creation before Christianity is brought to a culture. Therefore, both churches and missionaries need to remember that they can find God’s revelation even in the indigenous culture, although the Scripture is still the primary theological source, and culture needs to be converted under the authority

\textsuperscript{72}Ibid., 134, 322. FEAST was founded in 1964 and follows Assemblies of God theology.
\textsuperscript{73}Wonsuk was a FEAST student and became its full-time faculty in 1983. In addition to their responsibilities at the school, Wonsuk and Julie Ma engaged heavily in ministry to the Igorots, including the Kankanaey, when the seminary moved to Baguio.
\textsuperscript{74}Johnson, 48; 50.
\textsuperscript{75}Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{76}Ma, When the Spirit Meets the Spirits, 224.
\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., 225.
\textsuperscript{79}Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{80}Maggay, 39.
of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{81} Thus, Christianity should not remain “import”-ed but it must be rooted in the \textit{Kankana-ey} culture and keep growing.

In the following section, the beliefs of \textit{Kankana-ey} Pentecostals surveyed in Ma’s research are introduced and argued in the light of contextualization. First, the \textit{Kankana-ey’s} strong kinship and a sense of intergeneration relationship are like the idea of a “great cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1).\textsuperscript{82} Family and extended kinship even with dead ancestors are important for both people in the Bible and the Kankana-ey, however, the ritual to satisfy ancestors’ needs is not biblical and should not be practiced. Ma’s study emphasizes the ancestors solely in terms of spiritual power or the spiritual realm and shows that the converted regard any manifestation of ancestors as demonic.\textsuperscript{83} Nevertheless, the Bible affirms the importance of the concept of intergenerational connectedness with the ancestors. As discussed in the section on “human beings,” family relationship in the Bible includes people who are united by the faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, biblical heroes are now ancestors to all Christians. This sense of continuity through generations is meaningful to the Filipinos, including the \textit{Kankana-ey}.\textsuperscript{84}

Second, interpretation of supernatural revelation, particularly through dreams, can be another bridge for discourse. The \textit{Kankana-ey} believe that spirits communicate with the living people through omens and dreams.\textsuperscript{85} Again, Ma’s survey indicates that the \textit{Kankana-ey} Pentecostals reject such dreams as demonic,\textsuperscript{86} but Amos Yong argues that this is not an appropriate Pentecostal response.\textsuperscript{87} He admits some dreams are indeed demonic, however, the Pentecostals should not neglect dreams but ought to interpret and discern them.\textsuperscript{88} The Bible gives examples of troubling dreams given to pagan rulers that were prophetic dreams from God (Gen. 41:1-8; Dan. 2:1-2, 4:4-27). These narratives indicate that religious authorities called wise men and magicians who interpreted dreams in their religious context (Gen. 41:8; Dan. 2:4, 4:6-7). If God gave the rulers prophetic dreams, the Pentecostal needs to affirm the possibility that God speaks to a \textit{Kankana-ey} person in a dream. Another reason why the Pentecostal should affirm the function of dreams among the \textit{Kankana-ey} is because of their eschatological pneumatology. When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter declared it was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel

\textsuperscript{81}Gener, 68–73.
\textsuperscript{82}Yong, 124; Maggay, 48.
\textsuperscript{83}Ma, When the Spirit Meets the Spirits, 209–211.
\textsuperscript{84}Maggay, 48.
\textsuperscript{85}Ma, When the Spirit Meets the Spirits, 226.
\textsuperscript{86}Ibid., 206–207.
\textsuperscript{87}Yong, 123.
\textsuperscript{88}Ibid.
2:28-32 in Acts 2:17-32, in which dreaming a dream is counted as the work of the Spirit of God, the same as prophecy. This is one of the key texts of Pentecostal pneumatology. Of course, it needs to be carefully segregated from ritualistic traditions to avoid syncretism. However, instead of labeling and interpreting all dreams as demonic altogether, the Pentecostal may start a dialogue with the Kankana-ey and show the truth of God, just like Joseph and Daniel did (Gen. 41:16, 25, 32; Dan. 2:27-30; 4:21-22).

Third, prayer for healing is practiced by both the Kankana-ey and Pentecostals. As Ma states that the Kankana-ey Pentecostal stopped offering sacrifices and doing rituals to the spirits for healing disease but came to believe that the Holy Spirit is the only source of the healing power. Robin Steen studied possible influences of indigenous beliefs and practices on the Kankana-ey AG church’s practice of praying for the sick. He states that he finds only successful contextualization while syncretism is carefully avoided. He introduces an interviewee who witnessed a prayer in a pagan style “like calling on the spirits,” however, he concludes there are only a few cases of such syncretism. More than half of respondents from the middle-age group point out “the need for strong faith in the healing power of the Holy Spirit.” But care must be taken here. Paul Hiebert says that a prayer of request can become a magic formula to force God to answer their request, for magic is defined as an approach to control one’s own destiny. He also says that while proclaiming the gospel in an animistic context, one of the things the church “must” do is to guard Christianity against becoming a new form of magic. Holy Spirit is God and should be worshipped. In worship, people seek God’s will instead of their own.

Seeing how Catholicism has become folk Catholicism or even “a Christianized version” of indigenous religion in the Philippines, the need to be alerted by the danger of syncretism is understandable. Still, Burrows points out that Christian worship was the product of

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89Menzies and Menzies, chapter 5, sec. 3.1.
90Steen, “Syncretism in Prayer for Healing among the Kankana-ey Part 1,” 165. His analysis includes literature review of Ma’s When the Spirit Meets the Spirit.
92Ibid., 189.
93Ibid., 202.
94Hiebert, 46.
95Ibid.
96Almocera, 84.
contextualization from its earliest day. However, instead of centralizing the authority to discern what is appropriate or not onto church leaders, the Pentecostals need to trust the Holy Spirit to guide them to completion (John 16:12; Phil. 1:6).

Conclusion

In the first section, the Kankana-ey’s animistic beliefs and worldview were introduced and compared with the Scripture. Ma’s *When the Spirit Meets the Spirit* presents the Pentecostal mission to the Kankana-ey spoke to their worldview: the existence of the supreme god, spirit world, and supernatural healing power. As the result, spiritual transformation was brought to the Kankana-ey.

Also, the Pentecostals can admit that some dreams are possibly from God. This study encourages Christians to re-examine their practices according to Scripture without fearing syncretism more than necessary, for they might find what they reject as pagan is actually biblical whereas what whereas what they accept may actually be a pagan distortion of scripture.

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Beliefs of Kankana-ey and a Contextualization of the Gospel


Johnson, Dave. Led by the Spirit: The History of the American Assemblies of God Missionaries in the Philippines (Pasig City, Philippines: ICI Ministries, 2009), 48. A barangay is the smallest territorial, administrative, and political unit in the Philippines. Barangay Tuding is located in the northwest of the Municipality of Itogon, adjacent to Baguio City.


I live among the Isan (sometimes spelled Isaan) people in Northeast Thailand, where I am involved in Church planting and evangelism. Many Isan come to church regularly, participating in worship and church activities, but once they enter the workforce or return to their families, they leave all Christian involvement behind and reengage in some folk Buddhist practices, which include venerating ancestors. This scenario is prevalent in churches that work in a university environment but is also noticeable in other congregations. Could neglecting ancestral practices in the church be a possible reason for the poor retention of new believers? Ancestral practices should be considered in the liturgy of the Christian Church in Isan.

While the dominant religion in Isan is Buddhism, the whole belief system is animistic. Animism is a ‘belief in personal supernatural beings such as gods, spirits, and ghosts’, which can inhabit inanimate objects such as trees, rocks and houses.¹ The animist sees their world as being ruled by many spiritual forces. Sickness is often explained as being caused by a spirit, and a crop failure may be due to an angry ancestor.² This view can instil fear into their lives. Therefore, one approach to overcome the inherent power of these forces is for the animist to search for stronger powers to overcome the adverse effects of these spirits in his life. There are other ways of dealing with evil spirits, such as ‘merit-making’ (doing good to counteract evil) and performing various rituals to appease these spirits. Out of fear, many people seek comfort by visiting fortune tellers to know the future, buying amulets to ward off bad luck or making offerings to the spirits. Due to the desperation implicit in these approaches, animistic practices and beliefs can also open the door to gaining faith in Jesus Christ because animistic people

²Dave Johnson, Theology in Context, A Case Study in the Philippines (Philippines: Asia Pacific Theological Seminary Press, 2013), 220.
are very aware of the spiritual confrontations that are going on around them and so seek resolutions.

There are observations in the literature regarding ancestral practices available, but all literature is written from an academic perspective, often from a western worldview. Almost all communities that are unreached with the gospel message at this time are oral societies that do not have the skills to write articles on important issues. A current first-hand opinion on this subject, delivered in written form, is generally not available. I am continuing to research this subject and intend to interview ordinary Isan people to extract their true heart feelings towards their ancestors and the many ancestral practices in the future.

**Background**

The law of karma is another overruling and determining dogma in Buddhism, quickly explained as "do good, receive good; do evil, receive evil." People are generally aware of their karma, and "merit-making" improves karma. Misfortune in life seems a result of bad karma. They also believe in rebirth in the form of humans, animals or spirits. According to Buddhist teaching, the souls of the deceased will progress to one of the six heavens or go to hell. Neither heaven nor hell is seen as a permanent place in Thai Buddhism. Buddhists believe in the cycle of death and rebirth until they are liberated through the framework of Samsara and Nirvana. This concept is known in Isan, but according to my observation Isan people generally do not believe they can ever reach Nirvana. The Isan community exists of many people living in family groups, including the living and the dead. Merit can be transferred from the living to the dead. Merit is shared within communities; 'merit-making' becomes essential not just for the person making merit (tam bun) but also for the person receiving the merit. Making merit is vital for all the ancestors, regardless if they are still living or are already deceased.

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most Thai men are ordained as monks. Thai men live in a temple for a short period (often only one to three months) to enable the transfer of merit to their parents, especially their mother.7

The Living and the Dead

The concept of the living and the dead existing together is necessary to understand. The dominating belief regarding ancestors is the conviction that the spirits of the deceased ancestors are still present and are required to be looked after. Many believe that the relationship between the living and the dead is continuously interactive.8 Thais are cremated at the temple, which is seen as the abode of the dead.9 Many ancestral spirits live on the temple grounds. Some widows in Isan villages bring food to the temple every day to feed the spirit of their deceased husbands. The monks will chant while they perform the “นรูที่” (kruatnam) ritual10 to make the offered food available to the spirits of the deceased.

A significant issue is that no one can explain where the dead are going after leaving their earthly abode. They fear that the ancestral spirits could be angry and the spirits could come back and haunt the living. The spirits could remember something in the past that displeased them, and they may seek revenge. Many Isan people make a shrine on an elevated shelf in the house. This shelf usually displays a picture of some deceased family members and a small Buddha statue. They usually place some offerings of food, flowers, drinks or candles on the shelf daily or frequently. The shelf has an important place within the house—it is where food is offered to deceased relatives, especially to husbands by the widows. The belief is that if food is not given to the deceased relatives, the relatives will go hungry and may become troubled.

Ancestral Practices as Traditional Ceremonies

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9Sparkes, Spirits and Souls, Gender and Cosmology in an Isan Village in Northeast Thailand, 124.
David Lim presumes that ancestral venerations are not idolatrous in nature but are non-religious, cultural celebrations that fit into a communitarian worldview. Lim concludes that ancestors are not gods and are never seen as deities when they are honoured by their descendants. It is impossible for most people experiencing life with an Eastern worldview to separate the seen and the unseen, the material and the spiritual world. Spirits are always present with the living. Religion in China (and in Isan) is interwoven into all family and social life areas. Religion becomes interwoven with the culture, making most rituals and ceremonies religious - cultural events.

Lim cites that indigenous celebrations can be given a new Christian content. This includes using indigenous ways of worship and ceremony that will contribute to and enrich the unity of the believers in Christ and will be more likely to find acceptance than foreign forms and rituals. The Apostle Paul states in Colossians 1:20 that God reconciled everything to himself, which gives Christians the potential to bring societies that venerate ancestors into a universal understanding of Jesus. The abundant love of our Father God, our most significant ancestor, will draw people to himself. Christ can feel at home within all cultures and languages to give Christianity the flavour of local people's hearts and language. Lim concedes that believers must remember ancestors with all their hearts and even honour them more than unbelievers do in an Asian cultural context.

Remembering Ancestors

According to Wonsuk Ma ancestral practices are a struggle for the Asian church. The church's attitude towards these practices shows where the individual church stands in its own culture. If honouring ancestors is not worship but cultural practice, could the church fulfil the fifth commandment (honour your father and your mother) by honouring parents through appropriate ceremonies?


14Lim, 2015,190.

151 Timothy 5:8.


17Exodus 20.
Their spirits, who live around the house compound or local temple, can become angry if they are not well looked after. This emotion of anger can cause many problems.18 When suffering occurs or persists, the ancestral spirits are often blamed, especially if the family does not care sufficiently for them. To appease the spirits is a principle daily responsibility for the older members of the family in order for the family not to get hurt and to have good fortune. From a biblical perspective, Ma & Ma states that there are no ancestor spirits but instead many demons who can act as ancestors. This concept needs to be taught from Scripture so that “God will completely replace the ancestors in their allegiance.” The power of our God is far above the power of any of these spirits.19

Replacing Old Ways

Kosuke Koyama states that Christianity will never replace Buddhism in Thailand. Instead of replacement, one should look at 'mutual enrichment.'20 The roots of Buddhism or animism are too strong to disappear altogether. Charles Kraft underlines this concept and explains:

Jesus spoke of our faith as a seed, not a tree. We have often taken full-grown trees to other peoples, trees that were at home in their native soil but are out of place in the new context. What Jesus meant by picturing our faith as a seed is that the tree or bush that springs from that seed do not look like it came from another place. It is chosen to serve inside, nourishing the new soil and water. It is meant to look like it belongs.21

Ancestral Spirits

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18Ma, 2002, 204, 205.
19Ma & Ma 2005, Kindle loc 2908.
20Water Buffalo Theology (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), X111.
The Isan predominantly follow the animistic customs and beliefs of their forbears. Kevin Hovey posits that for the animist, the spirit world is part of "this world", while the westerner sees the spirit world as part of the "other world."\(^{22}\)

Hovey suggests that western attitudes are reinforced by the Bible prohibiting communication with the dead.\(^{23}\) Hovey claims that ancestors are living members of their community who interrelate with the living. Offerings are given to extend the human relationship with the deceased.\(^{24}\) Unless missionaries come to a greater understanding of ancestral practices and find more realistic and creative solutions, traditional practices will be pushed underground and not evaluated from the knowledge of the Word of God.

