

K o r e a M i s s i o n s Q u a r t e r l y

한국 선교 KMQ

2016 English Edition

MISSION KOREA

A Study on the Mission Movement of Korean Evangelicals

The Nature and Limitations of the Korean Evangelical Mission Movement

The Essence and Content of Self-Theologizing and Self-Missiologizing

Mission for People in Oral Cultures

A Neglected Alternative: Liberal Islam



K W M A

μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη

The above Greek logo, "to make disciples of all nations",
is the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 20:19.
Making disciples of all nations by obeying this commandment is
our Dream,
our Vision,
our Mission.

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Preface

N. Yong SUNG

KMQ Editor

God created the world beautifully. As he created each day, he “saw that it was great” (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Therefore, all created beings in the world are creatures whom God admired. Not least human beings, who were created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). However, humans are at the same time born in the image of Adam (Gen. 5:3), because of the sin inherited from Adam (Rom 5:12). So we are a double image. We reveal the beauty of humans through the image of God, and the ugliness of humans through the image of Adam.

Because of Adam’s image, all humans are by nature subject to the wrath of God (Eph 2:3). Eternal judgment is awaiting. No one is capable of avoiding judgment because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). And yet our God has never stopped loving us since sin entered the world. He revealed His love through His chosen people and their prophets and eventually sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ who died on the cross, as the ugliest sinner bearing our sins.

And He transferred the righteousness of God to those who believe in Him, thereby making sinners righteous. Whoever now believes in what Christ Jesus did on the cross will experience this transformation. Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, God sees us as righteous people without spot or blemish. God of the Holy Trinity would like to bestow this grace on all the people in the world.

KMQ would like to see people in the world in the way that our dear Lord sees them. We want to see them with the love that our Lord has for them. By seeing them that way, not glancing but gazing, we may be able to find ways to reach them. Further, we want to have the passion that our Lord Jesus has for them. It is our desire that we can be of a little help in restoring the distorted and perverted world because of sins inherited from Adam.

KMQ has so far published 58 editions in the Korean language, and this is the third in English. The reason we publish an English edition is simple. We would like to share our missional desires and passion with missional people in the world. The articles introduced in this 2016 edition were selected from among the KMQ articles of the last two years. I hope and pray that whoever reads this book will see our passion and love for the church, for the Lord, and for the work of missions. We believe His kingdom will come through the loyalty of His people and the mutual cooperation of the churches in the world. Let us hold hands together and work together for the kingdom of God.

To God be the glory!



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A Study on the Mission Movement of Korean Evangelicals

Hwal-young KIM

Preface

“When European theology coughs, American theology gets a cold, and Korean theology catches pneumonia.” That joke that was once widely told in the Korean Church. In terms of theological movements, the fact that the Korean Church was extremely dependent on the Western Church is a historical reality that cannot be denied. Our mission movement also cannot escape this categorization. The mission movement is an expression of theology in life. In order to understand the Korean evangelical mission movement, we must look at how evangelical theology developed. In particular, we must pay attention to the influence that western theology has had on Korean theology, and the conflicting relationship between the progressive and conservative sides which have affected one another. We also cannot overlook the positive influences that the missionary movement had on the theological movement.

So in this brief study, I look at the evangelical theology movement in the Korean Church and the aspects of its conflict with the liberal theology movement, and then track the unfolding situation of the evangelical mission movement. My purpose is to gauge how the Korean mission movement, especially the evangelical part, should develop in this 21st century of the postmodern generation.

Theological Movement of the Evangelicals

Myung-hyuk Kim, president of the Korea Evangelical Fellowship (KEF) said, “The Korean Church was, from the beginning, built based on the heritage of evangelical faith” (Kim 1990, 182). In saying this, he emphasized the inherent theological identity of the Korean Church. The early Korean Churches that were pioneered by puritan background American missionaries were initially all evangelical. As a result of the conflict that came out of the challenging new theological stream, the Korean Church found its evangelical identity, and developed into a more vivid and clear movement. Park Myeong-su also considers the early Korean Church to have been classical evangelicals. In defining “evangelicals,” he cites Timothy Smith: “The authority of the gospel is based on the Bible, its stress is on the regeneration, and its mission is the preaching of the gospel.” And he states that “the Evangelicals are much wider concept than following denominational traditions, such as the Reformed, Wesleyan, Pentecostals, which the Korean Church has embraced” (Park 2001, 642).

