

Listening to Asia's Younger Scholars

For the first time in our eighteen year history, every article in this edition is written by an Asian. Also, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first edition ever done where all of the authors are currently associated with APTS. First, Herman Dionson, is a junior faculty member. Second, Luan Thang and Anattiphong (K) Phanon, are MTh students. The other Daniel Liu, is in the Master of Divinity program. For more information on these programs, please visit www.aps.edu.

To celebrate this event, we've invited our dear friend and one of the founders of this Journal, Dr. Wonsuk Ma, to write a special editorial to give his perspective on why we need to listen to Asia's younger scholars. To allow his voice to be clearly heard and, in the spirit of this completely Asian edition, I will reserve my own reflections on this vital subject for another time.

Herman Dionson's article regarding a theology of encouragement leads off this edition. Here, Dionson claims that Paul intended 1Timothy 4:6-16 as both a challenge and an encouragement to Timothy, his son and protégé in the faith, challenging him to preach sound doctrine and lead a correct life. Dionson sees this as a model for older Filipino pastors and challenges them to mentor the younger generation of leaders who will soon take their place.

Luan Thang then adds a new twist to the age old debate between Paul and James' views on the relationship between faith and works by applying it to the ecclesiastical situation in his native Myanmar (Burma). Thang contends that the difference between Paul and James is complementary rather than contradictory because Paul is contending with those who hold that faith is necessary to salvation and James contending with those who believe that saving faith bears no social responsibility. According to Luan, this relates directly to the situation in Myanmar where the older, more liberal churches focus on the practical needs of people while ignoring their spiritual needs while the newer, more evangelical churches do the reverse. Both groups, according to Luan, need to change and reflect a more holistic and biblical view.

Daniel Liu exegetes Chinese culture as well as the Scriptures in grappling with a biblical approach to the *Zhong Yuan Festival* in his part of Mainland China. Liu explains that the purpose of the festival is to honor the ancestors. Can Christians participate in at least some of the aspects of the festival? If not, what might they do to honor their ancestors without worshiping them? Liu provides some excellent reflections on these and other related questions.

Anattiphong (K) Phanon concludes this edition with an attempt to clear up the confusion that, he holds, exists among believers regarding the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual tattooing done among folk Buddhists in his part of northeastern Thailand. According to Phanon, these spiritual tattoos are infested with local spirits whom Phanon describes as “Wild spirits.” How does one know the difference between these spirits and the Spirit of God? Phanon answers this question and a number of related questions in order to help local believers have a better understanding of what it means to be “Filled with the Spirit.”

Our regular readers will notice that this edition is smaller than normal with only four articles. This stems from the fact that Debbie and I have been in transition for the last few months and are now home in the States for itineration—visiting our supporters. In the hustle and bustle of preparing to leave Baguio and getting settled here in the States, I failed to notice this shortage. Please accept my apologies and know that we will resume our normal size again with the next edition. And, yes, we will return to Baguio once we have completed our itineration cycle.

I would also like to acknowledge my debt to the Reverend Frank McNelis, our senior editor, who is serving as the acting director of our publishing ministries while we are home, and is making a tremendous contribution. Any mistakes, however, are my responsibility.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me through the APTS website, www.aps.edu.

Your partner for Asia,

Dave Johnson
Managing Editor