**Can Ancestral Practices Disappear?**

Ancestral spirits that come into existence after a traumatic death, such as after accidents or unexpected death through sickness (e.g. deceased children), will be believed to cause more problems and difficulties for the living. These ancestral spirits are furious, so more rituals are necessary to appease them.\(^{25}\) In Isan, anyone who dies a tragic death, like in a car accident, is not usually cremated in the temple but buried in the forest outside the village area.\(^{26}\) The Isan people attribute accidental and unforeseen deaths to the work of malicious spirits. According to the belief of the Isan, that the spirits of the deceased are still present in the village, these malicious spirits are not welcome in the village and the village temple. So deceased people who harbour these spirits are buried outside of the village.

**Understanding the Animist**

Like Ma, Hovey and Rheenen, Kraft also sees different perceptions of the living and the dead as a significant problem in interacting with people from the East and the West. These differences lead to communication problems. It is the purpose of teaching to shift the allegiance from the ancestor to God. The ultimate power source may well

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\(^{23}\)Hovey, 1995, 145.

\(^{24}\)Hovey, 1995, 144.


come from God, who should be seen as the most powerful ancestor. Jesus can be seen as the supreme ancestor who deals on our behalf with God. Instead of talking with the ancestors, the animist can now talk with Jesus.27

Hiebert talks about critical contextualisation, an important tool for dealing with various rituals and ceremonies. The first step is to understand people and not criticise them.28 As one person eats, the food will be shared with everyone, including the ancestors. They should be informed of any changes and be part of any capital that changes hands, for example, during a wedding. Leaving the ancestors out of these celebrations is a great sin against the immediate and the extended family. Everyone is fearful that the ancestors may become angry; the community will have regular ceremonies to pacify them.29

If missionaries eliminate traditional ceremonies from a people group, they extract power, which will lead to a powerless Christianity. Indigenous people perform celebrations secretly so as not to disappoint the westerner.30 This practice accounts especially for the most important feasts, such as ancestral rituals.31 The result of attempting to reject these celebrations will lead to a dualistic approach to Christianity. People will travel both ways, the traditional and the Christian ways, the new and the old.

As the Isan believers grow in their faith in Jesus and see him as their one true and only God, they will question some of their cultural celebrations and look for ways of bringing these in line with their new beliefs. Alan Tippett suggests that "in the newly planted church of animist converts, a direct relationship exists between the effectiveness of the functional substitutes and the possibilities of reaction against cultural voids."32 Tippett introduced functional substitutes to bring local cultures more in line with biblical Christianity, which encourages local people to find ways to replace aspects of their own culture in more biblically comparable ways.33 If this process is carried out well, The Isan people will come to see Christianity as something that belongs to them and fits

29Hiebert et al., 2000, Kindle loc 1006,1011.
31Shaw & Burrows, 2018, Kindle loc 559.
32*Introduction to Missiology*, 201.
33Hovey, 2019, 253.
in their world. Hovey suggests that “it is the people themselves who determine what is truly satisfying to them, even though an outsider like a missionary can be a resource person for them in this process.”

Fear of Ancestors and Offerings

The question is, nonetheless, “are ancestors revered as gods or are they seen simply as grandfather and grandmother”? Lim has never met any Chinese person who saw the ancestors as gods. Lim states that ancestors are not gods to be worshipped. The animist will give gifts and not offerings. As the animist in Isan gives food to the deceased, this is a gift for the ancestors to survive and not be hungry. The animist commonly talks to the ancestors, informing them of all the family happenings as if they are still alive in the same room. This conversation is not to be confused with a prayer to the dead. Biblical Christianity challenges ancestral practices because the dead cannot help the living. The dead live in another place; they are not here. Biblical Christianity can challenge the concept of ancestors not on the basis of worship but on the basis of the fact that ancestors live in heaven or in hell. The living is separated from the dead. If the saved ancestors live in heaven, where do those who have not heard the salvation message live?

McGavran suggests in that God is sovereign and can do whatever he chooses to do; there is no clear answer in Scripture. The Bible says in Romans that there will be a revelation of the judgment of God. Who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honour and immortality.

God may give eternal life to people who know right from wrong and lead an exemplary life for God, such as Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, etc. However, the only sure way to heaven is through Jesus Christ, our Lord. In the Old Testament, Naaman declared he would not offer burnt offerings or sacrifice to other gods after being healed from leprosy after Elisha, the man of God, sent him a message to bathe in the Jordan River.

34Hovey, 2019, 255.
39Romans 2:6 -7, NKJV.
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Naaman spoke with Elisha and asked the Lord for forgiveness regarding his temple visits with his master:

Yet in this thing may the Lord pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord please pardon your servant in this thing. Then he [Elisha] said to him, “Go in peace.”

There was peace for Naaman, just as there can be peace for believers who go to the temple with their unsaved relatives. Ma thinks that ancestral practices are necessary to meet cultural expectations. The worldview of that particular community drives these expectations. For animistic communities, ancestral practices must follow as culture demands. People follow their parents’ expectations; children are taught the Isan social hierarchy from early childhood, which is reflected in the type of language used when speaking to people of higher or lower status. As children become adults, they are responsible for looking after their parents as they age. They will always respect and honour their parents and show reverence towards them. This practice will continue after the parent’s death. Because the ancestral spirits have more power than the living grandparents, these spirits are more powerful and knowing than the living. “The living man is happier than the departed because he is alive, but the departed are more powerful.”

Power Encounters

Miracles not performed through divination and magic are miraculous acts through the power of God. God will receive the glory. These miraculous acts need to enable the animist to encounter God at a powerfully felt level of their being. Only power encounters with Jesus, and his Holy Spirit can change their attitudes from unbelief to God.

Christianity often fails to address these power-related issues. Pentecostal believers appear more successful in addressing power issues. It is a continuing process to change people's perception of the

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40 Kings 5:18,19, NKJV.
44 Hovey, *Before All Else Fails, Read the Instructions*, 139.
45 J. Ma & Ma, 2010, Kindle loc 2904.
spiritual world in which they live. The message must be contextualised toward their understanding to enable them to move from their current viewpoint to a new understanding which will eventually eliminate fear.46 Hovey’s model, using Tippett’s theory of power encounters in three different phases, is helpful here. Firstly, an encounter with God, secondly, a demonstration of God’s power (powerful God) and thirdly, a conversion encounter where Jesus becomes Lord.47 People need to see and experience that God is more powerful than all other spirits. God often becomes real through healings and other miracles, and the animist will become aware of God’s presence in their lives. As God answers many prayers of new believers, they gain trust in Jesus and learn to rely on him daily, but many still keep the old beliefs in the back of their minds.48 Hovey calls this the first phase (God is supreme/ Cosmic encounter) in which the animist will gain authority over Satan and find a safe place to reflect on Jesus.49 During the second phase of the power encounter (God is powerful/ demonstration encounter), the animist will experience supernatural intervention, leading to increased confidence.50 As people who follow animism and move towards a sole reliance on Jesus, their old religious ways will cease slowly. Over time the old altar and places to perform animistic rituals will collect dust and disappear. Now allegiance changes from the “old ways” to Jesus alone. The animist will now proclaim: “Jesus is Lord” (conversion encounter/ absolute dependence on God).51 Many animistic background believers realise that the power of the Holy Spirit is greater than all other spiritual powers because God’s power is above all other powers. Power encounters are often the driving force for the animist to meet Jesus. For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.52

Because the animist lives in a world of power, only a God who demonstrates mighty power can be of any help to him.53 Animism can prepare people for the Gospel as animistic people will rarely refuse prayer to meet their needs. They have an open heart for Jesus (first phase

46Ibid., Kindle loc. 1659.
49Hovey, 2019, 220.
50Ibid., 216-17.
51Ibid., 216, 231.
521 Thessalonians 1:5, NKJV.
As they engage in these power encounters and gain experience with God, they become more reliant on God. The animist will not replace one power with another, like the power of spirits with the power of God. However, he will always add more power to the previously gained power and “add more power sources to the previous power sources that they have feared, worshipped, served, manipulated, and from which they have drawn power and assistance.” They will see that this increased power will help in their daily lives through miraculous acts, like healings (second phase encounter).

The apostle Paul asked the Ephesians to take off the old things and put on the new in his letter to them in chapter 4:24. As the animist will never give away power, new believers have to continue their walk with the power of the Holy Spirit rather than with the power of any other spirit. They have to add power to the existing power in their earthly life, the power of Jesus and his power alone. The message of the Christian regarding the greatest power (God) will address the animist’s needs. Scripture verses like “all power is given unto me” and “power over all power” will touch their heart. The challenge now for the new believer is that the supernatural experience or power encounter will modify their beliefs into a new belief, a faith in the still greater power of Jesus Christ. As the animist progresses and destroys the old powers (present as idols or other religious paraphernalia), he will overcome the old ways with a new winning path (third phase encounter).

Bowing as an Act of Worship

Buddhist or animistic background believers need to bow before their ancestors. This practice is an essential act of honour and respect, not worship. According to my observation, the Isan will always bow down if asked to pray sincerely. Bowing makes no difference for believers or unbelievers. Asian people bow down to authority. Ancestors are highly esteemed and have authority in Asia and other parts of the world with predominantly animistic belief systems. Showing honour and respect to the elders and the ancestors is most important. In many Asian countries, it is common practice for children to approach the head of the house on

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54Hovey, 2019, 203, 204.
55Hovey, 2019, 228.
56Hovey, 2019, 221.
57Tippett, 1987, 328.
59Matthew 28:18.
61Hovey, 2019, 202.
their knees when asking for a favour. The bride and groom bow down before their parents during the Thai marriage ceremony to show them honour. It is not surprising that people in Asia bow before the picture of their ancestors during ancestral ceremonies. Yonggi Cho, founder of Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul (South Korea), the biggest church worldwide at the time, did not object to his congregation bowing before ancestors as culturally appropriate behaviour. He said, if people can bow before their father and mother while they are alive, they can bow before them when they are dead. He was heavily criticised for this decision by the Presbyterian Church in Korea. This and several other issues caused him to leave this denomination.62

Isan Christians

The Isan Christian church struggles to attract a significant number of followers despite a long missionary presence of approximately 500 years (including the first catholic monks) in Thailand.63 Today ninety-five per cent of the approximately eighty thousand villages in Thailand have no Christian church presence. Only 0.2% of the population of Northeast Thailand are Christian.64 Could the general oversight of the importance of ancestral practices for the Isan people be one stumbling block to successful evangelism in Northeast Thailand?

As someone becomes a Christian, this person may withdraw from all family rituals or traditions, and this decision will negatively affect his whole family. Missionaries often ignore the communal aspect of Thai life.65 Herbert Swanson has lived in Thailand for most of his life. He states that early missionaries would influence converts to live together with the foreigners in foreign enclaves and withdraw from celebrating “the communal and pagan rituals”66 within the Thai community. This

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practice isolated new believers from their families and community, which did not make Christianity attractive to the Thais and caused many issues for the new church. On their first visit, Christians even tore down charms and desecrated spirit shrines.

As some new Christians leave their families, the family can become angry over the “loss” of a son or daughter, leading to persecution of the new believer from those families and causing hatred towards the church. The families feel shamed and publicly dishonoured as one of their family members departed from their traditions and are no longer seen to be publicly supporting their family through rituals and ceremonies – in essence, rejecting what the family stands for. On the other hand, we find believers who will participate in all the community celebrations, often doing this in secret and not telling the church to maintain “face” in the community and prevent being socially outcast or ridiculed by neighbours. This is also another reason why many Thai Christians attend church in larger urban centres – that way, their church activities can be separated from their life in the village, thereby avoiding any social disagreements.

I am aware that two Christian movements in Thailand do not restrict people's decisions on which ceremonies to participate in. Rather than overtly forbidding members to participate, they prayerfully approach the situations but give people time to decide what to do and what not to do.

In Thailand, the formal church has the mindset of a “minority” church, which means that the church represents only a tiny part of the population. Adapting any indigenous rituals is seen as syncretism, and local believers are expected to leave their own culture/identity and identify with western Christianity to become “Christian.” There is still an enormous fear of the evil spirits among Thai Christian believers.

The Thai church should leave its western forms behind and focus on the salvation message, which should be expressed in indigenous forms.

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67Swanson, 1987, 18.
68Hughes, 1983, 94.
within the local culture. The Apostle Paul wrote regarding adopting different cultural means and values to other cultures in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Christians in Northeast Thailand should be encouraged to give the Isan people the freedom to build their own church. This process will need guidance and supervision but should lead eventually to the existence of a church that is acceptable for the Isan people and will meet their needs. As the church grows, it will be much easier to make disciples, as these young Christians can be nurtured in a church environment that is not antagonistic towards Isan culture and its people. Isan has a rich culture, which can be used to draw people to Jesus. Unless the Isan culture is understood and the church starts to respect the Isan worldview and includes this culture into its life, the church will continue to struggle to become the strong body that Jesus intended it to be.

In particular, the attitudes of many Isan churches towards anything involved with filial piety need to change. It is challenging to decide which ancestral practices can be included in the church liturgy, which ones need to be modified and which ones need to be substituted in the framework of biblical Christianity. Jesus has given us his Spirit as our helper. In his presence and trust in him, the Isan church can be transformed into a strong body of Christ and can still be relevant to the people living in Isan who search for hope now and later.

God has given us his word, which is relevant to the Isan culture and their animistic worldview. Apart from the book of Ecclesiastes, Paul's letter to the Ephesian and Colossian church, and even Genesis and Exodus are full of information about animistic communities. Suppose we can read the Bible without our western glasses and try to understand the Scriptures from the first reader's perspective in its original era. In that case, we will gain information about building churches in an animistic context.