On the other hand, Park Yong-kyu sees the Korean evangelical movement thus: “Korean evangelicalism that began to be rising since 1960s, was considerably influenced and challenged by the British-American evangelical movement developed since 1940s” (Park 2001, 649). And, he concludes, with a concern regarding the extreme left and right’s theological flow (progressive vs. conservative) and conflict that started at the beginning of the Korean Evangelical movement, that the Korean Evangelical Movement has been evidently developed in full-scale, centering on forming a united force of the Christian denominations since the 1970s. In contrast, Kim Dong-sun stated in a progressive perspective that “the Evangelicals’ absolute author-

ity on the Bible brought a phenomenon of a weakened theology and indifference toward society and due to this there arose conflict even within the Evangelical church about the absolute authority of the Bible” (Kim 2001, 277). He pointed out the narrowness of mission theology and schism due to the vulnerability of Evangelicalism.

Starting in the early 1920s, evangelicalism in Korean Church began to be challenged by progressive Western liberation theology. From the 1950s, this conflict between the conservatives and progressives left a significant wound in the Korean Church. The progressives targeted the close-minded, fundamental conservatives, and the two differed greatly in terms of evangelicalism and the authority of the Bible. In the 1960s came the fiercest conservative-progressive bilateral confrontation. This was associated with church politics and escalated to the extent of denominational divisions, between the National Association of Evangelicals and the National Council of Churches, which seemed to perfectly mimic what happened with the American Church. Liberals condemned the fundamentalist conservatives as anti-intellectual, separatist, and semi-cultural. The radical Western liberation theology that claimed even the God is Dead theology, utilizing the “humanistic perspective,” insisted on the indigenization of theology and developed a Minjung theology. In contrast with the evangelicals, the progressives—especially those in the mission movement—geared to the new direction of direct social involvement and active participation in the political world. It began to develop a political and religious pluralism that seemed to render missionary work useless.¹ However, the progressive movement could not

¹ Progressive theologians stress that the mission of the church should be the realization of justice of God to against dictators and that removing structural evils should be objective of *Missio Dei*. And according to my research, by 1984, among 100 cross-cultural Korean missionaries, there

gain broad agreement from the Korean Church as a whole. Rather, the moderate conservative evangelicals gained more support and provided a broader influence on churches in Korea. In particular, as we came into the 1970s, evangelical theologians organized internal societies to actively promote theological activity, while externally, the church leaders built a united front to show their strength and stood up against liberalism.² Thus the mainstream evangelical retained its influence in the Korean Church, shouting the Gospel loudly and leading the missionary movement.³

In the 70s and 80s, the Korean social context was met by democratization in politics and new economic development. Simultaneously, progressives and conservatives and liberals and evangelicals each began to manifest different focuses in mission movements. The liberal circles began to advance the social issues such as human rights and political and economic issues as the main focus of missions, while the conservative circles devoted their zeal and efforts to church growth and sending out missionaries. At this point, the Korean Church was experiencing unprecedented quantitative growth, and there were large mega-churches where hundreds and thousands

wasn't a single missionary sent by the Mission Boards of Korea Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church of Republic of Korea, which are progressive liberal denominations. Only a few couples were sent from these churches through inter-denominational mission agencies. These denominational seminaries were dominated by the liberal theologians, such as Byun Sun-hwan and Kim Yong-bok, who followed Minjung theology or religious pluralism. To them social issues were the main concern for their mission of the church (Kim 1994, 94).

² In 1972, the Korea Evangelical Theology Society (KETS) was formed by evangelical theologians of the Evangelical Holiness Church and Presbyterian Churches (re-organized in 1982). Subsequently, the Korea Evangelicals Fellowship (KEF) was formed and extended its fellowship with world-wide Evangelical circles.

³ Through the "Billy Graham Crusade in 1973," "the Explo '74," the "National Evangelization Convention," and "the World Evangelization Movement" the Evangelicals united each other and held grand assemblies. This caused the Korean Churches to commit missionary movement.

would gather, one after the other, to zealously and passionately send missionaries overseas. Today, Korea has become the largest missionary sending country, surpassed only by the United States. National evangelization and world evangelization has been the main topic of the Church in Korea. Thus, as world evangelization movements like the Lausanne Movement (Kantzer 1992, 253–259) fought back against the liberal movement, Korean evangelicalism has rode alongside the mainstream forces. Behind these developments lay the direct or indirect influence of three great leaders of the evangelical movement in the late 20th century. Billy Graham gathered one million people in one place in Korea to preach the Gospel, McGovern provided a theological theory about the rapid growth of the Korean Church, and Bill Bright played a central role in the missionary movement by influencing young Korean minds to hold firmly to the Gospel and be sent into the world as missionaries.

