From Imitation to Innovation: The Church in Asia

Something Happened is the understated title of a 1933 account of the itineration of Mildred Cable and Francesca and Evangeline French—three missionary women "with attitude." These peripatetic CIM missionary colporteurs traveled across northwestern China, the Gobi Desert, and Turkestan virtually nonstop between 1913 and 1933. Their experiences along the way were vividly recounted in books that to this day read well as travelogues. By any quantifiable standard their accomplishments were modest. Nevertheless, "something happened," and in this issue of the IBMR readers will get a sense of how integral a part of Asian life and culture Christianity is becoming.

David Barrett and Todd Johnson offer the nineteenth in an unbroken succession of annual statistical tables on global mission that made its first appearance in 1985. They estimate the number of Christians in Asia to be some 327 million, of which, according to Tony Lambert’s cautionary report, well over 20 million Protestants and another 10-12 million Catholics may be found in China. Something happened, and—as Jean Paul West’s report on the Catholic Church there shows—continues to happen, in China.

Something has been happening in Korea as well. As Steve Moon points out in his masterful survey of what is arguably one of the most missionally dynamic movements of the last decade, the number of Korean missionaries has increased from 1,645 in 1990 to 10,745 in 2002, a majority of whom serve in Asia. Qualitatively, likewise, the 136 organizations represented by these missionaries are progressing "from imitation to innovation."

Behind such numbers lie concealed countless men and women without whom there would be nothing to count. Some of these are missionaries—people like James Gilmour, "the missionary without a single convert"; John Schuette, the first mission secretary of the Society of the Divine Word; and Ralph Covell, who shares his pilgrimage in this issue.

Even less evident are the ideas that give rise to those orientations, motivations, and initiatives that prescribe and proscribe Christian mission and its varied modus operandi. As John Flett points out, it was mission and its Gospel of hope, after all, that undergirded and impelled Christian response to the wrenching human devastation issuing from the Great War.

While the numbers game in Asia is as fraught with its own kind of risks as was navigation by ancient mariners of the Strait of Messina between the twin perils of Scylla and Charybdis, clearly, something is happening in Asia. And in this issue, the IBMR is pleased to highlight that fact.

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Catholics in China: The Bumpy Road Toward Reconciliation

Jean-Paul Wiest

The situation of the Catholic Church in China in 2003 is complex and constantly evolving. The most common view of the church highlights two extremes: the church that is recognized by the government, and the underground church that is in hiding. In fact, increasing numbers of Catholic believers belong to a large gray area between these two. The government-recognized part of the Catholic Church functions openly in churches registered with the government and is linked to the Zhongguo Tianshuixiao Aiguoheui, or Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA). It is therefore often referred to as guanfang (or gongkai) jiaohui, the open church. The other extreme, often referred to as dixia jiaohui, the underground church, refuses any control by the CCPA and usually operates in private homes or buildings without seeking government approval.

There are no perfect terms to identify these two clearly distinct manifestations of the Chinese Catholic Church. I would recommend avoiding labels such as “patriotic church” to describe the government-recognized segment of the church because it implies either that all its members wholeheartedly support the CCPA or that the underground church is not patriotic-minded, neither of which is true. Likewise, the names “suffering church” and “loyal church” to describe the underground segment of the church are wrong and divisive, as they falsely imply that the government-recognized church has not suffered or is not loyal to the pope.

Chinese Catholics all love their country. Their moral values and habits of hard work make them model citizens. In this sense they are clearly patriotic. The vast majority worship openly or would like to, provided they would not be controlled by the CCPA. Many, even in the government-recognized churches, remain suspicious of the CCPA and would like to see it disappear.

In this article, then, I view the Catholic Church in China as one church, not as two (one faithful to Rome vs. one that is not). It is certainly a wounded church, but the division did not lead to the formation of a schismatic church because the difference never amounted to a doctrinal deviation or a total breach of communication with the worldwide Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See has never issued a formal declaration of a Chinese schism nor has it explicitly excommunicated any “patriotic” bishop. In fact, there are increasingly hopeful signs that healing between the different groups is in the making, though the road toward reconciliation has recently included some unpleasant bumps.

Government-Recognized Segment

The roots of the division between the two parts of the Chinese Catholic Church can be traced to the emergence of the CCPA in 1957. Formed on the model of the Sanzhi Aiguo Yundong, or Three-Self Patriotic Movement—a Protestant group organized in 1954 under the control of the government to force the churches to break their economic and political ties with the West and become thoroughly self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating—the CCPA was to serve as a bridge between the church and the state.

By late 1957, because of the prior expulsion of foreign bishops and the subsequent imprisonment of Chinese prelates who opposed the regime or rejected the CCPA, 120 out of 145 dioceses and prefectures apostolic were without ordinaries. The clergy in several districts considered filling the vacancies a real apostolic need and, at the urging of their local CCPA branch, began the process of choosing a new bishop. After electing a candidate each, the Dioceses of Wuchang and Wuhan in Hubei Province telegraphed the names to the Holy See for the pope’s approval. The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith turned down their requests, however, because it saw these selections of bishops by the Chinese as an attempt to put in place “patriotic” ordinaries who would simply carry out the Communist government policy.

There is certainly no doubt that the Chinese government was, and still is, trying to exercise a large measure of control over the church. In all fairness, however, one must also acknowledge that the requests came from a Chinese clergy who, in the midst of intense pressures, still acknowledged the pope’s privilege to appoint bishops. Only when their plea was rejected did they decide to proceed anyway, on the ground that the Holy See had failed to realize the difficulty of their situation. On April 13, 1958, “patriotic” bishop Li Daonan of the neighboring Diocese of Puqi performed the consecration of the two bishops in the Hankou cathedral. Thus began the ordinations of bishops sponsored by the CCPA but not recognized by the pope. In church parlance, such bishops are “illegitimate.” In canonical terms, however, their consecration, although “illicit,” remains perfectly valid.

Saddened by the news of the consecration of two new bishops, Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical Ad apostolorum principis, in which he expressed his disapproval of the CCPA and reiterated that the authority for making episcopal appointments was his alone. Not unexpectedly, the Chinese government reacted by forbidding church authorities to have any further contact with the Vatican. A question was even inserted in the ritual of episcopal ordination that made new bishops-elect promise to be detached from all control of the Roman Curia.” The question, as explained by a “patriotic” bishop, was not to reject papal authority but to object to the Vatican’s rejection of Chinese-elected episcopal candidates. Bishops, priests, sisters, and laypeople who refused to go along with the government and the CCPA stance were sent to jail or labor camps. Also in 1958, prayer for the pope was removed from the public prayers of the church. By 1962 the number of “patriotic” bishops had reached forty-two, while those formerly appointed by Rome had fallen to about twenty.

The division between the two groups became fully apparent only after the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), during which all public religious activities ceased and all church properties were confiscated. By 1978 and 1979 clergy were allowed to return to their dioceses. The new policy of the government allowed them to function in public, rather than in hiding, and many began doing so. With less than thirty bishops still alive, some prelates who had been imprisoned for their unwavering loyalty to the pope and had refused any relationship with the CCPA were now more willing to cooperate with the association for the future of the Catholic Church in China.
After 1981 the requirement to swear independence from Rome was dropped, which resulted in more priests willing to accept episcopal ordination. In addition, several of the “illicit” bishops have secretly obtained legitimization of their status from the pope. Some even actively sought higher positions within the CCPA in order to influence its decisions and curb its tendency toward unilateral control.

In late May 1980 more than two hundred delegates representing the government-registered Catholic Church gathered in Beijing to attend the Third National Convention of the CCPA and the National Catholic Representatives Assembly. These two meetings resulted in a major reorganization of structures within the open church with the creation of two additional national organizations: the Chinese Catholic Church Administrative Commission and the Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference. From this point forward, the CCPA relinquished its role as overseer of all church concerns, relegating itself to external affairs and church-state relations. Responsibility for doctrinal and pastoral affairs was given over to the clergy and church leaders. In 1992 further reorganization placed the Bishops’ Conference on an equal footing with the CCPA while reducing the Church Administrative Commission to a committee responsible for pastoral affairs under the control of the Bishops’ Conference. Five additional committees were also set up to oversee seminary education, liturgy, theological study, finance development, and international relationships. Initiatives in the areas of pastoral work, training of clergy, and the social apostolate of the church indicate that the new structures have been effectively implemented.

With many ups and downs, the open church’s attitude toward papal primacy has gradually improved. The prayer for the pope was reintroduced into the Collection of Important Prayers in 1982. In February 1989 the government allowed spiritual affiliation with the Holy See, and in April of the same year the new Bishops’ Conference promptly acknowledged the pope as the spiritual leader of the Chinese church. By the end of the decade, most congregations had also restored the prayer for the pope during Mass.

Underground Segment of the Catholic Church
Many clergy released at the end of the Cultural Revolution were still unwilling to join any Catholic organization registered with the government. They refused to live at a church with other priests who had married, betrayed others, or publicly denied the primacy of the pope. They therefore carried out religious activities in private and gradually attracted a great number of Catholics to join with them. Bishop Fan Xueyan of the Diocese of Baoding in Hebei Province was released in 1979 and acted as the leader of the underground church. Recognizing the urgent need for bishops in several dioceses, he ordained three bishops in 1981 without first securing approval from the government or the open church. When the pope learned of the circumstances that prompted such a procedure, he legitimized the new bishops and
By 1989 the underground church had more than fifty bishops, as well as bishops for vacant seats of neighboring dioceses. By 1989 the underground church had more than fifty bishops, who in November of that year set up their own episcopal conference. Rome also gave underground bishops the authority to ordain priests without the required lengthy seminary training. This concession accounted for the overall poor theological instruction of priests in the underground church. Moreover, signs of excess and lack of coordination have appeared, with some dioceses having as many as three bishops claiming to be the legitimate ordinary.

Since 1989 the underground church has been the target of mounting pressure from the government. The same government document of February 1989 that recognized the spiritual leadership of the pope also spelled out how to deal with the underground church. Communist cadres were asked to differentiate between underground forces that clung to their hostility and stirred up believers and those who did not join the open church because of their faith in the pope. The former, said the document, must be dealt with severely, while patience should be used with the others. Accordingly, the government regarded the setting up of an episcopal conference by the clandestine bishops as a provocation.

This evaluation resulted in the arrest of several leaders, including Bishop Fan. At the local level the implementation of that policy has remained vague and vacillating, resulting in sporadic destruction of unregistered religious buildings, temporary detention, and the levy of heavy fines. Since the ban of the Falun Gong in July 1999, however, repressive measures against Catholic communities not officially registered have also greatly increased. Several priests and bishops remain in prison or have had their activities curtailed.

Many underground Catholics play a prophetic role by their refusal to participate in a government-sanctioned organization. They dare to challenge the government policy regarding human rights and freedom of religion from a Catholic standpoint.

Reconciliation in the Making

The bitter division has pitted those who choose to worship under the supervision of the government against those who refuse to do so. During the past twenty years the two sides have gradually moved away from mistrust and bitter accusations to an attitude of understanding respect and to concrete acts of cooperation and genuine efforts at reconciliation. The dividing lines between the two are becoming increasingly blurred. Fidelity to the Holy See has become less of an issue, since the pope has legitimized most of the bishops in the open church, and a number of new ones are being ordained with his approval.

For an ever-growing number of clergy, sisters, and ordinary Christians, the division does not make much sense anymore. In a courageous and prophetic manner many act as bridges between the two sides of the church, and Pope John Paul II has made repeated pleas to the Catholics of China to display toward one another "a love which consists of understanding, respect, forbearance, forgiveness and reconciliation" (from remarks made in Manila in 1995).

The more serious reconciliation issue involves the still-unresolved tensions between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Vatican. Informal talks between the two sides about the normalization of diplomatic relations have taken place intermittently since the late 1980s. Beijing realizes that it has much to gain from restoring such ties but insists on two main points: Rome must first sever its relations with Taiwan, and it must not interfere with the election of Chinese bishops. The Vatican sees diplomatic normalization as leading to a greater freedom for the church and to possibilities for a solid implantation.

Church officials have indicated that they are ready to establish relations with Beijing, but first an agreement must be reached over the Holy See's relationship with Chinese Catholics. In late 1999 the news spread that both sides had made substantial progress toward bridging the gap between Beijing's demand for a total and complete independence of the Chinese church and Rome's insistence on an autonomous Chinese church in communion with the pope and the universal church. But during the course of the year 2000, two events—the ordinations of bishops without papal mandate on January 6 and Rome's canonization of 120 China martyrs on October 1—seriously undermined the process. These misunderstandings point to the distance that still separates the Holy See and the Chinese government.

An Offense to Rome: Non-approved Ordinations

The ordination on January 6, 2000, of five bishops approved by the CCPA but not approved previously by Rome represents a major source of contention between China and the Holy See. Canon law 377 states clearly that "the Supreme Pontiff freely appoints Bishops or confirms those lawfully elected." The Vatican thus refuses to sanction any bishop named independently by Chinese or any other civil authority, while Beijing, in defiance of church law, claims the right (since 1958) to appoint bishops.

Circumstances surrounding this ordination, however, point clearly to a rift within the open church. We know now that original plans called for an even larger ordination ceremony, but several open church bishops disapproved and refused to attend the ceremony, as also did the teachers and seminarians of the national seminary in Beijing. Accordingly, all but five ordinands bowed out of the ceremony. These five, however, felt the pressure of the government and the national CCPA to be ordained without seeking prior papal approval. This incident shows clearly that the prevailing mood within the open church inclines toward full support of existing church laws. Repressive measures from the government have been unable to reverse the trend.

How the Vatican chooses bishops in China remains a problem, but not an insoluble one. A likely compromise is for the Vatican to choose bishops in consultation with the Chinese government. No agreement can be reached, however, until the two sides resume dialogue.

An Offense to Beijing: Canonization of Martyrs

On October 1, 2000, as a proud China celebrated the fifty-first anniversary of its founding as a republic, the worldwide Roman Catholic Church proclaimed as saints 121 Catholics who died on Chinese soil, 86 of them during the Boxer Uprising in 1900. The timing of this canonization resulted in a bitter exchange of words...
between the two parties that once again derailed precarious efforts toward reestablishing diplomatic relations.

The history of turbulent relations between China and the Roman Catholic Church is littered with elements of cultural disparity, which in this instance centers on the meaning attached to dates. For Chinese people, October has a special meaning. October 18, 1860, stands as a stern reminder of how low China had fallen, for on this date British and French troops burned down the magnificent summer palace resort known as the Yuanming Yuan. Forty years later, precisely during this same month of October, another rampaging foreign force was in the midst of pillaging the capital. By contrast, October 10, 1911 (the Wuchang Uprising against the Qing Dynasty, the beginning of the overthrow of the imperial regime), and October 1, 1949, the birth of the republic, stand as symbols of the indomitable spirit of the Chinese people and their resolve to forge their own destiny.

October is likewise a unique month for Roman Catholic devotion. First, it is the month of Our Lady of the Rosary, a designation based on a key naval battle at Lepanto, Greece, on October 7, 1571, when Christian forces defeated Ottoman Muslims. Western missionaries brought to China the cult of Mary and the recitation of the rosary, so much so that in some parts of Hebei Catholics are known as Old Rosary Sayers. Today, the two most common pictures found in Catholic churches and homes are still those of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and of the Virgin Mary, and the most popular form of devotion remains the prayers of the rosary.

October is also often referred to as Mission Month because special emphasis is put on reminding Catholic faithful of their responsibility to ensure that Christian belief is spread to the entire world. The month opens with the feast of St. Theresa of the Holy Child, patron saint of missions, who spent her life praying for the conversion of non-Christians. Chinese Catholics have a great devotion to St. Theresa, with whom they readily identify because, not being allowed to preach the Gospel openly, they too rely on the power of prayer.

Each October, the third or fourth Sunday is set aside as Mission Sunday to promote mission awareness among the faithful and to secure funding for the missionary enterprise. Since it was established in 1926, Mission Sunday has been closely related to China because it was on October 28, 1926, that the first six Chinese bishops of modern times were ordained by Pope Pius XI.

Mission Sunday is emphasized by a papal message that always pays special tribute to those who died a violent death because of their faith. In 2000 John Paul II opened Mission Month with the canonization of 120 martyrs who died in China. What prompted the decision was the fact that close to three-fourths of the people added to the list of saints were killed by the Boxers exactly 100 years earlier. Rome acknowledged that the canonization had been postponed several times in the past because it was a “highly sensitive question.” Yet it went ahead in 2000, insisting that the decision was “a purely religious matter” with no political overtone. It simply “rendered justice to the historical reality” of 30,000 innocent people killed by “Boxer rebels.”

Pointing to another historical reality, Beijing, for its part, denounced the event as a painful reminder of how until recently missionaries and Chinese converts had been agents and lackeys of colonialist and imperialist nations. It called the canonization ceremony of October 1 an “open insult” to the Chinese people, who on that same day celebrated the fifty-first anniversary of their throwing off foreign control and aggression. In stark contrast to this response, when a few months earlier the Russian Orthodox Church canonized 222 Chinese Orthodox martyrs, the Chinese government did not raise any criticism. Many of these Christians were killed during the nights of June 11 and 24, 1900, during the same Boxer Uprising.

On October 24, 2001, a year after the canonization dispute, the pope acknowledged that historically members of the church had had to work within the context of “complex historical events and conflicting political interests,” and that their work “was not always without errors.” These errors, the pope said, “may have given the impression of a lack of esteem for the Chinese people on the part of the Catholic Church, making them feel that the church was motivated by feelings of hostility towards China. For all this I ask forgiveness and understanding of those who may have felt hurt in some way by such actions on the part of Christians.” But this response was not enough for China. On October 30 a Chinese spokesperson, although viewing the apology as “a positive move,” said that the pope had “not made a clear-cut apology for the canonization incident, which seriously hurt the feelings of the Chinese people.”

Looking Toward the Twenty-First Century

In 1950 China had a Catholic population of about three million, with 1,900 Chinese priests and 3,700 Chinese sisters. In 1980 it was estimated that less than 1,300 elderly Chinese priests were actively engaged in ministry. The situation of Chinese sisters was even more discouraging, for by 1980 just over 1,000 remained. Obviously the training of new church leaders and the reopening of seminaries and novitiates was a most urgent priority. Sheshan Regional Seminary near Shanghai was the first Catholic house of formation to reopen in 1982.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, twenty-four major seminaries are allowed to operate with government permission, and another ten exist in the underground church. Altogether they prepare 1,700 seminarians. Sisters in formation total 2,500, spread over forty novitiates in the open church and twenty in the underground. With a total of 2,200 priests and 3,600 sisters, the number of religious workers seems to be on the rebound. Churches and chapels reopened for public worship with government approval have multiplied and now stand at 5,500. The Catholic Church population is estimated at more than twelve million, a rate of growth that has only kept up with the population growth since 1949. By comparison, Chinese Protestants have displayed much more vitality by growing from less than three million to at least twenty-five million members, or twice the population growth. Factors behind the relatively slow growth of the Catholic Church are complex and many, one being certainly the bitter inner dispute that has been so divisive.

The Catholic Church’s educational activities came to an abrupt end in the 1950s. Private schools reemerged in the early 1980s under the impetus of Deng Xiaoping, but the government has made a clear distinction between private schools as houses of religious formation and training and private schools as alternative options within the public education system. While the five recognized religions (Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Protestantism, Cultural disparity litters the history of turbulence between China and the Vatican. January 2003
and Catholicism) are permitted to open the former under certain conditions, they are barred from any involvement in public education.

Yet in a country where church educational activities remain drastically curtailed, Catholic publishing houses such as Sapientia Press in Nanjing, are important means for reaching and educating a great number of Christian and non-Christian Chinese. They publish Bibles, Christian literature, and journals. They have also reprinted in simplified characters many of the Chinese translations arriving in recent years from Taiwan and Hong Kong, such as the documents of Vatican II, the liturgy of the Mass, the new code of canon law, and the new universal catechism. Unfortunately, except for Zhongguo Tianshujiao (The Catholic Church in China), the official journal of the CCPA, church publications remain subject to the government censor and may legally be sold only on church premises or through mail order.

The Hebei Faith Press also publishes a biweekly newspaper called Xinde (Faith). In spite of the restriction just mentioned, it has a distribution of 45,000 copies throughout most of the provinces of China, which amounts to a readership of over half a million people in the underground and the open Catholic Church, as well as among non-Christians. Besides relaying news of the church within and outside China, the newspaper also encourages readers to act responsibly by sending funds for various charitable causes and major catastrophes. Responses have been so enthusiastic that they have led to the establishment of Beifang Jinde (Progress), a Catholic social service center formed to handle donations for charity work in society.

