

Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies

“Pentecostal Ministries”

Volume 3, Number 1 (January 2000)

“PENTECOSTOLOGY”? ET AL.

1. “Pentecostology”?

It is only by God’s grace that this *Journal* has survived its first two years and now enters its third year of existence. This is, then, not a bad time to talk about age: the Pentecostal movement is now one hundred years old! Pentecostalism has become an object of many inquiries from various perspectives: theological, historical, biblical, missiological, and even psychological. With this wide range of academic development, and to mark its first century of life, it may be timely to ask the question, “Why not coin a new category for the study of Pentecostalism, say, Pentecostology?” Does any one know how to canonize a discipline?

2. About This Issue

One area in which Pentecostalism has made a distinct contribution is perhaps in practical ministerial areas including missions. Hence, this issue is titled “Pentecostal Ministries.” It was never planned to be a thematic issue, but submitted articles have much to do with practical and missiological implications, thus the editors have decided to make another thematic issue.

A little bit of explanation: The editors are always pleased to see fine biblical studies undertaken by young Pentecostal thinkers. In this issue, an Asian (Emmanuel Bagalawis) and a western Pentecostal writer (Steven S. Carter) provide incisive investigation of two biblical themes. We also have two missiologists, one Asian (Julie C. Ma) and the other European (Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen), who provide missiological thoughts. William Kay’s article has to do with Pentecostal ministers in the London area. At first glance, its relevancy seems to be remote to Asian Pentecostal churches. However, considering that the Pentecostal movement was originally an urban reality (of course, we remember the Azusa Street Revival), and Asia has been consistently and rapidly urbanized, what London is experiencing may be relevant to, let’s say, Singapore tomorrow, if it is not already today.

Two writers appraise various contemporary ministries. A Korean (Hong Young-gi) reflects the church growth pattern among Korean charismatic-type mega-churches, while a European (Keith Warrington) studies Kenneth Hagin and his ministries. The limit is space did not allow a fine study on a Japanese “Pentecostal” group to be included in this issue. The present issue of the *Journal* concludes with a review article by Paul Elbert on the topic of healing and two book reviews. We thank the contributors for their fine studies.

3. A Reader’s Questions

While the editors are still on this page, we would like to introduce feedback from one of our readers. A letter from Professor Walter J. Hollenweger was received right after the inaugural issue of the *Journal* was published. As a senior Pentecostal scholar, in his letter, he offered warm congratulations on the birth of the *Journal*. At the same time, he challenged Asian Pentecostals with the following questions:

- 1) How do Pentecostals relate to non-Christian religions (for instance, in the faculty, in the neighborhood), in particular to their healing ministry? In what – if at all – are Pentecostal Christians different from Catholic and Protestant Christians?
- 2) Does their [Pentecostals’] understanding of the Holy Spirit as being poured out on *all flesh* (Joel 2:17; not Christian, not Pentecostal, not western flesh) make any difference [to Asian Pentecostals]?
- 3) In a region where Christians are a culturally minority, does ecumenical cooperation play a significant role? If not, what are the reasons?
- 4) Asia has not been touched by Aristotelian philosophy (this is a western important in the form of technology and perhaps Hegelianism and Marxism). In Chinese and Hindu cultures truth does not necessarily have to be expressed in logically consistent and non-contradicting ways. Does this fact influence [Asian] Pentecostal hermeneutics? For instance, do they [Asian Pentecostals] better understand the Hebrew thought that God can

¹ A letter (Nov 20, 1997) from Walter J. Hollenweger to the editors of the *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*. A slight editorial change has been made so that the format would conform to the *Journal* style, but the content remains unchanged, except some additional word for clarify. They are indicated by brackets. This part of the letter is published by the author’s permission.

“repent” (e.g., in Jonah), contradict himself by saying one thing and then doing something else? Is this a correction of the rationalistic, so called logical Evangelical theology of the West?

- 5) How do [Asian] Pentecostals deal with the cyclic religions (re-incarnation) in such a way that the break out of the curse of reincarnation is understood as good news?
- 6) What is their [or Asian Pentecostals’] attitude to the [western] gospel of prosperity? This gospel must be very foreign, for instance, to Indians.
- 7) Are they (Asian Pentecostals) engaged in the New Chinese translation of the Bible? What is their experience in translating the Bible?
- 8) Are there any attempts at contacting the many “Pentecostal-like” independent churches in India, in the Philippines and in Korea? What are the hindrances if this is not happening?

The editors as well as many readers do not have to agree on every question shared here. There may be many other questions the readers may like to suggest so that a stimulated discussion would continue among Asian Pentecostals and their friends around the world. We certainly invite our readers to engage in a dialogue with some points raised by this friend of *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies*. As already seen in the last issue, engaging dialogue enriches our fellowship, deepens our understanding of the Spirit and sharpens our thoughts and commitment to His work.

Editors