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Pentecostal Theological Education in the Majority World: The Graduate and Post-Graduate Level
In Search of Pentecostal Trajectories and Realities: A Study of Hong Kong Assemblies of God Churches
by Christian Nathen Ng

Introduction

Hong Kong is a religiously pluralistic city, comprised of Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, the Baha’i Faith, and other religions. Although Pentecostal denominations are not the dominant Christian denominations in Hong Kong, Christianity (about 1.2 million adherents, including 800,000 Protestants and 404,000 Catholics), Buddhism (about 1 million adherents and over 400 temples), Taoism (over 1 million followers and over 300 Taoist abbeys and temples), Islam (about 300,000 Muslims, including 150,000 Indonesians, 50,000 Chinese, and 30,000 Pakistanis), Hinduism (about 100,000 adherents who are from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and other south-east Asian countries), Sikhism (about 12,000 Sikhs), Judaism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, and the Baha’i Faith. This rough statistic entails that Christianity is not the overwhelmingly dominant religion in Hong Kong. Stuart M. I. Stoker, ed., *Hong Kong 2020* (Hong Kong: Information Services Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, 2021), 311–15.

For the purpose of analysis, the author regards the Pentecostal denominations as the classical Pentecostal denominations depicted by Allan H. Anderson in his taxonomy of global Pentecostalism in this paper. However, the term Pentecostalism is not confined to the classical Pentecostal denominations. This study adopts the definition of Pentecostalism depicted by Allan Heaton Anderson in his book *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity*, in which “Pentecostalism” includes all those movements and churches where the emphasis is on an ecstatic experience of the Spirit and a tangible practice of spiritual gifts.” Allan Heaton Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 8. Defining the term Pentecostalism varies, and the author is cognizant of the limitations and other possible ways of defining the term as well as the differences between the different types in Anderson’s typology. For the theoretical discussions on and approaches for defining global Pentecostalism, see Allan Anderson, “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions,” in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, eds. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, and Cornelis van der Laan (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 13–27.
Kong, Hong Kong has the most diverse classical Pentecostal denominations among different Chinese regions. The early trajectory of Pentecostalism in Hong Kong is traceable to Alfred G. Garr (1874–1944) and Lillian Garr (1878–1916), who experienced the Azusa Street revival and were among the first to arrive in Hong Kong in 1907. Kay finds that apart from the GARRS, early Pentecostal progress in Hong Kong is also traceable to Mattie Swan Ledbetter, who arrived in Hong Kong in about 1912 to conduct tent missions and evangelistic activities without any denominational backing. Ledbetter founded a Cantonese congregation that joined the American Assemblies of God in 1928.

**A Brief History of Assemblies of God in Hong Kong**

In 1916, a meeting was held by the early founders of the AG. AG pioneers decided to create a statement of faith “to regulate both religious experience and doctrinal beliefs.” There was eventually a statement of sixteen doctrinal beliefs for the AG that is consistent with what is now known as the Statement of Fundamental Truths. It emphasizes not only the fundamentalists’ basic beliefs but also “healing by the atonement” and tongues as ‘initial evidence’ of Spirit baptism.” The AG has become “the world’s largest Pentecostal denomination, with over sixty million adherents and some 312,000 churches located in more than two hundred countries and territories.”

After Ledbetter’s arrival in Hong Kong, “although she probably died in the 1930s, the congregation she gathered continued to grow and thrive under Chinese leadership and is known as First Assembly of God in Hong Kong to this day.” During the Japanese occupation, AG missions faced a standstill. Eight AG missionaries were in Hong Kong at the time; almost all were interned in the Stanley Internment Camp. Later, they were repatriated in an exchange agreement between the US and Japan and returned to Hong Kong in 1945.

AG evangelism and social ministries progressively developed in different regions of Hong Kong after the war. Under the leadership of Harland Park, First Assembly of God (formerly known as the Argyle Street Church) decided to expand. In 1952, they purchased land for construction of a building seating 800 individuals and to extend its social ministries, including one elementary school with 450 children enrolled. Harold C. Herman (1902–1999), an AG missionary who ministered in forty-eight nations, launched an evangelistic crusade in Hong Kong in which—he “preached continuously in various churches and outdoor meetings from October 1956 through January 1957.” In the campaign, 2,260 professions of faith were registered on decision cards. Several

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10Poloma and Green, Assemblies of God, 6–7. The Statement of Fundamental Truths consists of the 16 doctrines of the Assemblies of God. Most AG churches in Hong Kong follow the Statement of Fundamental Truths. The Assemblies of God 16 Fundamental Truths can be found on the official website of Assemblies of God (USA).
11Ibid., 8.
12Kay, “Missional education,” 202. The grave of Mattie Swan Ledbetter (1870–1938), recognized as a missionary of the AG, is located in the Hong Kong Cemetery. Ledbetter was born on 22 August 1870 and died on 4 March 1938.
hundred people prayed for salvation in meetings that Herman conducted at AG, Foursquare, and Pentecostal Mission churches with T. M. Sung, a Chinese pastor.16 The AG denomination experienced gradual church growth since the middle of the twentieth century.17

In 2014, Hong Kong Assemblies of God (hereafter HKAG) celebrated the centennial of the AG and its arrival in China and Hong Kong. The Centennial was co-hosted by Ecclesia Ministries Limited, General Council of Hong Kong Assemblies of God, Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong (hereafter PCHK), and Asia Assembly Mission Council. Over forty AG churches, congregations, and institutions collaborated. The commemorative events, including Centennial Celebration Walkathon, 100 Days Prayer, and Centennial Celebrations, took place from July 2014 to November 2014.18 In 2020, the 5th International Pentecostal Conference was held by Ecclesia Ministries Limited from 24 June to 27 June. The conference, conducted in Chinese, promoted the Pentecostal movement in the Sinophone world as well as academic, pastoral, practical, and experiential exchanges between Pentecostal scholars, pastors, leaders, and adherents.19 In total, 113 local and foreign churches and organizations and 1,276 people from around the world participated in the conference.20

**An Emic Story of Hong Kong Assemblies of God Churches**

In 2014, Ecclesia Theological Seminary, an AG seminary in Hong Kong, published a Chinese book written by HKAG pastoral leaders and adherents entitled, *A Century of Assemblies of God China Mission – From South China to Hong Kong*, documenting the trajectories of the AG reaching from South China to Hong Kong. The stories of the churches possibly contain certain biases and subjectivity.21 Nevertheless, the book, especially the chapter authored by Lam Ngau Ming, is a

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18For more information about the Assemblies of God Centennial in Hong Kong, see the official website of the event: http://ag100.hk-ebc.edu/ (accessed 12 November 2021).
21For instance, one may argue that the authors of the book are inclined to adopt what Anderson calls the insider or emic paradigm and perceive the individual testimonies and accounts of healing and miracles different from the perspectives and approaches of etic observers, in which “emic and etic views always create such differences of viewpoint.” Anderson, “Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions,” 14–15.
valuable source. Accompanied by other sources, this study summarizes Lam’s chapter to trace the HKAG trajectories.

After Ledbetter died, due to a paucity of leadership, the AG sent missionaries Harland A. Park (1907–1971) and Catherine Elizabeth D. Park (1909–1961) to administer First Assembly of God Church in 1940. In post-war Hong Kong, under the leadership of H. A. Park, the church started to hold healing meetings and experienced gradual growth. In 2014, the mother church reached over a thousand people, with five congregations, one primary school, one kindergarten, and one nursery.22

Many missionaries focused on church planting in city areas during the early twentieth century. Since the late 1930s, more focused on evangelism and church planting in rural areas of the New Territories. Churches founded during this time include Fanling Assembly of God Church, founded in 1940 by Lula Bell Hough (1906–2002), and a rural AG church now called Assemblies of God Holy Light Church, founded by a group of missionaries, including N. Cherry, and a Chinese Christian in the Yuen Long District in 1939 and joined by Sarah C. Johnston (1904–1972), Annie Bailie (1900–1986), and Poon Tai Koo. 23 The missionaries, including Johnston, Bailie, and Hough, not only pioneered AG churches in cities and villages but also door-to-door evangelists in destitute areas.24

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23Poon Tai Koo (1909–1995) is commonly known as the Chinese pastor and co-founder of New Territories Assemblies of God Church in the local AG circle. Regarding the name Poon Tai Koo, it was mentioned by Annie Bailie during her ministry in Hong Kong. See L. W. Smith, ed. followed by the rest of the entry. “Foreign Missions,” The Pentecostal Evangel, no. 2342 (March 1959): 11. It is possible that Tai Koo is not the first name in Cantonese since it can literally mean auntie. Poon Tai Koo possible refers to 潘大姑, whose Chinese name is 潘慈惠. The name of 潘慈惠 in English has remained unknown. This study uses the name Poon Tai Koo referring to 潘慈惠 or 潘大姑. The author of this study collected two documents related to the history of the church and other two documents related to the brief biographies of Annie Bailie and Poon Tai Koo from Cheng Siu Hung, one of the two ministers of New Territories Assemblies of God Church (Ping Shan), on 24 October 2021. According to the documents, Poon had closely worked with Annie Bailie in both China and Hong Kong for a long time. Apart from the documents, according to The Pentecostal Evangel, Bailie mentioned that she went to Pak Nai with a Bible woman called Tsz Nai, without mentioning her last name. See Annie Bailie, “In China Again,” The Pentecostal Evangel, no. 1723 (May 1947): 9. The Bible woman possibly refers to 潘慈惠 since Bailie and the woman had worked in Pak Nai during the same period. The author opines that although the last name of the Bible woman may be Poon, and although the name Poon Tsz Nai is consistent with 潘慈惠 in Cantonese, more evidence should be provided in order to confirm the real name of 潘慈惠 in English.

24Lam, “Legacy of the Spirit,” 100–03.
After the war, American and Canadian AG missionaries departed from China and came to Hong Kong due to political tension in China. The early missionaries, including Johnston, Bailie, Sadie McLeod (1915–1999), Blanche Pardo (1905–1979), and J. Elmor Morrison (1896–1965), devoted themselves to missions in Hong Kong. From the 1950s to the 1970s, due to increased demand for educational and social services among the lower-class people, the missionaries and Chinese Christians focused on planting churches, preaching the message of the full gospel, simultaneously conducting social and educational ministries.25

In 1953, McLeod and Pardo co-founded Assembly of God Shek Kip Mei Church, a historic AG church. They later co-founded Tuen Mun Assemblies of God Church in the New Territories and Assemblies of God West Point Church on Hong Kong Island.26 In 1954, with the assistance of Morrison, Siu Hoi Lei (1929–2010) also started evangelism and Bible and Chinese learning classes for children in Hong Lok Sun Chuen. The ministry “expanded into the fields of education and social services” in different locations, such as Wong Tai Sin, Tung Tau Estate, Wang Tau Hom, Ngau Tau Kok, and Diamond Hill.27 In 1964, Siu officially founded and registered PCHK, an independent AG denomination as a non-profit organization.28

Carmichael mentions that Hough and Bailie supervised churches and schools in the New Territories after the war.29 In fact, Poon Tai Koo, a Chinese woman recognized as a Bible woman in the Western AG circle but recognized as a pastor in local AG circles, also played a significant role in missions in the New Territories. In the early 1950s, New Territories Assemblies of God Church, which currently consists of three congregations, and Wai Kwan Primary School were co-founded by Bailie and Poon in Ping Shan, gradually penetrating the rural areas since the middle of the twentieth century.30 Assemblies of God Wa Wai Church was founded by A. Walker Hall (1908–1990) and Nell Funk (1909–2004) in the 1960s. Like Siu, the Halls started their mission, especially educational ministries, in the resettlement areas in 1963. From the 1960s to the 1970s, the church had conducted evangelism in various impecunious residential communities, such as Kwun Tong, Lam Tin, and

25Ibid., 104–07.
27Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong, Annual Report 2018-2020 (Hong Kong: Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong, 2020), 2.
29Carmichael mentioned the name Lula Belle Hough. The full name of Hough is Lula Bell Hough. Carmichael, “Hong Kong,” 14.
Sau Mau Ping. Since the 1980s, the church has adopted megachurch and cell group models and contemporary worship music.\textsuperscript{31}

Many HKAG churches had both global and local visions. Originating in Kam Tin, Yuen Long Kam Kwong Church has transformed from a village church into a megachurch in the center of Yuen Long Town. It is now the largest HKAG church, and planted its affiliated congregations in Los Angeles, Nepal, and Singapore.\textsuperscript{32}

International Christian Assembly (ICA) was founded in the early 1970s by Otis (1927–1997) and Irene Keener to evangelize the non-Chinese speaking groups in Hong Kong. ICA was one of the earliest English-speaking HKAG churches. It expanded its language ministries to include Sri Lankan, Indonesian, Nepali, Putonghua, Brazilian, Tamil, and Hindi. In 2014, ICA had over 30 weekly worship services at seven locations, with over 4,500 in attendance in Hong Kong.\textsuperscript{33} Kay notes that ICA contains 12 congregations and “is organised into 60 home groups.”\textsuperscript{34}

Mapping Hong Kong Assemblies of God Churches

There are four main HKAG associations within this largest Pentecostal denomination in Hong Kong:\textsuperscript{35} Ecclesia Ministries Limited, PCHK, General Council of Hong Kong Assemblies of God, and Asia Assembly Mission Council. Most HKAG associations and churches are members of Ecclesia Ministries Limited.\textsuperscript{36} PCHK contains seven

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 130–33.
\item \textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 136.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Ibid., 142–46.
\item \textsuperscript{34}Kay, “Empirical and historical perspectives,” 17.
\item \textsuperscript{35}It depends on how one defines the largest classical Pentecostal denomination. Based on the author’s observation, HKAG has the most congregations and churches in Hong Kong. Other large classical Pentecostal denominations in Hong Kong include Hong Kong Pentecostal Holiness Church, which has fourteen congregations and one small planted congregation associated with the congregation called Pentecostal Holiness Church Rousseau Memorial Assembly, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel Hong Kong District, which contains seven congregations, and True Jesus Church in Hong Kong, which consists of eight churches.
\item \textsuperscript{36}Ecclesia Ministries Limited currently comprises seven members, including Asia Assembly Mission Council, Assemblies of God Wa Wai Church, Christian Gospel Church of Love, New Territories Assemblies of God Church, Assemblies of God Holy Light Church, Ministry on the Rock, and Chinese Christian Workers’ Fellowship. As of November 2014, Ecclesia Ministries Limited also comprised other independent churches: Yuen Long Kam Kwong Church, Assemblies of God West Point Church, International Christian Assembly, Tuen Mun Assemblies of God Church, Assembly of God Paul Church, Hong Kong City Church, and Kingdom Pioneers Assembly. For the list of HKAG churches as of November 2014, see Edmund Tak-ming Cheung, ed., \textit{A Century of Assemblies of God China Mission – From South China to Hong Kong} (Hong Kong: Ecclesia Bible College, 2014), 156–57.
\end{itemize}
congregations. The General Council of Hong Kong Assemblies of God has several member churches. The Chinese Christian Assemblies of God contains two congregations.

