Asian Light, Asian Fruit

The Nestorian Monument, featured below with frequent contributor Jean-Paul Wiest standing in the foreground to provide some sense of the replica’s scale, is one of the most recognizable symbols of early Christian missionary efforts in Asia. Careful examination of the inset picture, a rubbing of the original monument, shows the cross rising out of the lotus flower (symbol of Buddhism), shrouded by clouds and set with a flaming pearl (yin and yang, symbols of Taoism). The inscription reads, “Memorial to the Entrance into China of the Religion of the Light from Persia.” According to the epigraph on the tablet below the cross, this monument was erected in 781 during the Tang Dynasty (618–907).

Most of the articles in this issue explore aspects of Christianity’s long, if sometimes tenuous, link to Asia. The articles show that, although for several centuries Christian missions were sometimes deeply compromised advocates, or at least beneficiaries, of Western military and economic intrusion in that part of the world—which left behind a legacy that will take many more

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generations to purge—nevertheless the church in Asia not only survived but thrives.

This issue’s lead article provides a snapshot of what is surely one of the most astounding mission stories of the last thirty years. Steve Sang-Cheol Moon and his colleagues at the Korea Research Institute for Missions (KRIIM) conducted an extensive survey between January and August of 2007. The results and analysis confirm what has been anecdotally asserted: Koreans are in the forefront of Christian missions today, with nearly 15,000 known Korean missionaries working in 168 different countries under the auspices of 174 mission agencies. While some of these mission agencies are international with roots in the West that have been around a long time, by far the majority of Korean missionaries (81.4 percent) serve in Korean agencies, which run the gamut from mega- to mini-agencies. The largest Korean mission agency is the Global Missionary Society, with more than 1,800 missionaries.

One hundred years ago, as Kevin Yao’s insightful study of the great Shanghai conference of 1907 marking one century of Protestant missionary presence in China reminds us, the Opium Wars were over, the Boxer Rebellion had been quelled, and Protestant missionaries were enjoying a time of unprecedented freedom to live and move and work throughout most of that great country. The number of Chinese Protestant Christians associated in one way or another with Western missionary activities numbered nearly 750,000. Missionary reports were infused with optimism and confidence at the prospect of China joining the rest of the “civilized” world, thanks partly to missionary educational and medical efforts. Although foreign missionaries continued to enjoy the extraordinary privileges vouchsafed them by the so-called Unequal Treaties, some were troubled by the impropriety of trying to accomplish righteous ends through unrighteous means. Still, so great were these benefits that the debate mostly dealt with whether or not Chinese believers should be placed under these treaty protections as well.

The missionaries’ optimism, as it happens, was warranted—though the growth of the church in China, both Protestant and Catholic, did not correspond in any way with their triumphalist prognostications. Today in China, estimates of the combined number of Protestant and Catholic believers range from the government’s conservative figure of 21 million to presumably more realistic estimates that range from 50 to 80 million Protestants (Christian Science Monitor, March 9, 2006) to 110 million total Christians (World Christian Database, figures for 2005). As John Tsz-pang discusses in his article, the production of Christian literature, so key a dimension in Western missionary strategy, has in China become an avalanche, yielding its fruit both in the churches of the Protestant China Christian Council and in the unregistered and Roman Catholic churches.

As the “Guidelines for Doing Theologies in Asia” that were hammered out between October 2006 and November 2007 clearly show, the thirty-year-old “Critical Asia Principal” (CAP), which has served as a basis for ATESEA and SEAGST in theological education, is a tree whose branches are now laden with the fruit of uniquely Asian Christian theology, born from the Asian soil from which I write the lines of this editorial.

This issue of the IBMR opens with an in-depth survey of a vigorously growing Asian missionary movement and showcases the historical depth of Western missionary investment in the world’s most populous continent. At the other end of the spectrum, Notto Thelle’s moving reflection about his own father’s willingness to be “number two” speaks to us of a humility for the sake of Christ that represents the best that Christian missionaries have ever had to offer.

—Jonathan J. Bonk
The Protestant Missionary Movement in Korea: Current Growth and Development

Steve Sang-Cheol Moon

The Protestant missionary movement in Korea has recently gone through a period of growing pains and now stands at a crossroad. Careful analysis is needed to determine the direction it should now take. This report is based on the most recent survey, conducted by the Korea Research Institute for Missions (KRIM) between January and August 2007. The survey notes both the increasing elements of globalization of the Korean missionary movement and the developmental issues that must be addressed for qualitative growth.

The Globalizing Mission Movement

The number of Korean Protestant missionaries who were at work in other countries as of the end of 2006 is shown in Table 1, as well as the number of Korean mission agencies and the number of countries in which they were serving. Marlin L. Nelson’s first research on the Korean missionary movement, in 1979, reported the existence of 93 missionaries. His last report, in 1989, identified 1,178 Korean missionaries. For the next generation of KRIM research, surveys showed a growth from 1,645 (1990) to 8,103 (2000), and then to 14,905 (2006). That is, during the twenty-seven years from 1979 to 2006, the number of missionaries grew 160-fold! Throughout the 1990s the annual growth rate was 25 percent, which fell to 7.6 percent in the 2000s. The change in growth rates indicates that the missionary movement entered a stabilizing period in the 2000s, which allows us to project growth to a maximum of 35,000 career missionaries in the next twenty-five years. One factor explaining this rather conservative projection is the stagnated growth of Korean Protestantism. Nevertheless, with an annual growth rate of 7.6 percent, we can expect Korean churches each year to send out over 1,000 new foreign missionnaires, which still represents one of the fastest growing national missionary movements in the world.

The number of Korean mission agencies grew steadily from 21 in 1979 to 74 in 1990, then to 136 in 2000 and 174 in 2006. In recent years the number of mission agencies has not grown as rapidly as it did in the 1990s, which indicates that the sending structures are being established and stabilized. From another angle, we could say that new missionaries prefer working with already existing, stable agencies, a preference that matches the growth in size of mission agencies over the years. In 2006 there were two sending agencies with over 1,000 members, six with 500–999 members, twenty-eight with 100–499, fifty with 50–99, eighty-nine with less than 50 members, and 34 supporting agencies such as missionary training centers. In 2006 the ten largest mission agencies were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Missionary Society (Hapdong)</td>
<td>1,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Bible Fellowship</td>
<td>1,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Mission Board (Tonghap)</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Mission Board</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies of God Mission Board</td>
<td>664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Mission International</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Missionary Fellowship</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist Mission Board</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiness Mission Board</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth With A Mission</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The Korean Missionary Movement, 1979–2006: Missionaries, Mission Agencies, and Countries of Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Missionaries</th>
<th>No. of Mission Agencies</th>
<th>No. of Countries of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1,178</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,645</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2,576</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3,272</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4,402</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>5,948</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8,103</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>10,422</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>12,874</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>14,905</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of sending structures for overseas missions in Korea is a facet of globalizing church structures that has been propelled by the globalization of Korean society in general. This development has been marked in particular by opportunities for unrestricted travel and overseas residence.

In 1979 Korean missionaries were serving in twenty-six countries around the world. This number more than tripled by 1990, and then nearly doubled again by 2006 (see Table 1). Such growth reflects the pioneering spirit of Korean missionaries. For a monoethnic and monocultural people, it has been unexpected indeed to see the numbers of Koreans scattered around the world in so many places for the sake of preaching the Gospel.

Not surprisingly, the largest number of Korean missionaries serve in Asia (47.3 percent). The rest are active in the Eurasian countries of the former USSR (14.6 percent), followed by North America (9.3), Africa (7.7), Latin America (5.8), the Middle East (4.5), western Europe (3.9), the South Pacific (2.9), and eastern Europe (2.0), with the remainder in itineration and headquarters (2.0 percent). The comparatively large deployment of Korean missionaries in Asia is positive because Asia is the most populous, but also the least evangelized, continent. Worldwide, the major countries of service for Korean missionaries are China, United States, Japan, Philippines, Russia, Germany, Thailand, Indonesia, India, and Canada. Recently, many missionaries have been sent to Japan, Russia, Thailand, and India. The missionaries in the United States, Germany, and Canada are mostly involved in campus ministries.

In terms of the religious or cultural areas served, over half

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of Korean Protestant missionaries are active in the Christian (29.1 percent) or Islamic (24.1 percent) blocs. The remaining half are divided among peoples that are Communist (18.7 percent), Buddhist (14.2), animist (4.1), Hindu (3.8), or other (5.9). It is noteworthy that, at present, more and more Korean missionaries are going to the Islamic world.

What reasons can we give for such a phenomenal growth of the Korean missionary movement over the last three decades? First, the explosive growth of churches in Korea in the 1960s and 1970s affected Korean mission growth beginning in the 1980s. The missionary movement was the child of church revival. Second, the globalization of Korean society affects the missionary movement. Government policies that include unrestricted travel and overseas residence have facilitated the missionary movement. Third, a surplus of seminary graduates is another factor explaining the increase of expatriate Christian workers. Many young Christians who commit themselves wholeheartedly to the cause of Christ’s kingdom decide to enter seminary, and then, since there are not enough ministry positions in Korea for all graduates from seminary, many look overseas for their future service. There are negative sides of this phenomenon, but one positive is that it is desirable that more qualified people go to the mission fields.

Who Are the Korean Missionaries?

Korean missionaries reflect the characteristics of Korean society and the Korean church. These characteristics, which highlight both the advantages and the disadvantages of being Korean, work either positively or negatively with respect to current global trends.

Slightly more than half of all Korean missionaries are female (50.3 percent). Married missionaries outnumber singles in the missionary force by a ratio of almost 8 to 1 (88.7 vs. 11.3 percent). The percentage of single missionaries fell from 20.2 percent in 1994 to 12.7 percent in 2000, and still further to 11.3 percent in 2006. The decreasing percentage of single missionaries can be traced to the gradual development of denominational mission agencies, whose members are largely seminary graduates and married, and also to the preference of large interdenominational agencies for married members over singles.

In age, 71.8 percent of Korean missionaries are in their thirties and forties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20s</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30s</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40s</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50s</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 or older</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age distribution is related to the extent of ministry experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 4</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–8</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–12</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–16</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 16</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of Korean missionaries with less than four years’ experience is lower than in previous surveys (39 percent in 2000 vs. 68 percent in 1994), whereas the ratio of missionaries with over eight years’ experience has increased (46 percent in 2006 vs. 28 percent in 2000 and only 8 percent in 1994). There have been concerns about the lack of veteran missionaries who could provide oversight for young and inexperienced missionaries, but the problem is being reduced. More systematic efforts are needed, however, to care for and support younger missionaries.

As for the level of education of missionaries, 4.3 percent of Korean missionaries have completed only high school, 65.7 percent have undergraduate degrees, 25.7 percent have master’s degrees, and 4.4 percent have completed a doctorate. We find that increasing numbers of missionary personnel are educated at the doctoral level, many of them pursuing higher degrees in mission-related topics such as ethnology or area studies. The educational standard of Korean missionaries suggests that they are equipped to carry out highly specialized ministries globally, though certain formative informal and nonformal training is essential in addition to purely academic studies.

Over one-third of Korean missionaries are ordained pastors (36.6 percent), with pastors’ wives and laypersons accounting for the other 63.4 percent. Since a majority of Korean missionaries have had education in theology, we count on them to be effective in discipleship training, church planting, theological education, and especially leadership development.

In the 1970s and 1980s the majority of Korean missionaries were involved in diaspora ministry; currently, however, only a small minority (9.6 percent) are involved in ministry to the Korean diaspora or in home ministries at the headquarters. This percentage has increased a little recently because mission agencies now have more home offices, and some mission agencies have accepted new members who are currently involved in diaspora ministry but are targeting other population groups cross-culturally at the same time. Most Korean mission agencies do not consider diaspora workers as missionaries. If we include all of them in the number of missionaries, the total would be much higher. Diaspora ministry is characteristic of a missionary movement with a monocultural background.

In terms of ministry focus, Korean Protestant missionaries in 2006 were divided as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry focus</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Church planting</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discipleship training</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educational ministries</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Theological education</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Itinerant evangelism</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social welfare</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Community development</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Medical missions</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Business and IT-related</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Bible translation</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Other</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 10 above, we see that 72.9 percent of the missionaries in 2006 were directly involved in evangelistic and spiritual works, which reflects the conservative theological orientation of the Korean church. Korean missionaries, however, need to grow in practicing a more holistic concept of missions, as we see it expressed in other bodies of Christ around the world.

Strategic Agenda of Korean Missions

Korean missions must grow according to current global standards and needs, but they must not forget the need to adapt to
local cultural situations. For meaningful further growth of the Korean missionary movement, efforts must be directed in both directions—global and local.

“Glocalizing” the missionary movement. To properly glocalize the Korean missionary movement, we must evaluate it with global standards and must also pursue development creatively in local environments. In both areas we need insight for growth and maturation from the global mission community.

Working with international agencies provides a good opportunity to learn what it means to work multiculturally. According to the 2007 survey, 18.6 percent of Korean missionaries are working with international agencies, versus 81.4 percent with Korean agencies. The percentage of missionaries working with international agencies was higher in the 1980s than it is now. In the 1990s the figure dropped significantly but now is increasing again. This growing percentage reflects the new generation’s preference for international agencies over Korean agencies, which, considering the need for globalization, is a desirable trend.

International agencies need to complement their corporate structure and culture with significant input from local situations. In this global age it is no longer adequate to maintain uniform standards and regulations across an institution. Agencies need to learn and adopt local cultural traits and to maintain a spirit and philosophy of multiculturalism embracing both the global and the local. More and more international agencies are making efforts to localize their principles and policies in different parts of the world, although many still refuse to decentralize their functions. It is encouraging that a few have included Korean missionaries on their leadership team, but much more must be done by international mission agencies in sharing mission leadership with the Majority World church. Furthermore, glocalization efforts need to be more fully reflected in the corporate cultures of the agencies.

Where Korean agencies are weaker in the global aspect than in the local aspect, they need to cooperate closely with churches, missions, and missionaries from other countries. By doing so, their members can develop global expertise, as well as practice local diversity. Local agencies may feel uncomfortable about crossing organizational boundaries, but they nonetheless need to make conscious efforts to cooperate. As globalization deepens and widens, the need increases for tentmaking, which can often deal with global realities more sensitively and more creatively than traditional full-time missionaries can. Tentmaking ministries, through their greater economic opportunities, enable creative approaches to local cultural situations. Korean missions need to be creative in developing a wider range of tentmaking efforts, for currently only one-third of all Korean missionaries (33.5 percent) can be categorized as tentmakers, including those who are involved part-time in business. More experimental and creative minds and efforts are needed to suggest effective models of tentmaking. Concrete working models are needed, not merely further conceptual study. For example, a proper development of tentmaking requires marketing consultants for microbusiness.

Frontier missions, which are more difficult and dangerous and which require more effort and careful attention than work in established missions, aim to experience the full cycle of missionary work. In 2006 a sizable minority (29.6 percent) of Korean missionaries were involved in frontier missions, a percentage that has been increasing over the years. In the summer of 2007 the Taliban in Afghanistan kidnapped twenty-three Korean missionaries, eventually killing two of them and releasing the others after several weeks. This incident shows how necessary it is to base frontier missions on a realistic assessment of risks and on adequate preparation. Passion and zeal are not enough. We need information, strategy, and wisdom in order to do frontier missions well, just as we need a balance between frontier and established missions. It is not a matter of either/or but of both/and. Proponents of frontier missions in Korea, however, typically emphasize only unreached peoples, neglecting areas that show receptivity to the Christian Gospel. We need to follow, rather than precede, the Holy Spirit in strategizing global missions, whether on a small or a large scale. Frontier missions requires long-time perspectives, but Korean missions and churches tend to be more short-term oriented, ready to plunge in, often without considering the local sociocultural situation. Korean missionaries need to learn to wait patiently for God’s timing.

Strategizing for the Korean missionary movement. In the survey, Korean mission executives identified what they felt were the greatest single strength and the greatest weakness of Korean missions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greatest strength</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel resources</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological expertise</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know-how for missions</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial supply</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greatest weakness</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak supporting systems</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of know-how</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of experts</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor application of technology</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is curious to see mission know-how identified as both a strength and a weakness, a discrepancy that fuller definition of “know-how” might resolve. As for the top item identified as a weakness for Korean missions, it is clear that without proper supporting systems, the missionary movement cannot continue its growth. Agencies must therefore commit themselves to establishing better support systems both within Korea and abroad. Local churches need to invest in the establishment and strengthening of support systems rather than solely emphasizing the need to send missionaries to the “front lines.”

Mission executives suggested several ways to improve support systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways to improve support systems</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce good models of ministry</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise awareness of missions among churches</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control the number of missionaries</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise individual and corporate support</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Good examples and models of ministry can overcome mission fatigue among the stakeholders of missions. Short-term evaluation may lead to premature judgment, so long-term perspective is needed to monitor the fruitfulness of present ministries.

In response to an open question about the most urgent developmental issue facing Korean missions, mission executives pointed to the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most urgent area of development</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missionary care</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research and development 18.8
Missionary training 16.1
Missionary children’s education 9.8
Support systems 8.9

Of the various ways to exercise care of missionaries, professional care by experts is emphasized (by 44.9 percent of respondents) more than mutual care among field missionaries, care by home staff members, or care by local church people in Korea. Missionaries often carry deep-seated personal problems and need professional care by counselors, psychiatrists, educators, and administrators. Such experts need to work closely with mission leaders and missiologists to give systematic care for the missionaries.

When it comes to children’s education, Korean mission executives identified (47.3 percent) establishing the child’s sense of identity as the most important factor; internal issues must be resolved before addressing other concerns. The identity issue seems to be a complex one indeed for a “missionary kid” who grows up in a complex cultural and educational milieu. Mission agencies and local churches therefore need to invest in developing educational programs to help establish and strengthen MKs’ sense of identity.

Mission executives were asked to identify the area of research they viewed as most significant. The results highlighted the need for developing mission strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas needing research</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission strategy</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field research</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel research</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical research</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That is, pragmatic concerns were considered more urgent than theoretical and conceptual research such as in the theology of mission and mission history. Still, we cannot disregard theoretical and academic research, which, in the long term, will ultimately help mature the missionary movement. Mission executives, however, often seem to have little time to reflect on long-term goals.

On the question of which media are viewed as most significant for missionary work, mission executives identified the Internet (55.0 percent) and satellite broadcasting (27.5 percent). Both media are currently being used for missions by the Korean church, but more efforts are needed to make the best use of them for missions in this ever-globalizing world.

Mission executives identified several areas to be strengthened in missionary training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvements needed in training</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character building</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-life training</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area research</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missiological knowledge</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, personal and relational training is viewed as more needed than theoretical or methodological training. There are many Korean missionary training programs, but most of them focus on cognitive education for missiological knowledge. Mission executives, in contrast, consider personal stability and spiritual maturity to be more important than knowledge, experience, or managerial capability as important qualities of mission leadership.

The executives had different estimates of how much Korean missions would grow in the next twenty-five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimate of missionaries in 2030</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15,000–20,000</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,001–30,000</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,001–50,000</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,001–80,000</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,001–100,000</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over 100,000</td>
<td>11.2</td>
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</tbody>
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Although most mission executives do not expect to see 100,000 missionaries on the field in 2030, they nevertheless believe that the Korean church is able to send many more missionaries than the 14,905 on the field in 2006.

Which country will be the leading missionary sending country in the twenty-first century? The majority of respondents highlighted Korea.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leading mission country</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collectively, the respondents assumed that the leading missionary countries will change dramatically from Western to Majority World countries. The U.S. church is underestimated perhaps because of lack of awareness of the size of the American missionary force and of the leading role the U.S. mission movement plays in foreign missions especially in terms of strategy development.

The mission executives were asked which Korean mission agency they thought was the best. The highest vote-getters were Global Missionary Fellowship (GMF, 10 out of 55 respondents), Global Bible Translators (GBT, the Bible translation arm of GMF and affiliated with Wycliffe Bible Translators, 10), and Global Mission Society (GMS, Presbyterian/Hapdong, 8). If we include all eight divisions of GMF, it was selected by approximately half of the mission executives responding. GMS effectively overcomes the recent stereotype that denominational agencies lack missiological expertise.

Respondents identified the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF, 9 out of 51 responding), WEC International (8), and Wycliffe (WBT, 7) as the most excellent and respected international mission agencies, each of which has long been active in Korea. OMF has been in Korea for the longest time, both in receiving and in sending missionaries. WEC’s recent progress is remarkable and can be attributed to the younger generation’s preference for overseas training opportunities and its global network. WBT as a successful model of glocalization is known through GBT in Korea; although it is in third place here, its ministry in Korea is widely appreciated through its association with GBT. These international agencies are generally well accepted among the Korean churches because of their long history in Asia and Korea.

Summary and Conclusions

The Korean church is now not only a leading force in the Majority World mission movement but also an important part of the wider global mission movement. Korean missionaries are comparatively young but are rapidly accumulating cross-cultural ministry experience. In order to glocalize the global missionary movement, international agencies need to function like indigenous agencies, and indigenous agencies need to function like international agencies. In the changing climate of missions, the Korean church
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“This book is a wonderful introduction to missionary life and work, addressing most of the questions that a person might ask about a possible career in Christian missions. Steffen and McKinney Douglas emphasize that preparation for missionary effectiveness begins first and foremost in one’s relationship to God, and then in one’s relationships to God’s people. They also address most of the practical questions—support, agency, culture, language, family, schooling—related to the daily life and work of a missionary. This is an excellent resource for introductory missions classes in any training context.”—Sherwood Lingenfelter, provost and senior vice president, Fuller Theological Seminary

TRANSFORMING WORLDVIEWS
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HOW PEOPLE CHANGE
Paul G. Hiebert
9780801027055 • 400 pp. • $24.99p
Available May 2008

What does conversion to Christ entail? A change in behavior? A change in beliefs? These were the leading indicators for missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, respectively, that conversion had occurred. But each of these on its own is insufficient for a gospel understanding of conversion. And even when both are in evidence, it is possible that the result is merely syncretistic Christo-paganism. Renowned missions anthropologist Paul Hiebert argues that for biblical mission in the twenty-first century, we must add a third element: a change in worldview, which underlies both behavior and belief.