Some outside organizations foster a confrontational and adversarial position on the situation of the Chinese church. Such groups, however, are in direct defiance of the pope’s pleas for understanding, forgiveness, reconciliation, and unity among Chinese Catholics.

The Chinese Catholic Church today is quite different even from what it was in the 1980s when it emerged from long years of repression. It is growing in numbers, enjoying relative freedom of worship, and experiencing a renewal of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. At the same time, Chinese society is also undergoing profound social and economic changes. This transformation is confronting the church with new issues and challenges as it begins to shed its ghetto mentality and to fulfill a more meaningful role for various segments of the society.

Notes
1. This article is based on a presentation made in June 2002 at the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China, Hong Kong.
2. On this issue, see the excellent article by Geoffrey King, “A Schismatic Church? A Canonical Evaluation,” in The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives, ed. Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1993), pp. 80–102. An explicit decree of excommunication was issued to the vicar-general of Nanjing, Li Weiguang, for publishing a declaration promoting the Communist interpretation of the three autonomies and accusing the pope and his nuncio of collusion with the imperialists. This excommunication, however, took place before Li’s ordination as a bishop without Rome’s approval.
3. For more on this question, see Kim-Kwong Chan, Towards a Contextual Ecclesiology: The Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China (1979–1983). Its Life and Theological Implications (Hong Kong: Chinese Church Research Center, 1987), pp. 81–82, 443–48. Chan also points out that leaders of the so-called patriotic church were careful in their use of expressions. They “usually employed terms like ‘Roman Curia’ and ‘the Vatican’ instead of terms like ‘the Holy See’ or ‘the Apostolic See.’ The former denotes political status whereas the latter terms signify the religious and ecclesiastical dimension” (p. 79).

Counting Christians in China: A Cautionary Report

Tony Lambert

Recently I was attending a meeting in Europe at which a house church evangelist from China was speaking. The literature being distributed to raise funds stated that he represented more than 75 million house church believers. When this figure was queried, the Western sponsor retorted, “Well, this figure is not gospel truth—give or take a few million either way, it doesn’t matter!” The publicity of a Hong Kong Christian ministry claims that “every year 8 million people come to Christ and are baptised in Mainland China.” These statistics are impressive, but they simply cannot stand up under closer analysis, for they are backed by no reliable, documented evidence.

This problem is not new. In leafing through my newspaper clippings on the Chinese church, which date back more than thirty years, I came across the following report from 1983 which epitomizes rather succinctly the problem of counting the number of Christians in China accurately: “The number of Christians in China now exceeds 100 million, according to two former leaders of the Chinese house church movement now living in the USA. Their assessment of the situation is one of the highest in circulation. The official Chinese Three-Self Church says there are six million Christians (three million Protestants and three million Catholics) while some evangelical agencies take into account what they call ‘secret believers’ and put the figure at between 25 and 50 million.”

Though this clipping dates back to just a few years after Christian churches were allowed to reopen in 1979, the last two decades have seen no resolution to the problem posed by the yawning gulf between statistics issued by the Chinese government or state-approved church representatives, and those figures published by some Christian agencies elsewhere.

Counting Christians in China is notoriously difficult, but for years Christians, particularly evangelical and charismatic Chris-
tians, have seemed willing to accept very high figures without any real proof. Already inflated estimates have sometimes been extrapolated and exaggerated ("if in 1983 there were 100 million, then now in 2000 there must be 150 million or even 200 million" and so on). It is high time such castles in the air were brought down to earth! In this article I approach the problem by first reviewing the overall sociopolitical context, and then I assemble what reasonably reliable statistics there are from all sources: the Chinese government, the Three Self churches, and the house church movement. This study will concentrate on the Chinese Protestant churches.

Inconsistent Statistics—a Widespread Problem

We must recognize at the outset that the problem of false statistics is not confined to the religious sphere in China. An article in the respected Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post some years ago stated: "The truth about the Chinese economy is that no-one really knows. Economists and analysts look at the same events and see different things. Adding to the problems, there are severe doubts about the quality of what the observers are looking at hardest—the economic statistics which flood out of the State Statistical Bureau and other organizations." The article included a detailed table showing that sixteen economists working for sixteen international companies doing business with China—and, more glaringly, two of China’s own most prestigious state organizations—could not agree on China’s gross national product, rate of inflation, industrial production, trade balance, and other basic economic statistics.

More recently, we could cite the national census of November 2000, which reports a population of nearly 1.3 billion. This number is almost certainly too low, given the huge number of unemployed peasants flooding into the cities (the “floating population”) and distortions stemming from the one-child policy as citizens seek to hide their extra children from official eyes, and cadres seek to hide their own incompetence from their superiors.

Suppression and distortion of statistical data were rife in the Mao years. In 1958–62 China suffered a severe famine. Only in recent years have statistics been published in obscure Chinese journals confirming that upwards of 30 million people perished because of Mao’s utopian policies. Yet at the time, false statistics of bumper harvests were the norm. Local cadres knew that harsh reality had to bow to the party line, so they fabricated statistics to satisfy their superiors.

Since Mao’s death in 1976 and the inauguration of the Open Door Policy by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, things have slowly become more transparent as China has developed trade with the West and made great progress with economic modernization. The influx of Western businesses and of tourists and, most recently, China’s admission to the World Trade Organization have combined to force reluctant party bureaucrats to collect and publish statistics that bear more relation to the facts. Old Maoist habits of secrecy and obfuscation die hard, however, and this is nowhere more true than in the increasingly sensitive area of religious affairs.

Three-Self Statistics

Basic data on church statistics are collected by local representatives of the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), which passes down government religious policy to the churches, and the China Christian Council (CCC), which is involved in internal pastoral affairs. The data, which these organizations pass on to the Religious Affairs Bureau, generally relate to numbers of baptized church members and to new baptisms each year. They do not include children and young people under the age of eighteen, who are forbidden from being baptized and becoming church members before adulthood. These statistics are therefore conservative; also they usually do not include the large numbers of mudaozhe (inquiring seekers), who may well be believers but for various reasons have not yet been baptized. It is these statistics that are passed up to various party and government agencies and that may be published in various national and local statistical handbooks.

In 2002 the TSPM/CCC leadership announced that there were 15 million Protestants in China, which is more than twenty times the number of Protestants there were in 1949, then estimated at 700,000, when the Communist Party took power. There are now nearly 50,000 registered churches and meeting points, compared with precisely zero as late as early 1979. Church membership generally declined during the 1950s because of tightening control and persecution of the church, culminating in the closure of all churches during the Cultural Revolution period (1966–76) and the three following years until 1979 when Deng Xiaoping was firmly in the saddle and able to reverse many of Mao’s extremist policies. Thus this spectacular growth is generally reckoned to have taken place over the last twenty-five to thirty years, beginning in the early 1970s, when house churches began to proliferate. Significantly, interviews with provincial leaders of the TSPM/CCC usually provide local statistics that, when totaled, give a figure that is higher and probably more accurate than the figures found in the national handbooks. (See table on page 8.)

Statistics used in the West to count the Chinese house church are contradictory and exaggerated.

The official figure for Protestants in China has risen to 15 million, and perhaps about 18 million, based on local estimates of TSPM/CCC provincial leaders. As some of the provincial figures are out of date by several years, and bearing in mind what has been said about the omission of children and seekers from the statistics, it is not unreasonable to assume that there may be 20 million Protestants associated with TSPM-registered churches and meeting points.

House Church Numbers

More formidable problems arise when one turns to estimates for house church believers. All kinds of statistics have appeared in the West, often contradictory and exaggerated. As far back as 1983, as cited at the beginning of this article, some leaders asserted that there were more than 100 million Christians in China. Not a shred of evidence was given to support this wild assertion.

Figures for Henan. In a similar vein, a 1982 report from a house church source in Henan claimed huge church growth in that province, which most observers now agree has the largest Protestant community of any province in China. According to this report, no less than 43 percent of the total population of Fangcheng
believers. Some villages in the area were known to be 60 to 70 percent Christian. According to a May 1982 estimate by four itinerant evangelists, at least 20 percent of Henan’s population—15 million out of 75 million people—were Christians. They based that estimate on attendance at churches they regularly preached at in 15 to 20 counties in southwest Henan, as well as on observations of the church in the rest of the province. Separate reports from northern Henan estimated that 30 percent of the province had become Christian, that is, about 22 million people.9

These high estimates, however, do not tally with figures from another house church source. En Yu, pseudonym of another house church leader, published a book about the house churches in many parts of China. In a chapter devoted to Henan he estimated that the Christian population of Fangcheng was only 160,000 (not 300,000) and that the total number in Henan was 10 million out of a total population of 80 million, which would drop the Christian population to 12.5 percent (not 20 or 30 percent).7 These discrepancies are very large; furthermore, the sources were not trained researchers or statisticians, and their evidence falls far short of the norms expected in surveys of this kind. This is not to criticize the house church leaders; they minister in clandestine situations, and careful gathering of statistics is low on their list of priorities. Rather, criticism should be pointed at Western Christians who accept such guesstimates uncritically and then further extrapolate from them. Even En Yu is careful to say: “Some people estimate that there are 10 million Christians in Henan. Of course this is not necessarily reliable. But it cannot be denied that the number of believers in Christ is many” (my emphasis). Such restraint is commendable. Most house church statistics are very rough estimates and give only a general indication of massive church growth, which few people now would deny is indeed occurring.

Nine house church leaders. In August 1998 leaders of nine major house church groupings issued a statement in which they claimed there were “approximately ten million believers of the Three Self churches and eighty million believers in the home churches.”8 The statement listed the following groupings as being the major house churches operating outside TSPM control:

- Born Again Movement (Chongshegupai)
- Charismatics (Lingenpai)
- Assemblies (Jiujuichu), also called Shouters (Huhampai)
- Way of Life (Shengming zhi Dao), also called Total Scope (Quanfanweijiaohui)
- Little Flock (Xiaoqun)
- Pentecostals (Wuxunjie)
- Lutherans outside the TSPM (Buanjia Sanzi de Lidaihui)
- Baptists (Jinxinhuai)

Brother Ren. In 2000 Brother Ren, a spokesman for unregistered house churches, published figures for Christians in China as follows:

- TSPM churches: 15 million
- House churches: 75 million
- Unaffiliated: 2 million
- Catholic (patriotic): 4 million
- Catholic (underground): 8 million

The house churches were further broken down into three categories: evangelical, 33 million; Watchman Nee-
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type, including Local Church, Little Flock, and Gospel Church, 15 million; and charismatic (Lingen), 33 million. Unfortunately, these totals do not tally exactly with the total figure of 75 million house church believers previously given, and no detailed evidence was provided.9

Lausanne Committee. In April 2002 the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization reported that a group of top-level house church leaders meeting in conference had stated that “the official number of believing Christians is about 15 million. The unofficial total is about five times that, or approximately 75 million people.”10 Assuming these figures are only for Protestants and the unofficial total is for all Protestants, both TSPM and house church, then the number of house church believers can be reckoned at 60 million. Or, if the “unofficial total” refers only to house church believers, then they number 75 million. This figure would not be far off the 1998 estimate mentioned here by the nine house church leaders. Unfortunately, again there is no detailed breakdown or any proof offered.

Other house church reports. Some house church networks are no doubt very large, with thousands of meeting places across China. A house church leader from East China once told me he had personally helped baptize 1,100 new converts in a baptismal service lasting nine hours. The growth of unregistered Christians is so rapid that government officials and researchers have even coined a phrase to describe it: jidujiaore (Christianity fever). But reliable estimates are very hard to come by. The Born Again Movement claims to be one of the largest groups, with some 8,000 full-time evangelists and 15,000 voluntary workers. Some observers say this group has 4–8 million members; other estimates are as high as 23 million. Which figures are closer to the truth?

In January 2000 a major report in a well-recognized Hong Kong newspaper on the persecution of house church Christians stated that the China Gospel Fellowship had an “estimated membership of 500,000.”11 A report circulated by a Western Christian organization early in 2002, however, stated that this movement has “several million believers.” There is a wide discrepancy here. Similar discrepancies appear in estimates of the Fangcheng church based in Henan, which is headed by Zhang Rongliang. In 1998 Zhang told American reporters he led a “loose-knit underground flock of 10 million uncompromising believers.”12 However, in 2000 Christianity Today put the number of his Fangcheng church believers at only 500,000.13

Present Status

From the evidence now available it is virtually impossible to make an accurate estimate of the total number of house church believers in China. Apart from the major networks that have coalesced into virtual denominations, there are tens of thousands of smaller groupings and individual isolated meeting points. No one is in a position to visit all of them, a fact that is largely ignored when house church Christians make general estimates. Government surveillance and continuing persecution militate against recording and circulating accurate statistics on conversions, baptisms, and church membership. Where such figures do exist, leaders are understandably reticent to publish them for fear of attracting unwanted attention from the authorities.

As of December 1999 China had 663 municipalities and 1,682 counties and other rural districts. What we need is nothing less than a statistical survey aimed at obtaining reasonably accurate statistics for both registered and unregistered Christians in each of these more than 2,300 administrative units.14 Until we have such information, statistics on the number of Christians in China must be treated with a high degree of caution.

Notes

2. The Catholic church in China is much smaller, but researchers based in Hong Kong seem more agreed on the numbers than are those who count Protestants. The Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) estimates that there are 5 million Catholics (China Daily, June 21, 2001). Most overseas Catholic researchers are agreed on a figure of 10–12 million, including both CPA Catholics and the larger group of “underground” Catholics loyal to the pope.
4. The famine has been documented by Jasper Becker in his Hungry Ghosts: China’s Secret Famine (London: John Murray, 1996).
5. See Beijing Review, April 4, 2002, and a statement by Matthew Deng, general secretary of the TSPM, during a symposium held in Pasadena, California, February 22–26, 1999.
7. My translation of a paragraph on p. 21 of Shimeina Jiaohui (The church in Smyrna), by En Yu (San Francisco: China Witness Fellowship, October 1983).
13. Christianity Today, October 2, 2000, p. 27.
A Record of Growth, and More Growth Needed

Steve S. C. Moon

Since 1990 the Korea Research Institute for Missions (KRIM) has conducted biennial research projects on the missionary movement in Korea. The most recent survey, done at the end of the year 2000, studied the usual questions regarding the number of missionaries and mission agencies, and the number and type of mission fields. The 2000 survey also focused on the issues of information-technology investment, member care, and cooperation among mission agencies. This article highlights some important trends of the Korean missionary movement and issues needing attention for its further growth.

Korean Missionaries

According to KRIM statistics, 8,103 Korean missionaries were at work outside of Korea at the end of 2000. This total makes Korea the second largest missionary sending country in the world, ranking only after the United States in its number of overseas missionaries. This number is conservative, for it includes only missionaries belonging to mission agencies, not independent missionaries sent directly by a local church. Nor does it include workers who committed themselves to missionary service for less than two years, or those who have given up Korean citizenship for the sake of their work.

Marlin L. Nelson's first research on the missionary movement in Korea, in 1979, reported the existence of 93 overseas missionaries. His last report, in 1989, identified 1,178 Korean missionaries, more than a twelvefold increase in that decade. For the next generation of KRIM research, surveys showed a growth from 1,645 (1990) to 8,103 (2000), almost a fivefold increase. The growth rate thus slowed during the 1990s, but still it represents one of the fastest growing national missionary movements in the world.

At the time of the 1997 Korean economic crisis over the shortage of foreign currency, concern was expressed about the possible negative impact on the missionary movement. Our recent research shows, however, that economic problems have not slowed growth. In fact, every two-year period throughout the decade showed a strong increase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Missionaries</th>
<th>Two-Year % of Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1,645</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2,576</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>3,272</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>4,402</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>5,948</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>8,103</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>10,745</td>
<td>32.6 (est.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At present there are approximately 1,000 new missionaries being sent out each year from Korea. This number more than compensates for the missionaries leaving the field because of retirement or attrition.

Married missionaries outnumbered singles in the missionary force by a ratio of almost 7 to 1. The percentage of single missionaries fell from 20.2 percent in 1994 to 12.7 percent in 2000. 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.

Married missionaries have a lower attrition rate than singles, which suggests that the recent increase in the ratio of married workers is to be welcomed. In some fields, however, single missionaries can work more effectively. Also, given the typical cultural experience of Koreans, whose society is one of the most homogeneous in the world, it would seem wise to encourage young, single missionaries to gain intercultural exposure and missionary experience as soon in their lives as possible. Many Korean missionaries spend their twenties and early thirties on their own university education, military service, theological education, and prefield missionary training. This unusually long period of preparation in the home country is disadvantageous in terms of intercultural adjustment, learning, and creativity, because these qualities are better acquired when one is younger.

The level of ministry experience among Korean overseas missionaries has risen in recent years. In 1994 less than one-third of the 3,272 missionaries serving overseas had as much as four years' field experience. By 2000 this proportion had risen to 61 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>No. of missionaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 4</td>
<td>68 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>24 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 12</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2000 most of the 8,103 missionaries were focusing on church planting (37 percent) or discipleship training (27 percent). The remainder were divided among educational ministries (10 percent), theological education (7 percent), itinerant evangelism (6 percent), Bible translation or medical work (5 percent each), and social work (3 percent).

Korean Mission Agencies

The number of mission agencies in Korea has grown steadily from 21 in 1979 to 74 in 1990, 127 in 1998, and 136 in 2000. Of the 136 organizations, 98 are sending agencies, 17 are support organizations that do not themselves send missionaries, 11 are training centers, 6 are mission associations that facilitate cooperation and partnership among mission agencies, and 4 are research institutes. Altogether, 114 of the agencies are interdenominational, 22 are denominational.

Although the total number of missionaries continues to rise...
dramatically, the growth in the number of mission agencies has slowed. These facts suggest that new missionaries prefer working with already existing, stable agencies. In all, 4,615 (57 percent) of the Korean foreign missionaries serving in 2000 belonged to one of the following ten agencies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missionary Society</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Missionary Society</td>
<td>1,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Bible Fellowship</td>
<td>889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonghap Presbyterian Mission Board</td>
<td>616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Mission Board</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Missionary Fellowship</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist Mission Board</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly of God Mission Board</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaehyuk Presbyterian Mission Board</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koshin Presbyterian Mission Board</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiness Church Mission Board</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Korean missionary movement is playing a larger role than expected in world evangelism.

The 1990s have witnessed a rise in denominational agencies and a relative decline in campus ministries and interdenominational groups. Of the ten largest agencies in 2000, only the University Bible Fellowship is a campus ministry, and only the Global Missionary Fellowship is an interdenominational agency. Denominational missions often have an advantage in raising support, and they are typically better able to keep mission policies consistent and based on theological principles. Their drawback is the danger of inappropriately imposing denominational patterns in a mission field.

The size of mission agencies has grown over the years. In 1990 only four agencies had over 100 members; by 2000 there were twenty-four such organizations. The recent economic crisis seems not to have affected this trend. In 1998 two agencies had more than 500 members; two years later four agencies had grown to that size.

Korean Mission Fields

In 1979 Korean missionaries were serving in 26 countries around the world. This number more than tripled by 1990 (87 countries), and then almost doubled again by 2000 (162 countries). In 2000 only the United States (197 countries) sent missionaries to more countries. 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.

Given the numerous foreign invasions and occupations the Korean people have endured in their history, we can view Koreans' heavy involvement in foreign missions as one of the biggest surprises in the history of missionary movements. Certainly we must credit divine intervention and wisdom, which chooses what is foolish and weak in the world to put to shame the wise and the mighty (1 Cor. 1:27-28).

Not surprisingly, the largest number of Korean missionaries serve in Asia. Worldwide, the top ten host countries for the missionaries serving in 2000 were the following:

- China: 781 missionaries
- Philippines: 527
- Japan: 463
- Russia: 359
- Germany: 288
- Thailand: 233
- Indonesia: 216
- United States: 183
- India: 160
- Uzbekistan: 138

Overall, Asia is the place of service for the largest percentage of Korean workers (45.3 percent), followed by countries of the former Soviet Union (10.3 percent), Europe (8.9 percent), Latin America (7.0 percent), Africa (6.9 percent), the Middle East (5.4 percent), South Pacific and Oceania (3.3 percent), and North America (2.8 percent). The remaining 10.1 percent includes home staff members, itinerant workers, and people in training programs. It is natural and desirable for Korean missionaries to work in other Asian countries for cultural and geographic reasons, but their presence in the Middle East and other places distant from Korea reveals a certain pioneering spirit.