Other AG churches include Assembly of God Shek Kip Mei Church, Shatin Assembly of God Church, and Assembly of God Caleb Church. As of November 2014, there were forty-six HKAG churches in the three main regions of Hong Kong, including twenty-seven in the New Territories, fifteen in Kowloon, and four on Hong Kong Island. In 2015, Kingdom Pioneers Assembly merged with Youquake Christian Church, becoming Ambassador Assembly.

Questions Derived from the Myths of Pentecostalism

Miller and Yamamori point out three Pentecostal stereotypes commonly rooted in individuals’ minds. They clarify that “while Pentecostals believe in the Holy Spirit, worship services are not always populated with people being slain in the spirit, speaking in tongues, prophesying, and having their crutches thrown away by faith healers.” They point out the second Pentecostal stereotype “that Pentecostals are lower-class, marginalized people for whom religion is an opiate” as well as the third stereotype “that Pentecostals are so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good.” However, “while there is some truth to each of these three perceptions, the reality is much more complex.”

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37 PCHK currently comprises seven congregations in Hong Kong, including Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong Chuk Yuen Church (PCHK Chuk Yuen Church), PCHK Tai Po Church, PCHK Holy Mountain Church, PCHK Hang Hau Chapel, PCHK Sau Mau Ping Chapel, PCHK Church of Praise, and PCHK Grace Chapel. It has another congregation in Macau, namely Pentecostal Macau Gospel Church. For the organization chart of PCHK as of 2020, see Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong, *Annual Report 2018-2020*, 8.
38 It has several members, including Assembly of God Yuen Long Gospel Centre, Assembly of God Chapel of Praise, Fanling Assembly of God Church, Assembly of God Grace Light Church, and Assembly of God Mission Center of Grace.
39 Cheung, ed., *China Mission*, 158–59. Yuen Long Kam Kwong Church has a congregation located in Kam Tin, namely Kam Kwong Nepali Christian Church, which has not been mentioned.
Since many scholars and researchers have responded to these stereotypes, this study does not offer straightforward responses to such over-generalizations. Rather, it will investigate the realities and trajectories of HKAG churches, starting with questions that compare the churches with stereotypes of Pentecostalism and extract a set of questions from stereotypes of Pentecostalism as a starting point to investigate and reveal the realities and trajectories of HKAG churches. First, to what extent are their worship and spiritual practices consistent with the typical images of Pentecostalism? Second, in the case of HKAG churches, who are the congregations and what are their roles in the churches? Finally, how do they respond to society or to their residential communities? The study’s findings are based on case studies of HKAG churches who responded to these questions. The following discussions involve some cases of HKAG churches responding to the questions.

**Worship and Spiritual Manifestations in the Churches**

Historically, “early Pentecostal worship gatherings were marked by the creation of space for people to be baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.” However, nowadays, the forms and styles of Pentecostal worship services vary, and Pentecostals do not necessarily speak in tongues during worship rituals. These practices happen in some Pentecostal churches, but some churches prefer to practice spiritual gifts in small group meetings or on special occasions.

Yuen Long Kam Kwong Church holds one Sunday morning prayer meeting and ten worship services every week. On Sundays, thousands attend the worship services. Before the Sunday worship services, the church holds the morning prayer meetings with over one thousand

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46Miller, “Progressive Pentecostalism,” 278.

47One worship service for adults on Friday, three worship services for the elderly, secondary school students, and young adults respectively on Saturday, and six worship services, including one service for the youth, two services for adults, and two services for children, and one service held in Kam Tin Church, located in Kam Tin Main Road, on Sunday.
The church embraces praying or speaking in tongues and contemporary and popular Christian music in its worship services. Its public worship is emotional, interactive, and mercurial. During worship services, most congregation members are jubilant and typically applaud, lift up their hands, cry out, and speak in tongues. Worship leaders interact with the congregations and lead prayers in tongues. During cell group meetings, the congregations also practice the same.

A former member, who attended Kam Kwong Church for ten years, reveals that speaking in tongues is a very common phenomenon in the church and claims that almost all members would pray or speak in tongues during worship and prayer sections. The regular worship services and divine healing services were typically held separately. During the public healing meeting, the prayer section would last longer, and the congregations would be asked to lift up their hands to pray for and ask for divine healing for those who have serious diseases.

First Assembly of God Church provides similar worship services, but it has a strong preference for contemporary Cantonese and Chinese worship music rather than English worship music. Its congregation members are encouraged to lift up their hands and sing praise to God during public worship. Speaking in tongues can be observed during its worship sections. AG churches like Kam Kwong Church and First Assembly of God Church clearly embrace Pentecostal spirituality and traditionalism.

In contrast, the services of New Territories Assemblies of God Church (Ping Shan) are less emotional and interactive. The church prefers contemporary Cantonese worship music to globally popular worship music, though the latter plays an indirect role in the services. The congregations of Ping Shan Church are generally quiet and passive during the services. During the cell group meetings, the author observed

49Anonymous 1, Private conversation, 7 November 2021.
50For example, in 2018, there were three public healing services held in the church, namely ‘The 6th Kam Kwong Healing Crusade’ on 31 March 2018, ‘The 7th Kam Kwong Healing Crusade’ on 6 October 2018, and ‘The 8th Kam Kwong Healing Crusade’ on 15 December 2018. See Celia Hui, ed., Kam Kwong Post 63 (December 2018), 8.
51Anonymous 1, Private conversation, 7 November 2021.
52For instance, on 7 November 2021, during the first Sunday service at 9:00 am, the pastor kneeled on the floor and started praying or speaking in tongues during the worship section after the sermon.
53Wilson Ip, one of the two ministers of Ping Shan Church, has translated many global Christian worship songs produced by famous Christian music bands or producers, such as Hillsong Worship, Bethel Music, Joshua Band, and Stream of Praise Music Ministries, into Cantonese. The church sometimes performs these translated songs in the worship services.
that the cell members sang very quietly during worship and did not speak in tongues during the meetings.54

Cheng Siu Hung, one of two ministers of Ping Shan Church, asserts that the church does not emphasize charismatic manifestations such as glossolalia, especially during public worship. Cheng opines that the church is open to the working of the Spirit, and speaking in tongues is not prohibited because it belongs to the AG tradition. However, he also notes that the church, as a conservative Pentecostal church, is inclined to the Evangelical tradition: seeking the truth is more important than charismatic manifestations. He deems that speaking in tongues has been controversial among different Christian traditions in Hong Kong since the 1980s, and the spiritual manifestations may create misunderstanding or public fear of others.55

Similarly, Assembly of God Chapel of Praise does not emphasize speaking in tongues in its services, nor does it have a strong preference for English worship music in its public worship services. Like many Pentecostal churches, its worship services begin with cheerful and passionate contemporary Cantonese and Chinese worship songs and end with emotional and touching worship music. During the worship, the worship team occasionally interacts with the congregations, instructing people to pray and clap their hands. Yet, the collective manifestation of speaking in tongues among both worship team members and congregations is absent.56

Lau Wai Yip, the senior pastor of Chapel of Praise, reveals that the church has never pursued the gifts of the Spirit throughout its history. Lau mentions that the early church pioneers did not really have ecstatic experiences of the Spirit and that the congregations find the spiritual gifts very weird. They do not expect spiritual manifestations to occur in the church. However, he wants to restore the identity of his church as a Pentecostal church with spiritual gifts and divine healing. Under his leadership, the church has held seasonal conferences promoting Pentecostalism and courses that introduce Pentecostal theology, histories of Pentecostalism, and spiritual gifts.57

Ingalls mentions that currently, “diverse yet recognizable expressions of corporate worship and music making are hallmark features of pentecostal spirituality across the broad reach of the

54The author visited New Territories Assemblies of God Church (Ping Shan), located in Ping Shan, and attended its Sunday worship services from July 2021 to November 2021 as well as one of its cell group meetings three times at a house of the church member from October 2021 to November 2021.
55Cheng Siu Hung, Interview, 7 November 2021.
56The author visited Assembly of God Chapel of Praise, located in Sheung Shui, and attended four Sunday services of the church in November 2021.
57Lau Wai Yip, Interview, 21 November 2021.
movement.” However, unlike Kam Kwong Church and First Assembly of God Church, Ping Shan Church seeks to privatize spiritual practices and does not expect public spiritual manifestations to avoid potential theological conflicts and any misunderstanding from others. Evangelistic-Charismatic dualism is a mainstream discourse within local Christian circles. Many classify different churches into two categories, namely Evangelical tradition and Charismatic tradition, based on whether the churches practice charismata (especially glossolalia) and whether the churches encourage their congregations to pursue the ecstatic experiences of the Spirit.

In Hong Kong, many Evangelical churches have published official statements to impugn the Charismatic movement and spiritual gifts. Certainly, Hong Kong is not the only Chinese context where Christians are sensitive to the term Charismatic. Due to the theological controversy over spiritual gifts, Pentecostal churches like Ping Shan Church tend to privatize spiritual practices. However, interestingly, Chapel of Praise seems to pursue ‘re-Pentecostalization.’ While Ping Shan Church does not emphasize the spiritual gifts and Pentecostal identity, Chapel of Praise intends to reshape the congregational understanding of the spiritual manifestations and restore the centennial Pentecostal legacy. Re-Pentecostalization may serve as an alternative reality for Pentecostal churches, such as Chapel of Praise, which struggle with Pentecostal tradition to restore spiritual manifestations and reshape their Pentecostal identity.

59In the Chinese context, Charismatic tradition often refers to lingenpai or ling’en pai that may have a negative connotation to many Pentecostal churches. They and many Chinese churches having some ling’en in their beliefs and practices often refuse to be labelled as lingenpai jiaohui (Charismatic churches). See, for example, Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson, eds. Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
60In his study of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in contemporary China, Liu finds that Chinese Christians generally intend to perceive Charismatic Christianity as heresy or cult, and those Chinese Christians having some Charismatic traits often regard their traits as spiritual traits instead of Charismatic traits. Chinese church leaders and adherents having the spiritual traits do not like to be called either Pentecostals or Charismatics. His study of the spiritual churches in Henan clearly reveals this phenomenon. Liu Yi, Global Pentecostalism & Local Christianity: A Life History (New Taipei City, Taiwan: Taiwan Christian Literature Council and Taoyuan City, Taiwan: Research Center for Chinese Christianity, Chung Yuan Christian University, 2018), 15, 83, 159–60, 181.
Complexity and Hybridity of Pentecostal Congregations:  
A Case Study

There is not sufficient evidence to assert that Pentecostals are destitute and marginalised. Historically, this was quite true.\(^\text{61}\) However, the circumstances have changed. Suico noted:

As Pentecostal membership worldwide is no longer strictly confined to the poorest of the poor, it now has within its ranks people from a wide range of socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Already there is a growing number of Pentecostals taking higher education and actively involved in various forms of academic disciplines.\(^\text{62}\)

The case study of Yuen Long Kam Kwong Church exemplifies the complexity and hybridity of HKAG congregations, but is not a generalization of the realities of all HKAG churches.

The demographic of Kam Kwong Church is complex and hybrid. Many congregations are university students, well-educated young adults, professionals, and wealthy people. Yet, its congregational structure is not haphazard. Instead, it is structurally stratified. Like numerous Pentecostal churches, Kam Kwong Church generally divides its congregations into several zones by age, such as Youth Zone, Tertiary Zone, Young Adult Zone, and Adult Zone. Congregations may not share similar socio-economic backgrounds but are arranged into ‘Family-based’ groups led by Family Pastors. In each Family, zones are led by zone leaders and further divided into cell groups led by cell leaders. The church also has specialized professional fellowships which are programs based on different professions.\(^\text{63}\)

Kam Kwong Church members can devote themselves to the church services by voluntarily joining service teams such as the Translation Team, Worship Team, and Audio Visual Team. The youth ministry team, called the Joyful & Peaceful Team (JP Team), includes university and

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\(^\text{63}\) In 2018, the Professional Fellowships comprised Businessmen Fellowship, Disciplinary Force Fellowship, Accounting and Finance Fellowship, Medical and Healthcare Fellowship, Education Fellowship, and Social Service Fellowship, and each of these fellowships was led by an elite, professional, or expert. In 2019, the inauguration of the Engineers Fellowship was announced. Fun Lee, ed., Kam Kwong Post 58 (February 2018), 5; Celia Hui, ed., Kam Kwong Post 68 (October 2019), 11.
secondary school students. Its publication shows that from June 2019 to August 2019, the JP Team had reached over 5,700 lives, and over 580 of them were converted. The purpose of its youth ministry is to “win the campus today, win the world tomorrow.” They reached different groups of people and visited a variety of housing estates, primary schools, and secondary schools.64

The members with professions and youth members of Kam Kwong Church exemplify that they have been spiritually transformed, blessed by God, and become the outstanding and fully-committed Christians who are called to bring love and hope to different groups of individuals. Their narratives and personal stories testify how spiritual transformation has led them to rethink the meaning of life and further pursue their dreams for God. Noel notes, “Pentecostals instinctively recognized the power of the individual story as a means of connecting communities and communicating truth, much as postmoderns today value the same.”65 In the case of Kam Kwong Church the mobilization for evangelism of energetic and zealous adherents, especially university students and professionals, seems effective. By epitomizing themselves as Spirit-transformed Christians, the adherents influence or convert individuals with similar backgrounds and struggles.