“This book is vintage Hiebert, pulling together in a single volume his seminal thinking on the cultural dynamics of Christian conversion. Drawing on a lifetime of learning, thinking, and writing on the subject, this work augurs to be the standard text on worldview for years to come. The book brims with insights into the cultural and theological ‘what’ and ‘how’ of being ‘no longer conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds.’ Written with the clarity and originality of thought that put Hiebert’s writings at the forefront of twentieth-century missiological thought and practice, this volume is an apt tribute to the life and work of its extraordinary author, who went to his eternal home on March 11, 2007.”—Jonathan J. Bonk, executive director, Overseas Ministries Study Center; editor, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*
needs to cooperate with missionary forces from other countries, including the churches in the United States and China.

In conclusion, glocalization must be realized concretely in many mission fields in order for the missionary movement as a whole to advance. Qualitative growth according to global standards that allow space for local creativity is needed, and we need balance between them. Expertise in diverse areas must be developed to contribute to the global missionary movement more meaningfully and strategically. The process of this growth may include personal or institutional suffering. We must remember, though, that any such sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will ultimately be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18).

Notes
1. Our operational definition of “missionary” does not include independent missionaries who do not belong to any agency or pastors of diaspora churches who do not belong to mission agencies. People who work with migrant workers in Korea are also not included. Korean missionaries sent by diaspora churches are not included in this number, although we know that there are some. The number 14,905 is thus conservative. For comparison, the number of Roman Catholic missionaries from Korea at the end of 2006 was 634 according to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Korea.
3. According to the most recent Mission Handbook, there are 44,384 fully supported overseas missionaries from the United States (Linda J. Weber and Dotsey Welliver, eds., Mission Handbook: U.S. and Canadian Protestant Ministries Overseas, 2007–2009 [Wheaton, Ill.: Evangelism and Missions Information Service, 2007], p. 13). According to Operation World, there are 41,064 Indian missionaries, most of whom work cross-culturally within India. These countries are followed by the United Kingdom (8,164 missionaries, including 5,666 overseas), Canada (7,001, including 4,337 overseas), and Brazil (5,801, including 1,912 overseas) (Patrick Johnstone, Robyn Johnstone, and Jason Mandryk, Operation World: When We Pray God Works [Carlisle, Eng.: Paternoster Lifestyle, 2001], pp. 895–901). In the 2005 survey, the attrition rate for Korean missionaries was 3.4 percent (i.e., 34 missionaries out of every 1,000 return home sooner than expected). In 2004 the number of missionary early returnees was 443. For the time period 1995–2004, a total of 2,785 cases of attrition were reported. Important reasons for attrition, listed here in the order of frequency, were change of job, conflict with the home office, health problems, retirement, death, conflict with colleagues, and marriage with nonmissionaries.
4. Andrew F. Walls argues that democratic political systems that encourage voluntary organizations, unrestricted travel and flow of finance overseas in capitalist economic systems, and tax exemption for nonprofit organizations are important factors contributing to the growth of the American missionary movement (The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith [Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2000], pp. 221–40). Similarly, the globalization of society has affected the globalization of the church in Korea. The question is how the church should use its own global experience to contribute to the globalization of society.
5. See ibid. p. 160.
6. Here pastors of diaspora churches are included in the total number of missionaries if they belong to mission agencies with missionary vision, although not all of them are currently involved in cross-cultural ministry. The number of pastors involved in diaspora ministry is not large, however, because we do not include diaspora workers who are not related to a mission agency; and when diaspora workers form the majority of a mission agency, we do not count them as missionaries for the purposes of this survey.
7. Diaspora churches are important as bases of member care for cross-cultural missionaries and increasingly are becoming involved in cross-cultural missions.
9. These and the following statistics are based on replies by 110 (or, in some cases, fewer) of the 174 mission executives surveyed.

Errata
In the introduction to his review essay in the January 2008 issue of IBMR, page 44, John B. Carman should have been identified as a member of the editorial board of the Oxford Studies in World Christianity, not as the author of one of the volumes in the series.


The editors regret the errors.
At the Turn of the Century: A Study of the China Centenary Missionary Conference of 1907

Kevin Xiyi Yao

The year 2007 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of Robert Morrison’s arrival in China.1 A number of events were held in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan to commemorate this historic event. It is worth noting that one hundred years ago Western missionaries in China also marked the day by holding a centenary missionary conference to celebrate the first century of Protestant missionary presence and labor in that ancient land.

In the tradition of the great missionary conferences of 1877 and 1890, the China Centenary Missionary Conference (hereafter Centenary Conference) convened in Shanghai from April 25 to May 8, 1907, and was attended by 1,170 missionary delegates, representatives of home boards, and visitors. Among all the attendees, fewer than ten Chinese can be identified.2 Twelve subjects were selected for discussion, and twelve program committees were formed to draft resolutions on these subjects. In addition, a number of resolutions and open letters (memorials) were eventually adopted by the conference and implemented by twenty-four committees after the conference ended.3

The Centenary Conference of 1907, a landmark event in the history of Protestant missions in China, was “a celebration of the close of the first century of Protestant missionary work in China” and the ushering in of the second century (p. ii; page numbers in text refer to Records, China Centenary Missionary Conference). Looked at today, the discussions and resolutions of the conference yield insights into the issues the missionaries faced and their mentality, permit evaluation of their decisions in the light of later developments, and offer lessons pertinent to challenges facing the Protestant movement as it enters its third century in the country. Rather than examining each of the twelve conference subjects, I shall focus on five main themes shaping the conference agenda and discussions.

Retrospect of the First Century

At the time of the Centenary Conference in Shanghai, the missionaries and church in China were enjoying remarkable social favor. In the wake of the disastrous Boxer Rebellion, the Qing Dynasty initiated a series of economic, governmental, educational, and military reforms. At the same time, Chinese society showed unprecedented openness toward Western influences. Consequently, the intense hostility that the church had constantly faced in the previous hundred years ebbed considerably, if it did not vanish completely. In such an environment the church and the missionary movement experienced rapid recovery and expansion.

Not surprisingly, the conference participants were overwhelmingly upbeat in their comments on past missionary work and the current situation. First, the considerable change of social circumstance was a matter frequently noted. Second, reports highlighted and praised the tremendous missionary progress made since Morrison’s days. John C. Gibson of the English Presbyterian Mission, in introducing the resolution draft on behalf of the Committee on the Chinese Church, pointed out that William Milne, Morrison’s coworker, in 1820 had written “Retrospect of the First Ten Years of the Protestant Mission to China.” In it Milne predicted that at the current growth rate, the total number of Chinese believers would reach one thousand, including their children, by 1907. “Now at the end of the century,” Gibson said, “we count a Church of at least 180,000 communicants, which implies a Christian community of some 630,000 souls . . . besides some 120,000 children and young people. . . .—this is the wonderful fruit which one hundred years have left in our hands. . . . Our first thoughts in this Centenary Conference may well be those of profound thankfulness to God for what He has done” (pp. 1–2). Overall, a sense of pride, gratitude, and celebration is evident throughout the conference reports.

Manifestation of Church Union

Comparing the 1907 conference with the China Missionary Conference held seventeen years earlier, in 1890, many participants singled out harmony and cooperation as highlights of the centenary gathering (p. 690). “Comity and Federation” was actually listed as one of the twelve conference subjects. Conference participants seem to have been quite united on this issue. Going beyond fostering a unified spirit, the conference began to take concrete measures toward a larger church union, adopting resolutions that recommended formation of a federal union to be titled the Christian Federation of China (pp. 719–20). The vision embraced by the conference clearly foreshadowed the birth of the National Christian Council in the 1920s.

A spirit of unity also permeated other resolutions and discussions. Acknowledging the divisions and confusion caused by Protestant denominationalism, conference participants through resolutions on the Chinese church offered a joint statement of faith that stressed the basic doctrinal consensus of the Protestant China missionaries (pp. 437–38). Consensus on the nature and tasks of mission was expressed as well in “Memorial to the Home Church.” Preaching or spreading the Gospel was clearly emphasized as the core of mission, but Christian social responsibility was also considered to be indispensable (p. 364; see also pp. 548, 550, 656–59). The fact that the conference delegates were able to reach consensus on fundamental doctrines and missionary tasks is a clear indication of the continuing existence and influence of the so-called Protestant missionary consensus within the Protestant missionary community in China in the early twentieth century.4

Signs of the coming collapse of missionary unity, however, began to emerge during the conference. There were intense debates on Chinese ancestor worship, the relationship between preaching and social involvement, and the value and necessity of church union, among other subjects (pp. 486–88, 540, 614). Inroads made by higher criticism in China were already causing concern in some sectors of the missionary community (p. 66). Gradual intensification of these debates and concerns eventually led to the demise of the consensus in the modernist-fundamentalist controversy in the 1920s and 1930s. The conference of 1907

Kevin Xiyi Yao, Associate Professor in Theological Studies, China Graduate School of Theology, Hong Kong, is the author of The Fundamentalist Movement Among Protestant Missionaries in China, 1920–1937 (Univ. Press of America, 2003).
can therefore be considered the last major manifestation of the Protestant missionary consensus in China. But in 1907 ideas of union and cooperation were still so dominant that one missionary could predict that “together is the twentieth century watchword” (p. 597). Ironically, within less than two decades the National Christian Council that had been envisioned by the conference proved unable to unify missions and churches across the country in the manner that the conference of 1907 had done.

Gospel and Civilization

The notion of Christian civilization was very much taken for granted in the Centenary Conference. Few of the missionaries would have doubted that the Gospel was the spiritual foundation and power source of modern Western civilization, the latter being the fruit of the former. Their calling was to bring to the Chinese people the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as its fruit. As a result, spreading the Gospel, planting churches, and reforming society and culture always went together in Chinese missions of the nineteenth century.

In looking back at the first one hundred years, the missionaries felt proud not just of the growth of the church but also of their role in introducing modern civilization and stimulating social progress in China. In a speech entitled “The Influence of Christian Missions on Chinese National Life and Social Progress,” D. L. Anderson of the Methodist Episcopal Mission, South, made painstaking efforts to illustrate the missionaries’ impact on China’s political, educational, and medical development, and even their role as a “walking advertisement” or a “kind of sandwich man” in promoting foreign trade and Western goods in the country. Such words reveal much about many China missionaries’ self-identity in the nineteenth century, namely, that they were ambassadors of Western civilization, as well as of the Gospel.

The same mind-set was dominant in missionary discussions of current needs and future tasks of Protestant missions in China. The resolutions on the Chinese ministry declared that China’s ongoing reform “opens up before the Christian Church a unique opportunity to inspire the new civilization with its ethical truths and religious life” (p. 473). In line with this view, the “Memorial to the Home Church” asserted that the vision of China missionaries “is nothing less than that China may become a Christian nation.” Indeed, the memorial admitted, Western civilization had its own flaws, but “after all there is a wide gulf between a nation that acknowledges, even only outwardly and imperfectly, the Christian law, and one that deliberately repudiates the name, the commands and the worship of our Lord” (p. 382). In the conference a broad view of mission, understood as integration of evangelism and social services, was repeatedly emphasized. According to Francis Lister Hawks Pott, of the American Protestant Episcopal Church Mission and chair of the Education Committee, “Our great ideal is the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. We aim at influencing all the strata of society. Christianity is to save the world and to bring all human relationship, political, social, commercial, and industrial into harmony with laws of God” (p. 68). A kingdom-centered theology clearly exerted a shaping influence on the missionaries’ thought and practice.

The strong missionary emphasis on forming a Christian civilization in China, in combination with the new openness to Christianity on the part of Chinese society, led to a growing call for providing future generations of Chinese church workers with much more advanced skills and more sophisticated education. The conference’s “Memorial to the Home Church” declared: “We want to train preachers who can appeal not only to the poor and the illiterate, but to the thoughtful” (p. 380). In his report to the conference, Pott argued that “it is not sufficient to give those who are to be employed as pastors or evangelists, a superficial theological education, but we must first give them an education that is liberal in the true sense of the word” (p. 66).

It is no surprise, then, that the 1907 conference called for mission schools to be expanded and upgraded. The conference resolutions on education asked the home churches and mission boards to increase considerably their investment in education in China. They also appealed for better and more professionally trained missionaries, closer cooperation between different missions in education, and establishment of a union Christian university offering instruction of the highest academic standards. In addition to educational endeavors, the “Memorial to the Home Church” urged great expansion of the missions’ medical work (p. 380).

The overwhelming support for expansion of educational and medical work exposed tensions between preaching and social services.

In calling for more resources for education, the “Memorial to the Home Church” carefully maintained a balance between education and evangelism by emphasizing that “our insistence, as a Conference, on the pressing need of education is not as a substitute for preaching”; rather, it sought to make the preaching more effective (p. 380). For missionaries such as Dixon Edward Hoste of the China Inland Mission, the need of native church workers for a higher educational level seemed overemphasized. He challenged proponents of the majority position not to assume “too readily that the man with intellectual culture is necessarily more effective for good, than one who, though but a poor scholar, has a stronger and more intense religious life” (p. 452).

Nevertheless, the call for considerable expansion of the educational, medical, and other social dimensions of mission enterprises was dominant in the conference. Not surprisingly, the first three decades of the twentieth century witnessed a surge of educational and social work, acceleration of institutionalization, and the rise of professionalism and elitism in China mission enterprises.

In 1907 the missionary community seemed quite united about the possibility and necessity of blending the Gospel and civilization, preaching and social services, and spirituality and education. Unfortunately, this unity could not be maintained; within twenty years the positions of liberals and fundamentalists polarized. Outside the church and missionary community, the seemingly innocent ties between mission and modern Western civilization were soon reinterpreted by Chinese nationalists of all strains, and they turned from being a great missionary achievement into indisputable evidence that Christian mission was the tool of Western cultural imperialism.
Debating the Treaty Protections

The rapid spread of Christianity in China followed imposition of the so-called Unequal Treaties between China and the Western colonial powers, signed in the wake of several wars that China lost to the West. The treaties guaranteed tolerance of Christianity, provided extraterritorial privileges, and protected the right of Christians to do mission work and plant churches throughout the empire. The advance of Christianity in China, however, constantly encountered anti-Christian riots and official hostility or harassment in many forms, which the missionaries usually referred to as persecution. The notorious Boxer Rebellion in 1900 was the culmination of the opposition.

Since in 1907 the missionaries’ memory of the Boxer Rebellion was still fresh, the issue of the protections provided by the treaties quickly became one of the focal points of the conference. Calvin Wilson Mateer of the American Presbyterian Mission, North, who was appointed chair of an eleven-member committee on the missionary and “public questions,” was at the center of the discussion. In the committee’s report to the conference, Mateer did not deny that the Western powers had acted unjustly for political and commercial purposes, but he tried to distance Christian mission from Western political and economic interests in China by arguing that the religious aspects of the treaties were “a mere incident,” free of pressure (pp. 337–38).

Mateer then dealt with two controversial issues. The first was whether the treaty protections should be maintained. Acknowledging growing sentiment for overcoming persecution by patience and forbearance rather than through appeals to treaty privileges, Mateer launched a twofold refutation (p. 339). First, he argued that the treaties “can and do make the missionary and the convert at one with the law of the land.” Without the treaty protections, “the probability is that much blood would have been shed, and many hardships endured, and a very inconsiderable success achieved.” Drawing upon church history, he declared, “Patient submission is by no means a panacea for persecution, nor yet a highway for the triumph of truth.” Second, Mateer insisted that Jesus’ teachings of nonresistance “were doubtless spoken of private and personal revenge, and were by no means intended to nullify the function of civil government.” In fact, “Paul was not slow to resent his being struck contrary to the providence of God” (p. 728). By the end of the conference, he pointed out that the treaty protections were “a mere incident,” free of pressure (pp. 337–38).

The second issue concerned the practice of placing Chinese converts under treaty protections. Doing so had earned missionaries a bad reputation for interfering in the Chinese judicial system, and it directly contributed to the phenomenon of so-called rice Christians, persons who joined the church to gain an advantage in legal cases or to enhance their status in local communities. To correct abuses, there was an increasing demand that the treaty rights be confined strictly to the foreign missionaries (p. 338). Mateer opposed this position mainly on the grounds that it violated “the demands of Christian sympathy and brotherhood” and ignored the rights entitled to Chinese believers by Chinese law (p. 341).

There is no doubt that Mateer’s stand on the treaty protections reflected the general outlook of the missionary community at that time. J. C. Garrit of American Presbyterian Mission, North, a member of the drafting committee, spoke the mind of many missionaries when he depicted the treaty privileges as simply “the providence of God” (p. 726). By the end of the conference, however, Mateer’s report emphasized that “great care and circumspection should be used in taking up supposed cases of persecution” (p. 340). In other words, missionary intervention should be limited strictly to cases of religious persecution, even though Mateer admitted that Chinese believers were often persecuted for reasons not directly related to their Christian identity but for nonreligious causes (p. 340). In the end, on this issue of treaty protections, Mateer advised that the true ideal, both for the missionary and his convert, is to do what will best subserve the cause of Christ. . . .

In sum, Mateer’s report regarding the treaty protections was affirmative, circumspect, and conditional. The basic contentions set out in Mateer’s report were all endorsed by the conference. The final resolutions adopted on public questions exhorted “all missionaries to urge upon Chinese Christians the duty of patience and forbearance under persecution for Christ’s sake, and also make every possible effort to settle matters privately, an appeal to the authorities being the last resort” (p. 743). That the missionaries chose their words on this sensitive issue with care after thorough deliberation is beyond doubt. For most of them the treaty arrangement was a necessary evil to be maintained only for the sake of the church’s survival in a very harsh environment. As the environment became more favorable, appeal to the treaty provisions would, it was hoped, become obsolete.

The position adopted by the conference, however, did not go without challenge. Significantly, some of the strongest voices in opposition came from within the committee for public questions itself. C. Bolwig of the Danish Lutheran Mission was one of those who spoke in opposition. He pointed out that the treaty protections were “a hated yoke laid upon the government” (p. 727). In his view, the protection granted to Chinese converts was especially unjustifiable because “it is injurious to the church inasmuch as it strengthens the belief that we are political agents, and it fosters ‘rice’ Christians and produces a spirit of weakness in the converts. . . . It plainly tells the Chinese that they are not masters in their own house, and will in the long run excite much more animosity” (p. 728).

Criticizing Mateer’s argument on the basis of Christian brotherly love, Bolwig suggested that there were other ways to assist Chinese Christians in suffering, such as prayer and financial aid. Furthermore, he believed that Mateer’s cautious advice to exercise prudence and carefulness was misdirected and called for completely shutting the door to “the mighty.” Citing

Placing Chinese converts under treaty protections had earned missionaries a bad reputation for interfering in the Chinese judicial system.
his own mission’s refusal to interfere in lawsuits or to appeal to the foreign consul, he did not see that his mission’s work was hindered as a result (pp. 729–31).

Bolwig was echoed by Dixon Edward Hoste, also a member of the drafting committee. He expressed great concern about the danger of missionaries’ being “implicated in affairs which were not really persecutions.” Because of interference in the Chinese legal system, he warned, “the cause of Christianity was being hindered and the repute of the Christian Church was suffering through it” (p. 733). Bolwig and Hoste represented a minority voice in the conference. History has shown, however, that their position was more farsighted and even prophetic.

From the nineteenth century to the present, the Unequal Treaties and related tensions have been key factors in shaping the image of the Christian community in Chinese society. The missionaries in 1907 no doubt took the issue seriously. But perhaps the most fateful and wishful thinking on their part was that the whole issue would simply fade away as Chinese society was reformed. Unfortunately, instead of passing away, the ties between the missionaries and the Western colonial powers have been manipulated to such a magnitude that the Chinese church has had to live under their shadow down to the present. From the vantage point of 2007, we can ask some hard questions: Did the missionaries in 1907 see fully the importance of the issue and the harm it could cause to the church? Could the result have been different had the majority of the missionary community embraced the outlook of Bolwig and Hoste? There are no easy answers to these questions. Still, we cannot help but regret that the missionaries did not act more reflectively and firmly on this issue at that time.

Looking Ahead

Seeking at the opening of the new century of Protestant mission in China to peer into the future, the 1907 conference sounded overwhelmingly hopeful and optimistic. All of the speeches forecasting the future heralded the country’s ongoing cultural and social transformations as signs of the coming of the kingdom of God in that ancient land. In the new century, it was predicted, this trend would continue, and the Christian missionary movement would have tremendous opportunities. The words of C. E. Ewing of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions are typical and telling: “The kingdom is coming in China. . . . The heavens are in, the fire is lighted; the loaf is rising fast. A new vital force is within, and the uplift of China is sure. He who doubts is deceived. . . . Our earnest hope is this—that the kingdom of Christ shall come in China. Let there be no more looking back, no more dull-eyed pessimism. The day of the croaker [complainer] is past; the day of the worker is now. . . . We are here to save, not merely souls, but a nation; not the Church, but China; not to point the way for a few, but for all; not to make small demands, but claim China for Christ; to sow the seed of the kingdom broadcast over the land” (pp. 86–87). Having weathered a turbulent century, the missionaries were confident that the new century would definitely be much more promising.

The missionaries were not unaware of challenges ahead, which included the familiar difficulties of resistance from traditional culture and hostility on the part of the class of scholarly-officials. More interestingly, however, some missionaries were beginning to feel that these old obstacles might be diminishing and that new challenges were on the horizon. Secular and materialistic aspects of modern Western civilization were being introduced into the country and extending their influence among young people, even as the native traditions were weakening. James Jackson of the American Protestant Episcopal Church Mission, chair of the committee on ancestral worship, sounded the following alarm: “The great struggle of Christianity in China in the coming days will not be with the superstitious practices of the masses, but with the materialism, godlessness and practical atheism of the educated. That is what we have to fear most of all” (p. 245).

At least for some of the missionaries, a sense of crisis and urgency became a driving force behind the numerous calls for strengthening mission schools and expanding evangelistic and literary work. It even added a new dimension to the long-debated issue of ancestor worship. Although the majority opinion and final resolutions on ancestor worship failed to transcend the traditional approach that rejected the practice as idolatry, missionaries such as J. Jackson and J. C. Gibson began to see the significant role ancestor worship played in maintaining social order and in strengthening belief in the supernatural. They urged careful handling of the tradition in order not to “drive out one devil only to let in seven” (p. 620).