As the twenty-first century approached, Evangelical theologian Kim Young-han stated, “With a variety of acceptance in the upcoming post-modern culture, evangelicals are confronted with the task of confirming their identity” (Kim Young-han 2006, 25). By saying this he examined the complex current status of world missions. He explained that fundamentalism has developed into neo-evangelicalism and various aspects such as the emergence of post-conservative evangelicalism over neo-liberalism (neo-orthodoxism). And by pointing out the various theological schisms of American Evangelicalism which are busily defining evangelical boundaries, he presented Reformed Evangelicalism as firmly grounded in and dependent on the Word of God as the foundation of the reformation tradition and emphasized the historical relevance and accountability of the revelation (Kim Young-han 2006, 36-47). So, can the Reformed Evangelicalism take

the place of liberalism and provide an opposing solution to the postmodern view that there is no absolute truth or absolute morality? This question is another urgent task placed upon the Korean Church's mission movement.

The theology of the Korean Church was based on the innate traditional evangelicalism, and it developed throughout the liberal challenge—namely, the progressive—conservative conflict—while never losing its initial energy. So for more than a century, it has breathed alongside World Evangelicalism. The strength of the Korean Church, which was born and matured as a missionary church, was evangelical theology. The evangelical theology movement in the Korean Church has served as the base from which the Korean Church is becoming the center of twenty-first century global mission and is being asked to take a leading role within the Global-South churches.⁴

Evangelical Mission Movement

The missionary movement, taken in accordance with the missionary mandate of the early church in Acts 1:8, has been recorded and expanded as not only a geographical (from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth), but also a cultural and ethnic pattern. This section will describe such patterns of mission movements in parallel to the patterns that appear in the Acts.

⁴ In the 1990s, there were two doctoral dissertations of mission history of Korean Church that pointed out the rapid growth of Korean mission movement was based on the conservative theology of Korean Church (Park 1999, 148; Kim 1994, 94). “A Two-Third Mission On the Way; The Missionary Movement of the Presbyterian Church in Korea” (Park Ki-ho, Fuller, 1991, Ph.D. dissertation; *From Asia to Asia; A Mission History of the Presbyterian Church in Korea* (1959–1992) (Kim Hwal-young, RTS, 1993, D.Miss. dissertation).

Let us start from the mission movement among the Koreans on the Korean peninsula. In Manchuria, the home of the old Han-Koreans, the Scottish Presbyterian missionary John McIntyre baptized four Korean youth in 1876 (Baek Hong-jun, Lee Eung-chan, Lee Seong-ha, Kim Jingi). Starting from this point, the Gospel fire was ignited in the eastern hermit nation and spread out throughout the Korean peninsula. The early Acts-like missionary church was gestated, birthed, and grown in an unusual way for the history of the world mission movement, and became the epicenter of a powerful missionary movement. In the north of the Korean peninsula, the first few baptized believers participated in translating the Bible and brought it across the Yalu River into Hwanghae Province, where they also planted the first local church (1884).⁵ In the south of the peninsula, the American missionary Underwood landed in Inchon (1885) carrying the Gospel translated by Su-Jung Lee who had been baptized in Tokyo, and the gospel began to spread throughout the peninsula. A ripened harvest field, Korea was ready to receive the gospel, and it was an apt environment to carry the gospel message to its neighbors, and other ethnic people groups.⁶ Under the guidance of Western missionaries (from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia) the flames of revival that took place in Wonsan and Pyongyang filled the national churches with the energy of the Gospel. The “Million

⁵ With the help of converted Korean youth, John Ross, a Scottish Presbyterian Missionary, translated the Bible into Korean and published in 1882.

⁶ One century earlier, Lee Seung-hoon, a diplomatic corps who went to Beijing was baptized (1784) and he brought Catholicism into Korea and started a church (1785). But the Catholic church faced severe persecution from the government. The beginning of the twentieth century was the darkest time in Korea history, because she lost her sovereignty to Japan for the first time in 5,000 years of her history. The massive Korean exodus took place at that time, and Koreans lost their national identity and became a wandering people. To them, the gospel of the kingdom was like a cool shower on dry land and a light to the darkness.

Souls for Christ” movement began and when the Korean Presbytery was organized in 1907, there were more than 1,000 churches and its membership reached sixty thousand. This was not including Methodist churches and other denominations. However, just as the Jerusalem church had been scattered by persecution, the Korean Church was forced to scatter to neighboring countries.⁷ This dispersion was God’s preparation for another dimension of the mission movement.