In terms of religious or cultural blocs served, two-thirds of all Korean foreign missionaries serve in areas that are culturally Christian (37 percent) or Muslim (29 percent). The remaining third is divided among peoples that are Buddhist (13 percent), Communist (11 percent), animistic (3 percent), Hindu (3 percent), or other (4 percent).

Quantity, but also Quality

The fact that 8,103 Korean missionaries work with 136 mission agencies in 162 countries is certainly encouraging. Though church growth in the homeland is currently relatively modest, and despite national economic struggles, the missionary commitment and zeal of the Korean church remain high. In the overall scheme of world mission, the Korean missionary movement certainly seems to be playing a larger role in world evangelization than would have been anticipated.

The rapid growth in the number of missionaries, however, has led to severe growing pains. There is clearly a need for more attention to the care of missionaries and to strategic development on the part of mission agencies and churches. The current socioeconomic stresses within Korean churches will likely limit bold investment in long-range development of strategic expertise on the part of mission agencies. We need further research on how mission workers from a monocultural background can become more effective in their work in the variety of global settings in which they serve. Thus, along with appreciation for the numerical growth of the Korean missionary movement, we need to address thoughtfully the issues that will promote continued growth and development.

Mistakes were made in the early, developmental stage of Korean missions, which were generally understood and excused by other missionary-sending countries and by the receiving countries. Now, however, as the second largest supporter of international missions, the Korean church must upgrade the criteria it uses for evaluating its mission personnel and programs. We certainly need more global criteria for judging the maturation of the missionary movement, for a wide variety of missions nowadays are simultaneously local and global. A review of the criteria used by the more experienced missionary-sending countries will shed light on what can be done to improve
missionary practice. Here we consider the key issues of member care for missionaries, the management of the missionary home office, and ministry strategy in the field.

From Noninterference to Systematic Care

Overall, Korean mission agencies have pursued size. They have emphasized recruiting new missionaries and mobilizing churches for missionary support, yet to a great extent they have neglected member-care service. For their part, missionaries on the field have typically preferred to work under their own guidance and sense of direction rather than welcoming the supervision and management of their sponsoring organization. As a result of these two tendencies, Korean missionaries have often worked virtually alone, engaging in minimal interaction with others. A weak member-care system has prevented Koreans from doing mission faithfully and skillfully, even in terms of their specific mission organizations or of the national missionary movement as a whole, not to mention by global standards.

Autonomy, rather than submission to organizational rules and policies, characterizes Protestant missions generally (especially in contrast to Roman Catholic missions), but this characteristic is even more pronounced in the missionary movements of the Two-Thirds World. A critical review of the Korean missionary movement reveals that its relatively weak accountability structure and its individualistic mission style, which to some degree are culturally determined, have been aggravated by a generally weak sending structure, which has commissioned missionaries before the sending bases were well formed, and by a weak member-care system, which has not been adequate for the numbers of missionaries actually sent out.

The general policy of noninterference and letting alone is undesirable, for missionaries need to work responsibly as members of an organization or team, being accountable to their supporting churches. Korean missionaries seem to be given, and to take, more individual latitude than missionaries from other countries. They would be well advised, however, to regard systems for supervision and care as minimal protective devices and to cooperate with them both for their personal well-being and for the sake of organizational solidarity.

On their part, mission administrators and supervisors need to remember that their role is not to control but to serve and to care for missionaries. Here the work of the Holy Spirit should be well considered because the Spirit pours out gifts on, and works through, individual persons in different ways, including those in support roles. Member-care personnel need to keep a balance between the extremes of noninterference and control. In this balance, both mission administrators and missionaries should be transparent in their use of time and finances, planning their respective ministries as good stewards for God. When all persons involved in the missionary effort fulfill their roles faithfully, observing biblical principles and organizational policies, missions will be more relevant and powerful.

Effective member care requires appropriate systems and experts who can maintain the systems. Health-care personnel, counselors, and educational specialists are most urgently needed, whether professionals who work full-time for missions or a network of experts who devote a percentage of their time to missions. Skilled administrators are needed both in the mission fields and in the home offices.

KRIM’s survey for the year 2000 identified 47 member-care personnel in 12 agencies, a number that is far from adequate in light of the actual needs of the 8,103 missionaries. Enlisting enough well-qualified people for member care will require a new degree of cooperation and support from churches.

From Imitation to Innovation

Missionary-sending structures in Korea have generally been modeled after Western agencies developed in Britain, the United States, and Canada, agencies whose structures reflect more than two centuries of refinement and change. Now, however, as the center of gravity in missions shifts to the non-Western world, there is an urgent need to review the appropriateness of using Western sending structures in the Two-Thirds World. In this transitory period non-Westerners need to be both appreciative and critical of the old as we develop models to face the new issues and challenges before us.

Indigenous mission agencies tend to be weak in establishing sending structures. In many cases an agency’s entire operation revolves around a charismatic leader, with little commitment to developing a structure that will allow the organization to survive after the passing of the leader. Leadership transition will be a crucial factor determining the progress of Korean mission agencies in the next several years. Developing sending structures based on contextualized ministry rather than on a single strong personality is a clear need, especially when we consider the involvement in missions of the younger generations. In our ever-globalizing world, this group calls for structures that are more horizontal than vertical.

In order to function both effectively and efficiently, mission agencies—especially the larger ones—need to act small, delegating more decision-making responsibility to lower units. Small mission agencies need to pursue organizational innovation through partnership and networking in order to give stability to their organizational practice.

Branches of international mission agencies need to pursue more innovative structural alignments that will allow them to work effectively across cultural boundaries. Management theorists have long suggested that uniform structures are no longer competitive in today’s global age. Megastructures, unless they act small, are ineffective in noticing and reacting to changes in their environment. A better option for international agencies seems to be to structure them as a federation of autonomous entities that give significant freedom to the operation of national councils. Such a decentralized model gives more sense of ownership to the supporting churches and national leaders in each sending country. Within such a structural model, Korean missionaries might feel less like a minority in a conglomerate international structure and more like part of a responsible leadership group. Embracing such a model will involve the radical restructuring of sending agencies; merely tinkering with the present model will produce no significant change.

Finally, all mission agencies, both large and small, need to explore the innovative possibilities of information technology (IT) and redefine their organizational functions accordingly. The
recently conducted survey by KRIM shows that Korean mission agencies are generally passive in their investment in IT. Of the 136 mission agencies, only 20 designate anyone as responsible for IT, and only 12 specifically mention IT in their budget. In all the agencies together, only 28 people are considered IT personnel. While many mission agencies are generally interested in IT and its related areas, few have developed concrete plans for creatively using IT in future ministry.

One of the main reasons behind the passive attitude toward IT among Korean mission agencies is lack of finances. Indeed, from 1999 to 2000 a majority of Korean mission agencies cut their budgets. The recent survey indicates that the monthly allotments for missionaries are indeed extremely modest: for a family with two children, the range is from US$780 to US$2,340; for single missionaries the range is from US$390 to US$1,404. For most Korean mission agencies 90 percent of the total mission budget goes directly to missionary support, leaving little for the home office. Most of the remaining 10 percent goes to salaries and maintenance fees for the home office, which hinders any new development of innovative technologies.

Korean mission agencies need to be proactive in attempting structural and technological innovation, notwithstanding their financial problems. With more IT experts, for example, more effective and efficient member service will be possible from the home office through better means of communication among supporting churches and missions, the home office, and missionaries on the field. Local churches have a significant role to play in making these advances possible.

From Competition to Cooperation

The fact that Korean missionaries work in 162 countries points to the need for field-based cooperation among mission agencies and missionaries. Since most Korean mission agencies do not operate solely within a single region, the need for cooperation is great. Partnership and cooperation are needed, not only among mission agencies, but also between mission agencies and churches in the mission fields, and between mission agencies and supporting churches in the home country.

Korean missionaries and their agencies need to work synergistically across organizational boundaries to achieve a common vision. In Korea competition rooted in the consciousness and mentality common to peasant societies has been strengthened by the national educational philosophy and system. Only by consciously embracing a truly kingdom vision will Korean missionaries be able to understand and practice "boundarylessness"; only when mission agencies are able to think across organizational boundaries can they enjoy synergy through functional partnership. Cooperation between mission agencies is difficult when mission executives are more concerned about the organizational development of their own agency than about the ultimate cause of the evangelization of the world. Duplicate investment by mission agencies, often a result of competition, sows the seeds of mistrust and a defensive mentality and thus jeopardizes partnership opportunities.

The role of associations of mission agencies is crucial in facilitating a spirit of partnership. Associations, both national and international, should provide sound platforms for cooperation and partnership based on recognized missiological principles. In negative cases, mission associations act like a separate mission organization, undermining partnership. Voluntary cooperation based on mutual trust is possible only when mission associations maintain an open, servant attitude.

It is becoming increasingly common for large churches to send out missionaries directly, bypassing mission agencies altogether. When local churches function also like mission agencies, however, contextualization of the Gospel is less likely to happen in the field because of the tendency of the sending church to exercise tight control over the mission work. Local church leaders, who often lack expertise in intercultural ministry, may exercise undue influence in determining field strategy. In worst cases, the direct involvement of local churches in field ministry might produce a new kind of imperialistic paradigm of missions.

Korean mission agencies and missionaries cannot avoid working with mission agencies and missionaries from other countries. Indeed, in this global age, we need to learn from one another in doing missions. Such learning across cultural and linguistic boundaries will help prevent mistakes otherwise easy to make. Korean mission agencies, however, now generally lack leaders prepared to work with representatives of mission agencies from other countries. Existing international agencies have more opportunities for raising up international leaders from among their member missionaries, but much time and encouragement are needed to cultivate well-prepared leaders. Church leaders in receiving countries should also take more initiative to foster partnership with Korean missionaries and agencies. Once adjusted to the concept of working in partnership and feeling comfortable with other stakeholders, Korean missionaries will become more effective in serving the cause of kingdom partnership.

Qualitative Issues for Local Churches

Local churches play a crucial role in advancing the missionary movement. Mission agencies are on the front line of world evangelization, but local churches are the driving force of missionary movements. The rapid growth of the missionary movement in Korea is rightly attributed to the zealous commitment and faithful support of Korean churches to the cause of reaching the unreached with the Gospel. It is time, though, for Korean churches to think less about the quantitative side of their missions growth and to reflect more on issues of qualitative growth.

In general, the Korean church should now pursue a globalization of its missionary movement, overcoming parochialism for the sake of world evangelization in this global age. Specific issues now facing local churches involve the support of missionary care, the development of infrastructures in support of missionaries, and the encouragement of mission innovation.

Experts in missionary support say that member-care personnel in mission agencies alone cannot meet the needs for missionary care. Workers on the field need assistance and support from the rich pool of people resources in local churches. There are medical doctors, counselors, and many others with valuable skills and experience who could make major contributions to the care of missionaries. Local churches should allow mission agencies to tap into their rich personnel resources.
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An example of broader personal involvement of local churches comes from Tae-Kwon Kim of Namseoul Pyongchon Presbyterian Church, who has made it a policy of his church to assign a single missionary or missionary family to each of his church’s cell groups, which then regularly prays for and contacts its missionaries. Cell group leaders are aware of their missionaries’ schedules and are the first to contact them when they return for a home visit.

A different source of support is the E-Land Group, founded in 1980 by Song-Su Park with the goal of using business as a vehicle for ministry and witness. The group has recently been developing ways to help mission agencies provide medical checkups for their missionaries. Ensup Sohn, director of the E-Land Group’s Hanse Clinic, has a vision of forming a network of medical doctors, nurses, and counselors who would be dedicated to missionary care.

Korean churches have generously given funds for constructing churches, schools, and hospitals in the mission fields. Now they need to give equally generously in developing the infrastructure in Korea in partnership with the mission agencies. Missionaries need housing while on home assignment, guest houses for short visits, sometimes youth hostels for their children, mission libraries for their continuing education, educational facilities for self-study, office space for administrative work, pensions for their lives after retirement, and many other provisions and facilities. Many churches in Korea run mission homes for missionaries on home assignment. Now a much broader vision of missionary support is needed, not only in the home country but also in the mission fields.

The newest technologies and skills must be used innovatively for ministry. Today one cannot talk about the future of missions without considering the Internet and the information revolution.

Korean churches need to take advantage of the advanced IT industry in Korea. Korean Christians, living in an environment where the information superhighway is more easily accessible than in any other country, must learn how to use the nationwide infrastructure and information technologies for missionary purposes. Perhaps one church could support not only its own Web page but another for missionary purposes in another language, in partnership with Korean missionaries or other Asian missionaries. Various sites could be run for direct evangelism, counseling, children’s education, or friendship building in different local languages.

Computer animation is one possible area of innovative ministry in the future, aimed at both children and adults. Bible stories and other stories of faith could be dubbed in different languages to be distributed in CDs, videotapes, or on Web sites. Perhaps Korean churches could overcome their monolingual background by partnering with Indian, Singaporean, and other Asian churches for production and distribution of these projects, thus helping develop genuinely cross-cultural ministries.

Looking to the Future

The global mission of God finds various expressions in different ages and cultural settings. The phenomenal growth of the Korean missionary movement has been an unexpected expression of God’s providential work, which works through the foolish and the weak. The movement has its own strengths and weaknesses as it continues to evolve. Along with rapid quantitative growth, there is need to upgrade the national missionary movement to become a fully global movement that encourages other local missionary movements throughout the world. Such a task requires a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of Korean missionary practices, using global criteria and standards.

A global mind-set requires learning across cultural and national boundaries. Korean missionaries need understanding and encouragement from Christian brothers and sisters of other countries, as they must give the same to the rest of the Christian world. Missionaries from Korea are eager to be part of the unified adventure of future missions, taking their part in God’s multinational, multicultural, and multilingual teams.

Notes

1. This article is based on a paper the author presented at the Global Congress on Church Ministry and Mission, Pattaya, Thailand, in October 2001.

2. If we consider the broader category of cross-cultural missionaries, India ranks ahead of Korea, for in 1997 it had 15,000 missionaries working cross-culturally, many of them in ministries within their own country. Patrick Johnstone cites the rank of Korean overseas missions in Operation World, 6th ed. (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Lifestyle, 2001), p. 388.

3. If we included independent missionaries, the number would be more than 9,000. We counted a missionary husband and wife as two units but did not include children unless they themselves had been admitted as adult missionaries. The pastors of Korean churches in the United States and Canada, as well as salaried staff members of mission agencies, were not included in the total of 8,103 missionaries. However, those working full-time in home offices as full members of the missions and who are supported directly by churches and individuals were considered as missionaries working in the headquarters. Missionaries who belonged to more than one agency were counted only once. In general, our number is a conservative one. Johnstone’s numbers of 10,646 foreign missionaries and 12,279 cross-cultural missionaries (Operation World, p. 749) include pastors of Korean churches overseas and double-count members who belong to two mission agencies.

4. My observation is that Korean churches make the support of individual missionaries a high priority, but they are less willing to invest in missions on a long-range basis. The recent economic constraints seem to have had an adverse effect on the attitudes of churches. For comparison, consider the story of American churches, which continued to support the cause of world missions despite the woes of the Great Depression in the 1930s (Ruth Tucker, From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983], pp. 323–24).


6. Marlin Nelson’s original research reported 89 mission agencies in 1986, and 92 in 1989. KRIM researchers, however, narrowed the definition of “mission agency” to those clearly dedicated to foreign missions, which reduced these figures to 65 and 66 respectively.


8. The number of missionaries in each country is to be understood as a minimum. In many “creative access” countries, missionaries use pseudonyms. While KRIM researchers did their best to identify all legal names and pseudonyms, the numbers here for such countries as China are no doubt actually higher than shown.

The global crises that dominated the first half of the twentieth century profoundly influenced the development of ecumenical social thought. The darkness of this time colored the diagnosis of the problem, leading even such a level-headed thinker as J. H. Oldham to state, “The fabric of human society is threatened with collapse.” Its severity focused attention on Christianity, especially on the incongruity between the reality and depth of the crisis and the claims of the Christian message. How could such social turmoil develop within an apparently Christian civilization? What religious message did Christianity have? The implication was that Christianity was powerless where it ultimately mattered—in reality. Such a perception resonated with some uncomfortable truths and stimulated a popular shedding of old attitudes.

The Great War

For missions the consequences of World War I were immediate: borders were closed, property was seized, and missionaries were expelled. Resources, both human and material, were diverted into the war effort. These physical consequences, however, were less troubling than the spiritual concerns. The West had considered itself a Christian civilization, yet the war revealed the impotence of Christianity, even among its greatest supporters, and raised serious questions about the missionary enterprise: “What do we mean by preaching the Gospel? The evangelization of the world is sometimes regarded as primarily a matter of preaching... but this view is too simple.... It has been necessary for the Gospel to commend itself in deeds and in the revelation of a new type of life before attention could be gained for its spoken message. ... The attitude of the non-Christian people towards Christianity will be determined in the end by what Christianity actually is in practice and not by what missionaries declare it to be.”

Traditional missionary methodology had relied on the resources and spiritual stature of the West to substantiate its message. So when the West seemed to be unraveling, the missionary enterprise seemed destined to unravel as well. The necessity of missions was questioned. What right did the West have to approach the East as its spiritual savior, as though the West held a greater truth? In an attempt to move forward, three tasks were highlighted: (1) diagnose the spiritual illness of the West, (2) revitalize the Christian West to promote the spread of the Gospel, and (3) prevent negative and eroding qualities present in the West from being exported to the East.

Initial diagnosis revealed, not the bankruptcy of Christianity, but the futility of attempting to build civilization on a foundation other than that of Christ. It highlighted the materialism, self-interest, and “belief in the might of the stronger” that

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From Jerusalem to Oxford: Mission as the Foundation and Goal of Ecumenical Social Thought

John Flett

The Great War

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ever, was the manner in which these values were propagated by an "extensive, complex, intricate, pervasive social organization which embraces us all in its controlling and inexorable grasp," which had become a "dominating fact in the life of the twentieth century."\(^4\)

A second factor responsible for the spiritual malaise of the West was the privatization of religion, an attitude of individual pietyism that vitiated the ability of distinctively Christian principles to influence Western society as a whole. To restrict the Gospel to individual salvation, however, is to compromise fundamental Christian principles, for "Christianity is thus divorced from real life" and "a large part of human life is withdrawn from the field of [its] operation."\(^5\) Social action is not some corollary of the Gospel but part of its very heart, and the war is one consequence of the church’s failure in this regard.

The cessation of hostilities in 1918 saw an influx of new tensions into this developing missiological debate. Before 1914 the supranational character of missions was a vaunted asset of the fledgling ecumenical movement. With the onset of the war, however, an uncritical and vengeful nationalism became apparent, one that swept away all facade of Christian unity and exposed the true isolation of the churches. Nationalist spirit strained the relationship between the German missionary leadership and the Edinburgh Continuation Committee (ECC), even to the point of the German contingent calling for the resignation of chairman John Mott.

Serious theological differences also became obvious. The American social gospel movement experienced a revival after the war. Scorning the tacit acceptance of abuses within industrial capitalism, as well as pulpits concerned only with the middle-class world of piety and private virtues, the social gospel stressed the Christianizing of the social order.\(^6\) In contrast, on the Continent a "crisis" theology was emerging that held the proclamation of the Word as of supreme importance and emphasized the uniqueness of Christ and absolute judgment of God. Crisis theology stressed the inherent antithesis between Christianity and the secular and thereby stimulated vocal opposition to the direction the ECC appeared to be heading.

The cumulative effect of these tensions during and after the war focused missionary attention on the Christian message itself and on fundamental theological reflection. What is Christianity? What is the Gospel? How does the distinctive Gospel message relate to the vital issues of the modern world? While the missionary message was fourth on the agenda of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910, the Christian life and message was of central priority for the first world assembly of the International Missionary Council (IMC), in Jerusalem in 1928.