In light of later historical developments, the prophetic insights of some participants of the 1907 conference are amazing. Still, the pace, scope, and depth of social and cultural changes in China in the early twentieth century far surpassed their boldest estimation. In 1907 the missionary community’s awareness of the coming crisis and turmoil remained weak, and it could by no means counterbalance the overwhelming mood of optimism. For most of the missionaries, the coming opportunities seemed clearly to outweigh the challenges ahead.

Concluding Remarks

The China Centenary Missionary Conference of 1907 was an event of unity, triumph, and hope. It fully manifested the Protestant missionary consensus of the previous century, it highlighted the missionaries’ vision of transforming China into a Christian nation or civilization, and it projected a bright picture of Christian advance in the new century. The thinking and policies embodied in the conference resolutions and other documents were largely inherited from the missionary movement of the previous century and were strongly colored by a Christendom outlook and triumphalism. Standing at the turn of the century, the missionaries apparently did not see any need to make fundamental adjustments or to reorient the missionary movement in China.

Standing today at the turn of another century and looking back at the conference of 1907, we are perhaps most struck by the sharp contrast between the missionaries’ expectations and the historical reality of the twentieth century. In less than a decade the Protestant missionary consensus that featured so prominently in 1907 was hopelessly smashed by fundamentalist-liberal divisions within the missionary community. Outside the church there were even more surprises. Just four years later the Qing Dynasty, upon which the missionaries laid so much hope, was overthrown, and
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the country changed permanently both socially and culturally. Far from witnessing the triumph of Christ’s kingdom in China, the new century brought the church even worse ordeals than those experienced in the nineteenth century. After a short-lived harmony between church and society in the 1910s, the Christian community found itself under relentless attack from rationalism, scientism, and revolutionary ideologies. Far from being forgotten as time passed, the unfortunate historical ties between Christianity and Western colonialism became a stigma for the Chinese church. The culmination came during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, when the church lost all right to exist and was suppressed. In the 1907 conference’s “Memorial to the Home Church,” there is a pregnant, almost fateful statement: “The judgment of history has frequently reversed contemporary judgments as to what was failure and what was success” (p. 367). Based on what the Chinese church went through in the first half of the twentieth century, we have to acknowledge that history’s judgment has long since been rendered on many aspects of the 1907 conference and the whole movement it represented. Yet there is no need to point our fingers in judgment or scorn at our predecessors of one hundred years ago, for the people of every time and circumstance, including our own, have their own blind spots. Nevertheless, the course of historical development following the conference was so surprising and totally unanticipated that the whole conference looks rather beside the point, if not tragic.

As we stand on the threshold of the third century of the Protestant movement in China, it is not difficult for us to see similarities between the church in China then and now. The church then recovered from the Boxer Rebellion. After enduring tremendous hardships from the mid-1950s through the Cultural Revolution, the church miraculously “resurrected” in the 1980s and has since experienced amazing growth both in number and influence. If history can repeat, however, it is possible for the tragedy of the 1907 conference’s misreading of its times and the future to recur in our day as well? Guarding against misreadings is not dependent solely on what the church itself does. Other agents and other factors are also at work. In any case, if we remain humble before two decades of unprecedented church growth; if we courageously face existing problems and potential difficulties and make timely adjustments; and especially if we reflect appropriately on the two major legacies of the 1907 conference—the mixing of the Gospel and civilization and the ties between mission and colonialism—then there is reason for optimism that the tragedy of 1907 can be prevented from happening again. This is perhaps the best tribute we can pay to our predecessors of a century ago.

Notes
1. In recent years the traditional view that Morrison was the first Protestant missionary to China has been challenged by scholars from mainland China. They argue that the Dutch Presbyterian missionaries who arrived in Taiwan in the seventeenth century should be considered the first ones to reach China. Nevertheless, most scholars agree that Morrison’s arrival in 1807 marks the real beginning of the Protestant movement that swept the entire country in the next two centuries. See Yan Ke-jia, “Malixun Chuan Jiao Shi Ye de Hui Gu yu Ping Jia” (A Retrospect and Appraisal of Robert Morrison’s Mission Work), in Chuan Jiao Yun Dong yu Zhong Guo Jiao Hui (The Missionary Movement and the Chinese Church), ed. China Christian Council and National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (Beijing: Press of Religious Culture, 2007), p. 67.
2. All Chinese participants were categorized as “visitors” and had no right to vote. See “Conference Directory” in Records, China Centenary Missionary Conference, ed. Centenary Conference Committee (Shanghai: Methodist Publishing House, 1907), pp. 785–808. During the afternoon of April 27 a group of Chinese pastors was invited to the platform and was welcomed by the conference during the discussion of “Chinese Ministry” (see Records, pp. xxiii, 470–71; hereafter, page references in the text are to Records).
3. Besides Records, a volume of speeches, discussions, and sermons was compiled and published as Addresses Public and Devotional (Shanghai: Methodist Publishing House, 1907). Also, the following volume, containing nationwide surveys of missions and churches, was published before the conference: Donald MacGillivray, ed., A Century of Protestant Missions in China (1807–1907) (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1907). These three volumes are the major sources for the study of the Centenary Conference.
6. Addresses Public and Devotional, pp. 52–53.
Christian Literature in Nineteenth-Century China Missions—a Priority? or an Optional Extra?

John Tsz-pang Lai

Following the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, an international committee was appointed to investigate the issue of Christian literature in the missionary enterprise. As a general principle, the printed page was not intended as a substitute for the living voice of missionaries, but Christian literature admittedly possessed some merits that missionaries did not have. According to John H. Ritson, “It can be read and re-read and pondered over; it can reach a vastly greater congregation than is to be found within the walls of the sanctuary; it can accompany the hospital patient to his home, and penetrate the most secluded harem and zenana; it can travel forth as the pioneer where the climate is deadly, and the population is sparse and conditions are unfriendly and hostile. The printed page alone is the ubiquitous missionary.”

While the value of Christian literature was recognized generally, its significance was even further emphasized in the China missions. John K. Fairbank has suggested that missionary involvement in the written word “served as a substitute for the living voice of missionaries, it can be read and re-read and pondered over; it can reach a vastly greater congregation than is to be found within the walls of the sanctuary; it can accompany the hospital patient to his home, and penetrate the most secluded harem and zenana; it can travel forth as the pioneer where the climate is deadly, and the population is sparse and conditions are unfriendly and hostile. The printed page alone is the ubiquitous missionary.”

Throughout the long span of Chinese history, the class of literati had emerged as rulers of the people. The dominant philosophical and religious systems in China rested on a literary foundation and on the people’s veneration for the writings of the sages. Confucianism, which was largely built on the Four Books and Five Classics, was for two millennia virtually synonymous with literature because of the implementation of the Civil Service Examination in imperial China. Furthermore, a large corpus of Buddhist sutras were brought from India and translated into Chinese from the second century onward. The significance of tracts in converting China to Buddhism was also mentioned by some missionaries, and it was proposed that Protestant missionaries follow this precedent of evangelizing China by means of religious tracts. China also had a long tradition of distributing morality tracts among the common people with a view to inculcating moral and religious virtues. Some Christian tracts were modeled on the style and terminology of these Chinese morality tracts. China’s age-old reverence for the printed word therefore both constituted challenges and offered opportunities to the literary efforts of Christian missionaries.

Perspectives of Missionaries

Against this background it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of literature as a means of converting the Chinese to Christianity, something that was grasped by the early Jesuit missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), an Italian, arrived in Peking in 1601, and by 1631 the Jesuit missionaries, together with their Chinese converts, had published no less than 340 treatises on religion, philosophy, mathematics, and natural sciences.

Alexander Wylie (1815–87), from England, had a high regard for Chinese Catholic literature and recommended that his fellow Protestant missionaries learn from the experience of their Catholic predecessors: “The earliest Christian works extant in Chinese date from the beginning of the 17th century. On the arrival of the Jesuit missionaries, it soon became an object with them to employ the agency of the press in the dissemination of their views through the empire. The books which they have left must ever prove an object of interest to the disciple of Jesus.”

Christian literature indeed became prominent in the era of Protestant missions, beginning with Robert Morrison (1782–1834), the pioneering Protestant missionary to China in 1807. By the 1840s, missionaries lost any legal right to stay in mainland China and propagate Christianity there. A handful of pioneering missionaries, including Morrison and William Milne (1785–1822), dedicated themselves to the production of Chinese Christian literature in Southeast Asia (and secretly in China) to prepare for China’s eventual opening. Milne explicitly stated the importance of tract operations: “Such is the political state of this country at present, that we are not permitted to enter it, and publish by the living voice the glad tidings of salvation. Tracts may, however, penetrate silently, even to the chamber of the Emperor. They easily put on a Chinese coat, and may walk without fear through the breadth and length of the land. This we cannot do.” Brent Whitefield correctly points out that “the Protestant missionary effort in China, which was initiated by Robert Morrison in 1807, was initially a largely literary phenomenon, with little meaningful presence in mainland China prior to the first Opium or Anglo-Chinese War.”

The British defeat of China in the Opium War ushered in a new era in the history of Protestant missions in the Middle Kingdom. With the signing of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, Hong Kong Island was ceded as a colony to the British, and five coastal treaty ports were opened—Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai—where missionaries were, for the first time, allowed to reside, build churches, and preach the Gospel. Alongside the establishment of mission stations and local churches, missionaries fully realized that the provision of Christian literature was a more efficient and effective means of propagating the Christian faith to a wider audience. The number of missionaries was, after all, negligible when compared with the vast population of China. The interior provinces were inaccessible to Westerners until the signing of the Treaty of Tientsin (1858) and the Peking Convention (1860), which followed in the wake of the Anglo-French expedition to Peking. Before 1860 the distribution of Christian publications was almost the only way of conveying a religious message in the hinterland of China.

Under these historical circumstances, quite a few Protestant missionaries to China made painstaking efforts to acquire the language and create Christian literature in Chinese, either by translating existing Western religious works or by writing their own. For them, the formation of a body of Chinese Christian literature served several purposes: first, as an instrument of conversion; second, as a preparation for future evangelism; third, as language-study guides for newly arrived missionaries; and fourth, as a way for missionaries to fit into their social niche.

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as recognized scholars or teachers in the Chinese community, thereby facilitating their missionary work. Protestant missionaries to China repeatedly stressed the importance of Christian literature in their missionary endeavors. Tract production and distribution went hand in hand with oral preaching in the propagation of Christianity. Samuel Wells Williams (1812–84) remarked that “the voice explains the book and the book recalls the ideas and teachings of the preacher.” It was also generally believed that missionaries, “until they have mastered the language, can do nothing without tracts; and even when they can preach with fluency and power, they regard tracts as important subsidiaries to impress the truth on the awakened hearer.” Religious tracts usually prepared the way for oral preaching by familiarizing the people with Christian terms and the Christian message. Thomas H. Hudson (1800–1876) maintained that Christian tracts would “give much knowledge of gospel truth, make the people acquainted with terms and phrases used in Christian books, and thus prepare them to hear and understand the instruction of the Christian missionary.”

The most important function of the tracts was to inculcate Christian faith by introducing the doctrines of sin, atonement, and salvation. Every effort was made to adapt the tracts for evangelistic purposes in order to reach the unconverted. Timothy Richard (1845–1919) highlighted the value of Christian literature by arguing that “salvation of the multitudes in each of the tribes, and kindreds, and tongues must be through saving knowledge, in whose conveyance Christian literature is the main agency.” In the 1877 Shanghai Missionary Conference, Stephen L. Baldwin (1835–1902) summarized the progress of Christian literature over the previous seven decades as follows: “Our converts are brought in by the truth of the books. The native Christians are spiritually fed on them. The schools are trained by them. The churches are founded and disciplined by them. The religious work of hospitals and dispensaries is conducted through them. And the general enlightenment of the people, and the undermining of idolatry, are promoted by the same agency.”

While missionaries in the field placed emphasis on Christian literature, the literary mission could not have been accomplished through missionary enthusiasm or literary talents alone. The whole enterprise of publishing and distributing Christian literature required extensive financial resources, in which institutional patronage played an indispensable role. Missionary societies seem to have been the natural source of financial support.

### Policies of Missionary Societies

While most missionary societies tended to channel substantial resources into missionaries’ salaries, the building of churches, and the upkeep of mission schools and hospitals, the home committees differed considerably in their attitude toward Christian literature. Some societies did contribute quite a few prominent writers and translators of Chinese Christian literature, and others earmarked special funds toward the cost of publishing books (chiefly denominational) that their missionaries needed. It was nonetheless the exception rather than the rule for missionary societies to make generous grants for publication, or to set aside missionaries exclusively to offer their literary talents. As overseas missions underwent enormous expansion in the late nineteenth century, most societies preferred to concentrate their resources on church planting and development, delegating the task of literary production to the leading tract and literature societies. By way of illustration, we consider here the policies of the Society for

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**Noteworthy**

**Announcing**

A three-year project commenced in May 2006 by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the World Council of Churches’ program on interreligious dialogue and cooperation now includes evangelical and Pentecostal representatives. The dialogue, called *An Interreligious Reflection on Conversion: From Controversy to a Shared Code of Conduct,* was advanced August 8–12, 2007, when some thirty Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Pentecostal, and evangelical theologians and church leaders from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the United States gathered at the Institute of Science and Theology of Religions, Toulouse, France, to outline the content of the code of conduct, which is expected to be finalized by 2010.

A global conference on Christian mission has been proposed for late 2011 by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. The commission includes delegates from member churches of the council as well as from the Roman Catholic Church and several other Christian bodies not in full membership of the WCC. The conference will continue a series of representative gatherings that began with the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. The WCC’s most recent world mission conference met near Athens in 2005. Many historians of Christianity consider the decision at Edinburgh to form a Continuation Committee, which eventually led to the formation of the International Missionary Council, as the starting-point of the modern ecumenical movement. Samuel Kobia, a Methodist pastor from Kenya, is WCC general secretary. For details, visit www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/browse/10/article/1722/world-mission-and-evangel.html.

Some 240 leaders of a broad range of churches, confessions, and interchurch organizations from more than seventy countries agreed to advance what they called the Global Christian Forum. The agreement for encounter and dialogue has a goal to “foster mutual respect, explore and address common challenges.” Participants endorsed the final draft of a “Message from the Global Christian Forum to Brothers and Sisters in Christ Throughout the World” at a meeting November 6–9, 2007, in Limuru, near Nairobi, Kenya. Visit www.globalchristianforum.org to read the statement.

The Endangered Archives Program at the British Library has funded nearly seventy projects in thirty-seven countries since its establishment three years ago. The program, with support from Arcadia, formerly the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund, focuses on the preservation and copying of important but vulnerable archives throughout the world, according to a British Library report. For details, visit www.bl.uk/endangeredarchives.

**Personalia**

On January 1, 2008, John R. Watters, who has done linguistic fieldwork and consultation in Cameroon, Nigeria, and Chad
Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Church Missionary Society (CMS), and the London and New York tract societies.

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Founded by Thomas Bray (1656–1730) and four laymen in 1698, the SPCK (London) is now the oldest denominational publisher, with the goal of promoting Christian knowledge both at home and overseas through education and the distribution of Bibles and tracts. Though the SPCK had a close connection with the Church of England in terms of its ethos and constitution, it was established as a voluntary and independent institution. From the outset, one of its major aims and achievements was to provide Christian literature for the missions of the Anglican Church. The SPCK placed more emphasis on introducing Anglican doctrine and worship to Christians overseas than on producing evangelical literature.

One of the SPCK’s most important tasks was translating the standard 1662 version of the Book of Common Prayer, which was overseen by its Translation Committee. It carried out translation and publication work to support missionary societies, especially the CMS. In actuality, most of the literary work was done by CMS missionaries, while the SPCK funded and published what they had prepared. The translation committee formulated its own principles and rules of translation as follows: “The Foreign Translation Committee shall have power to publish, at their discretion, complete versions of the Book of Common Prayer, and also versions of any integral portions thereof. But they shall not publish any work purporting to be a modified or adapted version, or a version intentionally altered, whether in text or in rubrics, from the original, without having obtained the sanction of the Archbishop of Canterbury to such issue. . . .”

The title-page of every book published or issued under this Rule shall state, as far as possible, the character of the version contained in it.”

Throughout the nineteenth century, the SPCK published prayer and service books, catechisms, and hymnals in a large number of languages. It was the society’s aim, first and foremost, to meet the vernacular needs of the missionaries. After extending its operations into China in 1843, the SPCK patronized the publication of Chinese Christian literature in various vernaculars, including the dialects of Mandarin, Foochow, Hangchow, Hok-kien, and Ningpo. There were a few theological and devotional works and some tracts in the society’s catalogue, but the majority of the publications were prayer books, most notably the Book of Common Prayer. The scope of SPCK sponsorship was therefore extremely limited, fundamentally confined to the publication of Anglican works.

London Missionary Society. The pioneering society in sending missionaries to China, the London Missionary Society, apart from contributing distinguished missionary authors, established a couple of influential mission presses in China, notably the London Mission Press, Shanghai, and the Anglo-Chinese College, Hong Kong. During the early decades of its China missions, the LMS allocated sufficient funds for its own publishing and the running of its presses, but a fundamental change of its publication policy occurred in 1848, when the home committee passed a resolution declaring that the cost of publishing tracts and the Bible would thereafter no longer be borne by the society; instead, application for funds should be made to the Religious Tract Society (RTS) and the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS).

Toward the second half of the nineteenth century, manuscripts

and has taught linguistics at the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Yaoundé (Cameroon), completed his maximum term of service as executive director of SIL International and Wycliffe International and the position was divided in two. Watters will continue to serve the SIL-Wycliffe Bible translation cause. Fredrick A. Boswell, SIL vice president for academic affairs, was named executive director of SIL International. Boswell worked as a field linguist and translation advisor to the Cheke Holo language group in the Solomon Islands on Central Santa Isabel Island. In addition to that field assignment in the Solomon Islands, he has lived and worked in Peru and Papua New Guinea. Kirk Franklin, a citizen of Australia and the United States who has spent most of his life in the Pacific region, was selected as the next executive director of Wycliffe International. He has served with Wycliffe since 1980, most recently as executive director of Wycliffe Australia. He previously served in various media, communications, and leadership roles. Franklin, fluent in the Tok Pisin language of Papua New Guinea, spent twenty-five years in that country.

T. Jack Thompson, who spent thirteen years working in education in Malawi, will retire in September 2008 as director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World and senior lecturer in the history of world Christianity at the University of Edinburgh. He specializes in the history of Christianity in central and southern Africa and on the impact of missionary photography in creating stereotypes of Africa in Europe and particularly in Scotland. The university’s school of divinity is seeking a new director.


Died. Heribert Bettscheider, S.V.D., director of the Divine Word Missionaries Missiological Institute at Sankt Augustin, near Bonn, December 11, 2007, in Germany. Born in 1938, Bettscheider entered the Society of the Divine Word in 1959 and was ordained in 1964. He held numerous academic and administrative posts in the S.V.D. and was named director of the Missiological Institute in 1995. In recent years he had dedicated much energy to the missiological implications of migration and to questions of considering Europe as a continent in need of missionary efforts.
in foreign languages were often handed over to tract societies for funding. LMS funds were not meant to be spent even on their own printing department, the London Mission Press in Shanghai. Their missionaries were not authorized to draw on the funds without the sanction of the home board. William Charles Milne (1815–63) reported, “We have been in the habit of drawing on the funds of our own Institution for deficiencies in the printing department; but after your letter of February last, we cannot continue to do so without your previous sanction.” He then made an application to the LMS for an annual grant for publication: “Hence the necessity of being allowed to print occasionally & to a limited extent at the cost of our own Society. Taking these matters into consideration, we recommend that the sum of One or Two Hundred Pounds annually be placed at the disposal of this Local Committee, for the purpose of keeping the press at work in case of failure of supplies from other sources.” Milne’s application was declined, and no separate grant was made for the purpose of publication from the LMS. These expenses were to be defrayed by the Bible and tract societies, and henceforth the LMS presses served as tools of these societies. In other words, a large proportion of LMS publications were issued for, and paid by, these societies.

Church Missionary Society. A similar situation can be illustrated in the evolution of the CMS publication policy between 1849 and 1861: “In early days, Publications were regarded as an important part of the missionary work abroad in which the Society was to engage. . . . This work, of course, is still as important as ever it was; but the Society itself does not take a large share in it. So far, that is, as the expense is concerned; for as regards the writers and translators, they are of necessity supplied from among the missionaries. But the arrangements are for the most part made, and the funds supplied, by the Bible Society, the S.P.C.K., and the R.T.S., and the Christian Literature Society for India.” The particular responsibility of publishing was henceforth taken up by the SPCK and Bible and tract societies, each of which had a rather distinctive scope of operations. The major Bible societies, such as the BFBS and the National Bible Society of Scotland, were confined to the publication of the Scriptures without note or comment, while the scope of SPCK publication was denominationally limited, as noted above. The chief responsibility for sponsoring the production and publication of Christian literature was thus undertaken by the leading tract societies.

Religious Tract Society and American Tract Society. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Religious Tract Society (London) and the American Tract Society (New York) emerged as the predominant missionary institutions in sponsoring the global production and publication of Christian literature. The RTS had firmly established itself as the archetype and parent institution, on whose aims and constitution other tract societies modeled themselves. Under the financial patronage of the RTS, scores of its canonical tracts—evangelical and interdenominational in character—were translated into hundreds of languages by Protestant missionary agents. The major non-Western fields included Africa, India, and China.

In 1913 John Darroch (1865–1941), an RTS agent in China, conducted a general analysis of the accounts of the local tract societies. He revealed that, apart from the receipts from sales, the RTS provided 72 percent of their total income, with a sum of £1,500 to £2,000 per annum. The American Tract Society, in contrast, provided only 10 percent of their income, with about £300 annually, while local donations and subscriptions accounted for 18 percent. This survey testified to the overwhelming importance of the RTS as a patron from 1814 until the turn of the century.