Even in the midst of Japanese persecution and extreme poverty in the country, the Korean Church flourished and grew in the Word and continued an active mission movement of sending missionaries to the scattered Koreans. The mission movement that initially centered on the Korean diaspora spread not only to the Maritime Province of Siberia (1909), China, Mongolia (1925), Japan (1908), and so forth, but also to other places and continents such as Hawaii (1903) and Mexico (1905).⁸ As a result of these missions, the Presbyterian Churches that were built in Manchuria during the Japanese occupation developed into several presbyteries, and in 1941, even an independent General Assembly was organized. In the midst of the nation’s suffering, the missionary movement was still active. The end of World War II, when Korea became an independent nation, resulted in the tragic division of North and South Korea, and their civil war led to a fratricidal tragedy. Thus

⁷ During the first half of the twentieth century, more than one third of Koreans were forcibly dragged out from the motherland and scattered to Manchuria (5 million) and Japan (2 million) as well as other parts of the world. Dr. David Cho likened this large-scale exile to the Korean Exodos (Cho 1991).

⁸ According to the research of the Mission Institute of Presbyterian Seminary, from the beginning of twentieth century to the end of World War II, the Korean Church placed 255 missions to the eight countries (Jeju Island, Manchuria, Siberia, China, Hawaii and Mexico) as missionaries. There were 145 Presbyterians, 46 Methodists, 16 Baptists, and 14 Holiness Christians (Park 1999, 117).

the church in North Korea, which accounted for the vast majority of the Korean Church, moved south due to the persecution of the Communist Party. The churches scattered into the South and took the lead by overcoming adversity and growing through revival, and the 70s and 80s were the peak of the Korean Church growth, where at one point, more than 25 percent of South Korea's population claimed to be Protestants (MCST 2011, 9). Today, there are over seven million people in the Korean Diasporas living in numerous global cities across several continents. Among them, more than 6,000 churches have been planted in various cities, playing a significant role in world evangelization. Indeed, the missionary movement of the Korean Church is worth a page of history in the World Mission Movement.

Secondly, the mission movement toward Korea's neighboring nations progressed much like the Samaritan Mission did in Acts. The Korean Church at first sent out missionaries to its nearest neighbor China (1913). The China mission of the Presbyterians lasted for 45 years sending over ten pastors and laymen across the ocean to the Shandong province of China. All of the national churches sponsored this Shandong mission project. Shandong is actually the home of Confucius and Mencius, the founder of Confucianism, which Koreans venerate. Through planting churches, schools, and hospitals—traditional missionary activities—a fruitful ministry was born there. When the Communist Party dominated China and they kicked out all the missionaries, Korean missionary Bang Ji-il was the last one withdrawn (1957). While waiting for China's door for missions to open, Korea Church sent out missionaries to Taiwan and Japan.

It has already been over 30 years since this door was shut. However, during the 90s when the winds of "open reformation" blow through the communist world, numerous missionaries squeezed through the bamboo

curtain.⁹ Korea alone sent thousands of Korean missionaries into China. In the spirit of Acts, Korea showed special interest in various tribes of Chinese and Japanese people, viewing them as her Samaria. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism came into Korea after development in China. Only Christianity went to China from Korea, and Korean missionaries played a role in evangelizing China. Although Japan was an enemy nation that took away Korea's national sovereignty and persecuted the church, it is the country where the most missionaries have been sent to share the love of Christ.¹⁰ Hundreds of thousands of Korean diaspora in Japan are a very effective resource for the mission to Japan.

The Korean Church has heavily invested one fourth of her mission resources in China and Japan. The history of thousands of years of love/hate relationship between their peoples and the similarities in culture is an advantage that makes Korea far more effective in doing missions there than the West. In particular, the Korean Church is the closest co-worker with the Chinese church which is the world's most effective evangelizing church, with the most potential resources in the future for world mission in the 21st century. In this sense, the Korean Church needs to seek a fresh mission strategy work in line with the Chinese church. It must be a critical task of the Korean Church to collaborate with geographic and cultural neighboring churches for missions.

Thirdly, the to-the-end-of-the-earth mission movement has also been dynamically and and broadly developed. The first Korean "Macedonia call"

⁹ According to the recent statistics, 140 Korean mission organizations sent 4,309 missionaries to China. Twenty-four percent of Korean missionaries work in Northeast Asia (Han 2013, 148).

¹⁰ In 2013, from 87 mission organizations, 1,438 missionaries were working in Japan (Han 2013, 148).

was from Thailand. Although the economy in Korea was devastated by the Korean War (GNI at that time was \$67), they did not ignore the call to the Thai people and sent two missionary families there in 1956. This was followed by sending missionaries to other distant lands such as Pakistan, Ethiopia, Mexico, and Brazil. The work began with the local churches being the sending and managing centers for the missionaries, rather than denominations. Then emerged the interdenominational missionary organizations and the student-missionary movement organizations from Korea itself and overseas, and even missionary training centers, making the 1960s the era of preparation for a full-scale entrance to the modern missionary movement.