**Rufus Jones demonstrated that secularism was rampant in a supposedly Christian civilization.**

We have thought of “Christian” truth as something above and beyond “truth in general,” as though there were levels and strata in the domain of truth. We must come to see that we gain nothing by insisting on private standards of truth and by setting apart our peculiar truths as though they belonged in a sphere where the normal tests of truth could be avoided or evaded. There is only one set of scales for truth, and our Christian claims to truth must be tested on those scales and must stand or fall by the way in which these claims conform to the eternal nature of things. . . . The weakest spot in our Christian armour is our failure to live the life about which we talk and preach.\(^7\)

This coalescent model of epistemology applied equally to the intellect and to common life. “It can be an adventure of the whole personality only if the Christian life is accompanied by a reflective interpretation of the implications of that life.”\(^8\) The comprehensive approach, however, was not universally accepted, and there were abiding criticisms concerning its theological base. According to Roland Allen, to suggest that the Gospel proclaimed life to society was unbiblical, arising from a “modern rationalistic theory of the Kingdom of God.”\(^9\) Fredrick Torm, reflecting Continental suspicions of prewar social tenden­cies, described the results of the Jerusalem conference as “Christian sociology” and insisted that the church and its missions could take no responsibility for social theories.\(^10\)

Jerusalem 1928

Perhaps the Jerusalem conference, held on the Mount of Olives over Easter of 1928, is best seen in the light of David Livingstone’s prophetic words: “The end of the geographical feat is the beginning of the missionary enterprise.”\(^11\) At Edinburgh in 1910 the idea of mission as expansion remained dominant, as did the use of battlefield metaphors.

Less than two decades later, however, and reflecting the massive effect the war had had on the global mind, Jerusalem found that “the mission field has no geographical limits and is not to be spatially conceived.”\(^12\) It rejected as false any assumption that the Gospel was for individuals only or that its spread could be measured by tabulating the lands where such individuals lived. Instead, it highlighted large areas of life, including social organization and economic relationships, that should be subject to Christian principle. This understanding of mission became known as the comprehensive approach and subsequently became a hallmark of the conference’s influence.

This radical extension of traditional missionary thinking was in large part due to a paper on secularism delivered by Rufus Jones. He demonstrated that secularism, a product of Western history and culture, was rampant within a supposedly Christian civilization. At heart, “this vast un consecrated rival” presented an epistemological challenge. It was a philosophy of life based on what people could see and touch, utilizing a powerful and evolving science and reaping the benefits of the technical enterprise. Secularism was “intimately associated with the creative forces of the modern world”; in response, Christianity required a true apologetic that reached down “to the depths of man and of life, causing humanity and individual men to be conscious of their own presuppositions.”\(^13\)

As the secular interpretation was closely associated with the realities of life, the epistemological question could be answered only by something that had an equal sense of engagement with reality. The church and its mission could not speak to the modern world unless it reexamined and reformulated the fundamentals of its faith and power. In the words of Hendrik Kraemer, the challenge of secularism “compelled us to a greater sincerity and deeper realization of the essential grandeur of religion—if it be a reality.”\(^14\) Jones called for expression of Christian faith to eschew philosophic idealism and come down to earth.

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In contrast, American and British observers maintained that "the whole distinction between the life of the spirit and the fabric of society is a false antithesis which it should be the duty of a Christian community to overcome." The missionary enterprise was responsible for the whole life of those to whom they ministered, and the task of the church was "to create a Christian civilization within which all human beings can grow to their full spiritual stature."16

Amid such a complex debate Jerusalem’s final statement, "Our message is Jesus Christ," was more than a minimalist agreement of divergent voices. This Christological message constituted an essential affirmation that the Gospel "announces glorious Truth." In Christ "we come face to face with the ultimate reality of the universe," the only reality powerful enough to meet the challenge of secularism and the modern global context. "He himself is the Gospel, the Gospel is the message of the Church to the world."17

But "if these affirmations are to be effective they must be given full and rich content." The council asserted "with all the power at its command" that the Gospel of Christ, which is a message of real salvation, of conversion and redemption, had a direct and definite bearing on all aspects of life; it is the "sure source of power for social regeneration." Furthermore, "those who proclaim Christ’s message must give evidence for it in their own lives and in the social institutions which they uphold."18

Such statements reflected a growing awareness within the IMC that the church and mission belonged together, not beside each other. Though this church-centered understanding remained nascent at Jerusalem, it emerged with prophetic force at the Oxford Life and Work Conference of 1937, which considered the theme "Church, Community, and State."

The stock market crash of October 1929 was the first in a series of social catastrophes that, combined with aggressive foreign policies, produced a wave of human misery of such magnitude that it could not be ignored. In response the Universal Christian Council of the Life and Work movement sanctioned an international conference, "The Church and the State of Today," held in Paris in April 1934. Conviction that the modern situation indicated a profound cultural change dominated conference discussions. More was involved than institutional relationships or religious liberty—at stake was "a shift in man’s total understanding of life."19

The Paris conference elicited favorable public response, but its discussion was only a beginning. When the executive committee of the Life and Work movement met that August in Fano, Denmark, to consider a follow-up to its 1925 Stockholm conference, the focus was on the compelling themes of church, community, and state—and their interrelation. J. H. Oldham accepted the role of chairperson for the 1937 conference, being convinced that the issues raised would contribute directly to the main concerns of the IMC: "When the Universal Christian Council turned to me . . . I found an opportunity . . . I have been seeking. It is not for me a different thing connected with Life and Work, but the very thing that since Jerusalem has seemed to me to be the crucial issue in missionary work . . . a fulfillment of the tasks which the IMC ought to undertake."

For Oldham, the central issue was "the question of the Message, and of the message not only in itself but in its relation and application to the modern situation."20 Oldham, widely acknowledged as Oxford’s chief architect, influenced the conference most profoundly because of the vital link he sustained and cultivated between the missiological lessons of Jerusalem and the social reality of the church.

Oxford 1937
When 425 conference delegates gathered at Oxford University on July 12, 1937, they were meeting against a background of historical crisis, with enormous problems of mass unemployment and a menacing nationalism. Consciousness of the growing threat, accentuated by the enforced absence of the German Confessing Church, reinforced in the minds of the delegates a theological realism that became Oxford’s leitmotiv. The phrase "Christian realism" attempted to convey the human condition in all its ambiguity, keeping in dialectic tension the subtleties of sin and the depth and extent of divine grace. Unlike the naive liberal optimism that had characterized so much earlier ecumenical social strategy, Christian realism provided a fruitful tension between study of the world context and study directed toward a deeper understanding of the Christian message and its application to modern social needs.

Oxford viewed the contemporary mission of the church in the context of a distraught and disunited humanity. Modern technologies had in effect shrunk the world, bringing peoples of contrasting assumptions into closer contact with each other. This intermingling exposed previously unquestioned traditions as limited perspectives of particular communities. The foundations that had once undergirded a single (Western) society now seemed inadequate to sustain a broader essentially communal world structure. The resulting moral confusion tended to fragment social life and provoke social disorder, disruptive economic forces, and international threat.

The attempt in the West to establish civilization on a secularist and humanist basis without regard for any fundamental external authority brought widespread social disintegration in its train. Guided by a secular view of life, Western civilization was confident that its problems could be solved by reason and through material means. However, "concentration of interest on the present life, which is ultimately rooted in the choice of individuals, . . . permeate[d] the whole texture of social life so that it [became] . . . the benumbing influence to which all . . . are . . . subject."21 The consequence of this preoccupation with individual self-determination was a monstrous parochialism that threatened to tear civilization apart.

Non-Christian assumptions about the purpose of life had profound potential to shape popular worldviews.

Confronted by the threat of fragmentation finding expression in modern society, some countries instituted deliberate and sustained efforts to regulate community life. Most notable were the communist and fascist systems, which attempted to restore social cohesion by imposing drastic regimentation and by making class or national unity the supreme good. These systems invested the state with absolute value and demanded that all else serve the state’s greater good or simply be eliminated, as illustrated by the trials of the Confessing Church. By centralizing public services, such as the media and education, the state was able to impose on the whole community a normative philosophy of life and pattern of living, which was meant to control the totality of human experience.
While necessarily concerned with authoritarian forms of government, Oxford was not blind to the less obvious influence of democracy. In a way more pernicious because subtler and presented in less identifiable packaging than that of dictatorial systems, democracy could be insidious and beguiling. Unlike military totalitarianism, which called for a response of martyrdom, democracy had the potential to become a social totalitarianism, "with the total absorption of the individual in a rigid unified social organism."

Focus on the Community

Intermediate between the church and the state is the community, which Oxford defined as "a web of organic corporate relationships which surrounds . . . life in concentric circles of ever-widening radius." The significance of this communal web lay in its socializing effect, in its capability to subtly mold the individual. As with the state, community is a gift of God, but all its forms, such as family, nation, or race, "partake of both good and evil; they are of God and also of human sin." At issue here is the question of what place culture holds in God's purpose for humanity. Oxford affirmed that community was "created by God for the preservation . . . of the past, the nurture and training of successive generations, and the maintenance and improvement of the common life." As such, the individual is obligated to this distinct culture as a trustee of an inheritance. But "the obligation of both the Christian and the Church is rather to loyalty than to obedience or conformity." This contrast between loyalty and conformity is crucial for understanding Oxford's balance between wariness toward community, active concern for the social structures of the world, and interest in clarifying the distinctive Christian message.

The expanding roles of state and community, combined with new technologies, created an unprecedented opportunity for the dominant ideas of a society to permeate the whole community. Assumptions regarding the nature of humanity and the purpose of life that were contrary to traditional Christian presuppositions were continuously and insidiously being promulgated. Consequently, they had profound potential to condition the ethical content of social life and to shape the prevailing worldview. "The struggle today concerns those common assumptions regarding the meaning of life without which . . .

Noteworthy

Announcing

The World Evangelical Alliance Missions Commission will hold a Global Leadership Consultation, May 31 to June 6, 2003, at Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia, Canada, with "The Globalisation of Mission" as its theme. Some 200 leaders from 50 countries are expected to attend the meeting, which will provide a forum to further develop the issues discussed at the commission's Iguassu Consultation in 1999. Organizers are also cosponsoring a two-day conference with Regent College, Vancouver, immediately after the general sessions around the theme "The Bible and the Nations." Contact William Taylor at wbiltdtaylor@cs.com or visit www.globalmission.org.

Religious Archives Newsletter, published by the Churches and Religious Denominations section of the International Council on Archives, recommends use of the Web-based UNESCO Archives Portal as having the "best chance to become the widest known and most complete archives portal in the international field." The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Web site, established in September 2000, links some 5,000 archives and related resources. Paris-based Axel Plathe is editor-in-chief. For a free subscription to Religious Archives Newsletter, which commenced with the January 2002 issue, e-mail a request to Michael Häusler in Berlin at newsletter@ica-skr.org. The UNESCO portal may be viewed at www.unesco.org/webworld/portal_archives.

The Franciscan Biblical Study Centre in Tokyo has published a Japanese version of the Book of Jeremiah, which completes the Centre's translation of the Bible, carried out in thirty-seven installments. Directed by Odaka Takeshi, the publication is the culmination of work begun in 1956 by the previous director, Bernardino Schneider, O.F.M., who, at 84 years of age, is still involved in the project. In 1952, when Schneider arrived in Tokyo as a missionary, he used a translation of the Bible in classical Japanese that was based on the Latin Vulgate. The translation he initiated is in colloquial Japanese and is based on the most recent critical editions of the original texts, yet keeping the Latin Vulgate in mind. Takeshi announced that within the next five years the Centre hopes to publish the complete translation of the Bible in a single volume.

The American Society of Missiology will convene its 2003 annual meeting in Techny, Illinois, June 20–22, with "Redressing the Counterwitness of Racism: A Missionary Imperative for the Twenty-first Century" as its theme. Margaret E. Guider, O.S.F., associate professor of religion and society, Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, is the ASM president and the annual banquet speaker. The Association of Professors of Mission will hold its annual meeting at the same location June 19–20 around the theme "Teaching, Learning, and Mentoring for Mission and Ministry in the Intra-cultural and Inter-cultural Setting." Register for both meetings by e-mailing asm.office@ptsem.edu or calling (609) 497-3639.

The Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and Non-Western Christianity, an informal group of scholars formed to facilitate discussion and exchange of information about historical aspects of the missionary movement and the development of world Christianity, will hold its 2003 meeting July 3–5 at Yale University Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, with "Conversion and Converts" as its theme. The Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, Edinburgh, and the Overseas Ministries Study Center are cosponsors with Yale. For details, e-mail Martha Lund Smalley at martha.smalley@yale.edu or visit www.library.yale.edu/div/yaleedin.htm.

More than 100 representatives of Anglican Communion mission boards, agencies, and movements throughout the
society can cohere. These vast issues are focused . . . in an all-powerful State which is committed to a particular philosophy of life and seeking to organize the whole of life in accordance with a particular doctrine of the ends of man’s existence and in an all-embracing community of life which claims to be at once the source and the goal of all human activities.” This was the fundamental religious problem of the day and also the essential theme of Oxford, identified in the official conference report as “the life and death struggle between Christian faith and the secular and pagan tendencies of our time.”

Attending to the church’s social context—learning the language and thought forms of an alien environment (even within Western culture)—was imperative if the church was to redress secular and pagan tendencies of our time.”

Reflecting a comprehensive approach to mission, Oxford called for a vital faith that would express itself through commitment to the social message of the Gospel. Yet Oxford linked that call to a caution and a challenge. On the one hand, “We cannot address ourselves to the real situation in the world today if we put [fundamentals] out of our mind in order to get on with the job of applying Christianity to the social needs and tasks of our time. . . . The real crisis of the Church relates not to its social program but to its faith.” On the other hand, the church dare not be

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**Personalia**

The World Council of Churches executive committee appointed Peter Weiderud of Sweden as coordinator of the WCC international relations team and director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, effective September 1, 2002. He succeeded Dwain Epps, who retired after twenty years with CCIA. Juan Carlos Michel, Argentine journalist, was appointed as WCC media relations officer. He succeeded Karin Achtelstetter of Germany, who resigned to become professor of linguistics and semiotics at the Universidad Catolica Boliviana, Cochabamba, Bolivia, since 1995, was elected vicar general. John C. Barth, M.M., who served ten years with the Maryknoll mission in Cambodia and founded Rehabilitation for Blind Cambodians, was elected an assistant general. John J. McAuley, M.M., former pastor of Tomakomai, Omotomachi Parish and Shizunai Parish on the island of Hokkaido, Japan, and co-founder of Tomakomai Mission to Seamen, was also elected an assistant general. The new council took office on November 22. For details visit www.maryknoll.org.

Ful fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, appointed Douglas McConnell as dean of the School of World Mission, effective April 1, 2003. He replaces Sherwood Lingenfelter, who was named in July 2002 as provost and senior vice president. McConnell, who was international director of Pioneers, Orlando, Florida, is also associate professor of leadership. John Fletcher, director of the global partners international director of Pioneers.


satisfied with merely restating orthodoxy; rather, to take its mission seriously, it must give to "the tremendous and startling affirmations of the historic Christian faith a meaning and expression that makes a living challenge to the thought and life of ordinary man."[30]

Oxford's Message concluded, "The first duty of the Church, and its greatest service to the world is that it be in very deed the Church-confessing the true faith, committed to the fulfillment of the will of Christ, its only Lord, and united in him in a fellowship of love and service."[31] As a present and universal reality, the church is witness to the radical and eschatological nature of God's kingdom and thus in a position to challenge all structures. As a firstfruit, it is called to embody a "totally other" sodality which reveals its own divine nature.

A second factor in Oxford's implicit ecclesiology was its emphasis on the laity. Oxford warned against limiting what the church could accomplish to what it could do in its corporate and clerical capacity. Such an approach would neglect the influence and experience of the laity, who penetrate every aspect of social life.

Oxford understood the church to be a community given a new understanding of life that affects the entire outlook and behavior of its members and that colors every action of their lives. In the modern world the Gospel is waiting to be carried abroad through the conduct of this multitude, actively engaged in secular occupations.

Conclusion

To separate social thought from mission is to create a false antithesis, more a product of Western culture and rigid scholasticism than of Christianity. Jesus' teachings concerning the community of salt and light point the church always beyond itself to the "place" in which it is set. In the same way, mission never ends with the church but, through the church, must confront any challenge to Christ's lordship.

In contrast, ecumenical history as opposed to the ecumenical ideal has been marked by widespread confusion over the precise relationship between mission and social action. Phrases like "doctrine divides but service unites" illustrate and reinforce the dualistic tension that exists. In one sense such catch phrases reflect legitimate differences of individual emphasis, but they cannot be allowed to detract from the wider question of the church and its responsibility in witness. The unity and development of the church depend on rapprochement between ecclesiology and missiology—and their mutual social expression in forms that are true to the integrity of a divine Gospel. Such are the lessons of Jerusalem and Oxford.

Notes

2. Ibid., pp. 18–20.
5. Ibid., p. 200.
11. Ibid., p. 197.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
24. Ibid., pp. 229, 227.
27. Visser 't Hooft, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 14: "There can . . . be no true wrestling with the realities of the contemporary situation, except in so far as we allow their meaning to break through the crust of our customary thinking into those deeper levels of our being in which our experience is absorbed and organized, so that there will take place progressively, and to a large extent subconsciously, a reconstruction of our whole outlook, and a reorientation of our fundamental attitudes. An openness of the mind and of the whole being to the realities of the world in which the mission of the Church has to be fulfilled today is essential. . . ."
29. Visser 't Hooft and Oldham, The Church and Its Function in Society, p. 112.
30. Ibid., pp. 105, 108.
THE PROPHET & THE MESSIAH
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Cultural specialist Patty Lane shows us how to develop hands-on relational skills that help build cross-cultural friendships, noting practical resources for navigating multicultural environments with sensitivity and savvy. She explains frequently misunderstood aspects of culture, debunks stereotypes and suggests ways to resolve cross-cultural conflicts. 206 pages, paper, 0-8308-2346-8, $14.00

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In his new book, experienced cross-cultural specialist Duane Elmer provides a compass for navigating through different cultures, including how to avoid pitfalls and cultural faux pas, as well as how to make the most of opportunities to build cross-cultural relationships. Filled with real-life illustrations and practical exercises, this guide offers the tools needed to reduce apprehension, communicate effectively, and establish genuine trust and acceptance. 215 pages, paper, 0-8308-2309-3, $15.00

InterVarsity Press at bookstores or www.ivpress.com
### Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2003

**David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson**

The table opposite is the nineteenth in an annual series describing statistics and trends in world mission. Each year this table has served as a brief report on the previous year’s annual Christian megacensus. The megacensus refers to the totality of churches’ and church agencies’ annual censuses of their adherents, activities, personnel, finances, and ministries. It includes all aspects of their mission in the world. These 50,000 or so separate and distinct censuses, collected yearly by some 10 million Christians at a cost of 1.1 billion dollars, are not centrally coordinated but are nevertheless reported and analyzed here as a single megaphenomenon.

### Short-Term Trends

The megacensus is a powerful tool for bringing short-term trends to light. The last column but two opposite, labeled “Trend, % p.a.,” measures rate of increase over the three-year period 2000-03. Used with care, these numbers form indicators of progress in mission, or the lack of it. The first, in line 1, gives the world’s trend in total population: 1.22 percent per annum (the same as last year). Readers are invited to assess the significance of this year’s thirty-two categories that show a growth rate of more than 2 percent per annum.

### Long-Term Trends

Each year the megacensus—which goes back to the Middle Ages—documents far more than the 79 categories shown opposite in the table. To show how the megacensus illuminates vast areas of Christian concern, consider the following sentence derived from data in this year’s new magisterial histories of the Bible and added to our CosmoChronology for the year 1516:

> Vast expansion of early Bible manuscripts (scrolls, codices, books, fragments, all written before A.D. 1000) known and available to scholars and translators. Total rises rapidly from only one in the year 1516 (the Byzantine Text, the only pre-1000 one available to Erasmus for his pioneering first printed Greek New Testament that he entitled *Novum Instrumentum*), to 15 (in 1553) to 90 (in 1707) to 220 (in 1752) to 1,000 (in 1840) to 3,000 (in 1890) to 4,000 (in 1908) to 5,500 (in 1950) to 7,000 (by 2000).

This mass of evidence bearing on the historicity and credibility of the risen Christ and his Great Commission has been growing at 1.85 percent per year.

### Reliability of “Baptized” Statistics

The oldest and most central of the 2,056 instruments (“measuring devices”) that churches, denominations, and agencies measure or count each year is the total number of baptized persons living at any one time.

To encapsulate the value and the power of the annual Christian megacensus, here are eight brief statements about this central category of “baptized” members (statistics of affiliated Christians or church members; see line 25).

