

Editorial:

Beginning of the International Journal of Pentecostal Missiology

From simple roots just over 100 years ago, through the Azusa Street Revival and the founding of various strands that saw themselves as returning to the practices of the apostolic church of the first century, Pentecostals (and her ‘children’) have become the growth edge of the church around the world. The Assemblies of God USA (AG USA), founded in 1914 with the expressed purpose of facilitating missions activity and early on (as articulated by Alice Luce and Melvin Hodges) intentionally sent out missionaries with the goal of developing indigenous national church movements. Now the AG USA represents only 2.8 million people in the 65 million member World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF), making it one of the largest religious bodies in the world.

It is a welcome development that the younger churches that are the product of the missionary movements of western based Pentecostal/Charismatic movements have now begun to send their own cross-cultural workers. The watchword “from every people to every people” expresses a wonderful sentiment but it is fraught with complexities that need to be examined. Nearly 10 years ago the sending agency of the AG USA, Assemblies of God World Mission (AGWM) formed two subcommittees to begin to explore the issues of emerging majority world missions and unreached people groups. It was soon decided that these are related issues and that it would be best to pursue them as a single committee. This first group was called the “International Committee on Emerging Missions and Unreached Peoples,” and later changed its name to the “Acts One Eight Project”. Recently, this group was asked to function as the Missions Commission of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. Brad Walz, AGWM missionary to Argentina and the founder and director of the missions arm of the Argentine Assemblies of God serves as the chairman of this group.

One of the things that our committee recognized early on was the need for a forum to grapple with the issues of majority world sending, relations between the “older” sending agencies and the “newer” ones, and the great need of large parts of our world with few or no Christians, churches, and church movements. The idea of a journal to provide such a forum has been bounced around for many years but we lacked the energy and time to pull it off. So this is a

very happy moment for our commission to welcome this journal as a vehicle to provoke healthy discussion and reflection on these important issues as well as other ones relevant to contemporary Pentecostal mission. To this end the journal will have a permanent section devoted to issues of majority world mission, as well as having articles focusing on other themes and issues as well.

It is our desire that the articles be profound, practical, and have an international flavor. Different cultures bring different strengths to the table of reflective thought, and tomorrow's missionaries will increasingly come from the "Global South". To adequately address the complex issues of 21st century mission we need greater diversity of thought and perspective. Further, there are and will be issues that are inherent to Pentecostalism, its theology and spirituality that has direct bearing on contemporary Pentecostal missions and missiology. We want this journal to be a resource not only for traditional senders, but also for the growing community of new sending countries and as well as the receivers.

One of the factors that helped to move the journal from idea to reality was the simultaneous interest in a Pentecostal missions journal by Paul Lewis at Asia Pacific Theological Seminary (APTS) in Baguio, Philippines and DeLonn Rance of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS) in Springfield, Missouri. Alan Johnson, who works in Thailand and serves on the WAGF Missions Commission, Paul, and DeLonn are serving as the initial editorial board for the journal.

Although the original impetus for the journal was born inside of the Assemblies of God World Missions USA environment, we want to be true to our title and have representation from various expressions of Pentecostal mission. To that end we are in the process of inviting a range of Pentecostal scholar-practitioners to form our editorial board for future issues. Launching the journal has turned out to be a much slower process than we hoped, and at the end of the day we felt it would be better to get an initial issue out than to wait for every piece to fall into place.

We believe that good missions practice is advanced by reflection on Scripture and missiological themes and public dialogue that allows for the interchange of ideas. We welcome letters to the editor and hope that many will write 500-1500 word reviews and responses to the articles that can be run in subsequent issues. We also want book reviews on materials that relate directly do or are of interest to Pentecostal missions. All the correspondence can be emailed to ijpm@agts.edu.

We trust this journal will be a blessing to all of us in this Pentecostal Missions Movement, no matter from which country or church one is sent out from and to what sphere of ministry one is called to.

Alan Johnson

Paul Lewis

DeLonn Rance

Brad Walz