The 1970s saw the opening of a new chapter of the modern missionary movement in the Korean Church. Numerous missionaries were sent to nations such as Indonesia, the Philippines, and Egypt. In the beginning of the decade, the focus of missionary work was on the Korean diaspora in Europe, and North and South America, together with various Asian nations. In the 80s, however, the situation changed. The nation's economy grew enough to host the International Olympics, and the Church revival movement also reached its peak. This was when the period of sending out full-fledged cross-cultural missionaries began in great numbers. Initially, at least half of the missionaries who worked among various nations were affiliated with Western missionary organizations, and were able to learn and gain ministry experience through them. But those many other missionaries who were sent by the national denominations and local churches faced a lot of struggles and problems because they hastily began ministries on their own without having proper mission supporting structures and knowledge of mission. However, as the 90s approached, most denominations organized their mission board to equip missionaries on an increasingly larger scale, and

more than 100 interdenominational missionary organizations were established and sprung up everywhere, in what was celebrated as the “golden age of missions.” More mission organizations produced more missionaries for more effective ministries on a larger scale and to the wider mission fields in the world.

Although church growth slowed in the late 90s due to internal problems which also influenced missions, around the end of the 20th century, the Korean Church, like churches in Nigeria, India, and Brazil, sent more than ten thousand missionaries to become the world’s superpower in sending out missionaries. The World Evangelical circle acknowledged Korea as an important mission force and expected Korea to lead the mission era for the Global South in the global evangelization movement.¹¹

At the dawn of the 21st century, or what could be called “the Global South missionary era,” the Secretary-General of the KWMA, Han Jung-kook, stated that “the main focus of the 21st century for Korean missions is the work of finding its direction. Following the advice of Ralph Winter and his mission team, the mission leaders concluded that Frontier Mission is the vision for the future direction of Korean missions” (Han, 2013, 10), and proposed “Target 2030”¹² as a future blueprint for this goal. He presented this as the vision to lead the missionary movement over the next 25 years, after re-

¹¹ Dr. David Cho is known as Mr. Mission to Western mission circles. He founded the Korean International Mission (KIM) and started to send missionaries. In 1972, he was influential in forming the Korean Foreign Mission Association (KFMA) and mobilizing churches to the mission movement. Asia Missions Association (AMA) was formed in 1975 under his leadership and called the Western churches to cooperate with Global South churches in equal capacity. The Korean Church took leadership among the Global-South churches in the missionary movement (Cho 2012).

¹² “Target 2030” is a plan for 25 years of missionary movement in the Korean Church from 2006 to 2030 (Han 2013, 146-9).

flecting back upon the past 30-year history of the Korean Evangelical Mission Movement. Part of this vision is to follow the world's mission trend of placing missionaries strategically as pioneers in frontier regions. There have been studies to divide the areas into two separate avenues (frontiers are F1, F2, F3, general mission field G1, G2). This aspect also shows the Korean Church's competence as a leader in world evangelization strategy.

In 2013, according to KWMA statistics, 24,742 missionaries were in deployment in 169 countries, and a good number of those missionaries were deployed in frontier mission areas, though not enough to satisfy the KWMA. The 24,742 missionaries belonged to 39 denominations and 214 mission organizations, and the figure will increase much more if the statistics include the number of missionaries who began mission work on their own.¹³ The official mission budget sent to the mission field in 2013 reached 300 million dollars, which means 12,125 dollars per person, per year. But there is no record of the privately sent money for the mission work (Moon Sang-chul 2014). These figures show precisely the size, eagerness, and impact of those churches which participate in the evangelical mission movements. Summing up all the statistics, Korean missionaries are engaged in all corners of the global village, and the missionary work ranges from evangelization and church planting to the various other types of missionary activities.

Here, I would like to summarize the Korean evangelical mission movement in a few points. First, from its early stages to the present, it has been the main force of the Korean Church. The influence of evangelicalism

¹³ The Korean Mission Research Institute reports that 19,789 missionaries are working in 2013. The numbers of missionaries differ in reports filed by KWMA and KMRI because of research methodology (Moon 2014, 148).

turned the progressive circles away from extreme liberal missiology, toward holistic missiology. Second, in line with the book of Acts, its history started from national evangelization, and then progressed to the neighboring nations and to the end-of-the earth nations. And next, the Korean Church proved itself to be the main force in the World Mission Movement by holding a leading position among the Global South's churches through many missionary activities and ministries. Lastly, it has not completely stripped itself of imitating the Westernized mentality in many aspects and is not yet able to stand on its own; it struggles to maintain balance due to its sudden growth in size. The most pressing concern now is that Korean missions may be gradually losing its early mission dynamics..

