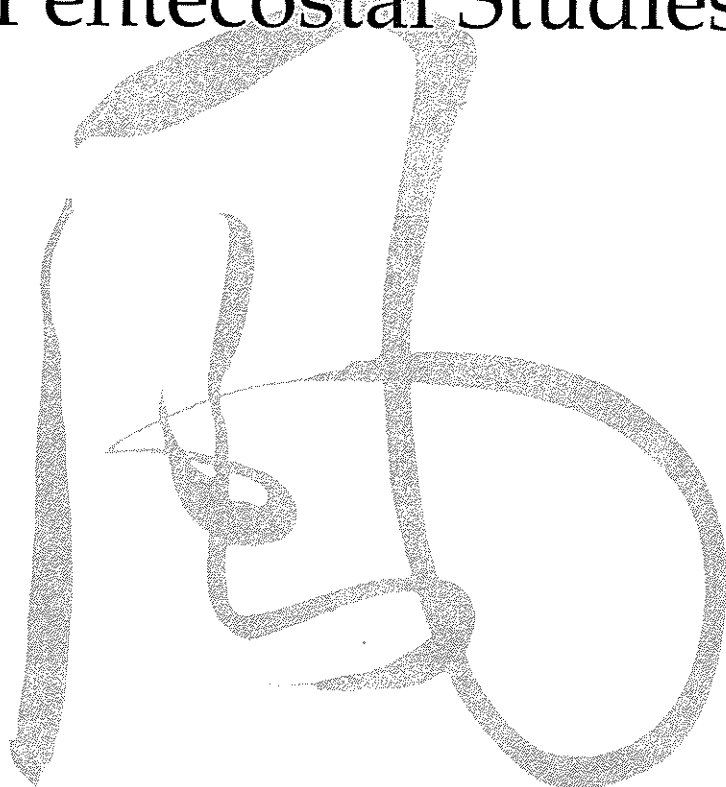


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BOOK REVIEWS

Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, Regnum Studies in Mission and Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies Series 3 (Oxford: Regnum Books and Baguio: APTS Press, 2005), paper, xvi + 596 pp., ISBN: 1-870345-43-6.

This is the first collaborative book on Asian Pentecostalism, edited by two scholars from Birmingham University, England. The essays in this collected volume are written to examine the reality of the Pentecostal movement in Asia. This work is a result of the International Conference on Asian Pentecostalism organized by the Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion, Birmingham University, England on September 17-20, 2001.

The combination of these two editors is very interesting. Allan Anderson is known as one of the world's leading scholars in Pentecostal studies. Presently he is the Director of the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies Department at the University of Birmingham. Edmond Tang comes from the same university but specializes in Asian studies. On one hand, Anderson is the representative of Pentecostal scholarship, while, on the other hand, Tang is the representative of scholarship of Asian theological studies. Both are highly respected scholars in their fields.

Basically, the main content of this book can be divided into three parts. The first part (chs. 1-7) is very important because it sets the theological tone of the whole book. Walter Hollenweger opens this part by challenging western churches and missionaries to listen to what Asian Pentecostal theologians have to say. David Martin, a sociologist from England, plainly shows the challenges that Pentecostals in Asia are facing nowadays from a more sociological perspective. Hwa Yung, a Methodist scholar who has been paying close attention to the growth of Pentecostalism in Asia, presents an essay which discusses the idea that indigenous Christianity has a lot of similar characteristics with Pentecostalism. He calls them "Pentecostal-like" Christians. Wonsuk Ma in his essay clearly demonstrates the situation of the Asian context, which Pentecostal churches have to face today. Another interesting essay is written by Amos Yong, an Asian Pentecostal scholar who lived in the west most of his life. Yong does a fascinating comparative theology between a Buddhist understanding of demonic powers and a Pentecostal understanding of spiritual warfare. It is interesting to note here that, in the middle of a theological discussion, Julie Ma comes with a different flavor. She presents an essay that discusses how Asian women have

played an important role in Pentecostal ministry. This part is ended with Anderson's provocative essay that strongly argues for the need of a revision of global Pentecostal historiography. According to Anderson, Pentecostal historiography has been done from a heavily North American perspective.

The second part of this book (chs. 8-24) discusses specific issues and uniquenesses of Pentecostalism in several Asian countries. This part is divided by the editors according to geographical category: South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. From Southeast Asia, Michael Bergunder and Roger Hedlund write on Pentecostalism in India. Paulson Pulikottil explores the contribution of Ramakutty Paul, who is a Dalit (the fourth caste in Indian society), to Indian Pentecostal churches. From Southeast Asia, each country is written about by a different author, such as Chin Khua Khai (Myanmar), Tan Jin Huat (Singapore), Gani Wiyono and Mark Robinson (Indonesia), Joseph Suico, Lode Wostyn, and Jeong Jae Yong (Philippines). From East Asia, Pentecostalism in China is written by Gotthard Obalau, Deng Zhaoming, and Edmond Tang. Pentecostalism in Japan is represented by Paul Shew, and Korean Pentecostalism is exposed by Lee Young-Hoon, Hyeon Sung Bae, and Jeong Chong Hee.