1. A cardinal initial principle is that heads of denominations (bishops, patriarchs, chairmen, presidents, general secretaries, and their secretariats) know their flocks far better than any outside observers, hence their enumerations must be accorded primary credibility whether published or kept private.

2. Most invoke Christ’s Great Commission, with its 110 macrocommands or imperatives (listed in *World Christian Trends*, p. 708, such as “Go,” “Witness,” “Proclaim,” and “Teach”), and most know that the imperative “Baptize” (as in Matt. 28:19, Contemporary English Version) is the only one of those 110 imperatives that can be immediately obeyed, recorded, and precisely enumerated or measured by counting.

3. On the first day of the church’s existence, the Day of Pentecost, the apostles did precisely this—obeying, baptizing, enumerating (“3,000”), and recording (in Acts 2).

4. To this day, virtually all the world’s 36,400 denominations have followed suit, maintaining counts of their baptized membership; moreover, most react strongly to disparaging or critical assessments of their censuses from outside.

5. Eighty-five percent of these denominations enumerate only this one category of membership, which could therefore be regarded as the closest we have to a universal outward and visible measure or sign of affiliated church membership.

6. This measure of baptized membership is the only measure in use for comparative studies, for representation at global, continental, or national conferences, selection of delegates, allocation of seats, drawing up of quotas, grants, taxes, assessments, and the like.

7. Among countless historical cases, consider Martin Luther’s usage. Whether the Devil sneered at Luther’s wavering hope of personal salvation, Luther would rush to his study and scrawl two words in chalk across his desktop—not *Conversus sum* (I have been converted), as his fellow reformers urged him to do, but *Baptizatus sum* (I have been baptized). What Luther was referring to was an indubitable event in his life in which his parents had rushed him twelve hours after his birth in 1483 to the local Catholic priest, who then immediately administered infant baptism without catechetical or other preparation.

8. Finally, we consider the vastly influential 1948 U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirms that a person’s religion and religious status are what he or she says they are, no more and no less. If he or she says, “I am a Muslim,” then he or she is a Muslim. Likewise, if anyone states, either as an individual or in a census or public-opinion poll, “I am a baptized Christian,” and is not obviously lying for whatever reason, no one else has the right to say, “No, you are not.”

With this powerful tool of large-scale comparative measurement, vast areas of church and mission history take on new significance. Each year the megacensus brings new surprises!

---

**Note**


#### GLOBAL POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Literates</th>
<th>Nonliterate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,696,148,000</td>
<td>6,055,049,000</td>
<td>2,342,778,000</td>
<td>1,737,970,000</td>
<td>2,544,674,000</td>
<td>3,261,345,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5,987,079,000</td>
<td>7,823,703,000</td>
<td>4,611,677,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### WORLDWIDE EXPANSION OF CITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Megacities (over 1 million population)</td>
<td>6,055,049,000</td>
<td>15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolises (over 100,000 population)</td>
<td>7,823,703,000</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural dwellers</td>
<td>4,611,677,000</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### GLOBAL POPULATION BY RELIGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christians (total all kinds) (=World C)</td>
<td>1,160,000,000</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New-Religionists</td>
<td>12,292,000</td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnoreligionists</td>
<td>1,994,100,000</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonreligious</td>
<td>3,943,000</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christians (=Worlds A and B)</td>
<td>1,236,374,000</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Christians as % of world (=World C)</td>
<td>1,994,100,000</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>1,994,100,000</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Christians as % of world (=World C)</td>
<td>1,994,100,000</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CHRISTIAN WORKERS (clergy, laypersons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Christians</td>
<td>1,994,100,000</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CHRISTIAN LITERATURE (titles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scriptures including New Testaments,</td>
<td>7,823,703,000</td>
<td>9.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelism-hours per year</td>
<td>2,544,674,000</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearer-hours (offers) per year</td>
<td>3,261,345,000</td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### CHRISTIAN FINANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Churches' income</td>
<td>2,544,674,000</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parachurch and institutional income</td>
<td>3,261,345,000</td>
<td>7.25</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN LITERATURE (titles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scriptures including</td>
<td>7,823,703,000</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### CHRISTIAN RADIO/TV STATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total monthly listeners/viewers</td>
<td>3,261,345,000</td>
<td>7.25</td>
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#### CHRISTIAN LITERATURE (titles)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Trend % p.a.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scriptures including</td>
<td>7,823,703,000</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### January 2003

- **Unchristian as % of world**
  - 787,579,000
  - 1,845,406,000

- **World evangelization plans since a.d. 30**
  - 1,653,901,000
  - 1,845,406,000
My Pilgrimage in Mission

Ralph R. Covell

My pilgrimage began with my birth, December 23, 1922, in Redondo Beach, California, a seacoast city that has now become a resort center for the entire Los Angeles area. I was a kind of afterthought in my family, for my two sisters were fourteen and sixteen years older than me. The family had come from Pueblo, Colorado, which they left because of the poor economic situation there. Settling in Redondo Beach, my father, a carpenter and handyman, built the house in which I was born. From the time I can remember anything, I knew our family was poor. Before I was seven years old, the Great Depression hit in 1929, and the only job my father could get was with the Works Progress Administration (WPA), often at sites far away in the desert that took him from home for long periods. The younger of my sisters had a reliable job, and often the family found it necessary to live on her earnings. Learning early how to live with the bare necessities of life helped in knowing how to adjust as I worked with and lived among some of the poor in China and Taiwan.

My father had been raised by an uncle who was a Methodist minister serving in many cities throughout Colorado, but he did not become a Christian until later in his life. My mother was a lapsed Lutheran and only later would become an earnest Christian. My two sisters thought it would be good for me to have a church upbringing and took me one Sunday to a large Methodist church in Redondo. I have vague memories of sitting outside on the steps of the building and crying—so they thought maybe I would do better at the Baptist church. This change apparently worked, and my denominational affiliation was determined until the present day (though now, I hope, for better reasons!).

I had faithful Sunday school teachers at the Baptist church, and their lives and teaching led me at twelve years of age to make a public profession of faith in Christ. Commitment to Christ, I have learned, is a process, and more important steps were just ahead. My Sunday school teacher after my baptism was a retired navy man who made the Bible live for me. He had had no formal training, and he did not know how to teach, but his life radiated the presence of Christ and his experience with Christ. At about the same time, as I entered high school, another young Sunday school teacher decided to start some noon Bible studies on the school campus and invited me to come. What a dilemma! I did not really want to join such a group that would expose me and my little faith to public scrutiny, but I could hardly refuse to go when I had made a public commitment at church.

Turning Points

So I went, albeit as quietly as I could. This decision was a turning point in my walk with Christ. The Bible became alive for me. Commitment to Christ, I have learned, is a process, and more important steps were just ahead. My Sunday school teacher after my baptism was a retired navy man who made the Bible live for me. He had had no formal training, and he did not know how to teach, but his life radiated the presence of Christ and his experience with Christ. At about the same time, as I entered high school, another young Sunday school teacher decided to start some noon Bible studies on the school campus and invited me to come. What a dilemma! I did not really want to join such a group that would expose me and my little faith to public scrutiny, but I could hardly refuse to go when I had made a public commitment at church.

Looking Toward China

An important factor in my decision to go to China was a fine book by Mrs. Howard Taylor entitled Behind the Ranges. Here was a challenging account of the English CIM missionary James Fraser and his work among the Lisu people of southwestern China. To learn of his dedication, his single-minded commitment to prayer, and his vision for a “people movement” among his beloved Lisu was an ongoing inspiration during many difficult years in China.

Ralph R. Covell served as a missionary on the mainland of China and in Taiwan, 1946–66. From 1966 to the present he has taught World Christianity at Denver Seminary, where he was also academic dean, 1979–90. Coauthor with C. Peter Wagner of An Extension Seminary Primer (1971), he has published five books on China. For the years 1982–88 he was editor of Missiology, the journal of the American Society of Missiology.
We had little to do for three months but read, pray, and amuse ourselves by chasing many rats.

issues on the home front were muddy and confused; in China there was theological turmoil, but the choices were clear. There we found many students on a Christian campus in Chengdu, sponsored in part by the ABFMS, who were thoroughly disoriented by divergent theological trumpets. From this observation I felt that my choice of the new agency was more than justified.

After language study in Chengdu, our China party settled in a remote area of what was often called eastern Tibet, now located in western Sichuan. This was a troubled time in China, testified to by the presence of four different armies, only one of which belonged to the national government. Our principal goal was to bring the Gospel to the minority people group often referred to as the independent Nosu. Even though we were isolated from the mainstream of Chinese life, our area was ultimately liberated by the armies of the People’s Republic of China in March 1950. Lulled by promises of “religious freedom,” most missionaries in southwestern China tried to continue their work. This effort ended with the “voluntary war” in Korea, and our group, along with many others, left China in mid-1951. The big blessing of this time was that I married a fellow missionary, Ruth Laube, who joined with me for the final days in China and our subsequent ministry in Taiwan and America.

As Ruth and I left China in the spring of 1951, we were delayed three months in a small room above a tea shop in the city of Yaan, Sichuan. We had little to do for this period except to read, pray, and amuse ourselves chasing the many rats who dared to enter our premises. Much of my Bible study during this time was in Revelation, which, depending on one’s prophetic perspective, could relate very directly to our dilemma in the midst of this Chinese revolution. Could I, following usual, self-confident evangelical prophecy, find any program that would help me see what was coming for China, the world, and us in days ahead? Fortunately not! But I did learn the big lesson of Revelation: Jesus Christ is Lord and may be trusted in all circumstances. That view has not left us as we continue to live in our present world with so many confusing and contradictory prophetic voices.

How do you put your head together after going through a revolution? I found no help with many American compatriots who thought the United States had “lost China.” Much more helpful were six months of study at Columbia University, with courses also at Teacher’s College and Union Theological Seminary. This exposure, along with our own experiences, helped me to conclude that China needed a change, that revolution was probably the best solution, but that revolution eventually generates the need for yet further change. Human utopias are not the final answer for the human dilemma.

Translating at Last

Following our time in the United States in 1951–52, Ruth and I went to Taiwan, where we spent fifteen delightful years. Here the dream, which had failed to come true in China, of translating the Bible into another language became a reality. Taiwan’s eleven groups of original inhabitants (formerly referred to as high mountain peoples) had come to faith in Christ in great numbers. But they needed Scripture in something different from Japanese, Mandarin, or Taiwanese. It was my privilege to work together with a diverse group of expatriate and local translators in getting this job done. My responsibility was with the Taruku people, who lived across the center of the island from Puli to Hualien and up and down the eastern coast. Before our departure in 1966 I was able to complete the New Testament and make a start on the Old Testament. Translation of the Old Testament is now nearing completion under the supervision of a local translation committee consisting of Presbyterian pastors. I have made almost annual trips back to Taiwan to serve as a consultant in this ongoing task.

As time allowed, I became involved in theological education at our Baptist seminary at Hsi Lo, south of the central city of Taichung. It was an exciting experience, not only to be involved in teaching young Chinese students, but to associate with many Chinese colleagues also engaged in theological education. The contrast between working in and with Chinese churches part of each month and then for the rest of the month being deeply involved in the churches of the original inhabitants was greatly stimulating. Soon it became apparent to me that my B.D. degree was not sufficient for the task at hand. So on our next furlough I studied for the Th.M. in New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, Calif.), finding great profit under the guidance of Everett F. Harrison and George Eldon Ladd.

The need for Scripture translation in the languages of the original inhabitants of Taiwan was great. Many of these people had turned to Christ during the latter years of the Japanese occupation in Taiwan. Much of what they knew came from the Japanese Bible, which tended to be classical and difficult to understand. The younger people were beginning to learn Mandarin, but again their comprehension was minimal. What a privilege then, during my last two years in Taiwan, to be appointed an associate of the Bible Society of Taiwan, helping to advise several translation committees involved in preparing indigenous translations for their groups.

Two of our three sons were born in Taiwan. The poor health of one made it necessary to return to the United States in 1966, and I was invited to become associate professor of missions at Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary (now known as Denver Seminary). I had been involved in various types of mission ministries for twenty years, but I really had no firm idea on how to teach missions. I soon realized that missions, unlike other seminary departments and disciplines, was very complex, for it included history, anthropology, sociology, theology, world religions, human relationships, and even more. How could I gain
a measure of expertise in any or all of these fields? Missiology
was in its infancy as an American discipline at that time. I saw
rather quickly that I needed more education and opted for a
comparative history degree at the University of Denver, whose
campus was only a few blocks from the seminary.
My dissertation for this Ph.D. degree produced my first
lings with Martin’s relationship to Chinese culture led in a few
years to other historical treatments of this basic issue. Confucius,
traced historically the way in which the Gospel had been related
to Han Chinese culture, and The Liberating Gospel in China (1995)
did the same with the non-Han minority cultures in China. These
books and a more recent one on Taiwan’s original inhabitants,
Pentecost of the Hills in Taiwan (1998), reflect my growing convic-
tion that nothing is more important in carrying out the mission-
ary task than to relate the message integrally to the receptor
culture. Can those of us who lived for a while under the hand of
the People’s Republic of China ever forget the phrase used by
some critics of the missionary cause when they heard of a
Chinese person converting to Christ: “One more Christian, one
less Chinese”?

New Roles

My predecessor in teaching missions at Denver Seminary was
Raymond Buker, who for many years directed the Committee to
Assist Missionary Education Overseas (CAMEO). In the late
1960s and early 1970s CAMEO was pushing Theological Educa-
tion by Extension (TEE). In 1970 and 1971 Buker arranged a series
of workshops in several continents on TEE. Because of my twenty
years’ background in Asia, he assigned me as a junior partner to
help in these workshops in several Asian countries. In 1970 I was
paired with Peter Wagner, and we traveled to Taiwan, Vietnam,
Indonesia, and India, hoping to stimulate local TEE committees.
The following year I partnered with Ralph Winter in visits to
Pakistan, Thailand, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Japan. I am
not sure how much I was able to contribute as compared to
Wagner and Winter, since they had been directly involved in the
founding of TEE in Latin America. My basic contribution was to
help relate this educational innovation to the cultures in these
countries.

My translation experience led, in my early years at Denver
Seminary, to an unexpected involvement in the New Interna-
tional Version (NIV) draft translation of portions of the New
Testament. Three of our professors in biblical studies were on
the translation committee, and since they needed one more transla-
tor to form two teams of two apiece, I was conscripted. My
colleague, Donald Burdick, who later would be a key figure in
writing the NIV study notes, and I prepared the draft version of
the Pastoral Epistles, James, and 1–3 John. This involvement has
given me a commitment to the NIV as a translation designed for
public worship. My experiences in Taiwan working with people
of another culture, however, helped me to see that something
more colloquial was needed for new readers, and I made exten-
sive use of both Today’s English Version and Today’s Chinese
Version.

During those same early years at Denver Seminary, I was
also conscripted to substitute several times as a “utility adminis-
trator” for absent administrative colleagues for short periods of
time. This experience led in 1979 to my being appointed as an
academic dean of Denver Seminary, a post in which I served until
my retirement in 1990. This task, combined with almost annual
travel to Taiwan and now-and-again involvement in the main-
land of China, drastically reduced my teaching load but still
allowed time to attend conferences on China and to continue to
write and teach on the work of God’s kingdom in that land.
Denver Seminary did not have a school of world missions, with
many specialized courses on Asia, so most of my teaching on
China was at other institutions—Fuller Seminary, Western Semi-
inary (Portland, Oreg.), Wheaton (Ill.) Graduate School, and
Eastern Baptist College.

I had been a member of the American Society of Missiology
(ASM) from its beginning in 1973, had tried regularly to attend its
annual meetings, and had served on some of its committees.
Nevertheless, it surprised me to be asked to become editor of the
journal Missiology after Arthur Glasser’s term ended. The only
redeeming factor was the agreement by Robert Schreiter and
James Scherer to serve as coeditors. Their presence, encourage-
ment, and help made the task manageable, provided a sense of
camaraderie, and, I trust, set a pattern for the type of editorial
partnership that continues to make the journal so valuable. These
editorial years, 1982–88, were extremely demanding as I had the
challenge—and excitement—of editing some of the fine articles
coming from our ASM constituency.

Life Beyond Retirement

In the years following my retirement from Denver Seminary,
doors opened for research in Edinburgh and for several short-
term teaching opportunities in schools in Ukraine and Romania.
This contact with Eastern Europe helped me to see firsthand the
chaos that can be created when hordes of Western missionaries
have access to formerly closed countries and often push their
own agendas without consulting sufficiently with local pastors
and leaders. This experience caused me to be thankful once more
that China has a policy of not granting total freedom to outsiders.
It is to be hoped that this limitation will enable the church to
avoid the old charge of being foreign.

The Chinese have a nice phrase to describe an active retire-
ment—tuì bù xiù, literally, “you back away from your respon-
sibilities but do not rest.” Interspersed with writing, traveling,
research, continued teaching, and much involvement in the lives
of six grandchildren in the Denver area is Ruth’s and my involve-
ment as active members of the Chinese Evangelical Church of
Denver. Here, praise God, is no polarized church with some
members pulling only for the house churches of China and others
only for the China Christian Council. God has multitudes of his
people in China, and all of us pray for, work with, and support
all who call on his name there. We rejoice that God—without all
of our outside help and sophisticated methods—has been active
in the Middle Kingdom throughout the past fifty years, and I
believe the best is yet to come both among the Han Chinese and
among the several hundred minority nationalities. May God
help us as we continue with many of them in the ongoing
pilgrimage of faith.
The Legacy of John Schuette, S.V.D.

Heribert Bettscheider, S.V.D.
Translated by Louis J. Luzbetak, S.V.D.

When John Schuette, S.V.D., died suddenly on November 18, 1971, in an automobile accident outside of Rome, the reaction to his death was worldwide. Not only news media like L'Osservatore Romano of the Vatican but also a great variety of Italian and German newspapers (e.g., Il Tempo, Il Messaggero, Il Giornale d'Italia, d'Avvenire, Die Welt, and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung) carried the shocking news. Similar reports and tributes appeared in the American press, such as the International Herald Tribune and the U.S. army paper Stars and Stripes. But who was Schuette whose death attracted so much attention?

Youth and Early Education

John Schuette was born on April 23, 1913, in Essen, Germany, as the third child of the family. He was baptized the next day in the local parish church and given the name of John the Baptist. Essen is a small community in Oldenburg, a region of Germany known for its great loyalty to the Catholic Church, a kind of heartland of Catholicism. During the Nazi times the people stood staunchly at the side of their bishop, Bishop van Galen of Münster, defending their religious way of life.

Schuette's father was a stonemason, and his mother came from a family of masons. John attended the local Volksschule and Bürgerschule, after which he applied for admission to the Divine Word secondary school located in Steyl, Netherlands, in hopes of someday becoming a missionary. An uncle had died in an accident while still a Divine Word theological student, and young Schuette decided that he would “take his uncle's place.” Schuette was always recognized as one of the best students. In March 1932 he passed his Abitur, the qualifying exams for graduate work in Germany.

In May of that year Schuette entered the novitiate of the Societas Verbi Divini (S.V.D., or Society of the Divine Word). He took his first vows in 1934, and a year later he finished his philosophical course. Once again, others were struck by his unusual talents. In the fall of 1936, after a short interruption of his studies in order to teach at St. Wendel’s Seminary (St. Wendel/Saarland), Schuette began his theological studies at St. Gabriel’s, near Vienna, a choice of schools he made for health reasons.

On August 24, 1939, Schuette was ordained to the priesthood. As is customary among Catholics, he celebrated his first Mass in his home parish. He was not yet finished with his required seminary training, however, but still had another year left. Only two months later, though, he was drafted into the German army and assigned to the medical corps in Vienna. He made every effort to obtain a study leave from the military authorities to finish his officially required studies. The request was granted but limited to only four weeks. At about this time the newly ordained priests of Schuette’s religious congregation had to submit their preferences to their superiors for the place and type of ministry they would like to engage in. Schuette simply wrote: “I am equally interested either in pastoral work or in teaching and formation of future missionaries. I am also equally interested in Flores, the Philippines, Honan (Henan) China, and South America.”