Conclusion

The Korean missionary movement has been a traditional evangelical missionary movement. And its core value was the spreading of the Gospel. Expanding churches, the earthly representation of the kingdom of God, was the main ministry of missionary work. The future of the Korean Church's missionary movement will be arduous as the twenty-first century becomes increasingly dominated by the era of post-modernism. Despite the attacks by modernists who advocate for reason and human freedom, evangelicalism stood firm on the absolute authority of the Bible, and experienced the appearing of the Holy Spirit in the expansion of the kingdom of God. What kind of theological attitude is appropriate for the mission movement of evangelicalism to face the challenges of post-modernism, which embraces and insists on relativism and pluralism by denying any absolute authorities? What are the communication skills needed to reach the ears and hearts of

those who are living in a world that is so rapidly changing? It is the homework of evangelical mission theology to answer these questions.

Furthermore, the evangelical missionary movement must ponder the strategic tasks, namely missions structure and collaboration, the new methodologies, and the various challenges they bring. Most important at this point is to return to the Bible and to be clothed in the power of the Holy Spirit. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

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The Nature and Limitations of the Korean Evangelical Mission Movement

Tim Hyunmo LEE

Introduction

The fourth National Consultation on World Evangelization (NCOWE IV) in 2006 recognized 1979 as the starting point of the contemporary mission movement of the Korean church, the year in which the first official statistics were published regarding Korean missionaries.¹ For each of the 37 years since, the Korean church has sent missionaries to foreign countries. Looking back to the past, it is clear that mainly conservative and evangelical groups have led the Korean mission movement. As Korean scholars, who studied in North America, and returned to Korea, they mostly designed and led the evangelical mission movements of the Korean church. They took on the role of fast followers of certain mission movements depending on the schools to which they belonged.² Of course, this is not necessarily a negative point. As a late starter who paled in comparison to the Western church in terms of history and experience in mission work, the Korean church had

¹ Dr. Martin L. Nelson and Dr. Jae Ok Jun reported the total number of missionaries deployed from the Korean church in 1979 was 93 in the book they co-authored. Martin L. Nelson, *A Manual of Mission Agencies, Missionary Training Centers, and Missionaries of Korean Church* (Seoul: Basile, 1989), 203.

² A fast follower means a person or a company that is quick to pick up good new ideas from other persons or companies.

no other option than to become fast followers. However, a fast follower has fundamental limitations by nature. Recently, Korea's evangelical mission movements reached those fundamental limitations and are facing difficulties in meeting various, new needs. The purpose of this article is to analyze and evaluate the characteristics of the Korean evangelical mission movement and the limitations resulting from such characteristics.

1. The Influence of American Missiology

Generally speaking, the Korean evangelical mission movement has followed the characteristics of North American evangelical missiology. Samuel Escobar, who evaluated evangelical missiology at the Iguassu Consultation in 1999, strongly criticized contemporary North American evangelical missiology. He described North American evangelical missiology as “a managerial missiology,” which reduced Christian mission to a manageable enterprise. This type of missiology has both merits and demerits. It provides pragmatic approaches, reduces the lack of clarity and fuzziness in the traditional way of defining and evaluating missionary actions. However, at the same time, it diminishes the importance of some aspects of missionary works that cannot be measured or reduced to figures. Especially it de-emphasizes theological problems and places methodology at the center. As a result, it turned missiology into missionary methodologies, Escobar insisted. He also pointed out that some methodologies offered by this missiology had a weak or no biblical and theological basis and handled Scripture in an arbitrary way, which resulted in rather doubtful activities in certain mission movements.³

³ Samuel Escobar, “Evangelical Missiology: Peering into the Future of the Turn of the Century,”

Even though Escobar emphasized only negative aspects of North American missiology, his evaluation provides a good reason for Korean churches to reexamine their missiological basis, which they had followed until then. A goal-directed and achievement-oriented attitude from American culture are central to the Korean mission movement. Considering the fact that mission is a providential action of the triune God and that human beings are only the instruments for His purpose, such attitudes reduce missions to human effort. Missionary activities without visible short-term achievements are regarded as failures. After all, despite the emphasis on unreached people groups and relocation of missionaries, missionaries flock to locations and methodologies that produce quick results. Ministries facing hardship, sufferings, and consuming work are considered to be operating with outdated patterns. One of the typical examples of this trend was the spiritual warfare movement focusing on driving out territorial spirits. It gained popularity in North and South America for a while and also once took an important share in Korean mission movements.