Social Engagement

In the eyes of many Christians, the separation of the spiritual and secular is embedded into the mindsets of Pentecostals. Dermawan notes that such “otherworldliness implies simple dualism between the world and heaven.” Their ‘heavenly’-mindedness leads Pentecostals “to focus only on such activities which they consider as spiritual,” such as saving souls, and they “neglect activities that are considered as secular.”66 Suico also points out that “although Pentecostals believe their message is relevant to people and to the larger society, they have also been perceived as indifferent toward social, economic and political issues.”67 Historically, as Smith points out, “Pentecostals were largely apolitical and otherworldly.”68 However, Smith finds that “global Pentecostalism has

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64 Celia Hui, ed., Kam Kwong Post 67 (August 2019), 1.
65 Bradley Truman Noel, Pentecostalism, Secularism, and Post Christendom (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 159.
moved on from the apolitical and otherworldly stereotype” and that “without losing their sense of the heavenly, Pentecostals, by and large, are thoroughly this-worldly, practical and concerned with the here and now, engaging the political and economic spheres at various levels.”

Brandner provides examples of Pentecostal interaction with the public sphere of Hong Kong, ranging from traditional public ministry, including social and educational services, to direct political participation. HKAG churches have consistently and actively engaged in social services and political issues. Kam Kwong Integrated Community Service Center - Yuen Long (KKICSC), the social service center of Kam Kwong Church, has launched various creative social ministry activities to serve families in need, cancer patients, the elderly, and ethnic minorities. It also empowers the powerless to serve their neighbours by recruiting cancer survivors, tutorial school owners, university students, and registered and retired social workers, to join the team, in order “to bring love and care into the community and serve the disadvantaged groups with the love of Christ.”

Its social enterprise project ‘Dream Home Artistry’ serves as an opportunity for women and teenagers to serve schools and social institutions with talents such as design, photography, makeup, and performance. Project tutors include housewives, people with physical disabilities, adolescents seeking employment, and ethnic minorities. A pastor of Kam Kwong Church notes,

Today, if we desire to live a life “to love our neighbour” and “truly” help others, it is a must to “touch the hearts” of the people in order to understand the needs of them. The example of the Samaritan shows us that we have to be filled with compassion and also taking action to reach out to those who are in need. This is how we should serve and become a true neighbour.

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72Fun Lee, ed., Kam Kwong Post 60 (July 2018), 10.
73Celia Hui, ed., Kam Kwong Post 63 (December 2018), 7.
74Amanda Ng, “Who is the True Neighbour?” Kam Kwong Post 65 (April 2019), 1.
Meanwhile, the messages of repentance, confession, and the working of the Spirit preached by the pastoral leaders have deeply penetrated the congregations.75

PCHK also offers diverse social ministries. It has provided poor children with schooling services since the 1950s.76 PCHK has two departments specializing in two types of ministries: the Education Department with both primary and secondary schooling services, and the Social Welfare Department, which governs the social service institutions.77 The church “aim[s] at spreading the gospel and promoting the welfare of the Hong Kong community in order to achieve the ultimate goal of glorifying God and benefiting men.”78

The recent annual report of PCHK shows that it has allocated significant resources to its social services, including the recruitment of more professionals in its three nursery schools. Its model of cross-professional cooperation for the nursery schools utilizes individuals with a variety of professions and occupations, such as an educational psychologist, an occupational therapist, a speech therapist, a school nurse, school social workers, a full-time native English teacher, a full-time Mandarin teacher, preschool teachers, and special child care workers. In September 2020, the Social Welfare Department of PCHK established two service units: the TARGET Diverse Development Centre79 and the Whole Person Training Centre. The former deployed a cross-profession team to run, design and lead activities for students with special educational needs. From August to October 2020, the latter offered a certificate program to equip the church staff with knowledge and skills to provide professional support for such children.80 Some AG churches, such as Kam Kwong Church and PCHK, intensively diversify their social ministries, while others specialize in theirs. For example,

76For a brief historical background of PCHK and its educational ministries, see Rhoda Chan, “The Establishment and Development of Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong,” in 60th Anniversary Booklet of Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong, ed. Rhoda Chan (Hong Kong: Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong, 2014), 12–15.
77Two primary schools, Assembly of God Leung Sing Tak Primary School and Assembly of God St. Hilary’s College, and one secondary school, Assembly of God Hebron Secondary School, operate under the Education Department. Social service institutions, include four elderly centres, three nursery schools, one family centre, one sheltered workshop, and a hostel. These operate under the Social Welfare Department, which also provides other social services. For the organization chart of PCHK, see Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong, Annual Report 2018-2020, 8.
78Pentecostal Church of Hong Kong, Annual Report 2018-2020, 2.
79TARGET: Teach, Assist, Reach, God, Establish, and Transform.
since the beginning, New Territories Assemblies of God Church has particularly focused on educational ministries among the poor. Oberg notes,

In Hong Kong, [Bailie] helped to establish and operate four schools, provided scholarships to young Christians, and returned to the ministry of hospital visitation and tract distribution like she had done in her early years in Pennsylvania. Many were saved, healed, encouraged, and filled with the Spirit due to her loving ministry.81

Historically, the educational ministries of church founders preceded the establishment of the church.82 Similarly, Fanling Assembly of God Church also emphasizes the educational ministries as well as other social ministries.83 Although it has mainly served the communities in Fanling, its schools (Assembly of God Union Church Kindergarten and Christian Little Tree Kindergarten), have reached Sha Tin, the New Territories, and Ngau Tau Kok, Kowloon respectively. These cases challenge Pentecostal stereotypes and exemplify the diversity and continuity of their social ministries.

Political Engagement in the Current Context

In 2019, the anti-extradition law amendment bill movement occurred in Hong Kong. After the Government proposed the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019, different activists quickly responded to the announcement arguing for or against the bill. On 26 May 2019, a group of AG adherents initiated a petition to express their concern that the

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82Cheng, Interview, 7 November 2021. For a brief description of different educational ministries provided by Bailie, Johnston, and Poon since the post-war context of Hong Kong, see Lam, “Legacy of the Spirit,” 124–26.
83Several schools are associated with Fanling Assembly of God Church: Assembly of God Union Church Kindergarten, Christian Little Tree Kindergarten, The Fanling Assemblies of God Kindergarten, Fanling Assembly of God Church Grace Light Kindergarten, Fanling Assembly of God Church Grace Light Child Care Centre, and Fanling Assembly of God Church Primary School. Fanling Assembly of God Church Grace Light Kindergarten and Fanling Assembly of God Church Grace Light Child Care Centre are currently combined as Fanling Assembly Of God Church Grace Light Kindergarten and Child Care Centre, located in the same place in Fanling, the New Territories. Fanling Assembly of God Church has also provided a variety of social services through Fanling Assembly of God Church Social Services Department.
Government had overlooked public voices of skepticism and opposition and to urge the Government to value public opinion.

As socio-political tensions continued, on 20 July 2019, fifty-eight individuals, including AG pastors, leaders, and adherents, initiated a petition condemning the Government and proposing the five requests. By referring to Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17, the initiators insisted that the authority on earth belonged to God and should maintain social justice and peace, and the churches should warn or even condemn the authority when it went wrong. On 10 December 2020, four Christian groups, including a group of AG adherents, initiated a petition showing support for Good Neighbour North District Church as the initiators believed the church had been oppressed by the Government.

Many HKAG churches have devoted themselves to social ministries and evangelism simultaneously, and some have professionalized their social ministries. Professionalization of the social ministries helps churches build up a professional image. It empowers them to serve not only the poor but also people with complex needs, penetrating different social communities and becoming part of their residential ecology. Miller notes,

Historically, it is true that Pentecostals were very other-worldly, with many of their members evangelising their neighbours as they waited expectantly for the imminent return of Christ. This other-worldly characteristic of Pentecostalism, however, is changing. There is an emergent group of Pentecostals who are pursuing the integral or holistic gospel in response to what they see as the example of Jesus who ministered both to people’s physical needs as well as preached about the coming Kingdom of God.

Miller and Yamamori call them Progressive Pentecostals and their emergent movement Progressive Pentecostalism. Progressive Pentecostal churches are programmatic in their social ministries, and “their social ministries are available to everyone in the community and, therefore, they are not simply incentives for people to convert to Christianity or join their church.” Many HKAG churches are

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84Namely the official withdrawal of the extradition bill, retraction of the classification of protesters as the rioters, establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into alleged police brutality, cessation of all searches and prosecutions which would spread the White Terror, and demand of holding the chief executive and principal officials accountable.

85Miller, “Progressive Pentecostalism,” 278.

86Miller and Yamamori, Global Pentecostalism, 2.

87Miller, “Progressive Pentecostalism,” 280.
inclined toward Progressive Pentecostalism, though they may not be de
facto Progressive Pentecostal churches. The urgency of social problems
and crises has long concerned them. Some Pentecostal churches do not
see that the work of the Spirit takes place in a socio-political arena.\footnote{Kung points out that the Pentecostals and Evangelicals “understand the work of
the Spirit chiefly on an individual level” and “see that the work of the Spirit mainly takes
place within the ecclesial (institutional) context, not in a socio-political arena.” Lap-yan
of Pentecostal Studies} 4, no. 1 (January 2001): 8.}
Some never speak of social issues because they are inclined to
otherworldliness.\footnote{Lap-yan Kung, “Globalization, Ecumenism and Pentecostalism: A Search for
Human Solidarity in Hong Kong,” \textit{Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies} 6, no. 1 (January
2003): 117.} However, numerous HKAG churches have focused
on social ministries and directly participated in the political realm.
Brandner observes that “the idea of standing at a crossroads is a common
feature of scholarly discussions of Pentecostalism.”\footnote{Brandner, “Public Sphere,” 135.}
Similarly, HKAG churches are standing at a crossroads.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Although this study could not comprehensively depict the realities
of all HKAG churches, the case studies demonstrate that HKAG
churches have multifaceted trajectories in social ministries. They have
experienced the efforts of foreign and local missionaries throughout a
century and have diverse understandings of Pentecostal spirituality and
traditions. Although the churches are denominational and share
commonalities, their multifaceted trajectories and realities make them
peculiar and unique as they serve all for God.
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Seedtime to Harvest: The History of the Assemblies of God in Cambodia
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To the Ends of the Earth: Building a National Missionary Sending Structure
Arto Hamalainen and Ulf Strohbehn

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies
A Legacy of Faithfulness:
USA Assemblies of God Pioneer Missionary
Work in China
by Michael Berley

Introduction

The first quarter of the twentieth century marked the high point for missionary work in China. Many missionaries and Chinese Christians had sacrificed their lives for their faith as the new century dawned but prior waves of Christianity had resulted in little or no remaining fruit. What happened in the early years of the century testifies to the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.

J. Philip Hogan served as the executive director of Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) USA from 1959 to 1989 and had a special burden for China, based on his own experience as a missionary there and Taiwan, from 1946 to 1949. During their first term, they were caught in the ongoing civil war in China between the Communists and the Kuomintang. On one occasion, Hogan saw dead bodies stacked on top of each other by the side of a road and asked himself, “What is the strange god of these young people that will cause them to make this kind of sacrifice? It is going to cost us something to preach Jesus around the world in this hour.”

Hogan committed his career to several foundational principles. As the executive director, in one of his missionary messages entitled “Missionary Work Today” he outlined four of those principles. First, despite living in a rapidly changing world, the Great Commission is unchangeable. Second, missionary motivation must flow from God’s call. The necessity of obeying that call burns like a fire that identifies closely with the Apostle Paul: “Woe is me if I preach not the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:16). Third, the world is inhabited by fallen people and Jesus Christ is the only remedy. This conviction compels Christians to go to the ends of the earth to seek the lost. Fourth, works of compassion

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1Michael Berley is a psuedonym for a global worker who has been working with the Chinese for over thirty years.
will always play an important role in Christian missions. The Church ministers to people’s needs because that is what Jesus did. All four principles support a three-fold mandate to preach the gospel, make disciples, and plant churches.³

Hogan closed that message by challenging his audience not to confine the Great Commission to a spiritual museum. Its relevance for the Church today demands that “we must make every sacrifice, use every tool, and summon every resource, that this gospel of the kingdom may be preached into all the world for a witness.”⁴ Because of his indomitable character and tenure as director, Hogan’s philosophy would have a strong impact on AGWM missions during and long after his time in office.

The following narratives, some of which pre-date Hogan, were birthed in spiritual revivals and the prayers of people desperate for God’s presence. These are the stories of men and women living in perilous times and a changing world, who believed God had called them. They responded obediently, sacrificing a great deal in the process. In China, they responded to human need with works of compassion. Some saw great revivals as a result of their obedience. Communities and people groups were changed. Others saw little to no fruit from their labor, yet they forged forward. They believed that by breaking up the spiritual ground and planting the seed of God’s Word, the day would come when there would be a harvest. These are their stories.

William Wallace Simpson (1869-1961)

William Wallace Simpson was born in 1869 in a one-room log cabin in eastern Tennessee. At the age of twenty-one, he served as a pastor of a small congregation for four months. He taught weekdays in a local school and preached on Sundays. On the second Monday after starting his pastoral responsibilities, he opened his Bible at random to find his text for the following Sunday. He read Mark 16:15: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” He thought that would make a good text, but upon reading it again, he felt it would not be honest for him to preach from that text if he was not practicing it himself. Kneeling in his room, he prayed: “Lord, I am only a poor mountain boy with little talent but I will obey you with all my heart.”⁵

Simpson attended the Missionary Training Institute, run by A. B. Simpson of the Christian and Missionary Alliance,—to prepare for

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⁴Ibid.
missionary service. On February 14, 1892, he read Romans 15:20 where Paul declared his ambition not to build on another’s foundation, but to preach the gospel where it had not yet been declared. Simpson decided that verse suited him and that he would attempt to do the same. He had heard that Tibet was closed to missionaries. The following day he went to see A. B. Simpson and informed him of his decision to be a missionary to Tibet. Pastor Simpson took down his personal prayer book and showed W. W. his entry for that day: “Took by faith that the Lord would call some students to Tibet.”