Conclusion

In nineteenth-century China missions, the production and distribution of Christian literature was given high priority by Protestant missionary societies in the field. From the perspective of missionary societies, however, it was generally regarded as an optional extra, not as the primary duty of missionaries. The scope of evangelistic activity, not to mention the fostering of the church, was limited in the early days of the China missions. As a corollary, missionaries could devote more time and energy to language study and literary work, which resulted in the development of some outstanding linguists and translators in the mission field. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the growing Chinese church gradually absorbed the time and strength of most missionaries in administrative duties, at the expense of their literary endeavors. It was estimated that 19.8 percent of the missionary body engaged in some sort of literary work prior to 1869. At the turn of the century, however, only 11.4 percent were involved. Deploring the neglect of Christian literature, especially on the part of missionary societies, Timothy Richard wrote, “Only five per one thousand of our missionaries are wholly devoted to literary work there, one cannot help blushing with very shame that the value of the press should be so far ignored.”

As far as worldwide Bible translation was concerned, the nineteenth century could be called the Bible Society Era. Bible societies became the most vital links between translators (usually Protestant missionaries), printing presses, and the target audience. Translators often had their manuscripts sent to a Bible society, which then had the translations printed and sent back to the mission fields. Bible societies heavily subsidized the cost of production to make the price low and affordable for readers.

For the publication of denominational works, such as the Book of Common Prayer, missionaries had no choice but to resort to the financial support of the respective denominational societies, such as the SPCK. Nevertheless, the scope of operations and the funds for publication remained limited on the part of denominational societies. Responsibility for publishing and financing evangelical and interdenominational works was shifted principally onto the shoulders of the leading tract societies. The nineteenth century could therefore also be considered the Tract Society Era, with reference to the global enterprise of the production, publication, and circulation of Christian tracts.
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5. See Records, China Centenary Missionary Conference, Held at Shanghai, April 25 to May 8, 1907 (Shanghai: Centenary Conference Committee, 1907), p. 193; Xu Zongze, Ming Qing jian yeya huishi yizhu tiyan (Précis of the Translations by Jesuit Missionaries in the Ming and Qing Dynasties) (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1958).


9. For the twelve main articles contained in the treaty, see Jonathan D. Spence, The Search for Modern China, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), pp. 160–62.

10. During the period from 1807 to 1843, a total of 64 missionaries were on record. For the full list of missionaries, see Donald MacGillivray, ed., A Century of Protestant Missions in China (1807–1907), Being the Centenary Conference Historical Volume (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1907), appendix 2. An influx of newly appointed missionaries arrived in China after the Opium War. In 1859 William Dean listed 214 male missionaries from twenty-four societies (The China Mission [London: Sheldon & Trubner, 1859], pp. 161–66).


19. Church Missionary Intelligence, September 1885, p. 687.


21. For the list of foreign publications from 1836 to 1897, see ibid., pp. 210–23.


23. Allen and McClure, Two Hundred Years, p. 208.

24. For the titles of its Chinese publications, see ibid., pp. 212, 213, 214, 220, 221.


26. William C. Milne to LMS, Shanghai, October 13, 1848, Council for World Mission, Central China, Incoming Correspondence, 1.2.A.41, CWM Archives, deposited in the School of Oriental and African Studies Library, University of London.

27. Ibid.


35. Records, China Centenary Missionary Conference, p. 591.


Guidelines for Doing Theologies in Asia

Association for Theological Education in South East Asia

Established in 1957 with sixteen member schools, the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA), now with 104 member institutions in sixteen countries, celebrated its Golden Jubilee in November 2007 at Trinity Theological College in Singapore. In 1966 the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST) was established by ATESEA as a consortium for advanced theological studies leading to the Master of Theology (M.Theol.) and Doctor of Theology (D.Theol.) degrees. Twenty-six schools in seven geographic areas now constitute the academic core of the Graduate School. Sientje Merentek-Abram is currently executive director of ATESEA and dean of SEAGST, with offices in Quezon City, Philippines; Po-Ho Huang is associate dean of SEAGST.

In 1972 ATESEA and SEAGST adopted the Critical Asian Principle (CAP) as a framework for theological construction and education in the region. While recognizing the significant contribution of CAP over the last thirty-five years toward enhancing the construction of Asian contextual theologies and theological education, the occasion of the Jubilee was an opportunity to develop new guidelines for a new era. After wide-ranging consultation and feedback from member schools, the new guidelines were approved by the executive committee of ATESEA and adopted by the SEAGST senate (see comments at www.atesea.org/guidelines.htm where the document that follows is available online). Po-Ho Huang, who gave leadership in the review and drafting process, presented the guidelines to the assembled representatives at the Golden Jubilee.—Editor

Preamble

The Critical Asian Principle (CAP) has a history, purpose and direction. Since its formulation and implementation about thirty years ago, we believe it has achieved its purpose reasonably well in assisting the process of doing theology and teaching theology in Asia. However, in today’s context, given its peculiarities and changing needs, we realize there is a need to review the CAP in order to intensify Asian theological reflection and theological training. Hence the need to revisit and rethink the CAP was suggested at the Taipei 2004 meeting by the ATESEA Executive Committee. Member schools, colleges and seminaries were requested to facilitate and participate in the re-assessment process. The process was to focus on relevancy, sufficiency and adequacy of CAP for today’s Asia.

The Critical Asian Principle has been the framework applied by ATESEA and SEAGST in theological education. In 1972 at the Senate meeting in Bangkok, the CAP formulation was introduced by Emerito P. Nacpil and officially adopted to provide the basis for theological construction and education in Asia. The primary concerns behind the implementation of the CAP were twofold:

1. To promote an Asian orientation in theological education in the Southeast Asian region;
2. To seek and identify what is “distinctly Asian and use such distinctiveness as a critical principle of judgment on matters dealing with the life and mission of the Christian community, theology, and theological education in Asia.”

Hence the CAP took into account the common spiritual and socio-economic context of Southeast Asian countries as the point of reference for biblical reflection and theologizing. Four broadly described principles were thus proposed:

1. The situational principle
2. The hermeneutical principle
3. The missiological principle
4. The educational principle

Each of these principles had general objectives to meet, namely to:

1. Help Asian Churches develop a theology of their own and be fully liberated from the Western framework;
2. Help Churches evolve an attitude which would seek to think Asian and act Asian in order to create a scope for living theology;
3. Help redress the situation whereby Asian Christianity continues to remain Western and the religion of the colonial masters.

Why Revisit and Rethink CAP

As mentioned in the preamble, the need to revisit and rethink CAP has been made necessary by the constantly evolving Asian context. Many things have changed and require different approaches and modus operandi in theologizing and teaching of theology in Asia. The revisiting and rereading should rightly raise critical questions in relation to the adequacy, relevancy and sufficiency of CAP in current Asian situations. The following comments are findings compiled through the various regional discussions.

1. The four principles of CAP are too general and do not specifically address modern-day challenges.
2. The usage of the term “critical” in the context of CAP does not seem critical enough, as the four expressed principles are common basic hermeneutic principles.
3. The CAP merely offers a general framework, without saying anything specific about the principles or application methodology. Hence it is seen to be descriptive and lacking in a clear theological perspective.
4. Since the principles are general in nature, the CAP lacks clear direction for doing theology and teaching theology in Asia.
5. The original CAP is inadequate to provide interaction with contemporary issues such as globalization, global empire building, ecological concerns and gender justice issues.
6. A lack is also noted in the areas of pastoral, ministerial and spiritual formation.

April 2008
From Bangkok to Singapore—a Long Journey of Changes

As noted in the keynote paper “Covenant with the Churches in Asia” presented at the ATESEA General Assembly 2005, “The Asian world has changed rapidly in all aspects of economic, political and social development. Christian Churches in Asia continue to struggle to witness the message of the gospel and the promise of the reign of God to be actualized among the people of Asia.” Since the “changing context” is the key factor which induced the reassessment of the effectiveness, functionality and suitability of the CAP, we need to identify what features color the changed context of today’s Asia and what paradigm shift has taken place between Bangkok (then) and Singapore (now). The following are some propositions:

Religious fundamentalism. The escalation of tensions between the Muslim world and the West, as well as terrorist activities sponsored by religious sectarian groups in Asia, continues to challenge us in the way we think and act as Christians in Asia. The revival of many sects with a fundamentalist tendency within the living religions of Asia stands witness to rising religious fundamentalism. Living in a pluralistic community leaves limited alternatives for Asians: either we build bridges or walls.

Gender justice issues. The rising cases of violence against women and children, as well as issues aimed directly at marginalizing women from mainstream activities, the evident gender deficit in organizations and institutions, and the circumvention of women’s quest for equal rights and opportunities have become a growing concern in Asia. Often times the oppression of women in Asia is reinforced by Asian cultures and religions. Gender justice issues compel us to accept the truth that women are human beings created in God’s image.

Ecological problems, disease and disasters. These ecological and health problems have become common in Asia today. The recent tsunami, flash floods and earthquakes have taken away thousands of lives and left the living devastated. The outbreak of avian flu and the resurgence of diseases like tuberculosis, dengue and malaria, once thought to have been eradicated in Southeast Asia, have once again resurfaced in epidemic proportions. HIV and AIDS are affecting families, communities and nations and challenge us to re-examine our ministerial formation program. Furthermore, uncontrolled and one-sided exploitative economic development projects have brought with them various ecological crises. “Ecological concerns have often been neglected or conveniently sidelined.” The rape of Mother Earth manifest in uncontrolled logging, indiscriminate use of chemicals in agriculture, uncontrolled disposal of non-biodegradable waste, and human beings’ many other ecocidal acts due to negligence, ignorance or greed destroy the ecosystem.

Globalization and global empire building. Much of Asia has moved from colonial contexts to a variety of post-colonial and neo-colonial situations where the global empire and the neo-liberal economic scheme of globalization play symbiotic relationships. The greed of the empire and the neo-liberal globalization threaten and destroy all life, especially the poor and marginalized people and Mother Earth. Thus, economic globalization and the rise of a global empire is a serious concern for Asia today. Such “new realities within the Asian contexts are posing new challenges to our theologizing today.”

Colonization. Most Asian countries have a colonial experience. Asia’s post-colonial realities and emerging neo-colonial attitudes are matters that should be given a renewed emphasis in combating abuse, imperialism and exploitation. “Neo-colonialism is now disguised in the form of economic domination.” Neo-colonialism also employs cultural hegemony in both subtle and glaring ways. The principle of “decolonization” must be implemented in making people “aware of the colonizing command and dominance that is around us and in us. We need to engage consciously and continuously in decolonizing all alienating and imposing influences.”

Spirituality. With the increasing influence and impact of materialism, secularism and liberalism in the post-modern era, Asian countries continue to experience challenges and stagnation in spirituality. These include loss of focus in discipleship and spiritual formation, loss of indigenous wisdom, character and values, and infiltration of Western culture and ideology through the neo-Pentecostal and new religious movements influences.

Identity and power struggle. Most communities in Asian countries have experienced identity crisis through history. In the process of the post-colonial impact, some experienced a “hybrid” identity. Similar to this is the question of “what kind of world order is theology going to project that is consistent with its hope for the kingdom of God, as the people of Asia rise to claim their basic rights and rightful place in the world?”

People movements and ecumenism. In a Christian minority and multi-denominational context, enhancing ecumenical unity and cooperation is vital. In seeking to fulfil the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, the Asian Churches need to transcend denominational boundaries and constantly seek to promote wider cooperation. Some Asians see denominationalism as a legacy of Western mission agencies that promotes a particular brand of Christianity. Learning from past history, ecumenism must not be just seen in functional terms but as a dynamic unity (“that they may be one”). Ecumenism is about a vision of God’s household where the members seek to listen to the variety of Asian theological voices and to practice intrafaith and interfaith dialogue in order to promote peace, healing and reconciliation.

Information and technological change and challenges. “Globalized capitalized economic activities act not only to widen the gap between the rich and the poor, but also weaken the sovereignty of individual nation states by interruption of capital power. Its operation is backed by the information technology and military power, and has led to the decline of the weaker cultures, discrimi-
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nation against minorities such as aborigines, and exploitation of women and children.”

Social challenges. The expression of sin in terms of greed for power and wealth experienced by the peoples of Asia has had a tremendous effect on the community, especially the poor and marginalized. Ethical problems such as corruption, abuse of power, and prostitution; poverty realities such as indentured child labour and population explosion; communal problems such as ethnic conflicts, racial tensions and breakdown of family structures and continued marginalization of women, children, and persons with disabilities continue to rise.

Reclaiming indigenous identity and minority rights. Loss of identity, loss of dignity, and loss of good cultural values have resulted from lack of dialogue with indigenous peoples. Dialogue with them has been hindered by our prejudices and stereotyped views about them that were influenced by Western theology and culture. The indigenous has often been equated with being “backward,” “primitive” and “irrational.” For these reasons, local cultures and their wisdom have been systematically suppressed and marginalized. However, indigenous wisdom has a valuable character that needs to be rediscovered.

Guidelines for Theologizing and Theological Education in Asia—Time for Another Paradigm Shift

The purpose of these guidelines is to allow a redefinition and a retargeting of the role of theological education and its methodology in Asia by addressing the actual situation of a local community and at the same time ensuring that it is “biblically based, missiologically oriented, educationally shaped, pastorally advocated and spiritually empowered.” Theologies in Asia must be authentically Asian in content, shape and processes. Thus we propose the following guidelines. Theological education should promote:

1. Responsive engagement with the diverse Asian contexts
2. Critical engagement with indigenous cultures and wisdom for the preservation and sustenance of life
3. Reflective engagement with the sufferings of the Asian people in order to provide hope for the marginalized, women, indigenous people, children, differently abled people and migrant workers
4. Restoring the inter-connectedness of the whole creation
5. Interfaith dialogue as well as intrafaith communion and communication for the fullness of life and the well-being of society
6. Enhancing capacity building in order to serve people experiencing disaster, conflict and disease, as well as those people who suffer physical, emotional and mental disabilities
7. Prophetic resistance against the powers of economic imperialism
8. Equipping Christians for witnessing and spreading the gospel of Jesus with loving care and service to fulfil the Christian mission of evangelism.

Implication and Implementation

The following suggestions are made in order to allow for effective implementation of the guidelines:

1. ATESEA accreditation criteria should be revised to incorporate the above requirements.
2. ATESEA member schools and SEAGST should reflect the spirit of the above guidelines in their curriculum, ways of teaching and training programs.
3. ATESEA member schools should adopt an inter-disciplinary approach and avoid the departmental approach in teaching of theology.
4. Ongoing faculty development should be given due consideration in developing expertise in the areas of concern mentioned in the guidelines.
5. ATESEA member schools should ensure that proper resourcing is done in libraries to enable meaningful academic research, reflection and articulation on current and relevant issues.
6. AJT/ATESEA publications should be encouraged to take the above guidelines into consideration and to reflect the spirit of the guidelines in their publications.
7. Efficient efforts must be undertaken so that ATESEA member schools and Asian theologians take the ideas of the guidelines seriously in theological education, reflection and construction.

Notes

3. Huang Po Ho, “Covenant with the Churches in Asia—Retargeting Theological Education in Responding to the Life and Death Struggles of the People of Asia” (ATESEA General Assembly Meeting, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 2005).
5. “Taiwan Area’s Critical Response to the Critical Asian Principle” (ASEA/SEAGST, Taiwan, 2006).
11. Huang, “Covenant with the Churches in Asia.”
13. “AJT” is the abbreviation for the Asian Journal of Theology.
The Gift of Being Number Two: A “Buzz Aldrin” Perspective on Pioneer Missions

Notto R. Thelle

The history of Christian missions is usually told from the perspective of the pioneers, the daring explorers, the “number ones.” These were the eloquent preachers and evangelists, doctors and social workers, powerful organizers and leaders, and scholars who pioneered the study of foreign cultures and languages. Most of them were intelligent, dedicated men who sacrificed their lives for what they believed was a direct call from God. They were featured in reports and were writers themselves, fascinating people at home with their accounts and appeals. They were both celebrated and respected.¹

My intention here is not to diminish the role of the number ones—in most cases their fame is deserved. But I do want to call attention to the number twos and threes, those who walked in the footsteps of the pioneers, carrying their burdens, taking care of the daily duties, yet allowing others to be the protagonists; they themselves worked in the wings or were just walk-ons in the shadows. What about the Buzz Aldrins of Christian missions?

My perspective is inspired by a remarkable Norwegian novel by Johan Harstad, Buzz Aldrin: Hvor ble det av deg i alt myldret? (Buzz Aldrin: What Happened to You in All the Confusion?)² Buzz Aldrin was the second man on the moon, a symbol of the many number twos in the world who tend to be forgotten because number one gets all the attention. Neil Armstrong, the number one, is remembered and celebrated for taking the first steps on the moon and saying the now-famous words, “One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.” But Buzz Aldrin was there too, taking photos, collecting rock samples, and awed by the magnificent desolation of the moonscape. Michael Collins was also there. He was in charge of the spaceship and saw the dark side of the moon, waiting for the two to return. The venture could never have happened without the entire team.

Harstad develops his theme in a beautiful and touching story of a young man who essentially wants to be a number two, satisfied with his anonymity in the world, but who is nevertheless less desperately afraid of being useless. “The point is not that I don’t want to leave traces after me,” he says, “but somehow they don’t have to be so visible for the entire world. I don’t need my handprint in the cement. I don’t have to be interviewed for what I do. . . . Someone has to choose to be number two . . . that’s what makes the world go around” (pp. 424–25).

I honor the memory of the number twos in Christian missions in China by reviewing the experience of my father, Notto Normann Thelle (1901–90), a missionary Buzz Aldrin in the Scandinavian exploration of Buddhism. In 1922 he arrived in China with another Norwegian, Karl Ludvig Reichelt, to begin a new work among Buddhist monks. Let us call him N. N. Thelle or, as a reminder of this perspective, just N.N. (as in nomen nescitur, name unknown).

Reichelt was a missionary Neil Armstrong who deserves fame for his pioneer work, though he was not the first to step into the unknown territory of Buddhism in China.³ He had studied Buddhism for almost twenty years when he began his Christian Mission to Buddhists in 1922. This new initiative was a unique and daring exploration, and Reichelt was the undisputable strategist and explorer.⁴ But N.N. was there from the beginning too. He worked faithfully with Reichelt during his lifetime and continued to serve the mission for almost forty years after Reichelt’s death in 1952. They were sometimes mentioned together as pioneers, but Reichelt predominates in the great story of the mission.

I became aware of N.N.’s prominent role in the mission when an American researcher in Hong Kong approached me to learn more about the details of my father’s life.⁵ This researcher had studied the records and diaries of the mission in Hong Kong and discovered that N.N. always seemed to be present. While Reichelt was often absent, attending meetings and conferences, making pilgrimages, and visiting Buddhist monasteries, N.N. was on duty at the mission, organizing, taking care of the daily routines, teaching, preaching, receiving guests, and attending to the care of students and visiting monks. The researcher’s impression was that N.N. was the hub around which the entire institution revolved. I had always taken it for granted that N.N.’s name was seldom mentioned, and he himself seemed perfectly satisfied with that level of anonymity. But the observation struck me as correct in many ways: the mission could never have succeeded without N.N. and some other number twos.⁶

Notto R. Thelle, Professor of Ecumenics and Missiology at the University of Oslo, served for many years as associate director of the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, Kyoto, Japan. He is the author of numerous books and articles dealing with interfaith dialogue, spirituality, and missions, including Seeking God’s Face (Paulist Press, 2008).

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History of the Christian Mission to Buddhists

The official history of the Christian Mission to Buddhists is described in numerous books and articles, and it shall not be revisited here. It is almost identical to the story of Karl Ludvig Reichelt, at least for the first three decades until his death in 1952. It is a fascinating attempt to promote Christian mission among Chinese Buddhists and religious devotees by establishing institutions for mission and dialogue. All religious seekers were welcomed as “brothers” and “friends in the Way/Dao” (daoyou), and the institutions were hence often called Brother Homes. They were modeled after Buddhist monastic institutions, with a daily rhythm of worship, meditation, work, and study, and with ample opportunity for dialogue.

The official story, with Reichelt as the “soul” of the mission, is also N.N.’s story, which he loved to tell. Probably no one else, including even Reichelt himself, has contributed more than N.N. to keep this story alive.7

The Pioneer and His Assistant

Karl Ludvig Reichelt was already in his mid-forties and an experienced missionary to China when he returned with his new assistant in 1922. He had served as a missionary evangelist in Changsha (Hunan) and later as professor of the New Testament at the Lutheran Seminary in Shekou (Hubei). He had been involved in revisions of liturgical books and hymnals, and not least, he had already gained some fame for his research on Chinese religions, notably Buddhism.

His young assistant, N.N., was only twenty-one years old, an inexperienced man from Kristiansand, a provincial port city in southern Norway. After middle school and a commercial course N.N. served as a clerk in a ship-broker company. He was reared in the evangelical tradition of Lutheran pietism, a warm and affectionate community with strong commitments to missions, evangelism, puritan values, and otherworldliness, and with a rather harsh stance against anything that smacked of liberal theology.

N.N. was a happy and trusted member of that community, appreciated by the Christian establishment as an up-and-coming leader. Photos from those early years show a handsome young man who was quiet and serious. But he seems to have been somewhat depressed, or was he just pensive? His own letters and notes reveal that he had two “most serious questions in life”8: the feeling that he had been “called to something else” and the desperate need for a woman to love.

His situation changed drastically in 1921 when he met Karl Ludvig Reichelt, who was on home leave and was sharing his vision about work among Buddhists. The Buddhists in China seemed prepared to receive the Christian Gospel, he proclaimed.

God had sown the seeds in the religious systems of the East, and the time was ripe for harvesting, if one could only meet them with insight and sympathy, showing them that the inner aspirations of their faith were fulfilled in Christianity. The timing was perfect: N.N. was waiting for a calling from God, and Reichelt was searching for young people who could assist him in his work. N.N. reflected, “How wonderful that God would use me, of all people, in this work. What a grace!”9

This encounter led to a deep, lifelong friendship and mutual trust, in spite of the generation gap and their radically different positions. There must have been tensions and conflicts between the two, but I have never found any record of N.N. saying or writing one negative word about Reichelt.