Schuette had absolutely no desire to be a soldier. He therefore applied for an exemption from military service, which he received on April 10. He succeeded in obtaining the necessary papers to leave the country for China. He also obtained his missionary appointment from his religious superiors. At his first opportunity he took his exams at St. Gabriel’s and, without delay, made the necessary preparations for his departure. On August 8, 1940, he left Berlin by train for Peking (Beijing), going via Moscow and Siberia, and reached his destination fourteen days later. He first went to the headquarters of the Society of the Divine Word in Taikia, near Tsinling (Jining), to study Chinese, a language he managed to learn well in the course of a year.

Missionary in North Honan (1941–52)

The mission to which Schuette was assigned had been taken over by the Society of the Divine Word in 1933. It covered 10,000 square kilometers, with a population of two million. Previously it had been a part of the Apostolic Vicariate of Weiweiufu under the direction of the Foreign Missions of Milan. The superior of the mission was now Monsignor Thomas Megan, an American, as were most of the missionaries there. Megan, as a matter of policy, welcomed missionaries from other countries, including Germany. Caught in the political turmoil of the times, missionaries generally recognized this policy to be wise.

Schuette began his missionary work under very difficult political conditions. For some time the Japanese had occupied part of the territory, but before long the entire area found itself enmeshed in the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists. Eventually, the entire mission fell into Communist hands. Schuette soon took on a number of responsibilities, serving as pastor, leader and organizer of a middle school, prefect, and regional superior. His foremost responsibility, however, was that of pastor of the main mission station.

When the Japanese entered into war against the United States, American missionaries were interned. The prefect apostolic, Msgr. Megan, decided that his wisest course of action was to flee to the mountains. Schuette thus found himself responsible for the spiritual care of an entire city. There were also religious instructions to provide for the girls' middle school. It was only with the greatest difficulty that he was able to maintain contact with Megan. At the end of March 1942 Schuette was transferred to Sinyang (Xinyang), one of the largest mission districts, which

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also included a number of outstations. In Sinyang he opened a girls’ school.

In the middle of February 1943 he was transferred to Sinsiang (Xinxiang) “as intermediary with the government, as mission treasurer, and as pastor.”* The weight of responsibilities soon left its mark on Schuette, making it necessary for him to visit a physician in Peking. The doctor wisely prescribed a long rest for the overburdened missionary. On this occasion Schuette devoted more than a year to the further study of Chinese. His fellow missionaries were impressed by his language ability, which he exhibited, for instance, in his religious instructions. Similarly impressive was the way he could handle business matters.

In 1944 he returned to Sinsiang from Peking. For the next four or five years he was leader and organizer of Fu Jen Middle School, now less a pastor than an organizer, businessman, and director of an educational institution. In these roles he was fully in his element.

The middle school program that he had introduced for boys who had previously existed as a girls’ school. The affiliation proved advantageous inasmuch as it guaranteed and strengthened the standards of the school and, above all, served as an occasion to obtain additional approval for the school’s various certifications. Legally, the school was in Chinese hands, even if always under the control of Schuette, who wisely stressed business aspects of school management. With this emphasis in mind, he went into a kind of transportation business. He bought two trucks and a vehicle suitable for both passenger and freight service. Since the trains were extremely unreliable, if functioning at all, Schuette never lacked for customers and in this way was able to keep his school financially afloat. He also invested in lime and coal stocks, in an automobile repair shop, and in the wheat trade. Farmers in the area offered some of their acreage, enabling him to count on some 40,000 pounds of wheat annually for the benefit of the school.

A steady increase in enrollment brought Schuette additional concerns for adequate classroom space and, in particular, for hiring of good teachers. In time, the school showed considerable progress and became financially secure. Later he looked back on this school as his greatest achievement. The Communist siege and capture of the city at first brought the school no special hardship, but then all religious instruction was forbidden and the school was entirely taken over by the Communists.

At this time Schuette had new tasks to tend to. There was the management of the mission and his religious society, since he had been named pro-prefect and regional superior. Now that the disorders of war seemed to be giving way to some semblance of order, Megan felt that it would be an opportune time for him to visit the United States for a few months. He made Schuette pro-prefect for the duration. Megan never returned, however, thus making Schuette the head of the mission.

The constant shifting of fortunes between the Nationalist forces and the Communists colored the life of the missionaries and fairly well describes Schuette’s life in China while he was regional superior and pro-prefect. He held out as long as humanly possible, never demanding anything of anyone that he did not expect of himself. The mission—with its hospitals, pharmacies, elementary schools, middle schools, and nursing training centers—somehow kept going forward as much as one could expect, and somehow Schuette was always there with new plans.

The superior general of the Society of the Divine Word, whom Schuette had an opportunity to meet in Shanghai in 1949, congratulated him: “Your courageous ‘stick-to-itiveness’ deserves recognition and gives me great joy. May the Holy Spirit grant you the wisdom you can so well use now in your very important and, in fact, in your doubly lamed ministry.”

In May 1949 the capital city of Sinsiang was once again taken by the Communists, who took control of the mission. More than ever, strong agitation was directed against the mission, especially against the foreign missionaries. More than once, Schuette was summoned to appear in court. Despite the hardships, somehow everything still seemed to be going reasonably well.

The year 1951 marked the beginning of the end. An ordinance required that all foreign-supported schools, hospitals, churches, and all foreign property had to be registered. American property in particular had to be declared, the relationship with the United States had to be acknowledged, and American possessions had to be handed over to the state. Any activity of the mission was automatically regarded as an American enterprise. Schuette, as the head of the mission, was brought to court several times, arrested, but always freed again.

In October 1951 he was found guilty and placed under house arrest, only to be freed again. He was questioned no less than nineteen times, often for hours at a time. The main accusations were: “the funding and the direction of the Legion of Mary under the spies Riberi and Megan. Every form of ministry was regarded as reactionary and declared antirevolutionary.” Other accusations were, for instance, “that we hindered Christians from declaring membership in the Independent Church and that we forbade Christians under the pain of excommunication from joining the Communist Party or its youth organization; that we maintained good relations with former [non-Communist] civil and military authorities.” Finally, in a show trial on May 7, 1952, Schuette was convicted and immediately expelled from the country.

**Missiological Studies at Münster**

When Superior General Alois Grosse Kappenberg learned that Schuette had been banished from China, he had the following advice to offer: “We should keep in mind that we are dealing here with an unusually gifted conferee for whom we should from the start be planning some appropriate position, making certain that good use is made of his abilities.” Schuette himself thought of the possibility of going into the social sciences. He based this inclination on an observation made by Internuncio Riberi of Hong Kong that China might in the not-too-distant future experience large-scale changes, with social problems given much more prominence than at present. Schuette, however, also thought of pursuing missiology or perhaps into some combination of missiology and church history. “In so doing,” he felt, “I may perhaps be able to make better use of the experiences I have had, as well as of my more recent impressions, by preserving them in writing and studying them a bit more deeply.”

The superior general decided in favor of having Schuette...
study missiology at Münster. For his doctoral dissertation Schuette wrote “Die katholische Chinamission im Spiegel der rotchinesischen Presse. Versuch einer missionarischen Deutung” (The Catholic mission in China in light of the Red Chinese press. An attempt at a missionary understanding). The theme and problem had stimulated his thinking when he was a prisoner in China. As a student in Münster, he found this experience extremely useful, so much so that he was able to submit his finished dissertation of over six hundred pages in a year’s time.

The dissertation first summarizes the situation of the mission on the eve of the Communist revolution. Then four long chapters deal with (1) religion and the church; (2) mission in general, including its goal and its history; (3) missionaries and their lay associates; and (4) mission methods, including medical ministries, orphanages, education, and the press. After the discussion in each chapter, a section A presents a Chinese perspective, and a section B contains a self-critical analysis. The author obviously wants to do more than just present a comprehensive critical overview of the Communist Chinese press. Above all, he seeks to reach conclusions that might eventually serve as guidelines for more effective mission action in China and elsewhere.  

The doctoral dissertation was a great success and was accordingly widely applauded. Schuette sought to paint an objective picture of the mission in China and to expand on the grain of truth hidden in the attacks in the Communist press, hoping that missionaries in China and elsewhere might thereby be able to draw some useful lessons.

When Schuette finished his doctoral studies, a number of possible tasks for him came up for discussion. Finally it was decided to have him teach at St. Augustine’s Major Seminary, near Bonn, Germany. His lectures dealt mostly with missionary methods and were richly illustrated with real-life examples and practical suggestions. At this time he was engaged also in mission promotion in the homeland and in recruitment. Additionally, during this period he drew up an important memorandum for the superior general on these two subjects.  

Important, too, was Schuette’s plan to found an internal mission house for educated laymen and monks who would, after some time in the field, return to help in the training of others. Schuette’s drive for the establishment of such a mission house was supported by Father Grosse Kappenberg, who, in 1957, invited Schuette to the Holy Year Congress on Pastoral Liturgy, at Assisi in 1956. On this occasion he proposed publishing an illustrated Steyler Missionschronik (S.V.D. mission annual), which was approved. The first volume appeared three years later, in 1959.

**Superior General of the S.V.D. (1958–67)**

On March 28, 1958, seven months after the death of S.V.D. Superior General Grosse Kappenberg, Schuette was elected as the sixth superior general of the society, becoming responsible for one of the largest missionary orders in the Catholic Church. His administration as superior general stands out especially in two ways: in his organizational skills, which he had already demonstrated as a talent waiting to bear fruit, and in his commitment to missionaries.

These organizational skills manifested themselves at Nemi, not far from Rome, where he founded the so-called tertiate, a center for continuing education for missionaries who already had some mission experience. Such missionaries would be invited to the center for six months or so to update themselves and to take advantage of the opportunity to restore some of their physical strength.

A further example of Schuette’s organizational skills was the manner in which he reorganized the mission work in China: he decided to work for the mission of China by re-creating the mission house and seminaries in Asia as well. His organizational skills manifested themselves also in promoting large-scale involvement by missionaries in human development.

The second emphasis and major direction characterizing Schuette’s administration as superior general was his total commitment to his fellow missionaries. He was not one to carry out his responsibilities as superior general from behind a desk, but insisted on personally participating in the life and work of his subordinates through direct contact and by discussing their worries, needs, hopes, and dreams with them. It is said that he visited, at some time or another, every S.V.D. mission station and enterprise, even the smallest, and in some cases more than once.
Participation in the Second Vatican Council

The high point of Schuette’s missionary and religious life was his role in the Second Vatican Council. He was one of the leading framers of *Ad gentes*, the Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity. Just how did the council regard Schuette’s role in this very important gathering of our times?

In working out the so-called *schema* (plan or proposal) for *Ad Gentes*, many conflicts and difficulties arose from the beginning. Tradition and a rather theoretical approach blocked the development of more progressive missionary thinking. The first draft of the *schema* turned out to be too abstract and bore too many marks of administrative bias. Not surprisingly, it was rejected and had to be rewritten.

Toward the end of the second session in 1963, Pope Paul VI expanded the commission from twenty-five to thirty persons, appointing Schuette as one of the new members. The task of the commission was to draft a new proposal in the form of propositions or suggestions. It was hoped that such a format would accelerate the work of the council.

In the third session, however, most of the speakers made it clear that the reduction of the *schema* to a mere collection of suggestions would be unfortunate. The commission thereupon withdrew the draft so as to make it into a more detailed and more complete presentation. Chosen to write the new *schema* were Bishops Riobe, Lokuang, Zoa, and Lecuona and Father Schuette. This subcommission met at the residence of the Divine Word Generalate in Nemi.

The group decided to follow two principles. First, the proposal should receive an adequate theological basis, tying it in clearly with *Lumen gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, and making certain that the mission of the church should be viewed as having a direct relationship with the plan of God the Father and with the “missions” of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Second, in response to the wishes of many of the council fathers, the proposal would provide a clear statement of the missions (if not devote a separate *schema* to this topic), in which the theological foundations would be worked out showing the individual missions as but one aspect of the universal mission of the church; at the same time, the necessity and urgency of specific missionary activities would be highlighted.

This task was taken up in true seriousness under Schuette’s leadership. Named vice president of the commission by Cardinal Agaganian, Schuette presented the new draft in the general congregation of the Council and, at the end of the debate, spoke in the name of the commission. The text, he now felt, would be approved by the majority, although he admitted that some modifications might still have to be made. In conclusion, he singled out certain important points, above all those that had a bearing on the missionary character of the universal church, on the ecumenical movement in missions, on the activity of the laity, and on dialogue with non-Christians. At this juncture the commission entered into a study of changes and improvements. Only after many meetings of both the commission and the General Assembly, and only under Schuette’s skillful leadership, was a text produced that was ready for the whole council’s deliberation and approval.

Schuette was successful in all the deliberations over matters for which he sought approval. Especially of interest to him was the establishment of a special mission council that would meet twice a year and decide major directions in matters affecting the missionary apostolate. Moreover, a secretariat of experts would be formed to support and guide the mission council. Schuette’s interest in obtaining the advice of the laity, women religious, and missionary organizations in this way was revolutionary, for it represents the first time that the laity would become actual members of the curia.

In October 1965 Schuette as presenter brought the final version of the new mission *schema* to the council fathers. In the fourth voting session of the council, the decree was passed overwhelmingly, with 2,394 votes in favor and only 5 against—the highest percentage ever received in any such conciliar ballot. The person to be thanked more than anyone else was Schuette, whose commitment and persuasive arguments few could resist. A postconciliar commission was set up on February 8, 1966, composed of the same members as the commission that had drawn up the *schema*, with Schuette elected chairman. Final decisions for implementation of the plans were then made before the pope accepted the *schema* practically word for word.

**The Last Years**

To facilitate the international voting process of the Divine Word Missionaries, which would have called for another worldwide General Chapter to elect a new superior general only two years later, Schuette resigned early, at the Chapter of 1967-68. After a short respite, he was able to offer his invaluable experience and skills to the universal church. At the end of 1968 he became vice secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. He was named secretary of the Subcommission for Human Development, an office concerned chiefly with developing countries. His extraordinary knowledge of languages facilitated his international contacts. During his last three years he attended conferences and congresses in all parts of the world and took part in the first Roman Synod of Bishops in 1967. He also became a member of the Council of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith (now the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples).

A highlight of these years for Schuette was his participation in the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, in Uppsala, Sweden, July 4–20, at which he was a Catholic observer. As an expert in *Ad gentes*, he was particularly interested in the Uppsala section report “Renewal in Mission,” a document parallel to *Ad gentes*.

Schuette found his new role fulfilling and, in spite of recurring health problems, was making plans for the future when he was killed in a traffic accident while on his way to a medical examination near Rome.

**Legacy**

Schuette devoted himself body and soul to the mission of the church, using all his manifold talents. Richly gifted, he could have made a career in the academic world. But his real strength lay in organizing things. He was a born leader, negotiator, inspirator, and organizer. He was not a theorist, but a practitio-
ner. Yet on the basis of his practical experience, he made important contributions not only to concrete mission work, but also to missiological reflection on the missionary task.

His practical talents, already obvious during his studies, came to the fore during his years of mission work in China. He was an excellent parish administrator, schoolman, and missionary superior. In advancing new ideas he negotiated with skill and energy. This was equally true during his time as S.V.D. mission secretary in Rome, as Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word, and as a member of the Second Vatican Council.

His most important legacy, though, lies in the new directions he mapped out—building on his own mission experience—for both missionary practice and the theory of mission. In his widely noticed dissertation he demonstrated that the church has to take Chinese culture and religion seriously and to spell out the message of the Gospel anew against this background. His ideas about the preparation of future missionaries in their home countries and his proposals for the formation of catechists and other indigenous missionary personnel also arose from his own missionary experience.

It is in this same framework that his commitment to Justice and Peace must be viewed. Most importantly, his missionary experience was the source of inspiration for his efforts to define a new concept of mission at the Second Vatican Council. Without a doubt the mission decree Ad gentes represents the peak of his work as a missionary and is his true legacy. His promising activities within the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace did not come to fruition due to his early death.

Schuette made a special place for himself in mission history, and we have reason to be grateful to him.

Notes

1. This institution, in Mödling, was the first S.V.D. major seminary.
3. Ibid., p. 19.
4. Ibid., p. 32.
5. Ibid., p. 45.
6. Ibid., p. 51.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
11. Ibid., pp. 62, 64.

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The Legacy of James Gilmour

Kathleen L. Lodwick

Mongolia and the name of James Gilmour will forever be linked in the minds of many people because of his books *Among the Mongols* and *More About the Mongols*, which are anthropological observations of Mongolian society as he observed it in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In 1883 one reviewer of *Among the Mongols* wrote that it reminded him of *Robinson Crusoe*—yet Gilmour’s was a true story, reflecting his long years in Mongolia with the London Missionary Society (LMS).

James Gilmour was born on February 12, 1843, in Cathkin, near Glasgow, Scotland. While studying at Highgate in London in 1867 he applied to the LMS and was appointed to reopen the Mongolian Mission, pioneered by Edward Stallybrass and William Swan and their wives from 1817 to 1841. Even as he accepted his appointment, Gilmour indicated that he wished it were to a less isolated field. His acceptance letter clearly reveals he felt no call to Mongolia, and one wonders whether he would have accepted the assignment had he known that Mongolia was a theocracy in which all aspects of life were bound up in Lamaism. Indeed, the LMS board itself seems to have been largely ignorant of the theocratic nature of Mongolian life.

**Arrival in the Far East**

Gilmour was ordained on February 10, 1870, at Augustine Church, Edinburgh, sailed for China twelve days later, and arrived in Peking on May 18. Learning that the anticipated French military response to the Tientsin Massacre would likely trap him in Peking, Gilmour memorized a few sentences of Mongolian and Chinese and hastily departed for his field. His instructions specified that he should “study the Mongolian language and literature, make acquaintance with the Mongolian people, gather information respecting the localities most suited to closer intercourse with them, and the forms of labor best adapted to accomplish the great purpose of evangelizing them.” Reaching Kyakhta on the Russia-Mongolia border on September 28, Gilmour quickly discovered that neither the Mongolians nor the Russians really wanted him there. Undaunted, he hired a teacher. When the arrangement did not work out, Gilmour went to live in the tent of a lama who had befriended him.

Gilmour spent fifteen months in Mongolia on his first visit and then returned to Peking. He later wrote the LMS with his opinions of the work, listing the advantages and disadvantages of centering it in each possible locale. Many of his descriptions of the Mongols and their society later appeared in his books about Mongolia. For example, he wrote at length about lamas, whom he thought made up “half the male population of Mongolia,” noting he had reached that conclusion “from personal acquaintance with families in various parts of Mongolia.” He estimated that only 15 percent of the laymen and 5 percent of the lamas could read, adding that if the mission were to be successful, the Bible needed to be translated into Buriat (a related language), which the Mongols could understand. He also wrote that he needed “pictures, especially in color.” Mostly, however, he needed colleagues, without whom “it is little short of nonsense to speak of reopening the Mongolia Mission.” The mission was also much more costly than the board had anticipated, as their appropriation was sufficient for him to make only one four-week trip per year. Gilmour added that he had paid for his 1870–71 travels out of his own funds but did not know how long he could continue to do so.

Awaiting instructions from the LMS—which never came—Gilmour spent the summer of 1872 in Peking studying written Mongolian. Then in the winter he observed medical cases at John Dudgeon’s Peking hospital, where he studied Mongolian and spoke with Mongols who were visiting the city.

Gilmour made a second trip to Mongolia in 1873. He wrote that he moved frequently, but did linger longer near temples and trade centers. The Mongolian population was very scattered, however, and some days he spoke with only one or two people. On average, he reported, he traveled twelve English miles per day, spoke daily to only twelve men, three women, and five youths each day, and treated eight patients. “The fewness of the natives is the hardest trial I have had to bear.” He wondered about the wisdom of continuing in Mongolia, as, he noted, in a single day he could speak to as many Chinese as he was seeing each week in Mongolia. He concluded, “In the way of direct results I have seen absolutely nothing. I cannot say that I have yet seen a single Mongol ambitious about his soul. I have seen hundreds of them working out their own salvation, as they suppose, by prayer, offerings, pilgrimages and other works of men generally but I have never yet seen one at all anxious that Christ should save him. Christ and His salvation they consider a superfluity.” Gilmour noted that the Mongols did want one thing he had to offer—medicine. Many people he met knew about the LMS hospital in Peking, and Gilmour thought it might attract a few converts. Overall, however, he concluded that the people “are so sunk in their superstitions” that though the Chinese “are said to be destitute of heart and religious feeling . . . I think there is more hope of China than Mongolia by a long way.”