W. W. Simpson arrived in Shanghai in April 1892. He met with James Hudson Taylor and asked his opinion on the feasibility of settling in Tibet for mission work. Taylor frankly laid out several requirements for a successful entrance into Tibet. First, learn the Chinese language and customs. Second, understand the Mandarin system of government and how to deal with government officials. Third, learn the Tibetan language. Finally, they must expect that spiritual forces would oppose them at every step.

Although Simpson wrote that he was willing to study for as long as necessary in order to master the languages, but he also seemed to expect that God would give him a supernatural endowment. When he arrived at CMA headquarters in central China, the director told him to begin language study on May 20. Simpson objected saying that he was praying and trusting God to give him the language. The director told Simpson he would wait until noon to see if God had answered his prayers. If, by noon, he could not speak Chinese, he must start his classes. Simpson later wrote: “I prayed the Lord to guide and He led me to submit.”

By 1908, the CMA missionaries in Gansu Province had heard of the Holy Spirit outpouring at Azusa Street. In January, forty local Chinese believers joined the nine missionaries for a week of meetings. At that time, no one expected anything unusual to occur, since they all accepted the CMA stance that they had already received by faith the baptism of the Spirit. Nevertheless, on Friday afternoon, one of the Chinese brothers began to shake and started speaking in tongues. While Simpson was

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6Romans 15:20ff was the basis for Simpson’s belief that Paul had missed God’s will in traveling to Jerusalem (Acts 21-23) instead of continuing with his stated ambition of preaching the gospel where it had not yet been proclaimed. He mentioned this in his 1950 sermon, “Redeem the Time” (p. 4) as well as his 1952 message “Why Not Discern This Time?” (p. 10).


8McGee, 48.

praying, “Lord, what does it mean?” he heard the Chinese brother speak in perfect English, “Eternity is nigh.”

Returning home from the convention, Simpson announced to his family and to Grace Agar, another CMA missionary working with them in Gansu, that he was seeking the baptism of the Spirit as in Acts 2:4.

Four years later, on May 5, 1912, Simpson received the baptism of the Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. The following morning, Chow Chao-nan, a Confucian scholar and one of the first converts in that area, visited Simpson and began speaking in tongues. Over the next two days, Simpson’s wife and daughter received Spirit baptism and his ten-year-old son, Willie, began to speak in tongues in their kitchen. Simpson’s daughter, Margaret, who had just received, laid hands on one of her Chinese friends who immediately began speaking in tongues. The next day so many came that they had to put the men in one room and the women and girls in another. Over the next ten days, over thirty local believers were filled as in Acts 2:4.

By 1913, W. W. had notified A. B. Simpson that virtually the entire work in northwest China was Pentecostal. However, the CMA leadership could not accept the new movement and wrote to Simpson regarding their position: “We hold that the consecrated believer may receive the Holy Spirit in His fullness without speaking in tongues or without any supernatural manifestations whatever.” Since the Simpsons were unwilling to sign that doctrinal statement and unwilling to refrain from preaching and teaching about Spirit baptism from a Pentecostal perspective, the CMA leadership asked them to resign as missionaries. In 1915, Simpson met with the General Council in St. Louis and chose to affiliate with the Assemblies of God.

Simpson ministered through periods of political turmoil as various warlords vied for control of the area. This civil unrest coupled with drought conditions contributed to famine in both 1923 and 1928. Simpson added famine relief to their preaching and teaching ministries. He established a home for famine orphans. In addition, Simpson earlier had introduced potatoes to Northwest China. These potatoes withstood drought conditions better than other crops. These “Simpson potatoes” saved the lives of countless thousands.

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13 Ibid.
Even though Simpson conducted the bulk of his missionary work in the Gansu-Tibetan border area, he also traveled to other provinces where he evangelized and taught in local Bible schools. Simpson, along with B. T. Bard, frequently taught at Truth Bible Institute (TBI), which was established in 1936 in Beijing. TBI claims to be one of the earliest Bible schools of the American Assemblies of God. However, prior to its opening, Marie Stephany and Henrietta Tieleman at the Ta Ch’ang Mission Station in Shanxi Province had opened another training school. B. T. Bard wrote: “The dying masses of China who are still in utter darkness of sin . . . can only be reached with the assistance of a strong and well-trained corps of native workers.”

Pentecostal ministry with frequent reports of speaking in tongues, gifts of the Spirit, healings, and exorcisms marked Simpson’s travels. Several testified to witnessing people raised from the dead. Simpson served in China until 1949, when at the age of eighty, he was forced to leave the country.

His primary missionary methodology focused on establishing churches and discipling local believers to become pastors and evangelists. Several years ago, David Plymire, whose parents were contemporaries of Simpson and also worked among the Tibetans, visited southern Gansu Province to see what, if any, fruit remained from Simpson’s work. He discovered that several churches, despite the Chinese government’s stand against denominationalism, still identified as “Assemblies of God.” Furthermore, church bookstores still sold books containing copies of Simpson’s sermons.

Harold Armstrong Baker (1881-1971)

H. A. Baker and his wife Josephine had been working for five years on the China-Tibetan border when they first met Pentecostal missionaries who told them about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. During their furlough back to the United States, they received Spirit baptism and spoke in tongues.

The Bakers’ ministry in China centered on two primary works. First, they opened an orphanage that became famous because of a revival among the boys in the 1930s. Many of the boys in the orphanage received visions of heaven and hell. Baker’s book, Visions Beyond the Veil, documented these events and was eventually published in thirteen languages and sold tens of thousands of copies.

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16David Plymire, Unpublished report of his trip to Gansu Province from August 18-28, 2015.
17McGee, 97.
During a season when Baker was experiencing a crisis in his career, he encountered a boy crying in the streets. This young boy had been working in the local tin mines. Too sick to work, he had been thrown out on the streets to beg for food. Baker invited the boy home with him and provided him with clothes to wear and food to eat.\textsuperscript{18} The Adullam Mission launched that day. Baker took the name “Adullam” from 1 Samuel 22:1-2 which describes the distressed, poor, and disconsolate joining David.

At one point over 100 children lived at Adullam. During the last two years of operation, the orphanage ministered to approximately eighty children. Every day, the residents studied the Bible and contributed to the support of the orphanage through such chores as gardening, carpentry, and other tasks.

The Bakers’ second primary work focused on minority peoples scattered throughout the mountains of southern Yunnan province. Baker referred to these people as the Ka Do. Both of these ministries resulted from Baker’s conviction that Jesus had been anointed by the Spirit to preach the gospel to the poor:

Why spend so much effort on stony ground when richer soil lay all about me? I would seek the poor, the meek. And where would I find them? Were they not the homeless boys on the street who were begging their daily food while the well-fed boys of the “better class” were yelling “foreign devil” at me? Yes, I would go to the poor whom Jesus loved. I would go to the beggar boys on the street. And were the “poor” not also the neglected and despised primitive tribes in the barren mountains all about that rich and fertile valley? Yes, I would go to these mountaineers too.\textsuperscript{19}

Even though Baker did not preach in the tribal languages, he became one with the people of the villages. His methodology was simple. First, build self-supporting churches. Second, travel simple. This meant that he adopted the clothing, the food, and the lodging of the villagers.

Third, preaching and teaching could be scheduled anywhere. He preached in kitchens, courtyards, underneath trees—wherever it proved convenient for those listening. Fourth, he was Pentecostal. Miracles of healing, casting out of demons, speaking in tongues as villagers were baptized in the Spirit, prophecies, and visions followed his ministry.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18}H. A. Baker, \textit{Seeking and Saving} (Mojiang, Yunnan, CHINA: Adullam Reading Campaign, 1940), 46-47.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., 45-46.
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 119.
The Joshua Project states that Baker played a significant role in starting thirty-three Ka Do churches prior to 1950. By 1986, the Ka Do numbered 40,000 followers of Christ with over 150 full-time Christian workers. In Mojiang County, one-third of the 5,200 believers were teenagers and 35 percent of all Ka Do today are Christians.

**Les Anglin (1882-1942)**

Les Anglin was born in 1882 in Georgia. Twice during his childhood, he miraculously escaped death. However, another event marked him for life. When three beggars came to his home, he noticed that his mother gave them food. Les asked later: “How do you know that these beggars are not just lazy men unwilling to work?”

His mother replied: “Perhaps that is true. But we must give them the benefit of the doubt.” She continued by telling Les the story of the Good Samaritan and reminded him of 1 John 3:17 which says that we cannot say we love God if we fail to respond to meet the need of our brother when we have the resources to do so. Les never forgot.

Les and Ava Anglin married in 1904. Family circumstances took them to New Mexico, where a meeting with a faith missionary, T. L. Blalock, changed the direction of their lives. Blalock influenced them to commit to serve in China. They were assigned to the city of Tai-an and arrived there in 1910. Their daughter, Margaret Evelyn, died shortly after their arrival. She was only 16 months old. Her death left them with many questions. “Had they not given up everything to serve as missionaries? How could God take their little girl?”

The Anglins devoted their ministry to evangelism. Les would study maps and plot ways to strategically saturate the area with a gospel witness. As he preached, he began to realize that foreign missionaries could never effectively evangelize the country. A plan evolved for training new converts and preparing them for ministry. Moreover, if this plan was to succeed, it would require strong Christian families to live out the message and support local churches.

A chance meeting with a street beggar during one of their evangelistic trips changed the direction of the Anglin’s ministry. They

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23 Ibid., 32-43.
24 Ibid., 44-45.
shared their food with this little boy named Lieu. Lieu later became the first orphan admitted to the Home of Onesiphorus.\(^{25}\)

Anglin’s purchase of a small home in Tai-an led to the establishment of the orphanage named the Home of Onesiphorus. The chosen name came from 2 Timothy 1:16: “The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not afraid of my chains” (NASB). Many people needed a place of refreshing and rest during that season of turbulence in China’s history.\(^{26}\)

By 1927, 500 children and 100 adults lived at the Home of Onesiphorus. During a famine in 1928, the number swelled to 1,150 residents. Some have described the Anglin’s ministry in Tai-an and the Home of Onesiphorus as an example of community development. Each child learned a trade. Some boys learned tailoring while the girls learned to sew. They purchased looms for weaving, and when they produced more cloth than the home needed, they sold the excess and used the profits to help with other expenses. One group of boys learned carpentry skills and built furniture. Shoemaking provided shoes for all the children in the house. They made so many shoes that they began selling an average of a hundred pairs a week in the surrounding community. Then they purchased a flour mill and began to grind grain making their own flour.\(^{27}\)

In the winter of 1925, the home’s flour mill saved the entire community. Warlords prevailed in 1920s China as rival armies fought to extend their territories. Two such armies were fighting in the Tai-an area, when one army needed food. The general demanded food from the townspeople made from the best available flour. The community could not fulfill the request and, in desperation, asked the Home of Onesiphorus if they could grind flour for them if they provided the grain. The flour mill ran day and night for several days and the city was saved.\(^{28}\)

News of the home spread throughout the area. Two girls with their mother and brother walked eighty miles to ask for help. Five boys walked forty miles. The Anglins could not say no to anyone who asked for help.\(^{29}\)

Not all in the missionary community understood the Anglin’s vision. In the early stages of the work, Anglin frequently heard comments criticizing him for giving up evangelistic work for orphan ministry.

\(^{25}\)Ibid., 48-49. The background of Peng Lieu is told in Les Anglin, Repairing the Breach (Milwaukee, WI: Word and Witness Publishing, 1933).

\(^{26}\)Cathy Ketcher, “The Onesiphorus Man,” Worldview 1, no. 6 (June 2015), 24-31.

\(^{27}\)Albus, 65-68.

\(^{28}\)Ketcher, 30.

\(^{29}\)Albus, 73.
Others asked if he had forgotten the importance of preaching the gospel.\(^{30}\)

In actuality, evangelism became the centerpiece of the ministry of the Home of Onesiphorus. They had adopted a long-range plan which emphasized planting the gospel message into the lives of young people. Anglin envisioned that these young people would carry that same message to their own people and be the heart of indigenous Chinese churches.\(^{31}\)

From its start in 1916, the Home of Onesiphorus began with three primary purposes. First, the Home existed to demonstrate the power and love of God. Anglin believed in ministry to both the physical and spiritual needs of a person. He believed that the things Christians do present stronger demonstrations of God’s power and love than the things they say. Second, the Home provided a means to spread the message of the Cross. The Tai-an Home was in the vicinity of Tai Shan mountain, an area visited by thousands of Chinese each year for ritual worship to their gods. The Home of Onesiphorus stood as testimony to streams of men, women, boys, and girls who had been set free to worship the one true God. Finally, the Home committed itself to training boys and girls who had accepted Christ as missionaries, evangelists, or Spirit-filled members of a local church.\(^{32}\)

A natural question arises as to whether the Home of Onesiphorus fulfilled these three purposes. The Home clearly demonstrated the power and love of God as evidence by Les Anglin’s own thoughts:

The Home of Onesiphorus was opened in 1916 for the purpose of rescuing the helpless, such as old men and women with no one to care for them, younger women who are left widows with a few children, also boys and girls who are forced by circumstances to beg for a living. The Home has been the means of bringing the Gospel to the destitute in such a practical way they have been convinced that the religion of Jesus is real and they have sought Him and found Him precious to their souls.\(^{33}\)

The Home of Onesiphorus sought to lift the residents of the Home out of poverty by providing education and vocational training. Anglin described the orphanage as an “institution where helpless men, women,
boys, and girls are cared for, and all who can work are given something to do so that they will not feel that they are merely objects of charity." 

Les Anglin became known in the community as “The Onesiphorus Man.” People believed that if they could somehow make it to the Home, they would receive assistance. Anglin determined that he would never turn anyone in need away from his door.

Life in the Home each day began with a chapel service following breakfast. The service included singing, praying, and reading God’s Word, followed by an explanation of its meaning and significance. Ava Anglin conducted an afternoon Bible service for wives of workers and widows.