Of course, we should not neglect the positive aspect of this missiology. The use of statistical information, graphical charts, and digitalized data that helped people visualize the daunting tasks of missionaries had a positive effect on motivating younger generations for missions. We have to remind ourselves that Escobar's emphasis on "a critical missiology from the periphery" as an alternative to the managerial missiology originates from his theological tendency. Escobar, in fact, led the radical discipleship move-

Global Missiology for the Twenty-first Century, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 109–12.

ment, which was a backlash against the church planting movement. However, mission works emphasizing church planting had a strong appeal to the Korean Church. For those insisting on prioritizing evangelism, numerical growth is an inevitable factor in evangelism. Even David Barrett who took a critical stance towards the Church Growth Movement or extension of churches also mentioned, “To distinguish between evangelism and membership recruitment is not to suggest, though, that they are disconnected.”⁴ Korean missionaries show particular excellence in church planting in mission fields. This aspect needs to be recognized as a strength of the Korean mission movement.

However, an excessive inclination to the pragmatic aspects of missionary work influenced by North American missiology is rejected in the fields. David Tai-Woong Lee pointed out that contemporary evangelical missiology was excessively preoccupied with social science rather than attempting to integrate biblical contents. He proposed placing a greater importance on the discipline of the integration of biblical issues.⁵ We now need to develop a well-balanced evangelical missiology based on the theology of the Kingdom of God, which is already among us and is yet to come, as well as the Trinitarian understanding of missions, and the endurance and obedience of workers.

The share of the Korean church in the global evangelization scheme cannot be ignored today. Not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of quality and academic research, the Korean church has made significant

⁴ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 415.

⁵ David Tai-Woong Lee, “A Two-Third World Evaluation of Contemporary Evangelical Missiology,” *Global Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 141.

contributions to the world's evangelization. So far, it is true that the Korean church has relied excessively on American pragmatic missiology, which became the grounds for most missionary methods. We need to critically evaluate this trend. In particular, we have to place more emphasis on developing a new direction of Korea's own missiology grounded in the Bible. Moreover, we should not disregard the contributions of social science but build upon our own approach in evaluating the Korean mission movement with a stronger emphasis on biblical perspectives.

2. Crises of the Contemporary Korean Evangelical Mission Movement

A number of statistical reports signal warnings that Korean evangelical mission movements are becoming stagnant. The Korea World Missions Association (KWMA) published a report on the deployment of Korean missionaries in 2013 at the end of December 2013. According to the report, a total of 25,745 Korean missionaries were serving in 169 countries. The number of missionaries had increased by 1,003 compared to the previous year. It is a positive development that the number of missionaries is increasing every year by more than 1,000. However, the rate of increase does not necessarily paint the same picture. In 2013, the rate of increase of Korean missionaries was 4.05 percent, a huge decrease compared to the annual average rate of increase between 2007 and 2012, which was 7.96 percent.⁶ The Korea Research Institute for Mission (KRIM) reported that the total number

⁶ Hye Jin Kang, "KWMA, Statistics of Missionary Deployment," *Christian Today* (accessed 2 April 2014).

of foreign missionaries in 2013 was 20,085 in 171 countries in its report on the “Current Situation of Korean Missionaries and Korean Mission Schools in 2014.” The difference between two reports was the result of the difference in the number of mission agencies surveyed as well as different definitions of missionary. However, the most notable fact in KRIM’s report was the rate of increase in the number of missionaries in 2013, which was 1.43 percent. It was a significant decrease from 2.41 percent in 2011 and 2.19 percent in 2012.⁷ Both statistics demonstrate that the rate of increase of missionaries has dramatically decreased. Compared to the statistics from the 1990s and early 2000s, when the average annual rate of increase was 17.2 percent and 10.5 percent respectively, it is true that the rate of increase of missionaries is slowing down.⁸

An external reason for the slowdown may be the rapid mission expansion in the past. Missionary endeavors of the Korean church had grown fast due to the rapid growth of churches in the 1980s and 1990s supported by the dramatic growth of the Korean economy, followed by the effect of the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the 2002 Korea–Japan World Cup, and the worldwide spread of “the Korean Wave.”⁹ However, within the last 20 years, the growth of the Korean church has reached a plateau as the global economic recession had a huge impact on Korea. Even though the Korean

⁷ Hye Jin Kang, “KRIM Report of Current Statistics of 2014,” *Christian Today*, <http://www.christiantoday.co.kr/view.html?id=270625>. (accessed 2 April, 2014).

⁸ Sang Mok Shin, “20,085 Korean missionaries are deployed to 171 countries,” *Kookmin Ilbo*, 12 March 2014.