This book is closed with two writings by Simon Chan and Anderson. Chan points out some main issues, such as the definition of Pentecostalism, contextualization/syncretism, spiritual warfare, etc., that are raised by other essays in this book. At the very end, Anderson sums up this book with a short epilogue that basically contrasts Asian Pentecostalism and western Pentecostalism.

In my opinion this is an excellent and well-written/edited book that should be a representative of Asian Pentecostalism in an academic, as well as a practical, world. It is also important to note here that Pentecostalism in Asia has been established for more than seventy years, but there have not been any writings that exhaustively investigate it. Therefore, the appearance of this book should be welcomed.

As a teacher at a Pentecostal school who grew up in Asia, I found that this book has been written with an honest academic and objective presentation of Pentecostalism in Asia. I discover through this book that there are many similar things between Pentecostalism in my home country, Indonesia, and other countries. This really amazed me while I was reading this book. Perhaps because of the geographical closeness between my country and those other countries, we have many things in common. I learned many things from this book, as it gives full and deep theological, pneumatological, ecclesiological and practical reflections on Asian Pentecostalism. I am now equipped with plenty of information and

details from each country. Besides that, I also began to realize that Pentecostalism is growing in my Asian context because of its ability to fit nicely into Asian religiosity. Even before “classical Pentecostalism” came from North America, Yung, Ma, Hedlund and Zhaoming prove that Pentecostal spirituality and religiosity already existed in Asia. They rightly call it “indigenous Pentecostal.”

Let me give my comments on one crucial thing that is strongly highlighted by most of the authors in this book, and that is, “defining Pentecostalism.” Anderson, Ma, and several others, give a broader and more generic definition. Undeniably, this is a provocative and interesting thing to bring into discussion. However, I am somewhat puzzled by the implications and benefits of defining in a broad and generic way. Is it theologically or ecclesiological necessary to broaden our definition of Pentecostalism? What is the purpose of it? Is there any practical benefit that we can get from this broader definition? Or is this only limited to the level of “theological” discussion? Do we have to include indigenous movements as Pentecostals only because they have the same phenomenon as we do? Can we not just categorize them with the term Yung has used, as “Pentecostal-like” Christians? I think perhaps this is a better way to describe these indigenous Pentecostal movements. By calling them “Pentecostal-like,” it implies that we still maintain the classic definition of Pentecostalism, but at the same time acknowledge them as brothers and sisters. I think that Simon Chan has sharply pointed this out:

I think it would be a mistake if one should think that the new [the broader] explanation should replace the old [the narrower], or that it is somehow ‘better’ than the old because of certain questionable assumptions commonly associated with the latter view. The fact that the older view has been associated with race bias and a colonialist mindset does not, for that reason, make it invalid (p. 576).

It seems to me that if our definition is too inclusive, then perhaps we will lose a clear picture of Pentecostal identity. What makes someone Pentecostal? In the old definition, at least the theological boundaries are very clear (e.g. doctrine of initial physical evidence and subsequence).

Furthermore, one small technical thing that I need to expose here is the uncompleted editing of materials. There is at least one essay that is not fully edited yet, and that is Wonsuk Ma’s essay, especially on pages 81 and 89 (note 50). I would like to suggest that it will be better, in the next printing, if these unedited elements could be corrected.

However, I must admit that this book has brought a fresh wind to the discussion on the importance of Pentecostalism in Asian Christianity. This kind of book is needed for showing what Asian Pentecostalism really is. We have heard about Asian Pentecostalism from a more western perspective, and also most of the writings on this subject matter are very fragmented. This book is undeniably significant because it is the first comprehensive book that deals with Asian Pentecostalism written by Asian writers. Therefore, I would strongly recommend this book to seminarians, pastors and Christian workers who are interested in knowing more about the development and issues surrounding Pentecostalism in Asia.

Ekaputra Tupamahu

French L. Arrington, *Unconditional Eternal Security: Myth or Truth?* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2005), paper, 211 pp., ISBN: 1596840579, \$11.99.

A series of previous studies has addressed the issue of whether Christians can willfully return to the practice of sinning, from which the saving grace of Christ has delivered them, and still be saved, e.g., I. H. Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God* (1974); D. and R. Bassinger, eds., *Predestination and Free Will* (1986); C. Pinnock, ed., *Case for Arminianism: The Grace of God, the Will of Man* (1989); J. Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (1990); and M. Pinson, ed., *Four Views on Eternal Security* (2002).

Against this background, *Unconditional Eternal Security: Myth or Truth?* adopts a distinctly pastoral approach with analysis of relevant texts in the OT, the synoptic Gospels, Johannine writings, Acts, and the letters of Paul, Hebrews, James, Peter and Jude.

Arrington briefly examines the historical origin of the debate but does not venture off into philosophical considerations and rationalistic speculations. The strength of this textual focus lies in a persuasive rhetorical expertise that has been honed in other equally well-written efforts, such as the co-editorship of the *Life in the Spirit New Testament Commentary* (1999) with R. Stronstad, which may serve as an accompaniment to J. W. Adams et al, eds., *Life in the Spirit Study Bible* (2000). In *Unconditional*, each relevant text is expounded with contextual clarity so that when it comes time for a summary, readers can