Although Gilmour’s arrival in Mongolia predated the comity agreements among Protestant missions, the LMS had a dispute with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions over who was to evangelize the area. Gilmour, however, liked the American missionaries, William P. Sprague and his wife, who had settled at Kalgan (Zhangjiakou), and stayed with them when he passed through the city, a major trading center for northern China and Mongolia. Later they occasionally traveled together, and it was Sprague who baptized the only convert Gilmour ever saw in Mongolia—a Han Chinese living there.

**A Partner Arrives**

Gilmour had arrived in China a single man, but he was soon in correspondence with Emily Prankard, the sister of the wife of Samuel E. Meech, a colleague at the Peking station who had also

been a classmate of his in Britain. By early 1874 Gilmour requested the board to send Emily to China to marry him. The board agreed, as did Emily, and she made the journey to China, arriving in December that year. They married within a week of her arrival and quickly settled into life on the Peking mission compound, where three sons were born to them.

Gilmour was planning to return to Mongolia in 1877, but he was forced to change his plans. At first delayed because of the birth of his first son, the trip was cut short after only thirty miles when they were caught in a windstorm and Emily became ill, requiring them to return to Peking. They gave up altogether when they learned that personnel changes were going to leave the Meeches alone at the Peking compound. Frustrated, Gilmour asked for advice from London, indicating he did not think he would settle in the open country, as such areas had only one to three families per square mile and when some Roman Catholic missionaries had tried in such an area, they “were forcibly deported.” Gilmour made it clear that he was not asking to be relieved of his post or to abandon Mongolia, but he did want to know what to do. In what was becoming a frustrating pattern, the board failed to address such concerns.

Gilmour returned to Kalgan in May 1878 and was warmly welcomed by a lama who had seen him “approaching from afar and ran round to all the tents in the cluster shouting ‘He’s come. ’ ‘He’s come.’” On this trip he traveled with William Sprague and reported that some people were friendly and knew why they had come. Some were willing to argue the merits of Christianity and Buddhism, and others listened, but most wanted to discuss other things. He reported that fewer people were asking for medicines because they had discovered that some diseases could not be cured, and some who thought they were cured found that their maladies returned if precautions were not taken. Gilmour wrote that many Mongols at first did not understand why they had come, but when they did understand, they did not like them less, although “they regarded as utterly absurd the idea of any of them giving up Buddhism and becoming Christian.”

Problems with Colleagues

While Gilmour was having trouble trying to discuss Christianity with the Mongols, he had other difficulties with his colleagues in Peking. In 1879 Joseph Edkins published a pamphlet in which he argued that Peking was a good place to evangelize the Mongols. He noted that there were many Roman Catholic settlements in southern Mongolia. In view of that information, Edkins wondered whether it would be better for Gilmour to settle in Kalgan or some agricultural valley and follow the Roman Catholic model for converts. Edkins thought Gilmour should find a Chinese convert to assist him or to oversee the Mongol Mission while Gilmour confined himself to Peking, where Mrs. Gilmour could supervise the mission school.

Gilmour, aware of Edkins’s report, responded that he had always wanted an assistant, but he had been unable to find any Chinese willing to study Mongolian because the Chinese considered it the “language of a despised race.” Gilmour added that Edkins had tried his ideas before Gilmour arrived in China, but they had failed.

James and Emily, who herself had learned Mongolian, spent the summer of 1879 traveling in Mongolia. On one occasion they had to spend four nights in a Mongolian hut because of a windstorm, which caused Emily to suffer a case of nerves. As a result, they decided that in the future she would stay behind in Peking whenever James traveled to Mongolia.

On this journey Gilmour reported that most people were friendly. The two had stayed a week at a large temple where they were welcomed by the common folk and lower lamas, but then the higher lamas ordered them away. Gilmour thought the lamas and mandarins opposed him because he and his wife were so well received by the commoners. They encountered many such difficulties during the summer. Stopping at one place where they asked a lot of questions and did a lot of writing, they heard many people ride past their tent saying such things as, “Without doubt they are carrying off the luck of some thing or another.” In another place they heard the accusation that at night they did not sleep but gathered up the valuable things of the place to carry off, including “four large lumps of silver which we had discovered in the earth.”

Gilmour attributed such rumors to the Chinese and Mongolians’ disbelief that they were preaching and healing without charge. He admitted that his work suffered a real setback when he sent a Mongolian with an eye disease to the Peking hospital for surgery, which was a failure. “Ill news flies apace,” he wrote, adding that he soon heard of the matter in Mongolia. He explained to his London readers that this incident was particularly damaging, since the Chinese were telling the Mongolians that foreigners gouged out people’s eyes. He ended on a hopeful note by saying that a few Mongolians were visiting them in Peking, and he was sure it was because “they now understand the importance we place on religion.”

In the midst of the discouragement of his work in Mongolia, Gilmour had to deal with the problem of living in close quarters with his compatriots in an isolated mission compound.

Perseverance Through Trials

Gilmour’s trials in Mongolia became even more complicated in 1880. In May he was in Kalgan, but rumors of war between Tientsin and Russia were so widespread that many Mongolians cautioned him not to travel in Mongolia that year. So instead of embarking on a far-ranging itinerary, he visited a Roman Catholic settlement eighty miles from Kalgan, where he was well received by the priests. He stayed with them over a weekend and met three people he had talked to previously whom he thought, in any place but Mongolia, would already be Christians. “But we missionaries are so often misled by our fond hopes, by the sayings of men who are not sincere that it is dangerous to build hope in words and unsafe to write about things before hand.” Yet despite such sentiments, Gilmour wrote of feeling less discouraged about the Mongolian Mission than he often was.

Gilmour continued his work. He left Peking on June 6, 1881,
hired his usual servants, and camped near a temple that had an encampment of five hundred Mongolian soldiers nearby. The Mongolian soldiers visited his tent, and he gave medicine to those who asked for it and later heard of one good cure. He visited four nearby temples where festivals were being held. He had an average of twenty visitors daily, about one-third of them hired his usual servants, and camped near a temple that had an encampment of five hundred Mongolian soldiers nearby. The Mongolian soldiers visited his tent, and he gave medicine to those who asked for it and later heard of one good cure. He visited four nearby temples where festivals were being held. He had an average of twenty visitors daily, about one-third of them

Gilmour wrote that one sophisticated man he had met was interested in the wider world and had in his tent many Western items, including a telephone. This man understood Christianity but would not convert because of persecution. When Gilmour lamented to him that no Mongolians were willing to convert, he replied that Gilmour's was a work of time and patience, though he added that by coming and going, preaching and talking, one day Christianity would take its place even in Mongolia. This man knew about “Buddhism, Mahometanism [sic], Taoism, two sets of Christians [Roman Catholics and Protestants],” but could not decide “which [was] right and which [was] wrong?” Gilmour commented, “Things sacred and secular sometimes get very mixed up in Mongolia.”

Jonathan Lees, who had been sent by the LMS to assist Gilmour in Mongolia, wrote a lengthy report about the field in April 1882. He began by noting there was “as yet no visible results of our work.” He concluded that Gilmour was the only one competent to expound an opinion about the Mongolian mission. Unfortunately for Gilmour, Lees held the Mongolian assignment only while the Gilmours were on furlough and then settled at the Peking station, which was also understaffed and which offered more likelihood of converts.

The Gilmours departed for their first furlough in England in June 1882. Their visit lasted more than a year, and they were back in China by the beginning of September 1883. During this furlough he wrote the first of his books, Among the Mongols, which was published in London by the Religious Tract Society in 1883.

Soon after the family’s return from furlough in Britain, Gilmour, who had endured so many hardships without gaining even one convert, began what was to be an even more trying part of his life. His beloved wife, Emily, died in 1884. Then in 1885 he said a painful good-bye to his two older sons, who returned to Britain for their schooling. Finally, Gilmour’s youngest son died in 1886.

Most of 1886, 1887, and 1888 Gilmour spent in Mongolia, from where he wrote frequent letters to the LMS asking for a colleague. None joined him, and by 1889 his letters began showing signs of a complete mental breakdown, which led the board to call him home. Gilmour complied, but by the time he reached Southampton waters, he reported that he was totally recovered. No one seemed to realize, however, that his mental problems stemmed only from his lack of like-minded companionship.

He remained in Britain until 1890 and then returned to Mongolia, settling in Tassu Kou in northeastern Mongolia. He left there on April 13, 1891, to attend the annual mission meeting in Tientsin, where he died of typhus on May 21.

Assessment

In the memorials to him in the Chinese Recorder, a friend reported that Gilmour had recently confided that it depressed him that not only had he spent twenty years in Mongolia without making a convert but he had not met a single person in all those years who was even remotely interested in Christianity. That anyone would persevere in such an endeavor says a great deal about the commitment of the person, but it also says a great deal about the LMS, which supported Gilmour for all those years. After his death the Religious Tract Society published More About the Mongols (1893) from the notes he had left. A number of hagiographies also appeared (see bibliography).

But what was the legacy of James Gilmour, the missionary without a single convert? What does one write, more than a century later, of a missionary who labored more than twenty years in a remote land and never saw the fruit of his labor? In one respect, Gilmour’s colleagues who urged repeatedly that the Mongolian field be abandoned were correct—it was a tremendous waste of resources to continue to labor in a field that produced no converts and had no hope of any. And certainly Gilmour, who attributed his lack of converts to his own lack of faith, was wrong; his colleagues all found him to be a kindly, gentle man of great personal faith. Shortly after his death one of his colleagues wrote, “Gilmour spared himself in nothing, but gave himself wholly to God. He kept nothing back. All was laid upon the altar. I doubt if even Paul endured more for Christ than did James Gilmour. I doubt, too, if Christ ever received from human hands or hearts more loving service.”

In another respect, Gilmour filled a need. He was just beginning to learn Mongolian and feel at home in his mission in Mongolia when David Livingstone died in Africa in 1873. Gilmour then became something of a living replacement for Livingstone, filling the category of “exotically located missionary” in the imaginations of LMS supporters at home. In LMS periodicals Gilmour was clearly portrayed as an icon. He was frequently referred to as Our Gilmour or Gilmour of Mongolia, terms not used for missionaries in more conventional or settled places.

When assessing the career of the missionary who made no converts, Gilmour belongs to that group of missionaries (Livingstone can be considered the group’s founder) who were sent out to mission fields by home boards that little understood the difficulties (nay, the impossibilities) of the fields they wished to see evangelized. Gilmour made no converts—few in this group ever did—but he did follow Jesus’ commission to “go into all the world and preach the Gospel.” The invaluable writings he left behind present a vivid picture of life in Mongolia as he observed it in the late nineteenth century. Indeed, Gilmour and the other missionaries who faced fields like his pioneered the field of cultural anthropology, and the world has been much enriched by their contributions.

Notes

1. James Gilmour File, London Mission Society Archives, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. (Except for note 3 below, the letters and other items cited in the following notes all appear in the LMS archives.)
2. “Gilmour,” LMS Register.
3. The so-called massacre was the result of opposition to building of a Roman Catholic church in Tientsin and of rumors which said that the French Sisters of Mercy, who ran an orphanage, were torturing and maiming children. The violence began when the French consul fired at the local magistrate in his yamen, missed, and killed a bystander. The resulting mayhem left ten sisters, six Frenchmen, and three Russians, who were mistaken for Frenchmen, plus an unknown number of Chinese dead. See Jonathan Spence, In Search of Modern China (New York: Norton, 1990), pp. 204–05.
7. Ibid.
8. Gilmour to P. O. Whitehouse, Peking, January 14 and September 22, 1874.
9. Gilmour to Mullins, Peking, August 18, 1877.
11. Gilmour to Mullins, Peking, November 26, 1878.
16. Gilmour to Whitehouse, Peking, August 12, 1880.
17. Gilmour to Whitehouse, Peking, July 2, 1880.
18. Gilmour to R. W. Thompson, Peking, September 6, 1881.
19. Ibid.
22. Gilmour to Thompson, Peking, November 30, 1885, and “Gilmour,” LMS Register.
23. “Gilmour,” LMS Register.

Selected Bibliography

Works by James Gilmour
Gilmour’s papers are in the James Gilmour File, London Mission Society Archives, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and are also available in microform.

Works About James Gilmour

Church and Mission

Scholars Welcome this summer at Overseas Ministries Study Center

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Two decades ago, Dr. Thu En Yu, principal of Sabah Theological Seminary in eastern Malaysia, was encouraged to take a sabbatical at OMSC, but his busy schedule made that break impossible until the spring of 2002. As he was leaving New Haven he said,

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January 2003
In this invaluable book, Stanley M. Burgess, professor of religious studies at Southwest Missouri State University, repackages the 1988 edition of the Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, which he edited with Gary B. McGee and associate editor Patrick H. Alexander.

The present volume is divided into three segments. The first part presents a global survey of the movements, highlighting the origins and expansion of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in specific countries and regions. The demographic data for selected countries are mainly culled from the 2001 edition of the World Christian Encyclopaedia. It is noteworthy that not every individual country is covered or given comprehensive coverage. Part 2 provides global statistics on the movement, focusing on patterns of growth. The final part contains a collection of topical and biographical entries that essentially depend on the first edition, with modified articles and new few ones. For example, Grant Wacker’s article “Bibliography and Historiography” has been rewritten with A. Cerillo, Jr., under the new heading “Bibliography and Historiography in the United States.” The controversial issue of spiritual warfare appears as a separate article: “Spiritual Warfare: A Neocharismatic Perspective.”

The current volume surpasses some of the spatial and temporal limitations of the previous edition. Some information on Pentecostal-type renewals before the twentieth century has been provided, as well as more coverage of movements outside the United States and Western Europe. To that extent, the current work is useful for both ecclesiastical and scholarly investigation of the history, ethos, and development of the worldwide Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.

The status of the movement in Africa and some non-Western countries, however, should receive more attention, with better-informed articles. One problem with the various lists in the bibliography is that African or other non-Western scholars resident in the West can easily provide up-to-date information from the countries of their origin, whereas in fact good research requires much personal contact “on the ground.”

Entries in the topical and biographical sections are still heavily tilted in favor of the North American scene. And with very few exceptions, the contributors came from the West, particularly North America. For example, on Africa (my regional focus in this review), part 1 has four regional surveys and seventeen country articles. Of the four regional surveys, Central and East Africa were written by D. J. Garrard (United Kingdom) and J. Booze (United States) handled North Africa (with the Middle East). The only African author was J. K. Olupona (originally from Nigeria), who wrote the article on West Africa. Of the seventeen country articles on Africa, D. J. Garrard performed the herculean task of writing sixteen! I. Hexham and K. Poewe-Hexham (Canada) wrote the one on South Africa.

Not too surprisingly, the Central and East Africa surveys are very sketchy, with some major omissions. For example, George Pilkington’s Pentecostal renewal of the late nineteenth century and the East African Revival receive virtually no coverage either in the regional surveys or in the country articles. The West Africa survey is very good but limits its scope to Nigeria and Ghana, focusing only on the “prophetic independent churches” and the “Pentecostal-Charismatic churches.” The piece on South Africa, unlike most of the country articles, is excellent, covering all the essential details one would expect in an article of this nature.

There are only three topical entries on Africa, and they lack regional, continental, and ecclesiastical breadth. Conspicuously missing from the biographical entries is the late Bishop Benson Idahosa, a high-profile international evangelist, church planter, and educator whom Olupona refers to as “the most successful pentecostal preacher in Africa” (p. 16).

Topics missing that should have been included are Nigeria’s fastest-growing church, the multi-million-member Redeemed Christian Church of God, founded in 1952 by Josiah Olufemi Akinyeomi; David Oyedepo’s purpose-driven Winners’ Chapel, Lagos, Nigeria (believed to have the largest auditorium in the world); Matthew Ashimolowo (a converted Muslim), pastor of the United Kingdom’s largest congregation, the Kingsway International Christian Centre, London; Sunday Adelaja’s 20,000-member Word of Faith Bible Church, Kiev (said to be Ukraine’s largest congregation); and Ghana’s largest Protestant church, the Church of Pentecost. Many similarly notable items were omitted.

Some corrections are needed in the country statistics. For example, the numerical strength of the Church of Pentecost, Ghana, as of 2001 was over 800,000 members. If we should add the figures for other denominations like the Assemblies of God, Christ Apostolic Church, and the Apostolic Church, the figure would obviously be much higher. It is therefore highly unlikely that the figures of 858,349 (p. 111) given for the total number of Pentecostals in Ghana is accurate.

Current demographic trends show a shift in the center of gravity of Christianity from the Western world to the non-Western World, particularly Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia and the Pacific. We need to improve our statistics for Pentecostalism in these areas if we are to present a true and fair view of the development and impact of these movements. Indeed, much work is still needed to document, preserve, and clarify the identity and heritage of some of the churches here. And in this regard, Pentecostal scholars in the non-Western world, particularly Africa, would have to play a leading role.

This dictionary is a confident, self-assured presentation of the movement that has so much transformed the face of Christianity around the globe. It will indeed help to increase the self-awareness of those within the tradition and will also introduce the broader religious community to the life, faith, and thought of Pentecostalism in its varied forms.

—E. Kingsley Larbi

E. Kingsley Larbi, Visiting Scholar at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, is the founding vice chancellor of Central University College, Accra, Ghana, and Executive Director of the Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, Accra.
Fifteen Outstanding Books of 2002 for Mission Studies

In consultation with twenty-five distinguished missiologists, the editors of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH have selected fifteen books published in 2002 for special recognition of their contribution to mission studies. Selections have been restricted to books in English, since it would be impossible to consider fairly the books in many other languages that are not readily available to us. 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.

Adeney, Miriam.
Daughters of Islam: Building Bridges with Muslim Women.
Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. $14.

Brown, Judith M., and Robert Eric Frykenberg, eds.
Christians, Cultural Interactions, and India's Religious Traditions.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; London: Routledge Curzon. £40; paperback $35.

Burgess, Stanley M., and Eduard M. van der Maas, eds.
The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements.

Cortin, André, and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, eds.
Between Babylon and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America.
Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press. $49.95.

Escobar, Samuel.
Changing Tides: Latin America and World Mission Today.
American Society of Missiology Series, no. 31.
Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books. $28.

Hansen, Holger Brent, and Michael Twaddle.
Christian Missionaries and the State in the Third World.
Athens: Ohio Univ. Press; Oxford: James Currey. $44.95.

Jenkins, Philip.
The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity.
New York: Oxford Univ. Press. $28.

Minahan, James.
4 vols.
Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. $475.

Moreau, Scott, Tokunboh Adeyemo, David G. Burnett, Bryant L. Myers, and Hwa Yung, eds.
Monrovia, Calif.: MARC World Vision. $34.95.

Phipps, William E.
William Sheppard: Congo's African American Livingstone.
Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books. $28.

Scot, John, ed.
Christian Missionaries and the State in the Third World.
Maryknoll: Orbis Books; Edinburgh: Alban. $16.

Shenk, Wilbert R., ed.

Walls, Andrew F.
Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books. $22.

Yrigoyen, Charles, Jr., ed.
The Global Impact of the Wesleyan Traditions and Their Related Movements.
Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press. $75.
Michael Goheen’s doctoral dissertation, published here, represents a major contribution to the emerging scholarship surrounding Lesslie Newbigin’s formidable impact on the church in the latter half of the twentieth century. Following an introduction, the book unfolds in three parts. The first is historical, detailing what Goheen sees as “major ecclesiological shifts” in Newbigin’s life. The two chapters here are “From a Christendom to a Missionary Ecclesiology (1909–1959)” and “From a Christocentric to a Trinitarian Ecclesiology (1959–1998).” In the end, Goheen concludes that the latter shift was incomplete because Newbigin’s fundamental Christocentrism remained in unresolved tension with his “trinitarian basis” for mission. (Goheen’s case for such discontinuous “paradigm shifts” will not be convincing to everyone, given the ample counter-evidence—even within the book.) Part 2, “Systematic Articulation,” traces Newbigin’s missionary ecclesiology in relation to God (“The Missio Dei as Context for the Church’s Missionary Identity” and “The Missionary Character of the Church”), to the church’s mission (“The Missionary Church as Institution” and “The Task of the Missionary Church in the World”), and to the religio-cultural milieu (“The Relation of the Missionary Church to Its Cultural Context” and “The Missionary Church in Western Culture”). Part 3, “The Nature and Relevance of Newbigin’s Missionary Ecclesiology,” summarizes Goheen’s evaluation in interaction with two current discussions that in the World Council of Churches regarding the church’s relationship to the world, and that in the Gospel and Our Culture Network (North America) regarding the “missional church.” Goheen is at his best in part 2, especially when tracing some particular facet of Newbigin’s missiology. Of special importance are two themes. First, Newbigin believes that the mission of the church plays out most fundamentally and routinely in the daily life and work of Christian believers. Goheen’s ear for that emphasis makes a profound contribution to the pursuit of what it means for the church to be missional. Second, Goheen in one section (pp. 147–53) provides a stunning reflection on the ways Newbigin saw and told the significance of the atonement. All subsequent work on this theme in Newbigin’s theology will have to begin here.