From Reichelt’s perspective N.N. must have been an extraordinary resource in Nanjing. His professional background made him a perfect secretary almost from the beginning, enabling Reichelt to “plunge into the real work as soon as possible.”10 In addition to his own language studies, N.N. took care of everyday duties such as managing finances, accounts, and correspondence, editing Reichelt’s writings, conducting morning and evening worship, and teaching in the small school. Since Reichelt was often out traveling, N.N. was increasingly put in charge of even preaching and worship. To some extent he also accompanied Reichelt on visits to local Buddhist monasteries.

When Reichelt was asked to return to Norway in the summer of 1925 in order to negotiate with the Norwegian Missionary Society about the future of the mission, N.N. was given responsibility for the entire work of the Brother Home. For one whole year, with only two and a half years of experience in China, and with limited education and no theological training, he was responsible for the entire community. In a time of escalating political unrest and anti-Western agitation, this was a heavy burden. No wonder he was relieved when Reichelt returned after one year and resumed his position as the undisputed master and leader.

Reading letters and diaries, both private and public, one is struck by the relationship between the two. It was a respectful relationship in which a considerate boss was initiating a conscientious and capable apprentice to his future work. The relationship was affectionate, nurtured by deep spiritual fellowship and mutual friendship.

Agonies of Loneliness and Romance

Other aspects of the relationship between this number one and number two are easily forgotten. Here we consider some of the agonies and challenges. N.N.’s private diary, written during his first years in Nanjing, was his confidential dialogue partner. It affirms the mutual friendship and confidence described above but also reveals hidden hardships. The first sentence in the diary sets the tone: “I am here alone.” It was New Year’s Day 1923, and three months had passed since they arrived. Reichelt was in Shanghai, and the young N.N. had time to think and to feel. He was desperately lonely and was longing for his family, for friends, and for somebody to confide in, someone with whom he could share his “many thoughts and struggles.” He wrote, “Now I understand to some extent what a precious gift from the Lord a good friendship is. I have no one. I am alone. I have entered the new year alone.”

The heavy work schedule probably dulled the pain. The first year was too busy to leave room for much emotion or private reflection. The next entry in the diary was made more than half a year later, during summer vacation, and then a few entries were made in the fall of 1923. N.N. was so busy that he did not even...
have time to answer personal letters. But he was still haunted by loneliness. He tried to convince himself that he was not longing for something else—how could he do that when he knew that God had led him to serve in China? But he had to be honest: There was no one with whom he could share his emotions.

N.N.’s encounter with Reichelt had to some extent solved his first agony—the call to “something else” as his life work. But the question was still burning. He was in China serving as a missionary, a calling that was admired in his home community as the highest possible. Why was he still uneasy? Had not God fulfilled his longings? Yes, he was grateful for the opportunity to serve, and he was ready to commit everything to his calling. But he was not sure that his work was good enough.

At home his work had always been appreciated, but in China it seemed almost impossible to do anything to please people. Was he of any use at all? There was no gratitude, no response, everything was so . . . he could not even find the right words. Things just slipped by. Would it ever be possible to communicate his thoughts in Chinese? Would he ever be able to preach Christ with a liberated tongue? Had he ever meant anything to anyone in China? “The feeling of loneliness, the terrible feeling of not being able to mean anything to anybody was about to overpower me.”

This feeling of loneliness probably would not have been so awful if he had had some resolution to his second agony: a woman to love. He thought that he perhaps had a girlfriend in Norway when he left, but there was no place for open proclamation in that culture, and he could not really expect a seventeen-year-old high school student to commit herself to a man who would be gone for such a long time. His private agonies shall not be described here, but the young man’s ups and downs in this matter are quite moving.

**The Burdens of a Liberating Vision**

It was a tremendous privilege for N.N. to assist Reichelt in the initial phase of a unique pioneer work among Buddhist monks. He had been pulled out of a community with clearly defined cultural and religious codes and placed in an entirely new world. Reichelt’s approach to Buddhism was the obvious model, one in which it was studied with sympathy and fascination but essentially with the intention of preparing for growth toward Christian faith. N.N. accepted Reichelt’s ideas as a liberating vision. It opened his awareness that God was not confined to the narrow world of churches and pietistic communities; it even introduced him to the totally unknown world of Buddhism, which hitherto he had figured only as part of the world of dark paganism Christianity was to conquer.

There was, however, a difference between the two men. Reichelt had made a long journey in which his new relationship to people of another faith was the result of his own exploration, research, and direct contacts. For N.N., in contrast, his was a borrowed position, at least initially, based only on trust in Reichelt. He was therefore much more vulnerable to criticism from conservative circles in Norway, especially when negotiations with the Norwegian Missionary Society forced Reichelt to leave the society and establish his own organization in 1926. It was a period of harsh theological struggle in Norway. Reichelt was severely attacked by conservative Christians for mixing Buddhism and Christianity and for preaching an “amputated” Gospel that could save neither the Chinese nor the Norwegians. N.N. received warnings and admonitions from his friends, who expected him to leave the mission as soon as he returned to Norway. His family also felt the pressure, especially his mother, who was an ardent follower of the conservatives and hence feared that he would end in hell. Most of his friends withdrew their support, and some even regarded him as an apostate. He later mentioned that during this period only one of his friends still supported him in his continued involvement in the mission.

For the rest of his life N.N. identified himself with the liberating vision, but to some extent it continued to be a burden, even though that burden was not his own but Reichelt’s.

**Humility, Inferiority, and Dignity**

N.N. was basically happy to be a number two. He grew up in a piety that nurtured a spirit of humble service, voluntary work, and commitment to evangelism. Sometimes, however, it also nurtured such negative elements as feelings of inferiority and even self-contempt.

His private diary is packed with reflections on humble service and with sincere prayers for strength to forget himself and commit himself to God. At the same time, however, he was struggling with the tension between humility and dreams of recognition. He wanted to be hidden behind Christ so “he alone can shine through me,” to suffer with him “in unforgettable sacrificial love,” but he was depressed by “this damnable striving for human glory.” He simply wanted to be seen; he needed recognition and was desperately afraid of being of no use to anyone.

One of N.N.’s problems was his lack of academic training. He came as an assistant but could not help asking why the Lord had sent him to China without an education. Other missionary students, even the women, had at least finished college. Why should he be an exception? “I thought God could make something out of what is small in the eyes of the learned,” he commented, hoping that God in this way might educate him through his Spirit. “But how often it is painful and preys upon the flesh that I should be inferior to the others.”

With such a background, one may easily understand his delight whenever his contributions were appreciated, which happened quite often. Early in his language studies at Nanjing University, he was first in his class. Reichelt and his Chinese coworkers described him as “unique and outstanding.” But he still was not sure that he was good enough.

With N.N.’s intellect and energy he might easily have become a number one in his field, given the right circumstances. But the situation was not favorable for such a development. The mission already had its pioneer. We might wonder whether the story of the mission would have been different if N.N. and other coworkers had been given the opportunity to be more independent in their work. There are good reasons to believe that such a scenario might have been problematic. Reichelt certainly had some fundamental beliefs about equality and collegiality.

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**This feeling of loneliness probably would not have been so awful if he had had some resolution to his second agony: a woman to love.**

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as his coworkers, in spite of the difference in age and education, and he apparently trusted them with a great deal of freedom. The relationship between Reichelt and N.N. is a beautiful example of mutual friendship and trust. Reichelt, however, did not seem to be interested in allowing N.N. and other coworkers to pursue their own independent studies, or even to explore Buddhism and Chinese religions in more depth. Reichelt did not seem to want independent spirits who engaged in creative dialogue about strategies and theological positions. N.N. commented that in discussions Reichelt assumed that all agreed with his position and could be irritated if someone dared to criticize him. He never checked the opinions of new staff, but he nonetheless expected them to share his views. A much harsher comment was made by a more independent spirit, Johannes Prip-Møller, the Danish architect who designed the Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre in Hong Kong. Prip-Møller felt that Reichelt’s tendency to micromanage was an oppressive deprivation of freedom. He commented that Reichelt’s exceptional vision and empathy with others were “limited exclusively to the sphere of religion.” In all other areas there was no room for real discussion, for Reichelt regarded disagreement as “personal invalidation.” Knowing from experience the somewhat heavy air created by disagreement, Prip-Møller continued, the result was often that one preferred to “give in for the sake of domestic peace.”

Reichelt needed committed people who would support his work, participate in the daily activities as preachers and liturgists, engage in dialogues with visiting monks, and teach the novices and students at Tao Fong Shan. But he was the master, the respected pioneer, the undisputable number one.

The Gift of Being Number Two

My sketches of the beginning of the Christian Mission to Buddhists in Nanjing in the 1920s from the perspective of a number two missionary do not detract anything from the well-known story, but they add some nuances that are seldom expressed.

N.N. is a representative for the countless other number twos, and he was basically happy in this role. His mental chemistry, his home and childhood, and the religious culture of his community had prepared him for such a role, and he filled it with commitment and gratitude. I realize that there have also been many number twos (and threes and fours) in Christian missions who were unhappy with their roles, people with abilities and dreams that were never realized, among them many women. But N.N. was among those with the gift of being number two, a missionary personality without whom no pioneer could succeed.

Alluding to Harstad’s above-mentioned novel, one might say that N.N. did not want to be visible to the entire world—he did not need his handprint in the cement—but he did want to be seen, and he struggled with the overpowering fear of being useless. In Harstad’s words, someone has to choose to be number two—that’s what makes the world go around.

Notes

1. This article is an abbreviated version of a detailed analysis to be included in a collection of articles dealing with Norwegian contributions to mission in China that is to be published in 2008 under the title “A Passion for China.”
5. Carl I. Smith’s detailed analysis, based on the available reports and diaries at Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, is available at the center’s Reichelt Library.
6. Among other number twos in the early phases were Axel Hamre (the engineer who supervised the building of Tao Fong Shan), Stig Hannerz, Gerhard Reichelt (son of the pioneer), and some important Chinese coworkers. Their wives were probably regarded somewhat as number threes, especially in a community where many visitors were monks.
7. N.N. described Reichelt as the “soul” of the work. See his account De første ti år (The First Ten Years) (Oslo: Den Kristne Buddhistmisjons Forlag, 1932), p. 19. N. N. Thelle’s other books about the mission are, in addition to the above-mentioned biography, Fra begynnelsen til nu (From the Beginning Until Now) (Oslo: Den Kristne Buddhistmisjons Forlag, 1939) and En buddhistmunks veit til Kristus (A Buddhist Monk’s Way to Christ) (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 1939). After returning from Hong Kong in 1949, N.N. served as general secretary of the mission from 1951 to 1972 and continued to serve the mission as a retired volunteer and speaker, keeping the memory of the pioneer period alive for new generations of supporters.
9. Reichelt–Thelle correspondence (hereafter RTC), December 26, 1921, N. N. Thelle’s private archives.
11. N. N. Thelle’s diary from Nanjing, 1922–27 (hereafter TD), October 14, 1923, N. N. Thelle’s private archives.
12. TD, October 1, 1923.
13. TD, April 10, 1924.
14. TD, June 7, 1924.
COME. Not long after I began teaching in Bangalore (South India), someone asked, “Which institution do you recommend for a Ph.D. in Mission Studies?” My answer was “Asbury Theological Seminary.” A decade later, as a faculty member at Asbury, I realize how right I was! What an experience it has been to join the team I so admired where a well-balanced emphasis on both spiritual life and high academic standards distinguishes the quality of this scholarly community.

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What I Have Learned About Missions from Writing The British Missionary Enterprise Since 1700

Jeffrey Cox

Writing a broad survey is daunting. One must transgress both geographic and chronological boundaries and enter fields where others know much more. My past publications were based on extensive archival research about particular places. When I was writing The British Missionary Enterprise Since 1700, there was no time to linger on a careful archival reconstruction in order to provide the reader with a sense of place.

Arriving at conclusions on areas beyond one’s field of expertise comes with the territory, though, and I learned a great deal. With due deference to those who know more, I found myself surprised by some of the received wisdom about missionaries in various fields of scholarship and differing, at least in matters of emphasis, with some widely read missiologists and historians. What follows is a simplified list of some of those conclusions.

Interest in missions in eighteenth-century Great Britain was linked to imperial expansion. Andrew Walls once referred to the modern missionary movement as “an autumnal child of the Evangelical Revival,” and there is a sense in which that is true enough. What drove missionary enthusiasm in eighteenth-century Britain, though, was not theology but imperialism. Church men and women from a variety of theological points of view turned to missions as a result of Britain’s imperial expansion, especially as it related to African-Americans, Native Americans, and South Asians. Throughout history, the relationship between missions and imperialism has been unstable and often dialectical, but neither can be understood without close attention to the other.

The distinctive contribution of evangelicals in Britain was organizational rather than ideological or theological. Evangelicals did not invent the characteristic institution of modern Protestant missions, that is, the nongovernmental (or quasi-governmental) voluntary society. Pietists, Anglicans, Moravians, and Scottish Presbyterians experimented with such a form in the eighteenth century. In the 1790s evangelicals perfected this institution in a way that led to the creation of a new ecclesiastical profession, that of the modern missionary.

There is a wide gap between the defamatory literature published by missionary societies in the nineteenth century for home consumption and the practices of missionaries in their respective fields. Early nineteenth-century British missions generated a large body of publications about foreign cultures that is now rightly seen as severely defamatory, in that it took the most shocking aspects of foreign cultures from a Western point of view (sat., cannibalism, etc.) and treated them as emblematic of the entire culture. This was a phase in mission history, though, that is often misunderstood. The defamatory tropes of foreign mission rhetoric were primarily designed for home consumption and published in the face of massive domestic skepticism about the appropriate nature of foreign missions. In the mission fields themselves, defamatory rhetoric was often abandoned as not useful to missionaries in the practice of missionary institution-building.

David Livingstone was not a typical missionary. The image of the missionary as David Livingstone, the itinerant preacher in a pith helmet holding forth under a palm tree, is the most durable and misleading of all assumptions about the nature of missions, one that remains deeply entrenched in the popular mind today. The single most important thing to know about missionaries is that, unlike Livingstone, they were first and foremost institution-builders, regardless of differences in matters of theology and social background.

A majority of missionaries were women. Specialists in the field know this, but I still find audiences that are surprised to hear it, largely because the image of the missionary is almost entirely male. The problem in mission historiography is to establish the role of the wives of male missionaries as missionaries in their own right, which they were from the very first days of overseas missionary effort. There is a hidden clause, however, in most generalizations.
about nineteenth-century missions: “not counting the wives.” That unspoken exclusion makes it difficult to count the true number of women missionaries, but it is not impossible to make plausible estimates.

Civilizing the uncivilized was not the goal of missions. The second most pervasive image of the missionary, after that of Livingstone, is taken from the novels of James Michener, where missionaries force Western clothing on Pacific Islanders. Mission historians will not be surprised to be told that the nature of the relationship between Christianity and Western civilization was highly contested in the world of missions, but influential historians and anthropologists, such as Jean and John Comaroff, still assume that missionaries are best understood as civilizing representatives of Western values.

Between 1790 and 1950 the characteristic form of mission activity was institution-building. Regardless of their theological point of view, missionaries built institutions when they arrived overseas: elementary schools for boys and girls, high schools, universities, theological training schools, vocational training schools, clinics, and hospitals, among others. This strategy has been misunderstood because it was heavily criticized from the first. Victorian critics such as Henry Venn denounced mission institutions for creating dependency, and in the 1950s Donald McGavran treated the entire period of institution-building as a missiological mistake. In order to understand mission history, it is necessary to understand why missionaries built institutions even when they claimed to be doing something else (as in the case of faith missions), why institution-building was an effective mechanism for spreading Christianity, and why the religious faith of the “dependent” Christians associated with mission institutions should not be denigrated.

Missions were important in twentieth-century Britain. In the early twentieth century the United States surpassed Great Britain as the largest sending nation in Protestant missions. As the British churches declined slowly after 1900, religion dropped out of the historiography of twentieth-century Britain. Missionaries, along with religion generally, were thought to be characteristic of the Victorian age, but not the twentieth century. Throughout the twentieth century, though, Britain remained the second largest sending nation for Protestant missions. The high point of overseas British mission activity was not the late nineteenth century but the interwar period. Even in the late twentieth century, there were more British Protestant missionaries abroad (depending on one’s definition of a missionary) than in the late nineteenth century.

Missionaries are important figures in non-Western Christianity. Why should this be a surprise? It is because of the influence of the church-growth school of missions and the great emphasis placed by missiologists such as Donald McGavran and Lamin Sanneh on the indigenous nature of non-Western Christianity. In the postimperial age, historians and missiologists have attempted to divorce non-Western Christianity from the taint of its imperial associations by defining it as entirely non-Western, with missionaries reduced to roles of “detonators” or translators of a Gospel that was then taken up and entirely transformed by non-Western Christians. Yet Third World Christian churches are neither independent of Western influences nor purely indigenous; in historical terms, they are hybrid, the results of a dialectical relationship between missionaries and non-Western Christians. Even those churches fully independent of mission origins adopt many Western Christian forms. David Livingstone may be reviled in the West as a missionary imperialist, but he is revered among many African Christians for his role in bringing the Gospel to Africa.

In conclusion, I encourage debate about these conclusions. Postcolonial missions have not escaped the dilemmas of history. The tension between missionary institution-building and the need to build up indigenous, independent churches has not been transcended. Vast mission bureaucracies are dedicated to Bible translation, and the training of indigenous agents is still conducted by Western men and women with superior education, superior credentials, and superior wealth. Attacks on missionaries as cultural imperialists, especially in their relationship to “unreached peoples,” are as ferocious now as they were in the days of Communist and nationalist ascendancy in the mid-twentieth century.

Notes
To describe my pilgrimage in mission, I wish to avoid a strictly chronological discussion, thinking instead of a house with four rooms. Let me move from one room to another and make adjustments in the time flow as we proceed.

Preparin in America for Mission

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is the first room in my house, for I was born there in March 1929, the youngest of three sons of Harry and Ruth Phillips. This proved to be a time when most Americans realized that what had seemed to be the solid certainties of the nineteenth century were coming to an end, for the stock market crashed in September 1929, and the Great Depression ensued. My dad lost his job then, and although it must have been incredibly difficult for my parents to keep putting meals on the table for three growing boys, they managed to do so, and we never thought of ourselves as deprived. Not just our family, but the whole of American society came to recognize that the period of “inevitable progress,” which had lasted up through World War I, with major bumps such as the American Civil War, had come to an end, and we were in for some hard times.

As “depression babies” my brothers and I soon realized that in order to get along in the world, we had to have a good education. Our mother was a registered nurse, but our dad, who could have gone to college like his two older brothers, had chosen instead to get a job and earn some money. Speaking out of their depression experiences our parents often told us, “Get a good education! They can take away everything else you’ve got, but they can never take your education from you!”

The public schools of Pittsburgh were then good places to start one’s education. My oldest brother, Bob, went on to become a physician, and my next older brother, Harry, became a pastor. Our family was active in the East Liberty Presbyterian Church, a large cathedral-like Gothic edifice that had been built with funds from the Mellon family, who had been Pittsburgh bankers and industrialists. Through the ministry of our pastor, Dr. Stuart Nye Hutchison, my brothers and I became thoroughly imbued with our Presbyterian/Reformed heritage, which fitted in neatly with our family heritage—Scotch-Irish, with a bit of German thrown in.

My high school years were those of America’s entry into World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. We knew from our parents, schoolteachers, and German relatives that the Germans were not all bad; the Japanese, though, were another matter. From the war stories that I read in our Pittsburgh newspapers, I could hardly believe that they were human. (I often thought about this judgment during our later years in Japan.) At the close of the war in Europe, there had been the awful revelations of the death ovens at Buchenwald and Auschwitz. And the war was ended in Asia with America’s using atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, incinerating thousands of people. There were so many things to think about as I headed off to college at Princeton in 1945.

With scholarship help and various jobs I was able to work my way through Princeton, and what a wider world I encountered there! The world of Western civilization was broadened for me through university courses in history and politics. I went on to major in the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, for it was my intention to go into some form of government service, possibly the Foreign Service. My generation was later described as one that had a love affair with government, for we believed that although our society faced a number of very serious problems, they could doubtless be set right by energetic action at the government level, just as President Roosevelt had done after the Great Depression.

My college years made me aware of some of the continuing tensions in the society in which I had been brought up. One was the tension between faith and knowledge, which became very real for me because some of my close friends had no faith whatever and thought of my faith as some kind of vestigial superstition. During this time I went through many periods of serious doubt about my faith; on several occasions I examined it critically and sometimes thought of tossing it away altogether, as some of my friends and professors had. Yet I was greatly inspired by the teaching and example of E. Harris Harbison, a first-rate historian of the Renaissance and Reformation, who was also an active Christian and church elder. Somehow I concluded that if he was able to hold faith and knowledge together, then perhaps I could too.

After college I knew that I would have to find a job. One day, without too much forethought, I telephoned the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to see if they might have a short-term teaching assignment somewhere overseas. They did, which led to my taking on a three-year term in Korea, which I discuss in the next section. But here I need to say that after my time in Korea I decided to head for the ministry and chose to enroll in Yale Divinity School.

My time in seminary, 1952–55, was during the period that Roland Bainton was teaching church history, Robert Calhoun was giving his masterful history of Christian doctrine, Kenneth Scott Latourette was just entering retirement but continuing his research and writing on mission, and H. Richard Niebuhr was engaged in his lifelong dialogue about Christian ethics. With such teachers as my mentors, I eagerly looked forward to working in the ministry and was ordained by the Pittsburgh Presbytery as “a missionary to distant and heathen parts.” Since I had decided to continue my studies, that description had to apply to Princeton University, to which I returned to do graduate work in Christian ethics under Paul Ramsey.

Graduate work at Princeton, from 1955 to 1959, took me into the entire gamut of theological disciplines, which I greatly enjoyed. My dissertation was on the ethics of Richard Baxter, a
Puritan pastor and theologian who lived through the harrowing experiences of seventeenth-century England, facing many issues not dissimilar to those of our own times. Baxter’s greatest creativity came in the midst of chaos, and it seemed to me that we were headed into more of it in our era as well.