The third purpose of the home called for boys and girls who, having accepted Christ, would fill the roles of missionaries, evangelists, and Spirit-filled members of local churches. In 1917, Anglin wrote that every girl in the Home, except one, had accepted Christ and nearly all had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In 1925, he reported that over 200 people had received Spirit baptism in the Home and around the city of Tai-an. In 1928 Anglin wrote, “Quite a number of our children want to go out as missionaries when they become men and women.”

The first graduating class of the Home exemplified the desire Anglin wrote about in 1928. The first graduating class had three boys and three girls. Two boys went out as preachers. The other worked as a Christian mechanic. One of the girls married and engaged in missionary work with her husband. The remaining two girls became department leaders at the Home.

Anglin’s Home of Onesiphorus enabled him to fulfill a God-given dream he had received in the early years of his missionary career. “China’s great need is self-supporting Chinese Spirit-filled Christian workers who can go out and spread the good news and teach the people the truths of the gospel.”

Les Anglin died in 1942, and Ava Anglin ten years later. In 2006, the city of Tai-an and the Chinese government held special celebrations to honor the Anglins and the Home of Onesiphorus on its 90th anniversary.

35Albus, 69-71.
40Albus, 68.
41Randy Hurst, “Legacy of Compassion,” AG Heritage 21, no. 1 (Spring), 14-16.
anniversary. They extended invitations to the USA Assemblies of God to send representatives to join the commemoration ceremonies.42

Today, the Home continues to minister to the poor, the suffering, and the unwanted. One section of the campus provides care for severely disabled and special needs children. Neither American missionaries nor American finances are allowed at this time. However, the legacy of the Anglin’s continues to challenge and touch the lives of the Chinese.43

**Marie Stephany (1878-1963)**

In 1900, Shanxi province became the scene of one of the worst bloodlettings of Christian martyrs for the entire Christian era. The Boxer Rebellion claimed the lives of both foreign missionaries and Chinese Christians throughout large parts of China, but it hit Shanxi province particularly hard. The provincial governor, Yu Xian, encouraged the killings, which resulted in the martyrdom of more than 150 Protestant missionaries. In addition, hundreds of Chinese believers throughout the province were hunted and murdered because of their Christian testimony.44

Prior to these tragic events, however, God had already begun preparing new missionaries who would come to serve in this key north central province. In Austria-Hungary, 500 miles from Budapest, Marie Stephany was born to a Catholic family on December 9, 1878. God’s call and plan for her life would take her to the United States and then on to China where she would head a team of women missionaries. Three women—Marie Stephany, Henrietta Tieleman, and Alice Stewart—would plant a church of over 900 people, establish an orphanage ministry and a drug addiction deliverance center, hold tent meetings in surrounding villages, and conduct short-term Bible school training.45

These ministries would present daunting challenges to any team of missionaries in ordinary times. But the three decades of 1920-1949 in China proved to be some of the most turbulent in Chinese history. Famines and rising crime, combined with Japanese occupation and confinement, as well as the ongoing civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists, would have been reason enough to retreat to more convenient and peaceful locations.

42Ketcher, 30.
44Paul Hattaway, *China’s Book of Martyrs* (Carlisle, UK: Piquant, 2007), 103.
After two years of ministry in Shanxi Province, Stephany settled on Ta Ch’ang for her permanent mission station. From the beginning, she prioritized evangelism. Stephany followed a simple plan. Realizing the difficulty of getting people to enter buildings, she purchased a tent for her evangelistic meetings. Her team devoted seven months of every year to this ministry throughout the neighboring villages. Once people responded to invitations to accept Christ, she started holding meetings in their homes. As these grew, they would open a station under local leadership and support. Follow-up meetings helped establish the new disciples.\textsuperscript{46} When Tieleman and Stewart joined her team, these three women oversaw the work of fifteen indigenous outstations which all operated under local leadership.

Most of the early Assemblies of God missionaries believed in the priority of evangelism, but when confronted with the dire needs of hurting people, they responded with compassion and sought to alleviate the suffering. Such was the case with Stephany in the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{47}

Stephany confronted two pressing humanitarian needs in her field of service. For many years, government officials in Shanxi had attempted to curb opium addiction. These officials proposed increasingly drastic solutions to the opium epidemic. They ordered the beheading of anyone who trafficked opium. The heads were displayed in public locations to warn the citizenry of the severe punishment for selling the drug. When that did not alleviate the problem, a subsequent law decreed that both those who sold and used the drug would be executed. Even though hundreds of people were executed, the power of addiction continued to ruin lives.\textsuperscript{48}

Stephany reached out to individuals bound by the “devil’s smoke” and proclaimed the power of God to deliver from the addiction. Her approach foreshadowed that of the still decades distant Teen Challenge.\textsuperscript{49}

Alice Stewart shared the following story of deliverance.

Mrs. Kuo had attended the mission station as a young girl and learned the song, “Jesus loves me, this I know.” In her early teens, her father gave her in marriage to a non-Christian family and her mother-in-law cruelly mistreated her. When her husband became sick, he became addicted to opium while using it to ease the pain. The Kuo family impoverished themselves trying to satisfy his drug craving. During those dark days, Mrs. Kuo remembered the words of the song she had learned as a child and wondered if she would ever feel again what she experienced while singing that song years before.

\textsuperscript{46}Marie Stephany, “Shansi Province.” \textit{Pentecostal Evangel} (September 1, 1928), 11.
\textsuperscript{47}McGee, 255-256.
\textsuperscript{48}Stephany, 23.
\textsuperscript{49}McGee, 256.
One day, some people came to her village and pitched a big tent and advertised meetings would be held there later that day. The whole village turned out to see the big tent and the “foreign devils.” As Mrs. Kuo listened, she realized they were talking about the same Jesus she had sung about as a little girl. She heard that drug addicts received help by the people conducting these meetings and persuaded her husband to seek deliverance. Impressed by the life of the Bible woman at the gospel hall, the husband cried out to God for help and received miraculous freedom from his addiction. When he returned home a new man in Christ, his wife opened her heart to Jesus as well. Soon their home became a site for Bible studies and home meetings.  

The many ministries of Stephany’s Ta Ch’ang station required many national workers. Within a few years, more than thirty of the forty national workers who worked with Stephany were former addicts who had received deliverance and discipleship under her ministry.

The problem of opium addiction produced another significant challenge. Many of the addicts had become too poor to support their children. Baby boys could easily be sold to families who wanted a male heir. However, people did not want baby girls, resulting in many being drowned at birth or discarded in the barren fields.

One day a man found a baby crying in a field and brought the baby to Stephany. The baby, wrapped in straw, had been surrounded by three dogs waiting for the baby to die. Stephany accepted the child giving her the name “Hope,” which symbolized the hope for her to live. Hearing that Stephany received babies, beggars would make arrangements to sell her the abandoned babies they found in the fields. Eventually, Marie’s family had grown to over thirty children.

The trio of Stephany, Tieleman, and Stewart served under extremely stressful conditions. Early on, God had given them Psalm 91:5-7 as His promise of protection: “Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come night thee” (KJV).

Despite the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in June of 1937, they stayed and opened up their mission as a refuge station. Despite sporadic communication and assistance from supporters in the United States, God provided for their needs. Turbulent times produced receptivity in the hearts of displaced individuals living in times of uncertainty. As many

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52 Stephany, 40-42.
people accepted Christ and were filled with the Holy Spirit, God turned calamity into blessing.

This team of missionary women, together with their national co-workers, had built a church in Ta Ch’ang that could accommodate 900-1,000 people. The Ta Ch’ang mission that had begun in a rented house with only one Chinese evangelist to assist Stephany had grown to include several buildings used for an orphanage, addiction deliverance center, Bible school, and church. Over thirty workers assisted the work there and in the various outstations established from the tent evangelism program. At least two-thirds of these workers had been delivered from addiction to opium. In addition, twelve students from Ta Ch’ang enrolled in Truth Bible Institute in Beijing with twenty additional workers studying at the local four-month Bible study.54

Conclusion

The introduction of this article references J. Philip Hogan’s message “Missionary Work Today.” Hogan emphasized an unchangeable Great Commission, obedience and faithfulness to the call of God, Jesus Christ as the only remedy for fallen humanity, and following Christ’s example of ministering compassionately to people’s needs. The four narratives above share the stories of individuals who lived out Hogan’s four principles. But reaching above Hogan’s principles, these missionaries lived out the fulfillment of God’s Great Commission and Great Commandment.

What conclusions can we draw from this article’s narratives? First, a certainty of God’s call gives missionaries the strength and courage to stand firm in their commitment. That call includes the conviction that our message is the most important message in the world. Second, God’s call on our lives demands faithfulness, especially in times that are changing, perilous, and turbulent, which are also times of opportunity. The faithfulness to obey and “go and make disciples” brings forth God’s response of “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Third, God uses various strategies of ministry to accomplish his plans and purposes. The creative God we serve provides creative ways to minister in our changing world.

Finally, it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God (Zechariah 4:6). It is the Holy Spirit who calls. It is the Holy Spirit who inspires. It is the Holy Spirit who reveals. It is the Holy Spirit who

administers. We have inherited a legacy of faithfulness. May we pass it forward to the next generation.

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I recently read Denzil Miller’s *Empowered for Global Mission* while preparing to teach a course in Africa. Denny has ministered in Africa for many years and is a passionate proponent of the missiological significance of the Pentecostal gift. As I read his book, I was immediately impressed with its clarity, significance, and value.

In this book Miller takes the reader on an inspiring tour through seven key outpourings of the Spirit in the book of Acts. Along the way, he presents compelling arguments for reading Acts as “a handbook on missionary strategy” (12). The “key to understanding Luke’s intent for writing the book” is found in Acts 1:8 (35). This verse not only provides a programmatic outline for Acts (“. . . Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth,” v. 8b), but it also presents a timeless, paradigmatic promise: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses . . .” (v. 8a). Here too we find a clear statement of Luke’s purpose: “He wants his readers to know that in order to fulfill Christ’s command to take the gospel to all nations, the church, and each believer in the church, must be empowered by the Holy Spirit” (67-68).

The book actually begins with a helpful description of important literary features and hermeneutical principles relevant to the study of Acts (Part 1). The heart of the book consists of an analysis of six of the seven key outpourings of the Holy Spirit recorded in Acts 2, 4, 8, 9, 10 (Part 2). An analysis of the seventh outpouring of the Spirit on the Ephesian disciples (Acts 19) is combined with a discussion of the Spirit-empowerment theme in Paul’s epistles (Part 3). Finally, Miller ends with an extremely helpful “Application” section (Part 4) that treats the role of gifts of the Spirit in missions, evidential tongues, and several other themes. The book includes two informative appendices that offer an outline of Acts and a catalogue of gifts of the Spirit that appear in Acts. A glossary and bibliography, along with subject and verse indexes, complete the book.

In my opinion, *Empowered for Global Mission* represents an incredibly valuable resource for Pentecostal students and pastors. It should be required reading in every Pentecostal Bible school, whether in Africa, Asia, America, or elsewhere. Several qualities encourage me to make this unsolicited endorsement. First, in addition to its outstanding Pentecostal content, the book is immensely readable. Miller’s writing
style is exceptionally clear. With short, simple sentences and strikingly memorable phrases he illuminates his subject. Miller’s pedagogical genius is reflected in the book’s structure, in its compelling descriptions, and in the numerous charts and illustrations that serve to aid the reader. The books simplicity and clarity will undoubtedly make it easy to translate. I have already encouraged friends in China to take up this task.

Secondly, this book convincingly articulates a core Pentecostal doctrine: the missiological nature of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Miller skillfully guides the reader through key passages in Acts and builds his case, block by block, for Luke’s missiological purpose. Miller correctly notes that “a powerful dynamic of the early Pentecostals was the way they successfully married the experience of Spirit baptism to world evangelization and to the soon coming of Christ” (13). Miller develops these interconnected themes—Spirit baptism, eschatological urgency, and global witness—through a careful reading of the book of Acts. For example, of the angels’ declaration in Acts 1:11, “why do you stand here looking into the sky?,” Miller implores: “Sense the urgency in their voice. Time is wasting; Jesus is coming again; be about your business of receiving the Spirit and preaching the gospel to the nations!” (59). Miller traces the “empowerment-witness motif” throughout Acts and notes that “every evangelistic and missionary advance . . . is preceded by one or more empowerings with the Holy Spirit in which the church is equipped for the task ahead” (66). Miller also helpfully highlights Acts 19:1-20 as “the clearest and most comprehensive example of the strategy Paul used in his missionary work” (182). Paul’s strategy here included: (1) pneumatic empowering (19:6); (2) evangelism (with new believers, 19:9); (3) training workers (Hall of Tyrannus for two years, 19:10).

Finally, Empowered for Global Mission is intensely practical. The book is peppered with edifying exhortations (e.g., “Luke wanted his readers to know that one outpouring—or one infilling—of the Spirit is not enough, no matter how powerful or how dramatic it may have been,” 98) and insights that will inspire sermons (e.g., on Acts 13:1-4, 171-74). This practical, down-to-earth quality makes the book tremendously valuable and useable for pastors and students alike. I warmly commend it to all who are interested in pursuing the call of Christ contained in the promise of Pentecost.

Miller’s instincts are surely correct when he writes:

It is my belief that the western Pentecostal church’s hope lies at least in part, in the emerging missionary movements of its daughter churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These
churches are much more oriented to supernatural experience than their parent churches in the west. Rather than following the lead of the west, these churches must assert themselves, and stand firm in the area of Pentecostal doctrine and experience (270).

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David Bentley Hart’s new essay collection, *You are Gods: On Nature and Supernature*, is the second volume in a one-two punch against traditionalist Thomism, the first having arrived a few months earlier in his *Tradition and Apocalypse*. While these texts signal Hart’s selection of a new opponent, *You are Gods* also serves as a tapered point wherein the seemingly disparate strands of Hart’s recent research are gathered and unified. A deeper examination reveals that this current polemical campaign is just the latest in a demonstration of martial artistry that began all the way back in *The Beauty of the Infinite*.