Goheen’s critiques of Newbigin fall mostly in the category of what Newbigin failed to develop in his theological writings. His theology is variously said to be weak, inadequate, underdeveloped, obscured, inconsistent, and unresolved (regarding some tension or other). Such judgments, more asserted than argued, seem to presume an agreed frame of reference as to the standard for testing theological adequacy or strength. What is not clearly enough stated or argued, but becomes evident by the end, is that the assumed standard against which Newbigin is measured is the neo-Calvinist theological vision in which Goheen himself is located.

—George R. Hunsberger

**Ministry at the Margins: Strategy and Spirituality for Mission.**


Anthony Gittins, professor of Catholic missiology at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, has published a study of the critical dynamics that make the missionary task possible and fruitful. While the orientation of this work, including the illustrative dilemmas and issues, is toward a Roman Catholic constituency, the defining principles are pertinent to Christians of all traditions. Furthermore, while his focus is toward those called to overseas missionary service, this work could be helpful to all Christians who seek to relate with integrity and grace to their neighbors—in short, to all who in the name of Jesus are committed to outreach and inclusion.

Four themes run throughout the work. First, Gittins ably stresses the place that language has in human affairs, highlighting how language gives meaning and is thus the key to intelligibility and culture. Second, he emphasizes that mission depends on a fundamental hospitality and positive regard for the other, for the missionary task depends on finding a common ground of understanding.

Third, Gittins also emphasizes that an awareness of our mutuality is critical to all human relations, particularly to the missionary vocation. Mutuality involves listening and speaking, but also giving and receiving, and other acts of reciprocity. Fourth, he highlights the inner dynamics of heart and mind that make it possible to engage with another. Gittins is essentially calling for the cultivation of a spirit of humility and meekness as the defining inner orientation of one who would be a missionary. This is the truly missionary spirit of Jesus and enables us to be both servants and learners.

This book serves well as a basic introduction to the missionary calling, an introductory text for either seminary or college courses that seek to cultivate these virtues in students. It also might be ideal reading for those anticipating a short-term mission assignment.

—Gordon T. Smith

**Mission for the Twenty-First Century.**


On the 125th anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word (S.V.D.), members from around the world gathered to reflect on the theme “Mission in the Twenty-First Century.” This book’s contents come from the symposium. Editors Bevans and Schroeder are S.V.D. missiologists.

Two surprises awaited this reviewer. Surprise one: the pluralism in these essays. On one end Jacob Kavunkal (S.V.D. India) claims—backed by citations from Amos...
Tomko, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Rome, maintaining the “unequivocal biblical” affirmation that “Christ is the only Savior of all . . . there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name” (pp. 27–28).

Surprise two: “forgiveness of sins” gets mentioned only once. Not even in the essay from the guest Protestant do we ever hear that the Divine Word for mission might be, “Good cheer! Your sins are forgiven.”

Most often the Divine Word lifted up in these essays is “God’s reign.” Yet what is God’s reign if not God’s “new regime” in the Friend of Sinners, a k a. forgiveness? The notion of God’s reign, with its focus on humankind’s numerous “horizontal” problems, tends to bypass humanity’s conflict with God, the root problem of sin.

Both of these surprises signal a new wrestling mat in missiology: biblical hermeneutics, including the issue of the canon within the canon. Jesus’ enigmatic Nazareth sermon (Luke 4) is today’s canon, almost a shibboleth, for “reign of God” missiology. Yet Jesus’ own Great Commission in Luke, specifying what that reign actually is (“repentance and the forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations,” 24:47), gets short shrift.

It is a strange hermeneutics that hypes the one and ignores the other. At least for Luke’s own canon, mission proposals that sidestep Christ’s mission mandate of repentance and forgiveness need reworking. It is finally all about the Divine Word!

—Edward H. Schroeder


God’s Global Mosaic belongs to the growing number of books introducing Christians in the United States to the growth and vitality of Christianity around the world. Chandler’s goal is to help Christians in the West (the “we” in his subtitle) better appreciate that “today’s Christianity is a multicultural global movement that is polycentric and largely non-Western” (p. 15).

Chandler is not a professional missiologist writing for the academy but a mission practitioner who wants U.S. Christians to catch a glimpse of what God is doing in other parts of the world. His experience gives him a voice that is at the same time authoritative and accessible. An American evangelical “missionary kid” who grew up in Senegal, Chandler has worked for the International Bible Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in London, where he was ordained priest in the Church of England. He is currently president and CEO of Partners International, a global ministry based in Spokane, Washington, that works in partnership with Christians in the least evangelized regions of the world to support them in their witness. The author’s commitment to fostering global Christian partnership thus comes through in the book.

Chapters are organized around six geographic regions of the world. In each
Expanded on the theme mentioned in the previous sentence, the author offers a unifying theme or metaphor for the Christian experience in the region under consideration, for example, perseverance (Middle East), celebration in the face of persecution (Latin America), and Jesus as teacher/guru (India).

The more sophisticated reader might find these themes to be rather simplistic and overdrawn, yet the author’s extensive use of both biblical passages and personal stories makes the book accessible to a wide audience.

The book is endorsed by a veritable CIRCULATION STATEMENT

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INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, Vol. 27, No. 1

who’s Who of evangelical church leaders, primarily from England and the United States. Evangelical Christians in the West will find the book to be a good introduction to the mosaic of global Christianity today.

— Ian T. Douglas

Ian T. Douglas, Professor of Mission and World Christianity at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, has served as a missionary in Haiti and is currently Convener of the Episcopal Seminaries’ Consultation on Mission and a member of the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Mission and Evangelism.


By Lorry Sweerts and Koen De Riddler, Louvain: Louvain Univ. Press, 2002, Pp. 188. $16.15.

When the Belgian missionary-artist Mon Van Genechten, C.I.C.M., arrived in Inner Mongolia in 1930, he sought to implement the Vatican’s recently promulgated “principle of adaptation” to indigenous cultures by pioneering, in his own words, a “true Chinese Christian Art. . . without any Western symbolism in it” (p. 39). In local churches he painted murals so that their walls “would become . . . the Bible,” which would “allow the poor and the illiterate to see . . . what they cannot read in books” (p. 74). He also fashioned catechetical woodcuts to supplant the traditional door gods on converts’ homes.

In 1938 Van Genechten was assigned to Beijing’s Catholic University to paint, draw, and etch Christian themes in scholastic Taoist and Buddhist styles so as to convince the literati that the “foreign” God . . . has lived among” the Chinese (p. 47). While under Japanese house arrest in 1942–45 and following his return to Belgium in 1946, the missionary continued to perfect his evangelistic art, which he increasingly embedded with sociopolitical commentary. The authors conclude that, whether employing popular or elite styles, Van Genechten was one of the few Catholic missionaries for whom Christian art was no longer “inculturated ‘from above’ . . . [but] was a genuine creative process, rooted in historical experience” (p. 10). His masterpiece in this regard is Suffering China (1943), in which a Chinese-appearing Christ identifies with the downtrodden Chinese and Mongols accompanying him to Calvary. The authors do not analyze the “historical forces” (Japanese occupation? the rise of Communism?) behind this startling folk-inspired painting. Nor do they assess Van Genechten’s impact on his fellow Chinese artists or those of today who, like He Qi of Nanjing Theological Seminary, are depicting the Gospel in the compelling folk motifs so close to Van Genechten’s heart.

Enhancing the analysis of Van Genechten’s artistic development are a bibliography, a catalog of his works (some of which are reproduced in color), a list of his exhibitions, and a sampling of his photographs and sketches of the suffering people in a turbulent China for whom he felt much compassion.

— P. Richard Bohr

P. Richard Bohr is Professor of History and Director of Asian Studies at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University, St. Joseph and Collegeville, Minnesota.

Hallowed Halls: Protestant Colleges in Old China.


This large, beautiful volume, with many color photographs, tells the stories of what has happened to thirteen colleges and universities in China that were founded by Protestant Christian bodies in North America and Great Britain during the half century between 1887 and 1937. The focus of the book is on the campuses and
architecture of these Protestant colleges of old China. The thirteen schools—Yenching, Shantung, Gingling, Nanking, Huachung, West China Union, Soochow, St. John’s, Shanghai, Hangchow, Hwa Nan, Fukien, and Lingnan—include four medical schools and the first school of dentistry in China. They led the way in education for women and pioneered in agricultural education.

After 1949 all the schools were nationalized, and some changed their names. All of them continue today and are among the best colleges and universities in China. For instance, in the early 1950s the Yenching University campus was amalgamated into what is today Peking University, which many consider to be the premier academic institution in the nation.

Photographs of the original campuses, taken from the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia archives, located in the library of Yale Divinity School, are placed alongside photographs of the campuses today, together with historical and descriptive text by Martha Smallley. The modified Chinese architecture of many of the original buildings at Yenching and other schools reflects a “desire to preserve the best in Chinese culture” (p. 15).

In 1980, we are told, “the government of China invited the United Board to return to China to assist with the development of higher education.” Since then “the United Board has supported projects at more than one hundred Chinese universities, with the primary emphasis on faculty training and the development of libraries”; by the year 2000 it had committed over $15 million to the effort (p. 13).

These campuses and buildings symbolize the ongoing legacy of Protestant efforts on behalf of modern education in China.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Gerald H. Anderson, a Senior Contributing Editor, is Director Emeritus of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut.

Christianity: A Short Global History.


Global Christianity has dramatically emerged as a hugely non-Western phenomenon, rendering problematic the almost exclusive emphasis on the Western phase of its history in the standard curriculum. In response, new survey courses have arisen, producing a demand for monographs detailing a history of global Christianity. Frederick Norris’s volume is a valuable and timely addition to this body of literature.

The book is divided into eight chapters, spanning from the emergence of the Christian faith as an obscure movement all the way to its present post-Western Christendom phase. It is a decided historical work, meticulously researched and richly detailed. What gives the work special significance, however, is the author’s unique approach. Each chapter is framed by three interrelated questions:

What kinds of relationships have Christians had with other people of other faiths? How have Christians functioned within various cultures? and Have Christians over the centuries developed a recognizable core of practices and beliefs?

This framework enables the author to probe indigenous responses to the Christian faith, demonstrate how Christians living in pluralistic settings have listened attentively to other faiths, highlight the immensely variegated nature of Christian practice and beliefs.
Christians throughout its history. Studies and suffering (rather than privilege and comfort) have been the more defining characteristics of the daily lives of Christians throughout its history. Studious treatment of the historical development of Christianity in Asia, the Far East, and Africa summarily discredits the still widespread assumption that Christianity is a Western religion.

The constraints imposed by this book’s compactness means that some major issues, characters, or events receive inadequate coverage. In places the narrative appears hurried and disjointed—perhaps a small price to pay for brevity, but still mildly disconcerting. Yet, concise, highly readable, replete with insightful analyses of Christianity’s interaction with other cultures, and loaded with interesting biographical details, a better introductory text for teaching the history of global Christianity will be hard to find.

—Jehu J. Hanciles

Jehu J. Hanciles, a Sierra Leonian, is Associate Professor of Mission History and Globalization at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

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Authentic Chinese Christianity: Preludes to Its Development (Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries).


Like its predecessors in the Louvain Chinese Studies series, of which this volume is the ninth, Authentic Chinese Christianity explores the legacy of Roman Catholic involvement in China, mainly that of missionary societies in the Low Countries. The present volume, however, which deals with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is more ecumenical in scope, and readers will find that several contributors have taken Protestant endeavors into serious account. As in many other conference volumes that opt for inclusivity instead of coherence, this one struggles to hold itself together under a very inadequate title (the implications of “authenticity” are nowhere addressed), even though all the contributions are of interest and (in a few cases) of real use to scholars in mission studies.

To get to the core of the book—the essays by J. G. Lutz (a profile of the often faceless and nameless Chinese Protestant evangelists who mediated the Gospel to the masses), J.-P. Wiest (a sociopolitical study of the early influx into Christianity of Hakka Chinese), and R. G. Tiedemann (whose analysis of conversion processes in the Qing Dynasty challenges some deeply entrenched assumptions)—one must break through the thick crust of several essays on such widely divergent subjects as missionary perceptions of Japanese colonialism (S. Sommers), the Chinese Christian diaspora of Southeast Asia (K. Steenbrink), the dictionaries compiled by Taiwan missionaries (A. Heylen), and an essay on the impact of missionaries on relations between Belgium and China (K. De Riddere). These may not be the book’s best essays, but De Riddere’s makes a spirited defense of the importance of transempirical insight into the transformative power of the Gospel to offset the shortcomings of empirically based mission studies. The “message of faith,” he claims, “always tips the scale” (p. 55). One wonders, however, how any scale could possibly balance such different types of evidential weight.

—Richard Fox Young

Richard Fox Young, Associate Professor of the History of Religions, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, formerly served with the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Sri Lanka, India, and Japan.
The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity.


The thesis of this book is that "we are currently living through one of the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide" (p. 1). Philip Jenkins, professor of history and religious studies at Pennsylvania State University, assembles much of the familiar documentation, ranging from Walbert Bühmann to David Barrett to Andrew Wals, to demonstrate the southward shift of the center of gravity in global Christianity. "The era of Western Christianity has passed within our lifetimes," he says, "and the day of Southern Christianity is dawning" (p. 3).

And yet, Western secular commentators have paid little serious attention to these trends, and Jenkins points to well-known Christian journals and authors who still neglect what is happening in this "browning" of world Christianity.

Jenkins predicts that by the year 2050 only about one-fifth of the world's three billion Christians will be non-Hispanic Caucasian; the rest will be concentrated in the Southern Hemisphere. This "new Christian world of the South could find unity in common religious beliefs" and develop "a powerful Christian identity in culture and politics" (p. 11). According to Jenkins, such movement could lead to a new Christendom in the South. The bulk of the book describes the historical process that has brought us to this stage.

At the same time, a similar development is taking place among Muslims in adjacent areas of Africa and Asia, and within some countries alongside Christians. This trend could lead in turn to Christian-Muslim conflict in the competition for power and control, as is seen already in Nigeria, Indonesia, the Sudan, and the Philippines. A worst-case scenario of the future, Jenkins warns, "would include a wave of religious conflicts reminiscent of the Middle Ages, a new age of Christian crusades and Muslim jihads. Imagine the world of the thirteenth century armed with nuclear warheads and anthrax" (p. 13).

Well written and well documented, the book presents a compelling—if sobering—picture of global trends for Christians to ponder.

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Gerald H. Anderson

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church. Peter B. Andersen interprets religious life among the Santals as an ongoing response to social and religious challenges. Bengt G. Karlsson shows that change of behavior (morality and lifestyle), as well as new beliefs, are part of the process of entering the new Christian dharma (way of life). Rather than destroying culture, Christian conversion brought direction, meaning, and cultural affirmation.

Other essays offer insights into the struggle for Christian indigeneity. Gerald Studdert-Kennedy illustrates the confusion of Christianity with colonialism in the case of High Church Anglo-Catholicism. By way of contrast, Susan Billington Harper introduces the cultural innovations of Bishop V. S. Azariah at Dornakal, where Hindu and other traditions were incorporated in new indigenous forms of Christian liturgy, architecture, and life. Michael Bergunder evaluates the political backgrounds and cultural implications of new Bible translations and concludes that there is no valid theological reason for rejecting the new “pure Tamil” translation.

Edited by Judith M. Brown, Beit Professor of Commonwealth History at the University of Oxford, and Robert Eric Frykenberg, professor emeritus of history and South Asian studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the essays in this collection are essential reading for anyone serious about knowing the place of Christianity in the history and development of India.

—Roger E. Hedlund

Roger E. Hedlund, a member of CBInternational, is Director of the Dictionary of South Asian Christianity project at the Mylapore Institute for Indigenous Studies in Chennai, India, and author and compiler of numerous works.

Flickering Shadows: Cinema and Identity in Colonial Zimbabwe.


In the 1930s British colonial authorities in Africa began an experiment in producing movies specifically for Africans. The logic behind this undertaking involved the racist (and somewhat contradictory) beliefs that Africans were not able to properly understand Western films and that their propensity for mimetic imitation would lead to violence and sexual misdemeanors. While enthusiasm for such “films for Africans” generally declined after the Second World War, in central Africa and particularly in Zimbabwe, they continued to be made right up until the eve of Zimbabwean independence in 1980.

James Burns’s fascinating book analyzes the history and ideology of this undertaking in great detail. The government agencies commissioning the films seem to have had two major purposes: the first was to educate (or, more accurately, indoctrinate) colonial subjects in modernizing techniques such as new agricultural methods; the second—and more disturbing—was to produce political propaganda, particularly in support of the highly unpopular Central African Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland in the 1950s.

While the book makes no pretense to be about religion, Christianity, or missionaries, it is interesting to note how often these subjects surface. Often missionaries were among the most enthusiastic of movie projectionists—both on their mission stations and, for example, in the mines of southern Africa. In undertaking this task, they were (perhaps unwittingly) drawn into an area of moral ambiguity, where propaganda, whether political or religious, was never far removed from the silver screen.

One of the oft-repeated European fallacies about African film audiences was that “they often laughed in the wrong places.” In the light both of the careful research of this book and of my own more limited experience, it might be argued that they were in fact laughing in the right places: undertaking a sort of reader-centered hermeneutics, interpreting the films in the light of their own experience. The same might well be said of African interpretations of Christianity.

—Jack Thompson

Jack Thompson, Senior Lecturer in the History of World Christianity, University of Edinburgh, served as a missionary in Malawi between 1970 and 1983.

Mission or Submission? Moravian and Catholic Missionaries in the Dutch Caribbean During the Nineteenth Century.


Lampe compares the missiological practices of two missions in the slave societies of nineteenth-century Dutch West Indies—German Moravians in Suriname and Dutch Catholics in Curacao. He concludes that they shared an important feature, namely, a theology of native submission or suppression. Although these two traditions operated on different missiological impulses, governed by different theologies of mission, Lampe argues forcefully that the political implications of this theology of submission clearly shaped the operations of each mission.

Lampe’s thesis is that Christian mission in this period in the Dutch West Indies followed a colonial policy of suppression that deliberately delayed emancipation. He refers to a “close connection between the postponement of emancipation, colonial education and mission schools” (p. 188) that was fostered deliberately by the Dutch colonial administration. This policy enabled the Dutch to resist British antislavery pressure until as late as July 1, 1863, thirty years after British abolition. This conclusion is opposite to the one Stiv Jakobsson reaches in his Am I Not a Man and a Brother? (Uppsala, 1972), where he argues that activist Christian missionaries in the British West Indies accelerated the final abolition of slavery there in 1833. In the Dutch West Indies, Lampe argues, the experience was the reverse.

With excellent archival sources and useful appendices, this book is a welcome contribution to comparative understanding of the impact of Christian mission in nineteenth-century West Indies. It provides fresh insights not only into Dutch colonial policy in the West Indies but also into the response of Protestant and Catholic communities pursuing Christian mission amid the complexities of two West Indian slave societies.

—Las Newman

Las Newman, a Jamaican, is a Ph.D. student at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, U.K., specializing in the nineteenth-century mission history of the West Indies.
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Culture, Values, and Worldview: Anthropology for Mission Practice.
Dr. Darrell L. Whiteman, Asbury Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, shows how one's worldview and theology of culture affect cross-cultural mission. Cosponsored by the Franciscan Mission Resource Center and Mission Society for United Methodists. Eight sessions. $125

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Ethnicity as Gift and Barrier: Human Identity and Christian Mission. Dr. Tite Tiénu, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, works from first-hand experience in Africa to identify the “tribal” issues faced by the global church in mission. Cosponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and Wycliffe Bible Translators. Eight sessions. $125

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Christian Witness in the Hindu World. Dr. Roger Heuland, director of the Dictionary of South Asian Christianity project, and former professor at Union Biblical Seminary and Serampore College, India, establishes the principles of effective witness in one of the world’s most challenging social and religious contexts. Eight sessions. $125

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