During my first summer session in graduate school, I joined the ministers-in-industry program at McCormick Seminary in Chicago, directed by Marshal Scott. One Sunday I went to the Fourth Presbyterian Church, where I met a girl named Ruth Hennig. To make a long story short, we were married the following summer. We moved into graduate students’ housing at Princeton, where our first daughter, Cathy, was born a year later. Because there were no aunts or grandmothers to help out, Ruth and I swam the new waters of parenthood together. Our church home in Princeton was Witherspoon Presbyterian Church, which had started out as a black church but came to have about 10 percent white members as well, including now Ruth and me. At the end of graduate school, various teaching posts were available in the United States, but Ruth and I accepted a Presbyterian mission board opening in church history at Tokyo Union Seminary. And so we were off to Japan, a kind of return for me, but for Ruth, quite a new and different experience.

Serving in Northeast Asia

Northeast Asia is the second room in my house. Before considering my family’s move to Japan, I must say something about my bachelor years in Korea, for it was in Korea that I started my mission career right after college.

Korea (and Japan), 1949–52. I was to teach history, politics, and English Bible in what is now Yonsei University in Seoul. A year’s teaching went by, and then—on June 25, 1950—the Korean War broke out. Our Presbyterian mission was holding its annual conference at a beach resort on the west coast of Korea when we got word that war had begun. Because the city of Seoul had already fallen to North Korean troops, we could not return there but instead headed overland to Taegu and Pusan, from where most of us were evacuated to Japan.

From Japan that summer we followed the worsening course of the war and then were cheered by Douglas MacArthur’s Inchon landing, which suddenly seemed to presage an allied victory. Although I enjoyed getting to know something of Japan while I was working there through the fall, my heart was really in Korea. So I was very glad to return to Korea at the end of 1950, where I helped in mission programs for the churches and for the countless refugees who began to pour down the Korean peninsula to escape from the Communist regime in the North.

The Korean War did several things to my consciousness. For one thing, here was a society seemingly coming apart under the repeated blows of war. Some Christian leaders I had met were killed or vanished on death marches, while many others suffered untold hardships from the hostilities. I also came to have a deep distrust of the Marxist promises of a new society, which had seemed in college to be an alternative lifestyle for many. In halting Korean I talked with scores of very poor people who had fled from North Korean Communism because of their terrible experiences with that regime.

I also found that bestial conduct was not the monopoly of one side. There were atrocities by both North and South Korean troops, and even some by American soldiers. This revelation caused me to ponder how some of these fellow-Americans—and I might easily have been one of them—had come to behave in such degraded ways. The veneer of civilization is very thin indeed, and war often destroys it completely. The cold war later brought us close to the brink of nuclear confrontation on several occasions, but somehow—God be thanked!—we were able to avoid stepping over the brink.

The Korean War also showed that for Korean Christians, as their world seemed to be falling apart, their faith in Christ grew stronger. Their eschatological approach to Christian faith was quite different from the way in which my faith had developed from boyhood times in Pittsburgh. To be sure, the fundamentalism of many Korean Christians and of several missionary colleagues was not for me.

After a trip in the summer of 1952 with two student-friends through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, I headed back to the United States for further education.

Japan, 1959–75. Following seminary and graduate school, Ruth and I, with baby Cathy, went to Japan in 1959. We found the country in the throes of reexamining its postwar ties with the United States. To understand the serious anti-American demonstrations that were taking place then, we must recall (in greatly simplified fashion) that Japan was not like several other nations that were divided in two after World War II, including Korea, Germany, Austria, and Vietnam. Each of these divided countries had a Communist-dominated section and a Western-dominated part. Postwar Japan was under a single occupation, even though the USSR had at first sought to occupy the northern island of Hokkaido. The occupation of Japan was Allied in theory but American-led in practice. Hence the East-West split, which tore other nations into two parts, was internalized in Japanese society. The Japanese government, with the support of many in the business and farming communities, was officially oriented toward America and capitalist economics. But many in the academic and labor communities favored a more neutral or even Marxist stance. The Marxist/capitalist economic and ideological tensions that had plagued Europe since the nineteenth century were now polarizing twentieth-century Japan.

After the struggles over the 1960 U.S.-Japan Security Treaty, Japan’s ruling Liberal Democratic Party turned its attention to growth of the Japanese economy, and the “Japanese economic miracle” ensued. From our missionary apartment in downtown Tokyo we could see the city growing around us; at one time, we could look out on five buildings that were under construction near us. The protests of leftist groups were generally drowned out by the sounds of the nation’s growing prosperity.

Our second daughter, Marjorie, was born in Tokyo, and she and Cathy—both blondes—were an instant means of introduction to people as we traveled around the country. My work at Tokyo Union Seminary, which I undertook after Japanese language study, brought me into daily contact with some of the most interesting students and faculty colleagues that one could possibly wish for. I am grateful that it was necessary for me to do my work
in the Japanese language, which enabled me to enter more fully into the daily issues and life situations that both students and faculty were facing.

The story of the “time of troubles” that swept over Japanese society and its Christian institutions from 1968 to 1970 is too complicated to describe here in detail. The crisis was related specifically to efforts by “progressives” to end the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty and to efforts by that treaty’s supporters to continue it. During this period over two-thirds of the nation’s schools were thrown into turmoil, including our seminary, which was barricaded by striking students for almost six months. I started a chronicle of the seminary’s problems to share with a wider public in Japan and overseas regarding what seemed to be the major societal and theological issues that were surfacing.

In time, this work became a book that sketched the history of Japan’s Christian community from 1945 to 1975, published as From the Rising of the Sun: Christians and Society in Contemporary Japan (Orbis Books, 1981).

While seminary teaching was my major assignment, I also served as pastor of the West Tokyo Union Church and traveled to Korea and other East Asian countries on periodic visits in connection with my work with the Northeast Asia Association of Theological Schools. I wrote articles for various journals in Japan and was associate editor of the Northeast Asia Journal of Theology. We were also able to travel as a family through Southeast Asia during the 1974 Christmas season. By the summer of 1975 it was time for us to return for what we thought would be a year’s furlough in the United States.

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Serving in Education in the United States

The third room in my house is that of serving as a mission educator, which occurred first on the U.S. West Coast and then on the East Coast.

SFTS/GTU, 1975–83. Returning from Japan, we headed for San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) in San Anselmo, where I became a visiting professor of church history and a part of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley. Our older daughter, Cathy, was starting at Oberlin College, and from there in due time she went on to study medicine at the University of California Medical School in San Francisco. After our younger daughter, Marjorie, finished high school in California, she went on to Carleton College in Minnesota and from there into the U.S. Foreign Service. Cathy married Steve Erban, and two wonderful grandsons have come from that union; Marjorie married Steve Carrig, and they are the parents of our “above average” granddaughter.

My own work at SFTS and the GTU involved me in teaching church history. As Kenneth Scott Latourette and Stephen Neill had done before, I tried to present the story of the church as part of the unfolding task of Christian mission. I’ll always recall talking with a student who had just finished my class in Christian mission. When I asked him what he thought of the course, he replied, “Frankly, I didn’t like it, for you kept referring to all the mistakes that missionaries have made.” He was absolutely right, but I explained that as a missionary myself, I wanted him to hear about the mistakes of mission from me, and not from an outside critic.

The time in San Anselmo and Berkeley furthered my conviction that Christian theology would increasingly be forged in the so-called Two-Thirds World countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, rather than in Western Europe and North America, as many Westerners assumed. These experiences also confirmed for me that Western countries had themselves become very difficult mission fields, as Bishop Lesslie Newbigin maintained after his missionary service in India and subsequent retirement in Birmingham, England. The 1960s era of student radicalism had been followed in the 1970s by a time of New Age spirituality, which maintained (along with many good affirmations) that, since ours was a time of a pluralistic culture, all convictions and standards must be relative, with no basis in truth but only in preference. Robert Bellah, an astute Berkeley observer, had begun by studying Japan’s religious establishment in Tokugawa Religion (1957), then moved to analyzing U.S. civil religion in The Broken Covenant (1975) and then postmodern relativism in Habits of the Heart (1985). This was an intellectual journey that somewhat paralleled my own, and which I then felt (and still feel) may begin to set the agenda for many of us in our own era as well.

Although our time in the San Francisco area was stimulating and enjoyable, it was also for me a period of great difficulty. From our last years in Japan, Ruth had begun to experience some difficulties in coping with the Japanese scene, along with some health problems, and I imagined that our return to the States would be better for her. How wrong I was! It became clear that Ruth was suffering from paranoia, which made things very difficult for our friends and colleagues, for our daughters, and for me. I got the help of a pastor and a psychiatrist, but Ruth denied that anything was wrong with her and wove those who tried to help her into an imagined plot against her.

OMSC, 1983–97. What was I to do? Ruth’s condition made our return to Japan impossible, so I decided to apply for academic posts in the United States and sent out copies of my dossier by the dozen. The replies came back stating that I was “overqualified” for the post that was available, or that they were seeking someone “not so far along on his or her intellectual journey” (i.e., not so old!). But instead of my reaching out and finding a job, a job offer came to me—to become associate director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC) in Ventnor, New Jersey, to work with its programs of continuing education for cross-cultural mission personnel. I was delighted to accept, and so we headed across the country from California to New Jersey.

OMSC was a known quantity to us, for our family had spent parts of three summer furloughs in Ventnor, and the director of the center was our good friend Gerald (Jerry) H. Anderson. Another staff member was Bob Coote, who also became my fast friend. This new location also brought us into daily contact with mission and church leaders from all over the world. OMSC was then in the midst of a self-study, for we realized that although the nearby beach area made Ventnor very popular in the summer, it lacked the academic environment necessary for a study center such as
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The Legacy of Elizabeth Russell

Karen K. Seat

Elizabeth Russell, missionary to Japan from 1879 to 1919, lived a long and complex life that in microcosm reflected social and political transformations in both the United States and Japan, particularly as these transformations affected ideologies and practices concerning women’s roles in society. Russell’s life (October 9, 1836, to September 6, 1928) was shaped by important nineteenth-century women’s movements, including the development of women’s higher education and the women’s foreign mission movement. Throughout her long life, Russell inhabited a range of identities available to women of her generation: she graduated from an all-female academy and became a schoolteacher as a young adult, then found herself cast as a spinster and an invalid in her thirties; she ultimately became a career missionary and the mother of an adopted daughter. She became a missionary at the age of forty-two through the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and she spent the following forty years of her life involved in the movement to promote higher education for Japanese women. Her most important and enduring work as a missionary was the establishment of Kwassui Gakuin in Nagasaki, an educational institution for girls and women that flourishes to this day.

Russell founded Kwassui Gakuin upon her arrival in Japan in 1879, a time when mission schools for girls and women were becoming a popular outreach strategy among missionaries, particularly as the number of unmarried missionary women was increasing through the rise of women’s foreign mission societies. Russell’s Kwassui Gakuin represents one of the most successful mission school endeavors of its time. While nineteenth-century mission rhetoric usually framed the purpose of female mission schools in terms of training future Christian wives and mothers, Russell radically expanded her school’s curriculum to educate students for work beyond this purpose. Kwassui rose to prominence as it opened industrial departments to train women to enter developing industries, offered subjects not usually offered in other schools for girls and women (such as advanced math and science), and added increasingly higher levels of post-primary education, establishing one of the first college-level programs for women in the country. Founding a female school during a time when formal educational institutions for girls and women were a rarity in Japan, Russell was a pioneer in developing women’s primary and higher education during Japan’s early years as a newly forming nation-state.

Russell’s work in Japan was not limited to Kwassui Gakuin. She also founded Kwassui Girls’ Home in response to the needs of orphaned children and established a seaman’s home as part of a movement to steer the stream of sailors entering Nagasaki’s port away from the temptations of “worldly pleasures” during their stay in the city. When she retired in 1919, she was decorated with the Japanese emperor’s blue ribbon medal in recognition of her educational and social-welfare contributions during her years in Japan.

Russell’s Early Years

Elizabeth Russell was born in Cadiz, Ohio, the second of six children born to John and Julia Ann Russell. Her father, a millwright, moved the family several times before settling in Wheeling, Virginia (later West Virginia), in 1844, when Elizabeth was eight years old. Although not of privileged origins, she obtained a high-level education for a woman of her day through her intelligence, ambition, and good fortune.

At the age of nineteen, Elizabeth Russell was discovered by Sarah Foster Hanna, the principal of Washington Female Seminary, an academically advanced school of higher education for women in Washington, Pennsylvania. Hanna, serving as the substitute principal of Russell’s modest school in Wheeling during the 1855–56 school year, noticed Russell’s exceptional academic talent and arranged for her to become a boarding student at Washington Seminary. Elizabeth Russell’s mother had died in 1855, and the young Elizabeth became quite attached to Mrs. Hanna; the boarding school community became her new family. It was at Washington Seminary that Russell developed her high ideals for women’s education. She also received her first missionary impulse while at the seminary when a missionary from Egypt came to speak to the student body.

Russell graduated from Washington Seminary in 1859 as the valedictorian of her class. The following years were not easy. She struggled to find satisfactory living and working arrangements, while the raging Civil War divided her home state of Virginia. Moving back after graduation to her family home, where her father lived with a new wife, Russell found work as a photographer painter and also worked as a governess. In 1863 her only sister, Julia, married, after which Russell lived at her sister’s house and became a schoolteacher. She worked as a teacher for some ten years while living with her sister’s family. Then, at the age of thirty-six, she experienced a profound turn of events that changed the course of her life. That year she had, in her own words, a “complete nervous breakdown,” an experience that she recorded at length in her journal later in life. Her physician told her that she would have to give up teaching to preserve her health. Russell states in her journal that during this low point in her life, she believed she would never work again. In later years, as she looked back over her life, she marveled that it was just when she had come to expect a future of idleness and decay that she was called to the most important work of her life: a forty-year missionary career in Japan.

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Despite her patriotism, Russell developed a critical and rather sophisticated understanding of global and local events.

some forty denominational women’s foreign mission societies were formed between 1868 and 1900, with over three million women on the membership rosters by 1915. Russell enthusiastically joined this movement, participating in local chapters of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (hereafter the WFMS). She soon became the secretary of the WFMS West Virginia Conference, in addition to her regular teaching work. At first she assumed that, at her age, she would have no further involvement in foreign missions. After several years of leadership in the WFMS, however, Russell, now in her forties, came to the decision that she should offer her life in service to the WFMS by personally entering the mission field.

The WFMS initially granted Russell’s request to be assigned to India, but two weeks before her scheduled departure she was suddenly reassigned to Japan. The WFMS had received a letter from a Methodist missionary in Nagasaki requesting two women missionaries to establish a girls’ school there. Russell was appointed to this task, along with a younger teacher, Jennie Gheer. So on October 25, 1879, Russell and her companion sailed for Japan, a country she “knew nothing of . . . save that it was a little spot on the map near Asia.”

Mission Work in Meiji Japan

Elizabeth Russell arrived in Japan during the Meiji Era (1868–1912), a time of sweeping change in the country. Reversing a closed-borders policy that had kept Japan relatively secluded for nearly two and a half centuries under the rule of the Tokugawa family, Japan’s new Meiji leaders were determined to make the country a major player on the world stage. In the 1850s the U.S. Navy’s Commodore Matthew Perry and his fleet had compelled the Tokugawa rulers to sign treaties with the United States and other Western powers. These treaties, called the “unequal treaties” in Japan, opened Japan to the Western world and placed Western powers at an economic and political advantage in their dealings with the country. The signing of the treaties sparked a civil war in Japan in which the Tokugawa shogunate was overthrown, and the new Meiji government was established in 1868. Its leaders, using Western rhetoric, declared that the new Japan—Meiji Japan—would pursue “civilization and enlightenment” by appropriating from the West those things that made Western countries so powerful, thereby achieving equal footing with imperialist Western nations. The Meiji government undertook extremely ambitious projects in restructuring Japan’s political, economic, and social systems.

Arriving as a missionary eleven years after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Russell witnessed firsthand the transformation of Japan from a struggling agrarian society to a powerful nation-state. By the time Russell retired in 1919, she had seen the establishment of Japan’s constitutional monarchy, had lived through the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and World War I, and had experienced the effects of Japanese officials’ frequently changing policies on how to “modernize” the country. Most important, according to Russell’s ideological commitments, she was there during a time when many were reexamining the place of women in the “New Japan.”

Many Christian missionaries, especially those associated with women’s foreign mission societies, believed that converting Japanese women was one of the most important ways to turn Japan into a Christian, “civilized” nation. They saw mission schools for girls and women as an important tool for creating Christian wives and mothers who would influence future generations. For example, the monthly journal of the WFMS, Woman’s Missionary Friend (titled Heathen Woman’s Friend from 1869 to 1896), printed an article in 1900 stating that true progress in Japan would be attained “not by modern parliaments, nor electric-car routes, foreign food or foreign dress, but by the creation of Christian mothers through the Christian schools.” Such viewpoints fueled the rapid growth of the American women’s foreign mission movement. Although Russell was influenced by prevailing Victorian gender ideologies and mission strategy, she ultimately revealed a more complex vision for female mission schools than that which was expressed in the early rhetoric of women’s foreign mission societies.

Like many other Americans at the time, Russell patriotically supported the West’s intervention in Japan, as she linked these events with the promise of converting Japan into a Christian nation. She was particularly enthusiastic about the introduction of American-style educational institutions, as she was certain that “the school is the hope of the Church in Japan.” She wrote that when Japan was opened to the West, “America was there with blackboard and chalk arranging a system of education . . . Primary, High Schools, and Colleges and Universities after the pattern of our own. I am very proud of the part my country had in starting off the New Japan.”

Despite her patriotism, Russell developed a critical perspective and rather sophisticated understanding of global and local events that informed her mission to women during her years of work in Japan. Russell felt it was urgent that women both in the United States and in Japan struggle to secure the best possible position for “womanhood” while they had their chance during times of social and political ferment. In her writings she praised the American women who had participated in the famous 1848 Seneca Falls convention, which had sought to establish a women’s rights movement focusing on, as Russell described it, “higher education for women, equal privileges in the trades and professions with men, and the abolition of slavery and franchise for women.” Unlike many other missionaries, who saw schools primarily as a means of proselytization, Russell saw women’s education as
having the potential to radically change women’s political, economic, and social status—particularly in a country like Japan, which was undergoing such dramatic transformations.

**Russell’s Vision and Leadership Strategy**

Elizabeth Russell and Jennie Gheer arrived in Nagasaki on November 23, 1879. The two missionaries set up housekeeping together and supported each other in their new life. Russell was euphoric upon her initial arrival to Japan, writing that she “had never seen anything so charming. . . . Everything was so novel.” In a relatively unstructured environment, away from the constraints of her own society, Russell was invigorated by the opportunity to reach her full potential as a leader.

Determined to fulfill their mission, a week after their arrival in Nagasaki Russell and Gheer opened a “school,” with one pupil. This pupil, a woman named Ono San (Miss Ono), ended up being more of a teacher for Russell and Gheer than they were for her. Missionaries in Nagasaki at this time had difficulty finding Japanese people who were willing to teach them the language, and Russell found herself turning to her student for assistance in Japanese. Despite the Meiji government’s proclamations, in the decade after the Meiji Restoration many Japanese were still relatively hostile toward Westernization and Christianity. Most families, moreover, preferred to use their resources to educate sons rather than daughters. Russell and Gheer thus had a daunting task ahead of them. Russell was startled by the difficult environment she encountered as she struggled to develop her school. “I had expected a cordial reception from the Japanese but had not had it,” she wrote when reminiscing over her discouragement during her initial months in Japan.

After a month of working with their one student, Russell and Gheer, in what one can assume was purely an act of faith, decided to formally name the school. A Japanese man who was studying theology suggested that they name the school “Kwatsu Sui,” meaning “fountain of living waters.” They shortened the phrase to Kwassui, and the official name of the school became “Kwassui Jo Gakko,” or Kwassui female school. Russell was a risk taker, and she often had visions of success before others could share her optimism. Only a handful of students enrolled in the school during its first two years. Yet upon ending the school year in 1881 with only eighteen pupils—a near collapse of the school the fall before—Russell convinced the WFMS to grant her $8,000 to construct a new school building for Kwassui. Not only did she begin to make arrangements to erect a large and expensive school building for Japanese girls and women, but she also managed to obtain a prime piece of real estate on which the British had planned to build their consulate. She states in her journal that it was “the most beautiful site I know of for a school.” It was a site evoking power and prestige, a property at the top of a large hill, not only overlooking Nagasaki city and the shipyards below, but also towering above the settlement of foreigners, which was itself elevated above the city.

As construction on the rather elaborate school building began, both Western and Japanese onlookers felt that it was a challenge to the existing social order. During the 1880s, as the status of Western education in general was peaking in Japan. Five years after the new Kwassui school building was opened, the school was so crowded that another wing had to be built onto the original building. By 1894 a large dining room and kitchen with rooms for boarders above were added, as well as an additional building with an auditorium, more classrooms, and more dormitory rooms.

Russell and the other teachers at Kwassui organized a rigorous educational program for their students during the 1880s and initiated Kwassui’s college program by the end of the decade. The college included a science department, largely because of Russell’s ability to raise enough interest among missionary supporters to provide the school with “a liberal lot of physical and chemical apparatus sufficient to perform the leading experiments; also a planetarium and a set of anatomical charts.” As a result of the founding of this department, some of the earliest female physicians in Japan were graduates of Kwassui. The school also

As construction of the elaborate school building began, both Western and Japanese onlookers felt that it was a challenge to the existing social order.
maintained a biblical department, which graduated Japanese women who worked as home missionaries in Japan and as foreign missionaries. Russell and her faculty also developed an industrial department, in which young women could learn readily marketable skills, such as sewing, weaving, and embroidering.