In *Tradition and Apocalypse*, Hart provided an argument against defining tradition historically, the approach favored by traditionalist Thomism. As an alternative, Hart argued that tradition ought to be defined in reference to its eschatological horizon. *You are Gods* takes this eschatological perspective and applies it to a metaphysical and phenomenological revision of theological anthropology broadly speaking. In doing so, Hart takes aim at the hard distinction between the natural and supernatural, a distinction safeguarded by the same traditionalist Thomists critiqued in *Tradition and Apocalypse*.

The chief implication that Hart draws from this eschatological framing is that humanity’s nature must always be considered according to its telos in deification. From this perspective, nature and supernature as discrete concepts lose all meaning. Framed by theosis, human nature is defined by its supernatural culmination and is thereby shown always to be a supernatural trajectory. Hart argues that this metaphysical reality correlates to a phenomenological one. Rational volition and cognition subsist as an orientation toward Being as such. And rational desire, therefore, is fundamentally a desire for union with God, which can only be properly understood and satisfied eschatologically. This undermines...
the phenomenal distinction between natural and supernatural desire. All conditional desires are proleptically derived from the unconditional desire for God, which is fully realized only in deification.

In the first two essays of You are Gods, Hart sketches the metaphysical and phenomenological rationale summarized above, the latter doing so through an extended engagement with Nicolas of Cuza. The third essay takes this eschatological anthropology as a starting point for aesthetics. Hart argues that the unity of the transcendentals in God means that aesthetic judgments are always moral judgments. Eschatological union with God entails being subject to the judgment of Christ’s beauty, a beauty that makes transformation possible. All contingent aesthetic judgments are, therefore, reflexive, revealing the character of the judge. The fourth essay applies Hart’s eschatological logic to ethics by way of a Kantian inversion: might love for God’s truth ever lead one to deceive another person intentionally? Hart argues that within the contingencies of history, the Good, True, and Beautiful, which are eschatologically one, become manifest in the fragmented forms of the ethical, epistemic, and aesthetic. This can lead to situations in which a contingent truth must be violated to honor Truth’s metaphysical identity with the Good. Service to Truth transcends service to mere facts, and ethics is the endeavor of discerning that difference within fallen time. The fifth essay is a prolonged engagement with Cyril O’Regan, or, more accurately, a critique of the connection he draws between German idealism and Gnosticism. Hart provides a historical counternarrative, wherein the ancient schools often called “gnostic” adhere more closely to the cosmology of the New Testament than do Hegelian notions of God’s becoming in history. This leads Hart to posit a miniature version of his argument from Tradition and Apocalypse, that the discernment of legitimate doctrinal tradition cannot be accomplished through a merely historical method. It must instead be determined by its eschatological culmination, which means considering all doctrine in light of deification. The implication is that perhaps Gnosticism is preferable to German idealism as a mine for theological resources. The last chapter, which is fragmentary and experimental in its form, places Hart’s phenomenological and metaphysical musings into a systematic trinitarian context. Dizzingly dense, this final piece primarily argues that all of creation is inseparable from the triune life as its origin and goal. God’s manifestation of himself to creation is inextricable from his eternal manifestation to himself as Son and delight in himself as Spirit. The incarnation is the telos of all creation, as the union of divine kenosis and creaturely ascent. God’s fullness, which entails God possessing all possibility as actuality, is necessarily expressed as other than God. Creation, therefore, intrinsically follows from divine nature just as
theosis intrinsically follows from created nature. Hart again demonstrates the teleological meaninglessness of the nature-supernature distinction, this time from the divine side of the deific union.

Many readers are likely familiar with Hart’s rhetorical particularities, so I will not waste time relitigating them other than to say that this volume will likely leave opinions unchanged. Hart’s characteristic glibness is intact, and despite its verbosity, this volume is eminently readable. A more serious issue is Hart’s tendency to leave his opponents unnamed and uncited. Throughout the book, he decries traditionalist Thomism with ferocity but rarely cites specific arguments or texts. This does not necessarily mean that Hart is wrong or misleading but merely that his arguments lose some rhetorical force when deployed against unnamed phantasms rather than concrete figures. In addition, while Hart shadowboxes with the notion of “Hegelian theologies,” his final summation of creation as endemic to the fullness of divine nature beckons a reevaluation of his theological relationship with Robert Jenson. Hart’s chief quarrel with Jenson in his early work was that by making creation intrinsic to the triune God, Jenson grants evil a determinative role within the divine life. To sidestep this implication in *You Are Gods*, Hart treats evil as the residue of deified creation’s protological nothingness, the crust of nihil that progressively falls away as creation draws ever nearer to God in theosis. While this is a different metaphysical perspective, it does not make evil totally superfluous as Hart wants it to. While it keeps evil out of the divine life evil remains an unavoidable part of history, albeit one that subsists in creation’s eschatological victory over it. In this context, Hart’s Christology is merely revelatory rather than metaphysically definitive.

For anyone who has been following Hart’s work, *You Are Gods* serves as a helpful summation and extension of his overall project. Since his initial systematic endeavor in *Beauty of the Infinite*, Hart has operated mostly through smaller topical projects, dabbling in topics like the doctrine of God (*The Experience of God*), soteriology (*That All Shall Be Saved*), and New Testament translation. *You are Gods*, despite feeling a bit fragmentary, helps to clarify how these separate projects fit into Hart’s broader theological vision. His eschatological perspective echoes his earlier work’s focus on creation ex nihilo, bookending his metaphysical vision of the triune God as all in all. The essay format forces him to restate some of his ideas in helpful ways that allow the reader to gain a wider perspective on the larger shape of his thought. The final piece, in an enigmatic and circuitous way, handily situates Hart’s various explorative ventures within systematic loci.

As a constructive partner for Pentecostal theology, Hart’s work here has quite a bit to offer. Pentecostal theologians such as Amos Yong have
already begun to evaluate the ways that Pentecostal spirituality might problematize the natural-supernatural distinction. Additionally, Daniela Augustine has done rigorous work on integrating an emphasis on Pentecost into the soteriological matrix of theosis. Hart provides a source that could be used to develop these conversations in metaphysically and phenomenologically rich ways. Most importantly, perhaps, Hart defines the supernatural as fundamentally rooted in eschatology. This perspective could enrich Pentecostal theological reflection as a reminder that all of God’s works are bound together in the broader work of the kingdom of God. Additionally, Hart’s unique aesthetic provides fertile ground for the construction of a Pentecostal aesthetic. In focusing on the convertibility of the transcendentals he provides a rationale for the correlation between beauty and holiness.

Hart’s writings are rarely interested in making friends with, or ingratiating him to, his interlocutors. But You Are Gods, despite its bravado, has an alluring audacity. In an academic world rife with relitigating method, a book so full of bold arguments as this one is energizing. Hart’s writing is as dense as ever, but his vision has never been clearer. And the possibilities opened by that vision are compelling enough that theologians of all traditions should ask what they can make of it.

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Douglas Jacobsen, co-director of the Religion in the Academy project and distinguished professor of church history and theology at Messiah University (Pennsylvania, USA), offers a concise and inclusive second edition of his textbook, The World's Christians. Initially published in 2011, his famous work provides a guide to understanding the complex world religion of Christianity. Interestingly, unlike his first edition, which offered an empathetic and fair introduction, this second edition is grounded on an increased involvement in the discussions surrounding "World Christianity" as a field of study (xxii). Using a religious study approach, he demonstrates a depth of knowledge and
awareness of contemporary developments that sustains the description and explanation of a multifaceted religion in clear, readable terms.

Like the first edition, *The World's Christians, Second Edition* attempts to explain who the world's Christians are, where they currently reside, and how they got there (xxiii). The book's subtitle supposedly serves as programmatic hints for the book's contents, but this second edition exchanges the sequence of the book's content. In his first edition, Jacobsen answers the questions of "who they are" in part I, "where they are" in part II, and "how they got there" in part III. This second edition switches the discussion, wherein "how they got there" is in part II and "where they are" is in part III. This change in sequence indicates a shift in Jacobsen's authorial purpose from being a field guide of world Christianity to a scholar highlighting the historical developments that shaped Christianity to its form now. In this edition, Jacobsen’s discussion of how Christianity got there, “the word 'there' being both theology/spirituality and geography/culture” (66), takes precedence over the discussion of "where they are now."

Part I answers the question of "who they are" by describing the four mega-traditions in world Christianity: Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Pentecostalism (xxiii). Note that in this edition, the fourth mega-tradition, named in the first edition as the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement, has been named simply as the Pentecostal tradition. The name change indicates Jacobsen's decision to recognize this young mega-tradition by its oldest name, Pentecostal, which is derived from the Pentecostal outpouring in the Acts narrative (49).

The chapters in Part I describe each mega-tradition's spirituality, view of salvation, institutional structure, and historical developments. Here one can read the differences between each tradition's general ethos, from Orthodoxy's focus on liturgy as the earthly representation of the eternal worship of God (7) to Roman Catholicism's sacramental imagination (21) to Protestantism's recovery of the priesthood of all believers (36-38), and Pentecostalism's focus on empirically experiencing God (51). The distinctions between these four mega-traditions, amid the existence of overlaps, are recognizable due to Jacobsen's clear description of respective core convictions and lived experiences.

Part II answers the question of "how they got there" by describing how Christianity developed into its current shape (xxiii). From the broader perspective of globalization, a small band of Christians initially located in a remote part of Palestine grew into a worldwide religion with traversing epicenters. His conclusion about Christianity's globetrotting is that "Christians now inhabit a 'flat' world, a world where the Christian
population is spread out more or less evenly around the globe and where new and varied experiments are lived out regarding what it means to be a follower of Jesus today” (xxiv; cf. 63-66).

Worth noting is the discussion on "Christianity in the Global Era: 1500 to the present," where Jacobsen includes the polar extremes of globalization: globalization, which promotes global homogeneity, and glocalization, the worldwide expansion of diversity (156). Both extremes occur in different sectors of world Christianity. Here Jacobsen likens globalization to missionary colonialism and glocalization as postcolonialism (156-157). He points out that Christians today have increasingly encouraged the middle ground of global adaptation, also known as "enculturation" or "indigenization" (157).

After giving an overview of Christianity's historical/theological development and geographical/cultural dispersal, Jacobsen proceeds to Part III, describing "where they are" now. With the establishment of its diversity and multi-centeredness, he then uses a grid of nine geo-cultural regions to describe contemporary Christianity: (1) the Middle East and North Africa, (2) Eastern Europe, (3) Central and South Asia, (4) Western Europe, (5) Sub-Saharan Africa, (6) East Asia, (7) Latin America, (8) North America, and (9) Oceania (177-178). The factors considered in drawing this nine-region map include their "natural geographic divides; population size; differences of language, history, and culture; and the varieties of Christianity that exist in each region" (177).

Essential to part III is recognizing that the global age has reshaped Christianity (175). Jacobsen observes that with the transnationalism brought in part by increased digital connectivity, "never before have so many Christians found themselves grappling with how to make sense of and negotiate their way through Christianity's internal diversity" (177). Hence, each chapter in Part III provides a unique profile of Christianity in each region and the detailed history and contemporary challenges Christians face in those locations.

The chapters in part III include chapter 9, about the Middle East and North Africa, where Christianity barely survives (181-183). Chapter 10 is about Eastern Europe, where orthodox Christianity is dominant (201). Chapter 11 is on Christianity in Central and South Asia, where confidence and complexity interface. Christians in this region are a minority, but they can be "confident, creative and at home in society even when their numbers are few and their neighbors are diverse" (224). Chapter 12 is about Western Europe, where Christianity is thin but alive. According to recent studies, the issue of Christian decline in this region is not persecution or pluralism but rather a loss of interest (243-246). Chapter 13 describes Sub-Saharan Africa's phenomenal Christian
growth and influence (266). Chapter 14 talks about East Asia, where piety and politics are linked. Having first received Christianity as part of the colonial enterprise, a postcolonial mindset pervades contemporary East Asian Christianity (285). Chapter 15 is about Latin America, after the religious monopoly of Roman Catholicism. In this region today, people are no longer assigned affiliation at birth; choosing their religious affiliation is now part of the Latin American experience (307). Chapter 16 is about North America, where freedom is a prerequisite for authentic faith (327). Finally, Chapter 17 talks about the region of Oceania where questions of new religious identity abound (349). All these chapters used historical, sociological, and theological resources to describe the array of Christians in these regions.

Looking at the near-comprehensive content, one can conclude that this three-part textbook contributes concisely to understanding the world's Christians in all its diverse and complex intricacies. The book's incorporation of recent studies on Christianity in different regions of the world, the updates on changes, tensions, and trends, and the recognition of Christian theological reshaping add invaluable pointers to the ongoing discussion of World Christianity.

Jacobsen's wisdom in identifying key indicators for each region of Christianity and refusing hasty conclusions based on predictive studies make this book invaluable for the academy. For instance, Jacobsen discussed a brief diachrony and synchrony of the world's Christian data, presented in a critical but popular manner. It is so clear and well-written that anyone reading will have an academic understanding of Christianity without being bogged down by the internal diversities and plethora of literary sources. Another strength of this new edition is its addition of notes or excerpts from primary sources that elucidate each chapter's theme. He also provides suggestions for further reading. The book's entirely irenic and didactic tone signals Jacobsen's passion for and effectiveness in the Christian academy.

However, this book remains only as an overview of World Christianity. As genius as Jacobsen was in articulating such a complex world religion, the reader cannot use this textbook to discuss the intricacies of Christianity in all its multifariousness. For instance, in the discussion of Christianity in Central Asia, the focus was more on the geo-cultural landscape and the predominance of Islam. There are no new data on the underground churches or the minority Christians in Central Asia. Perhaps the lack of discussion is due to a deficiency of resources on this topic.

Overall, I recommend this book for students of World Christianity in academic institutions. This book ought to be required reading for Bible colleges and seminary students. The reshaping of Christianity in this
global era is undeniable, and students of Christian history, theology, and ministry must have an overview of its intricacies, challenges, and horizons. Jacobsen's book on *The World’s Christians, Second Edition*, would be an invaluable introductory textbook for this task.

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