

The Kaleidoscopic City: Hong Kong, Mission, and the Evolution of Global Pentecostalism. By Alex R. Mayfield. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2023. 269 pp.

Studies of the Pentecostal Movement have proved the existence of many forms of Pentecostalism, with the various permutations of Pentecostalism practiced in different places, thus causing the emergence of the term “Pentecostalism.” Hong Kong is no exception to the rule; since its earliest days, the Pentecostalism in that colonial city took shape by “a kaleidoscopic mix of people with competing ideas and practices” (p. 4). The form of Pentecostalism that took root in Hong Kong was influenced by missionaries and preachers from various origins, networks, institutions, and nations, carrying opposing ideas at times. However, this smorgasbord of ideas and creeds took a new form by engaging with the local Chinese culture and the message of modern Pentecost. Alex Mayfield, in *The Kaleidoscopic City*, pens the mission history of Pentecostalism in Hong Kong between 1907 and 1942. Using Foucault’s conception of discourse, Mayfield describes the Pentecostal discourse on this island as “the product of global interconnections, sustained through a bevy of international revival centers, periodicals, and eventually—denominations” (p. 4). In this convincing discourse, Mayfield highlights the effect of globalization on the Pentecostal Movement in this city and how the global-local exchange transformed the form of Pentecostalism embraced and merged in Hong Kong.

In his attempt to explore the development of Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century, Mayfield employs an often-neglected methodology of spatial analysis using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. In this discursive spatial approach, he examines the development of the Pentecostal movement in Hong Kong as a local expression while considering the multivalent nature of the global Pentecostal movement. Using 1,072 articles referencing Hong Kong in Pentecostal periodicals along with other available historical records, Pentecostalism in Hong Kong is treated as a diverse yet singular network as well as a part of the global Pentecostal network. In this transnational network discourse, one will find the interactions among local missionaries and institutions and how the global Pentecostal networks influenced it through publications, conferences, and interpersonal relations.

In five chapters, Mayfield explores a distinct face of Pentecostalism in each chapter. Chapter one treats Hong Kong as a gateway city to the region, focusing on its struggle for a center. In chapter two, he delves into denominational identity and Pentecostal mission structures. He tells readers about the move from faith mission models of the Pentecostal norm to the denominational models as denominations were formed in the homelands of the missionaries. With the shift in the mission model

comes a shift in the aims, identities, and missional approach of Pentecostals in Hong Kong, looking like Pentecostals at one moment and like evangelicals at other times.

Chapter three portrays Hong Kong as a soul-saving city sharing the soul-saving, Spirit-filled education offered by Pentecostal missionaries and evangelistic institutions. He points out that Pentecostal evangelistic practices look “un-Pentecostal” as they see education, colportage, and Sunday schools as the most effective means to evangelize this colonial city. Chapter four focuses on Pentecostal spirituality, where the Pentecostals compete in Hong Kong’s religious market. Chapter five discusses the role of female missionaries, the acceptance of the evangelical missionary wife model, and the vital role of the local Chinese Bible women in the spread of the Pentecostal message. As the book is named, these five chapters show the kaleidoscopic view of Hong Kong’s Pentecostal movement in five distinct themes.

Mayfield’s *The Kaleidoscopic City* is a thematic examination of Pentecostalism in Hong Kong using a discursive spatial approach. In this impressive work, he manages to capture the development of Pentecostalism that is being transformed by globalization and the local culture where it is planted. His approach vastly differs from the traditional Pentecostal historiography drawn by three patterns rooted in different historiographies. Unlike the historical discourses of Vinson Synan, Walter Hollenweger, and Allan Anderson, who structured their work on the origins of Pentecostalism, Mayfield’s emphasis is on the transformation of Pentecostalism and the form of Pentecostalism that emerged in Hong Kong.

One of the contributions of Mayfield to the study of global Pentecostalism is his inclusion of historical data omitted in Anderson’s *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, which mainly focuses on the early part of the Pentecostal history, as Anderson intends to point to the multiple origins of global Pentecostalism. Thus, while the revival centers and pioneer Western missionaries are included in Anderson’s work, it ends with the indigenous leader, Mok Lai Chi, excluding the development of Hong Kong’s Pentecostalism in later decades. Mayfield’s work fills out the denominational histories from 1925 until 1942. His account includes the Chinese leaders who worked alongside the Western missionaries and the impact of social and ideological changes in global Pentecostalism on its local expression.

His choice of method is effective in handling the vast amount of historical data in a manageable way, and the use of the kaleidoscope analogy fits a city like Hong Kong that played many vital roles in the region. Moreover, viewing Pentecostalism in Hong Kong as part of a transnational spatially specific discourse provides a broader and more nuanced description of the Pentecostal mission in the city. However, the thematic approach has drawbacks as some other important facts are omitted. As the author acknowledges, his method of pulling out meta trends using charts and figures is not self-explanatory and is challenging for making sense without added narrative. One

should be mindful of the biased nature of historical discourses as this project relies heavily on periodicals that are, in fact, official narratives. One should be open to the possibility of non-official narratives that can be somewhat contrary to what is included in this project.

Overall, this book provides the readers with a better understanding of the history of the early Pentecostal mission in Hong Kong and the evolution of global Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century. It is an excellent book for students who study Pentecostalism, Asian Pentecostal history, and scholars of global Christianity.

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