In addition to living and working as the principal and as a teacher at Kwassui, Russell at age forty-eight adopted an infant Japanese girl in January of 1885. She named the baby Ellen May Russell and called her May. When May was eleven years old, Russell sent her to the United States to live with her sister Julia. On an earlier furlough Russell had helped her recently widowed sister move to Delaware, Ohio, where Julia’s children attended Ohio Wesleyan University; and now Russell wanted May to live and study in the United States in preparation for entering Ohio Wesleyan herself. When May graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1910, she returned to Japan to work at Kwassui. May and Elizabeth Russell were close companions until May’s death from tuberculosis at the age of thirty-nine, four years before Russell’s death at age ninety-one.

**Legacy as a Proponent of Women’s Education**

Russell was an important participant in the late-nineteenth-century Christian movement to provide educational institutions for women. Dozens of mission schools for girls and women were founded in Japan before 1900, and private schools founded by either Japanese Christians or Western missionaries became quite popular in the 1880s and 1890s. Although scholars differ on exactly how many of these schools provided “higher” education for Japanese women (there was no uniformity in the curricula), it is widely recognized that by the turn of the century, Japanese women with the highest levels of formal education usually had attended private Christian schools, for as late as 1894 only eight public high schools for young women had been established in Japan. Christian schools in Japan would continue to provide some of the highest levels of education for women into the twentieth century. Kwassui was one of the most outstanding schools of this period, as Russell and her colleagues offered not only postprimary courses of study but also one of the few college-level programs for women in the country.

At the turn of the century, however, Christian schools went through a period of crisis, as the government began more actively to develop public high schools for girls, which drew potential students away from private schools. While Russell had been at the forefront of the movement to build mission schools during the first twenty years of her missionary career, at the turn of the century she found herself involved once again in efforts to keep mission schools for girls and women alive. Although she turned over the executive responsibilities of Kwassui’s principalship to WFMS missionary Mariana Young in 1897 in order to devote more time to the establishment of the Kwassui Girls’ Home, Russell remained very active in promoting Kwassui Jo Gakko and women’s higher education in general throughout the rest of her career.

During the 1890s and early 1900s, the Japanese government increased its efforts to establish a public educational system that would be in line with Japanese patriotism and political agendas. Soon after promulgating the Meiji Civil Code in 1898, which explicitly placed Japanese women under the control of male household heads and denied them many legal rights, the government began to expand rapidly the number of public schools for girls and women, promoting a curriculum focusing on filial piety and domestic sciences. The expansion of all-female public schools was thus part of the Japanese government’s systematic efforts to ensure that modern Japan would remain a patriarchal society, even as many other elements of the nation were changing.

While Japanese feminists created their own avenues of protest, Russell, for her part, published articles and gave speeches in which she urged Christians in Japan to resist limits on women’s education, whether in private Christian schools or in public schools. She urged her Japanese and Western colleagues to work toward an educational system that would diminish the educational gulf between men and women, for, she argued, “whatever leads out the mental powers of man, leads out the mental powers of women, as there is no sex in mind.” Russell linked women’s work in education to women’s emancipation, stating that “before woman in any land rises, she must herself take the initiative, she must show some appreciation of her condition and seek to rise. . . Until a sufficient number of any class show a disposition to rise, they will not rise. Read history in every land; the rich, the great, the powerful, have never voluntarily reached down to lift up the poor, the weak, the lowly.”

A number of private schools collapsed because they lost their competitive edge as public schools became widely accessible, but Kwassui continued to flourish under the leadership of Russell and her colleagues. Ultimately, the desires of Japanese families, and Japanese women themselves, determined the success of private schools for women. A significant number of Japanese resisted the government’s agenda for women by enrolling their daughters and/or themselves in high-level mission schools like Russell’s rather than cooperating with the government’s new program for female education. Russell pointed out that “the increasingly large number of girls that crowd the halls of the few schools already opened for higher education” was evidence that women in Japan had “recognized the heavenly impulse” to work for their liberation from subservient roles.

By the early twentieth century, numerous missionaries involved in women’s education in Japan embraced strategies similar to Russell’s and openly advocated women’s higher education as a way to compete with Japanese schools in attracting students. As a result of the influence of progressive educators like Russell, mission schools, along with some notable private Japanese schools, came to function as some of the few spaces where women in Japan could find “intellectual challenges and a humanistic view of women.”

By the time Russell retired in 1919, she not only was held in high regard among Japanese, as evidenced by her decoration by the emperor, but also had been accepted by the foreign settlement in Nagasaki. The farewell she received from the residents of Nagasaki revealed the high stature she and her school had attained since she had established Kwassui forty years earlier. The May 28, 1919, issue of the English-language Nagasaki Express newspaper honored Russell’s work as the founder of Kwassui, stating that “for some years progress was slow, but success was achieved and to day [sic] Kwassui Jo Gakko has four hundred
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Russell’s educational institution provided unprecedented opportunities for Japanese women during the early years of modern Japan. Women who graduated from Kwassui Jo Gakko during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were involved in expanding women’s roles in society and were among the small but influential class of women who began to change popular perceptions of womanhood as Japan entered the twentieth century.

Epilogue

After retiring in 1919 at the age of eighty-two, Elizabeth Russell and her ailing daughter, May, moved back to Julia’s home in Ohio, where Russell found herself nursing both her daughter and her failing sister until their deaths a few years later. Russell continued living at her sister’s house until her own death in 1928. She was buried near her loved ones in Delaware, Ohio. Kwassui alumnae arranged for a prominent tombstone to be placed on her grave, which read, at Russell’s request, “If you could see it, you would find the girlhood of Japan written upon my heart.” Meeting her final rest the decade before global events culminated in World War II, Russell never could have imagined the extent of the enmity that would come between the two countries she called home, or the horrific destruction her beloved Japan would face, especially in Nagasaki.

After the war, the Japanese educational system, including its top universities, became coeducational, a transition that usurped private Christian schools’ predominance in the arena of women’s higher education in Japan. Nevertheless, Kwassui has continued to be an active Christian educational institution for girls and women and now offers junior high school through college programs. Russell’s original school buildings were replaced in 1926. Although badly damaged in the 1945 atomic bombing of Nagasaki, the 1926 buildings survived and are part of the school complex today.

Notes

1. Funding for research leading to this article was provided by the Research Enablement Program, a grant program for scholarship supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, and administered by the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut. I would like to thank the faculty and staff at Kwassui Gakuen for their generosity in opening Kwassui’s resources to me during my months of research in Japan. Kwassui teacher Patricia McCreary (now retired) was especially helpful as she shared her knowledge and passion regarding the history of Kwassui and the life of Elizabeth Russell.

2. The original name of the school was Kwassui Jo Gakko (Kwassui Female School). Current information on Kwassui Gakuen including pictures of the grounds can be found at www.kwassui.ac.jp.


4. Elizabeth Russell, personal journal (typescripts), p. 3, Russell Collection. The journal, written during her later years, consists primarily of memoirs of her youth and her early years in Japan.


7. The Reverend John S. Inskip (1816–84) was a famous Methodist Episcopal preacher and a leader of the Holiness movement. As the first president of the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness, he was instrumental in organizing numerous camp meeting events after the Civil War. See W. McDonald and John E. Searles, The Life of Rev. John S. Inskip (Boston: McDonald & Gill, 1885; repr., New York: Garland, 1985).


12. Louise Manning Hodgkins, “Round the Planet with the Editor,” Woman’s Missionary Friend 31, no. 12 (June 1900): 433.


17. Ibid., p. 7.


20. Ibid., p. 4.

21. Noriko Kawamura Ishii has suggested that before 1900, Kwassui was one of five mission schools in Japan offering programs of education for women comparable to college-level programs in the United States at that time. See Ishii, American Women Missionaries at Kobe College, 1873–1908: New Dimensions in Gender (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 12–13.


23. For a detailed account of Protestant Christian work in Meiji Japan, including Christian work in education, see Otis Cary, A History of Christianity in Japan, vol. 2, Protestant Missions (Surrey, Eng.: Curzon, 1993; reprint of the 1909 ed.).


25. After 1899, for example, all prefectures were required to establish four-year high schools for young women.

Bibliographic Materials

Elizabeth Russell contributed extensively to Methodist Episcopal periodicals. Articles and letters written by Russell can be found in the Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Women’s Conference in Japan (Yokohama: Japan Publishing Agency; Fukuin Printing Company; various publishers) and, after 1898, in the Minutes of the Woman’s Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in South Japan (n.p.); in Tidings from Japan (Tokyo: David S. Spencer, 1898–1906); and in Heathen Woman’s Friend (Boston: Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society, Methodist Episcopal Church, vols. 1–27, May 1869–December 1895), after 1896 titled Woman’s Missionary Friend (January 1896–December 1940).

Minutes of the Methodist Episcopal Women’s Conference in Japan and Tidings from Japan are located in the Aoyama Gakuin University Archives in Tokyo, Japan; the Minutes of the Woman’s Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in South Japan in Kwassui Gakuin’s Elizabeth Russell Collection in Nagasaki, Japan; and Heathen Woman’s Friend, Woman’s Missionary Friend, and Tidings from Japan in the United Methodist Archives at Drew University in Madison, N.J. Heathen Woman’s Friend and Woman’s Missionary Friend can also be found in microform at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

Sources directly relating to Elizabeth Russell’s life can be found in the Russell Collection at Kwassui Gakuin in Nagasaki, Japan. The Russell Collection houses Russell’s original journal (and a typescript), copies and typescripts of her letters, Russell’s personal library, census records, travel documents, and photographs, among other materials pertaining to her life and work. The collection also holds an unpublished article by retired Kwassui teacher Patricia McCreary, “Realms of Glory: The Life of Elizabeth Russell” (1992), which was informed by interviews with the descendants of Russell’s nieces and nephews. The Nagasaki City Library houses bound volumes of the English-language newspaper of Russell’s day, the Rising Sun and Nagasaki Express, later named simply Nagasaki Express.

Finally, some pamphlets were printed by the Methodist Episcopal Women’s Foreign Missionary Society pertaining to the life of Elizabeth Russell. These include Elizabeth Russell, Pioneer Days in My Beloved Japan (Boston: Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society, n.d.); Mrs. F. I. Johnson, The One Who Went and the One She Found (Boston: Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society, 1929); Bessie F. Merrill, Adventures in Faith: Elizabeth Russell (Boston: Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society, n.d.); and Helen Couch, Elizabeth Russell: Pioneer of Higher Education for Japanese Women (Cincinnati, Ohio: Methodist Church, Board of Missions and Church Extension, Woman’s Division of Christian Service, n.d. [published after 1945]).

Andrew F. Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity

Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, England, recently established the Andrew F. Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity to promote research and documentation in African and Asian Christian Studies.

Vice-chancellor Gerald Pillay announced that the university is hosting two one-day conferences to inaugurate the center. On May 23, 2008, the theme will be “Needs, Opportunities, and Cooperation in African and Asian Christian Studies,” and on May 24 the theme will be “African and Asian Dimensions of Christianity.”

The speakers will include Lamin Sanneh, professor of missions and world Christianity at Yale Divinity School and professor of history at Yale University and director of the Oxford Studies in World Christianity publishing project; Michael Nai Chiu Poon, director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia, Trinity Theological College, Singapore; Daniel Jeyaraj, professor of world Christianity at Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts; and Andrew F. Walls. Jeyaraj, Sanneh, and Walls are International Bulletin of Missionary Research contributing editors.

Walls lectures regularly at the Overseas Ministries Study Center; the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission, and Culture, Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana; and numerous other institutions and conferences around the world each year. He served as a missionary in Sierra Leone and Nigeria and was founding director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, University of Edinburgh. His writings include The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith (1996), The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History (2002), and The Cultural History of Christian Conversion (forthcoming).

The Liverpool center is already home to a small number of research students, and plans are now advanced to expand the work by establishing an annual lecture, the sponsorship of a regular seminar and colloquium series, and the publication of papers from those events.

Liverpool Hope University is also able to offer a visiting fellowship in African studies and has a scholar-in-residence program. The Andrew F. Walls Centre’s library and collections will be opened during the May conferences. Details of both conferences may be obtained from Sue Harwood, harwoos@hope.ac.uk.
Book Reviews


What happened in terms of pneumatology between the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Canberra, 1991)—where the Korean theologian Chung Hyun Kyung shocked the participants with her appearance on stage as a shaman and invocation of the Han-ridden spirits—and the Thirteenth Conference on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches (Athens, 2005)? The Holy Spirit in the World offers a detailed account of the development of the theology of the Holy Spirit between these two events, with a focus on mission.

After a brief introduction on the pneumatological implications of the Seventh Assembly’s theme, “Come, Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation,” the first chapter summarizes Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox pneumatologies with their responses to the question of where the Spirit is present: in the church, in the human heart, and everywhere, respectively. It is followed by a survey of New Testament data on the Spirit, which is organized under the three aspects highlighted by Pentecostals (with the emphasis on Pentecost), Catholics (with the emphasis on the Spirit as gift of the risen Christ), and Orthodox (with the emphasis on the presence of the Spirit throughout creation). Kim points out that the Bible also speaks of “spirits” as distinct from the Holy Spirit or Spirit of Christ, and that their presence and activities need to be taken into account in pneumatology.


The last chapter, “Theology of the Holy Spirit in a Plural World,” brings together insights from all the theologies discussed to suggest a pneumatology that is responsive to contemporary cultural and religious pluralism and to the urgent need of discerning between the Holy Spirit and spirits. Kim draws out the implications of this kind of pneumatology for Christian mission in terms of healing and reconciliation, the theme of the Thirteenth Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Athens in 2005.

The Holy Spirit in the World is a masterful study of contemporary pneumatology. Well researched, clearly written, ecumenical, intercultural, and interreligious, it offers exactly what its subtitle announces: a global conversation. For Westerners, its study of Indian and Korean pneumatologies is particularly useful. The insights it gathers for a pneumatological missiology and a missiological pneumatology are a treasure trove. I nominate it as the best theology book of 2007.

—Peter C. Phan

Peter C. Phan, the Ignacio Ellacuría Chair of Catholic Social Thought at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., is the author of several books in missiology, including Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue (Orbis Books, 2004).

On Missionary Roads.

Jozef Cardinal Tomko served as prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (the Vatican’s “Mission Department”) from 1985 to 2001. In this capacity he had a “privileged observation post” (p. xii), allowing him to experience the vast field of missionary activity. During this time he undertook over 100 pastoral journeys to mission territories; in addition, he was fortunate to accompany Pope John Paul II on all his missionary visits.

These experiences and personal encounters form the background of this enjoyable book. It is much more than a travelogue (complete with numerous color photographs); it reflects Tomko’s personal journey in mission. As Tomko records the details of his visits to various countries, he provides a delightful potpourri of history, geography, statistics, and information on early evangelizers, current personnel, and missionary challenges facing the local churches.

The book is divided into five unequal parts, reflecting the number of visits to various continents. Succinctly stated, the five sections, with the percentages of their space allotment, are Africa (50 percent), Asia (20), the Americas (20), Oceania (5), and Europe (5).

Tomko often provides his personal reflection and evaluation of mission realities. For example, he comments on the massacres when speaking of Burundi and Rwanda (pp. 56–64), the “blasphemy laws” in Pakistan (p. 195), and his meeting with evangelist Billy Graham (p. 259) and Taizé founder Roger Schutz (p. 297). He also includes mundane matters of lost luggage (p. 70) and spicy food (p. 297). In numerous, diverse ways, the book reveals the deep faith of countless evangelizers and the fundamentally missionary nature of the church.

This volume is handsomely produced, well translated from the 2003 Slovak original, and carefully edited. Yet at least one surprising error crept into the book. Korean Stephen Cardinal Kim supposedly “went to his deserved rest in 1998” (p. 261)—but Kim remains alive in 2007.
On Missionary Roads will appeal to a broad spectrum of evangelizers, as well as to academics. It captures how mission “travels in all directions” (p. 386), demonstrating that “mission is today younger than ever” (p. 388).
—James H. Kroeger, M.M.

James H. Kroeger, M.M., is Professor of Mission Theology and Islam at Loyola School of Theology in Manila. He recently published Once upon a Time in Asia (Orbis Books, 2006).

The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church.


Alan Hirsch, building on the contribution to the emerging-church discussion that he made with coauthor Michael Frost in The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the Twenty-first-Century Church (Hendrickson, 2003), presents this book as “an attempt to explore Apostolic Genius and try to assist the western church to recover and implement it” (p. 275). Examining his own engagement in innovative forms of emerging church, and stimulated by the dynamism of the early church and of the contemporary Chinese church, he postulates that there is a “unique energy and force that imbues phenomenal Jesus movements in history” (p. 274). “Missional DNA” constitutes that genius, which he parses with expositions of characteristics ranging from the “missional-incarnational impulse” to communitas (Victor Turner).

Along the way, he surveys the vast variety of experiments that constitute “the Emergent Missional Church (EMC),” and he provides both fascinating insights and useful tools (relevant Web sites and blogs) to explore them further. Commendable is his commitment to theological priorities: Christ-centeredness with particular emphasis upon discipleship, radical suspicion of cultural captivity, relevant critique of institutionalism, and concern for the integrity of Christian praxis. Ephesians 4:11ff. supplies the theology of leadership that is needed to activate “mDNA.”

The important discussion he provoces will need to examine further the radical role of Scripture in the formation of the EMC—his interpretation of the Ephesians leadership model ignores the fundamental insight that “apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers” are all ministers of the Word, and that rigorous Word ministry equips the saints (Markus Barth). His rigorous theological inquiry is sometimes confused by major forays into various organizational theorists. One

Fifteen Outstanding Books of 2007 for Mission Studies

In consultation with fifty distinguished scholars from around the world, the editors of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research have selected fifteen books published in 2007 for special recognition of their contribution to mission studies. We commend the authors, editors, and publishers represented here for their contribution to the advancement of scholarship in studies of the Christian mission and world Christianity. Formerly in the January issue, this list will now run in April to ensure that outstanding books published late in the year can be acknowledged.

Anderson, Allan.

Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism.

Austin, Allyn.

China’s Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832–1905.

Bonk, Jonathan J., ed.

Encyclopedia of Mission and Missionaries.
New York: Routledge. $190.

Corrie, John, ed. Samuel Escobar and Wilbert Shenk, consulting editors.

Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. $32.

Jenkins, Philip.

God’s Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe’s Religious Crisis.
New York: Oxford Univ. Press. $28.

Jeyaraj, Daniel, Robert W. Pazmiño, and Rodney L. Petersen, eds.

Antioch Agenda: Essays on the Restorative Church in Honor of Orlando E. Costas.
Delhi: ISPCK. Paperback Rs 400 / $24.

Kalu, Ogbu U., ed.


Miller, Donald E., and Tetsunao Yamamori.

Berkeley: Univ. of California Press. $60 / £ 35; paperback $24.95 / £ 14.95.

Sanneh, Lamin.

Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity.

Smith, Susan E.


Steenbrink, Karel A.

Leiden: KITLV. €47.50 / $57.

Stone, Bryan.

Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness.

Swartley, Willard M.


Tennent, Timothy C.

Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think About and Discuss Theology.

Wickeri, Philip L.

Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church.
wonders where the Holy Spirit works in relation to mDNA. The book has many diagrams and acronyms, an extensive glossary, a helpful bibliography, and an index; it would be strengthened by judicious cutting and editing.
—Darrell L. Guder

Darrell L. Guder, a contributing editor, is Princeton Theological Seminary’s Dean of Academic Affairs and the Henry Winters Luce Professor of Missional and Ecumenical Theology.

Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism.


Allan Anderson, director of the Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion and professor of Global Pentecostal Studies at the University of Birmingham in England, has provided the first major historical survey of early Pentecostal missions. No small accomplishment, it is based on the extensive use of available periodical literature and other primary sources. Spreading Fires—the title chosen to highlight the fervent revivalist spirit of Pentecostalism—is divided into three parts: contexts and theological distinctives, expansion in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and theories and practices.

Anderson bills his analysis as a “corrective” to the flawed work of historians of Pentecostalism who “have often interpreted this history from a predominantly white American perspective, adding their own particular biases of denomination, ideology, race and gender” (p. 5). He therefore endeavors to include the contributions of Majority World Christians to the growth of the movement as much as possible, though the bulk of the book centers on the activities of North Atlantic missionaries. Rather than functioning as a corrective, however, it primarily increases our knowledge of Pentecostal missions, since the historiography of the enterprise is just now moving beyond its infancy.

Readers will benefit from Anderson’s study of the missionaries who left North America and Europe for the regions beyond, the activities of their converts in evangelism, as well as his discussion of the problems they faced, the cultural attitudes they took with them, and their failures and achievements. He successfully demonstrates that from the beginning of the Pentecostal movement, mission has characterized its ethos. The book ends on a strongly triumphal note about the impact of Pentecostalism on world Christianity, despite Anderson’s initial hesitation to embrace David Barrett’s statistics on the size of the movement. Can it accurately be said that Pentecostal missionaries exhibited “unprecedented missionary vigour”? Or that the movement became “the main contributor to the reshaping of Christianity itself from a predominantly western to a predominantly non-western phenomenon”? (p. 290). Closer examination of nineteenth-century missions and the revivals that occurred in many lands might have curbed these claims. Nevertheless, Spreading Fires is a worthwhile investment that will pay rich dividends to students and scholars alike.

—Gary B. McGee

Gary B. McGee, a contributing editor, is Distinguished Professor of Church History and Pentecostal Studies at Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.

This volume addresses the issue of the appropriate role of religion in public political life and its implications for China. The first part discusses Western philosophical discourse on the publicness of religion and religion in public political culture, drawing on the views of John Rawls and Robert Audi. Switching to a more empirical focus, the second part surveys the religious scene in China, dwelling on its doctrinal and organizational diversity and the strict control that the state places on religion. The third part proposes a liberal “constrained public religion” in China, advocating both religious contribution to the public sphere and constraints on the state and religions for regulating public religious political discourse.

Based on a doctoral dissertation in philosophy, the book is largely a work on the normative philosophy of religion. The core issues addressed are primarily academic arguments within Western pluralistic, democratic societies, with liberal thinkers pleading restraint and communitarian scholars urging a greater role for religion in public political debate. The case selected for analysis (the abortion debate) is also vintage America, not China, where the American framing of the issue just does not fit. In an avowedly atheistic regime where religion has always been tightly controlled by the state, church-state relations are altogether different from those in a nation founded by Puritan immigrants. At least since 1949, there has never been any question of excessive religious expression in public life in China or of using religious rather than secular reasoning in public policy discourse, especially for abortion. The author’s proposal is not moot, but neither is it relevant in the foreseeable future.

The strength of this book lies in its philosophical discourse, not in its empirical analysis. There is not much description of the state of the different religions in China or of religious policy. The subject keywords for this book are Rawls, not RAB (Religious Affairs Bureau), and Audi, not Amity (the China Christian Council). With the breakneck pace of its development, the Chinese state may well cease to be predatory, and Xie’s book may turn out to be prophetic. But for religions in China today, the wolf living peacefully with the lamb remains a pious wish rather than a political reality.

—James Tong

James Tong, Associate Professor in Comparative Politics, University of California, Los Angeles, has written Disorder Under Heaven: Collective Violence in the Ming Dynasty (Stanford Univ. Press, 1991).

Melanesia and Its Churches: Past and Present.

This is an English translation of a book published originally in Italian in 2006. The author, who belongs to the Roman Catholic Order of Divine Word Missionaries,
began mission work in the South Pacific in 1974. He has been at the Melanesian Institute in Papua New Guinea since 1994 and is thus well qualified to produce a substantial publication about the churches of Melanesia.

What is immediately striking about this book is the breadth of its coverage. Its aim is “to present the current situation of the Melanesian Christians and to trace these situations back to their roots, both historical and cultural” (p. 1). In eight chapters the author addresses geography and population, traditional cultures and religions, European colonization, evangelization (in two chapters), movements, emerging independence, and current statistical data of the churches across Melanesia (Fiji, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, East and West New Guinea).

The book exhibits both the strengths and weaknesses of such an enterprise. On the one hand, within a single readable volume it introduces an area of the world that is much neglected in writings in mission studies. The detail included is quite extraordinary for such a volume; it reflects the immersion of the author in his research over a long period of time. On the other hand, the publication is so ambitious that, inevitably, it tends to overgeneralize and imparts only part of the story. That there is little footnoted support for its multitude of claims and insights, as well as only a limited bibliography, amplifies this problem.

Overall, however, the book is to be warmly welcomed. The Melanesian Institute’s own publicity advocates its value as a textbook in the history of missions and for students in Oceania to get a good working knowledge of their own missionary stories. It will also serve others who are looking for a general introduction to Melanesian cultures and churches.

—Randall Prior

Randall Prior, Professor of Ministry Studies and Missiology at the United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne, ministered for five years in Vanuatu.


Susan Smith is a New Zealander who lectures at the University of Auckland and is a member of the Congregation of our Lady of the Missions. She has also served in Southeast Asia and in Papua New Guinea. She brings this wealth of experience to research the neglected role of women in mission. In her preface she asserts that women’s part in the story of mission is still little understood, and her book goes some way toward rectifying this imbalance. She manages to give a broad sweep of all of church history, though admittedly mainly in the Western world.

She uses a variety of approaches to tell the story of women in mission, which makes the content accessible and interesting. In the early church she writes about Paul’s women coworkers. She discovers them by reading behind the text, using a hermeneutic of suspicion as well as plain common sense to highlight the role and place of women often ignored or overlooked by male commentators who are not expecting to find women in places of leadership or prominence. She draws on the idea that the house church was a good model for women’s involvement as it enabled them to move easily between the public and private spheres.

The second section, “Women Struggling to Be Missionary,” covers the second century until Vatican II in the 1960s. This structure points to the bias of the book as an account of mainly, though not exclusively, Roman Catholic women. In this section Smith looks at movements in the Middle Ages and case studies of little-known women with some truly fascinating and generally unknown stories. She demonstrates how women were involved in a wide range of ministries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

She concludes by proposing a feminist missiology that reclains a Trinitarian theology of mission allowing for mutuality and inclusivity in our engagement in mission. This book is a helpful addition to a small but burgeoning literature on the role of women in mission.

—Catherine R. Ross

Catherine R. Ross, a New Zealander who works for the Church Missionary Society in Oxford, is the J. V. Taylor Fellow in Missiology at the University of Oxford.

Missionaries Among Miners, Migrants, and Blackfoot: The Van Tighem Brothers’ Diaries, Alberta, 1875–1917.


Missionaries Among Miners, Migrants, and Blackfoot publishes the diaries and correspondence of two Flemish brothers who came to southern Alberta as Catholic missionaries: Leonard (b. 1851) arrived in 1882 as an Oblate priest, and his older brother Victor (b. 1845) arrived in 1886 as a brother. Brief sketches of the worlds from which they came and to which they arrived, along with circumstances leading to their departure, introduce each of their diaries.

Leonard’s diary details the growth of the Catholic community during twenty-five years of active ministry and includes frequent references to Protestants, even to some conversions and “defections” (p. 171). Issues of broad social significance appear in addition to the local details, but usually only briefly and with little comment. Railway completion and the Riel “rebellion” (pp. 22–25) happened shortly after Leonard’s arrival. He mentions railway completion south to Grand Falls, Montana, and west through the Crow’s Nest Pass to British Columbia (pp. 119–21). The miners’ strikes of 1894 and 1897 are noted in passing, as are epidemics of smallpox and measles and a tragic 1903 landslide in the mining town of Frank, Alberta. Leonard also laments the death of Queen Victoria and Pope Leo XIII and comments on the election of the pope’s successor, Pius X.

Victor’s briefer diary recounts his voyage to Alberta through New York and Montreal and his appointment to
a new “industrial school” (p. 271) on the Peigan reserve, which was near his brother. Along with the accompanying letters, the diary provides a window into the era of residential schools. Over time, Victor moves from frustration in teaching “savages” the value of subsistence agriculture, saying, “Poor school! Poor savages” (p. 280), to expressions of love and mutual appreciation as the Peigan gradually are “converted and civilized” (p. 300). Together these diaries offer a firsthand view of nineteenth-century attempts to “Christianize” the Canadian West.

—John C. Mellis

John C. Mellis is currently Provost of Queen’s College Faculty of Theology in St. John’s, Newfoundland. He served for twenty years in pastoral ministry and theological education among First Nations in Western Canada.

Historical Dictionary of the Salvation Army.


The editor of this latest addition to Scarecrow Press’s historical dictionary series, John G. Merritt, was commissioned as an officer in the Salvation Army in 1968. He served in various positions in the United States and Chile before being appointed director of the Salvation Army Southern Historical Center in Atlanta, a position in which he served for eleven years before retiring in 2001.

Merritt worked with 154 Salvationists from around the world to compile this historical dictionary of a denomination now numbering 1.5 million members in 111 nations. The list of contributors includes their rank, territory or country, and academic degree(s), if any. Articles are signed but lack individual bibliographies; instead, there is a seventy-two-page bibliographical essay and classified bibliography at the end of the volume. However useful this approach might otherwise be, this arrangement makes it difficult to identify sources for individual articles.

The introduction includes a chronology and a brief introduction to the movement. The dictionary is arranged alphabetically, with numerous cross-references to other articles. It includes appendices listing personnel (generals, chiefs of staff, wives of generals, children of William and Catherine Booth, commissioners, recipients of the Order of the Founder), official documents of the Salvation Army (doctrines, International Spiritual Life Commission affirmations), and ranks and designations.

This volume is an important reference work for those interested in the history, organization, structure, beliefs, and activities of the Salvation Army. Its price, however, will likely restrict its distribution to libraries and specialists in the field.

—Paul F. Stuehrenberg

Paul F. Stuehrenberg is Director of the Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, Connecticut, and Associate Professor (Adjunct) of Theological Literature.

We Look for a Kingdom: The Everyday Lives of the Early Christians.


Pope Benedict XVI recently remarked on the importance for Christians today of the “creative minority,” that is, the Christians of the first three centuries. It is encouraging, therefore, to see Carl Sommer writing about the everyday lives of Christians in...
the period before Christians could “emerge from their basements” with the legalization of Christianity under Constantine I. Sommer, an American Catholic layman, is deeply interested in the early Christians. He has attentively read the traditional sources for the orthodox Christians and has made good use of the church orders. He writes clearly, colorfully, and (from the vantage point of traditional Roman Catholicism) safely.  

In what ways were these early Christians a creative minority? Sommer is on the right track when he speaks about their astonishing level of charity, their sexual discipline and loving family life, and their treatment of slaves—although in each case one would like more information, rooted in a broader reading of the literature. It is surprising to read a treatise on the early Christians that ignores the scholarship of Peter Brown, Ramsay MacMullen, and Robert Wilken. Sommer’s concern to uphold traditional Catholic convictions is especially evident in his consistent separation of the Eucharist from the agape meal and in his contention that “all the local churches assumed that the Roman Church was in some way their leader” (p. 177). Throughout, I longed for Sommer to delve more deeply—into the lives of both laity and clergy, into the Christians’ burial practices, into their modes of evangelization. Sommer’s presentation is attractive, but it simplifies a pre-Chr istendom Christianity that is more complex and regionally varied than he acknowledges. I sense that a deeper treatment of the early Christians’ everyday lives would find them to be more creative—and more challenging—than the “model citizens” (p. 227) to which he introduces us.

—Alan Kreider

Alan Kreider is Associate Professor of Church History and Mission at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana. For twenty-six years he was a missionary in England with the Mennonite Board of Missions.


One of the truly remarkable revival movements in church history was that of East Africa in the middle of the twentieth century. A Gentle Wind of God tells that story and how it influenced African Christianity and extended particularly to the Mennonites in the United Kingdom and the United States. Richard MacMaster, a latecomer to the fellowship, and Don Jacobs, who spent a lifetime serving in areas heavily impacted by the revival, jointly wrote the book. By making extensive use of firsthand accounts through journals, interviews, and missionary literature, they illuminate several barriers that the revival overcame: from denominational leaders who suspected that it would lead to schism to those who considered the revival too naive in its simplicity.  

Starting first among Africans, the revival soon affected missionaries and their sending churches across the oceans. Also known in some circles as balokole, the movement was a series of meetings and prayer gatherings in which the confession of sin, transparency, accountability, and the desire to “walk in the light” became the norm. What ensued were lifestyle changes, including a willingness of African men to participate in household chores, formerly deemed below their dignity as men, as well as missionaries'
willingness to be transparent with their finances with their African colleagues, also formerly unthinkable. The sense of egalitarianism that the revival fostered attracted opposition from some in church hierarchy. From the other side, the movement’s lack of any formal organizational setup seems to have led to the revival’s being superseded by the wave of Pentecostal awakening in Africa.

A Gentle Wind of God is the story of William and Sala Nagenda, Simeon and Eva Nsibambi, Festo and Mera Kivengere, and also of Roy and Revel Hession, Joe and Decie Church, and Don and Anna Ruth Jacobs. With scores of photographs and testimonies, A Gentle Wind of God is an indispensable record for anyone interested in mid-century East African Christianity.

If there is any criticism to be made of this warmhearted book, it is that the need for confession of sins is repeated on almost every page. It can become tedious unless one realizes that in a revitalized faith, one’s unworthiness and Christ’s exaltation are both a daily remembrance.

—I. Casely Essamuah

Casely Essamuah serves as Compassionate Outreach Pastor of Bay Area Community Church, Annapolis, Maryland.

Ibn Taymiyya’s Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism.


Theodicy is a persistent question for theists. If God is good and sovereign, why do people suffer? Christian engagement with Muslims needs to include being conversant with Islamic theodicy. Jon Hoover explores Islamic theodicy through Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who significantly forms Muslim thought “in the rationalistic and egalitarian age of modernity” (p. 237).

Hoover has a Ph.D. in Islamic studies from the University of Birmingham (2002) and is assistant professor of Islamic studies in the Near East School of Theology, Beirut. Fifteen years of studying and teaching in the Middle East have enlivened his interest in the Muslim response to suffering and evil.


Ibn Taymiyya is in lively confrontation with alternative Islamic approaches to theodicy. He critiques the Kalam theologians, whose theodicy was influenced by Greek philosophy. Ibn Taymiyya’s Qur’anic exegesis concludes that God creates evil for the greater good. Creatures are created to worship God and are commanded to submit to his lordship. However, “Creatures have no impact on God since it is God Himself who creates their acts” (p. 232).

This book raises a question for me: how can Christians cultivate dialogue with Muslims, whose theodicy has no space for the God who suffers? I would welcome a sequel addressing that question.

—David W. Shenk

David W. Shenk has missions experience in East Africa and is Global Consultant with Eastern Mennonite Missions, with special interest in Islam.


This volume is a slightly revised version of Jørgen Sørensen’s Ph.D. dissertation, completed at the University of Birmingham under the supervision of Professor Werner Ustorf. Today the author of the book is general secretary of the Council on International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark.

The study has five chapters, the first three of which are introductory in nature. The first chapter discusses the crucial question of whether the modern mission movement is “the (illegitimate) child of modernity” (pp. 10–16) and proposes to move from missionology as an established and instrumental discipline of mission to “a disestablished critical discipline, which focuses on critical deconstruction and creative reconstruction of mission theory” (p. 27). The second chapter deals with methodology, especially with postcolonial theory as a deconstructive tool to be applied in missions and mission studies. The third chapter not only revisits and contrasts modernism and modernism but also deals with their indicative parameters. Although these three chapters repeatedly link their reasoning to missions and mission theory, they are still very abstract.

The fourth and longest chapter deconstructs the mission theories of three widely recognized scholars: Paul G. Hiebert, J. Andrew Kirk, and David J. Bosch. The terminology, implications, and perspectives of three of their books—respectively Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues (1994), What Is Mission? (2000), and Transforming Mission (1991)—are critically analyzed. Sørensen concludes that these traditional authors “work theologically with a modern epistemological paradigm” (p. 203), but he views Bosch as “probably the author who, for the majority of traditional mission-concerned theologians and individuals, represents the most challenging mission theoretical position and theological approach” (p. 181).

In the fifth chapter Sørensen develops his own reconstruction of mission theory. It is a postmodern theory, using a new vocabulary. Key terms and issues of this theory are partly available in the writings of scholars such as the Indian-born missiologist Thomas Thangaraj, who speaks of responsibility, solidarity, and mutuality. Sørensen adds a few other items to this list, such as vulnerability, relativity, transformation, and process. He uses all these categories to move from traditional modern mission theories (as discussed in chapter 4) into constructive and relational theology, which reconciles the radical religious diversity of the contemporary world.

Although traditional missiologists may not be convinced that the focus of their study needs to move from modernity to postmodernity in order to be relevant, they still will have to admit that Sørensen’s interdisciplinary study is outstanding both in its thorough reflection on the contemporary missiological situation and in its attempt to go beyond the traditional mission theories of Hiebert, Kirk, and Bosch. Other missiologists, however, may view this constructive theological study as “a key source of inspiration” (p. 248). At least the postmodern topic of vulnerability (pp. 221–27) will be able to unite both groups of scholars.

—Jan A. B. Jongeneel

Jan A. B. Jongeneel, a contributing editor, is Professor Emeritus of Missiology at Utrecht University. He is also editor of the series MISSION (Bockencentrum, Netherlands) and the series Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity (Peter Lang, Germany).


It is now widely recognized that Pentecostalism, in its myriad forms, is the fastest growing religious movement in the world. Within this swiftly spreading wave another, less noticed surge is developing, one made up of thousands of Pentecostal churches that are engaged in a variety of social programs in their communities. Donald Miller, a sociologist who directs the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the University of Southern California, and Tetsunao Yamamori, president-emeritus of Food for the Hungry International, call it “progressive Pentecostalism” and believe it is the leading edge of Pentecostalism, especially in the non-Western world. For four years they traveled around the globe to investigate this cresting breaker, crisscrossing Africa, Asia, and Latin America, interviewing hundreds of people, and observing outreach efforts to drug addicts in Hong Kong, sex workers in Bangkok and Calcutta, babies with AIDS in several places, and dozens of other programs.

The result of their investigation is an informative and highly readable account that puts faces and names on what is quickly becoming the major expression of Christianity around the globe. One example is Jackie Pullinger, whose ministry to heroin addicts in Hong Kong succeeds by relying on the Holy Spirit, forging modern management methods and a fund-raising staff. Another example is Pastor Oscar Muruu, whose Nairobi Chapel runs a clinic, a pharmacy, and a sewing school.

Something very important is obviously going on in the Pentecostal movement. Although previously fixed on a strictly otherworldly salvation, now the example of Jesus’ concern for the impoverished, the sick, and the socially outcast, along with the vision of the kingdom of God, has begun to play a more central role.

The authors wisely limit themselves to the non-Western world and do not study churches that have embraced a
right-wing political ideology. They foresee a possible complementarity with some of the insights of liberation theology. They predict that the emerging “progressive” Pentecostalism they witnessed—with its flexible structures, its welcoming of the emotional component in praise, its uncanny capacity to indigenize into different cultures, and now its emerging commitment to the Jesus ethic—is the wave of the future. They make a very convincing case. This book also includes a lively DVD showing many of the sites discussed in its pages.

—Harvey Cox

Re-enchanting the World: Maya Protestantism in the Guatemalan Highlands.


The Presbyterian Church is the oldest Protestant denomination in Guatemala, having arrived in 1882. C. Mathews Samson, visiting assistant professor of anthropology at Davidson College, in Davidson, North Carolina, has provided a very readable study of the Maya/Presbyterian identity in Guatemala. He begins by reconstructing the past century of religious developments amid Guatemala’s violent political lurches. Noting that “evangelicalism is now woven into the fabric of quite possibly the majority of Guatemala’s Maya communities,” he examines specifically the development of the Mam and Kaqchikel indigenous presbyteries, describing the development of Maya spirituality and religious practices, dynamics between indigenous people and Ladinos, and the churches’ struggle for indigenous rights and a just peace.

Focusing on the period from the height of the civil war through the peace accords (ca. 1980–96), Samson describes the internal activities and the role within civil society of these two Maya Presbyterian groups. The Mam, he concludes, have responded to local needs through the development of a new familial kinship system reflecting their Maya background and biblical faith. For the Kaqchikel, theological and political involvement “are

linked in religious practice that seeks to directly confront social issues affecting the place of Maya people in Guatemalan society” (p. 35). Samson illustrates Kaqchikel political involvement with a story of the community’s response to the assassination of one of its ministers. Samson also describes two Maya Presbyterian organizations that have played important roles in the resurgence of Maya culture and activism.

A strength of Samson’s perceptive study is that it includes three dozen interviews and an equal number of contextual observations offering insight into Maya cultural identity amid a complex mix of religious pluralism and political fault lines.

—Michael K. Duffey

Michael K. Duffey, Associate Professor of Theology, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is the author of Sowing Justice, Reaping Peace: Case Studies of Racial, Religious, and Ethnic Healing Around the World (Sheed and Ward, 2001).
Think on These Things: Harmony and Diversity
By Wisnu Sasongko
“I paint what I can see, what I can touch, what I can feel—a utopia of love expressed in the reality of life. All of that inspires me in my artistic way,” says Wisnu Sasongko, a graduate of the Faculty of Fine Art, Institut Seni Indonesia, Yogyakarta. This book includes “All Dreams Connected,” a 28-minute DVD about Sasongko and his art. 96 pages and a DVD, $29.95

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Arochiam, Sebastian.

Dantas, Elias Filho.
“Twentieth-Century Mission Theology: Conciliar and Evangelical Streams in Conversation.”
Ph.D. Pasadena, Calif.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006.

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FOLLOWING JESUS AS MISSION

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The Internet and Mission: Getting Started.
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September 22–26
Doing Oral History: Helping Christians Tell Their Own Story.
Dr. Jean-Paul Wiest, director of the Jesuit Beijing Center, Beijing, China, and Ms. Michèle Sigg, DACB project manager, share skills and techniques for documenting mission and church history. Eight sessions. $145

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Communicating Gospel Truth to the Totally Unreached.
Rev. Ajith Fernando, Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka, leads participants in considering how the Gospel can be communicated to people with worldviews that are very different from the biblical worldview. Eight sessions. $145

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Dr. Duane H. Elmer, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, helps Christian workers strengthen interpersonal skills and resolve conflicts among colleagues, including host-country peoples. Eight sessions. $145

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Missions in Contexts of Violence.

Grams, Rollin G., and Parush R. Parushev, eds.
Mapping Baptist Identity: Towards an Understanding of European Baptist Identity; Listening to the Churches in Armenia, Bulgaria, Central Asia, Moldova, North Caucasus, Omsk, and Poland.

Jeong, Paul Yonggap.
Mission from a Position of Weakness.

Karotemprel, Gregory, C.M.I., Jacob Marangattu, C.M.I., and Mark Barco, S.J., eds.
Evangelizing in the Third Millennium.

Kreis, Karl Markus. Translated by Corinna Dally-Starna.
Lakotas, Black Robes, and Holy Women: German Reports from the Indian Missions in South Dakota, 1886–1900.

Park, Joon-Sik.
Missional Ecclesiologies in Creative Tension: H. Richard Niebuhr and John Howard Yoder.

Park, Timothy K., ed.
Tracing the Apostolic Way of Mission: Compendium of Ninth AMA Triennial Convention.

Pérennès, Jean-Jacques.
A Life Poured Out: Pierre Claverie of Algeria.

Peterson, Daniel C.
Muhammad: Prophet of God.

Porterfield, Amanda, ed.
Modern Christianity to 1900. Vol. 6 of A People’s History of Christianity.

Rolfes, Helmuth, and Angela Ann Zukowski, eds.
Communicatio Socialis: Challenge of Theology and Ministry in the Church; Festschrift for Franz-Josef Eilers.

The Journal Once Lost: Extracts from the Diary of John Sung.

Swartley, Willard M.

Van Gelder, Craig.
The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit.

Wijzen, Frans.

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Missiology in Environmental Context: Tasks for an Ecology of Mission
Willis Jenkins

Mission to Nowhere: Putting Short-Term Missions into Context
Brian M. Howell

World Christianity and Christian Mission: Are They Compatible?
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Dale T. Irvin

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Titus Presler

Oral Theology in Lomwe Songs
Stuart J. Foster

Leslie Newbigin’s Missiary Encounter with the Enlightenment, 1975–98
Timothy Yates

Remembering Evangelization: The Option for the Poor and Mission History
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