⁹ Ho Jin Jun, “Evaluation of 25 years of Mission Works of the Korean Church,” *Future of Korean Mission Movement and Frontier Mission*, ed. Seung Sam Kang (Seoul: Han Seon Hyeop, 2006), 221–2.

Wave seems to be spreading continuously, the stagnant growth of Korean churches has a direct effect on mission movements in terms of funding and the number of missionaries.

One of the internal reasons of the slowdown is that the rapid growth of the Korean mission movement was attributed to external factors rather than the maturity of churches. I had once described such external factors as a “breeze blowing from outside of the churches.” Major causes that have encouraged the Korean mission movement in its early days were not mission education or mobilization of the local churches, but external factors such as the liberalization of overseas trips, the influence of parachurch movements, the effects of interdenominational recruit movement such as the launch of Mission Korea, challenges from international mission agencies, and personal commitments. In the 1990s, initiatives for mission movements that had been dominated by international mission agencies began to be headed by denominational mission departments. As a result of the lack of mature missions, mission education, and training at the churches contributed greatly to the slowdown. Mission movements without internal maturity were considered as nothing more than a trend among Korean churches, or understood as just another church program. Such a movement fades over time. Already in the early 2000s, the mission “fad” was over, and Korean churches began to focus on other trends, such as counseling.

Revitalization of the evangelical mission movement needs to start from the inside. Changing the external factors, such as the global economic recession or increasing the number of restricted access nations, is not a simple feat. Therefore, Korean churches have to start from the inside. First, churches have to educate all church members regarding missions—mission

work is a calling of the church by nature and not type of church ministry. Of course, “mission” here does not refer only to overseas ministries. Churches also have to teach that evangelism to the unreached peoples should be prioritized among all missions of the Christian church. However, as we all know, a plea for mission is not enough to arouse support. Churches should continuously provide mission education and proper training until the desired fruits can be yielded. To this end, it is important for the pastor to have an accurate understanding of missions. The churches have to realize that “Kingdom Growth,” not “church growth,” is the goal of the church.

3. Characteristics of Korean Missionaries

One of the major features of the Korean evangelical mission movement is a large number of ordained missionaries. The statistics published in 2006 reported that 64.7 percent of recruited missionaries were ordained ministers.¹⁰ Another statistics report in 2008 provided more details; 52 percent of all missionaries were ordained, 43 percent were spouses of missionaries, and only five percent were lay missionaries. When the percentage of spouses is proportionally distributed between ordained missionaries and lay missionaries, the ratio of ordained missionary families and lay missionary families would be roughly nine to one. In the cases of non-denomination agencies, the proportion of lay workers is at approximately 40 percent, much higher than in denomination agencies.¹¹ However, the source of this figure is unreliable as the number of lay missionaries deployed from a cou-

¹⁰ KWMA, “Report on Missionary Deployment, 2006.”

¹¹ KWMA, “Report on Missionary Deployment, 2008.”

ple of particular mission agencies is too large. As the source may be providing a skewed perspective, it would be difficult to accept the presented figure as a general feature of non-denominational agencies.

The fact that a large proportion of the missionaries are ordained ministers has positive and negative consequences. One positive consequence is that ordained missionaries improves the average quality of the missionary workforce. This does not mean that the quality of lay missionaries is necessarily poor. Rather it means that missionaries who are ordained ministers already had a chance to screen their abilities to serve in ministries. The large share of ordained missionaries resulted in church planting (36.1 percent) as the main ministry of Korean missionaries. In fact, excellence in church planting is recognized as a main feature of the Korean mission movement today. Another positive aspect is the fact that missionaries are highly regarded in churches given that ordained ministers garner great respect in Korean churches.

However, such recognition is also an obstacle in recruiting and motivating lay persons to become missionaries. In restricted areas, missionaries have to build platforms, which require missionaries to mobilize diverse people and resources that serve different functions. The climate of respecting ordained missionaries hinders the recruitment of tentmakers or senior missionaries who may not necessarily be ordained ministers. Also the division of the missionaries into two different groups—ordained workers and laypersons—impedes integration and harmony, even among missionaries. Such a mentality comes from Korea’s traditional Confucian culture.¹²

¹² Ji Hee Lee, “Need of Harmony among Missionaries, Pastors, and Lay Workers in Ministry,” *Daily Christian News*, 19 November 2013.

Through this dichotomy, Korean missionaries often aggravate unnecessary tension among themselves.

The current situation of mission works requires diverse mission resources. It is becoming increasingly difficult for ordained missionaries to gain a foothold in restricted access nations, such as Islamic countries in the Middle East. Lay missionaries certainly have their own weaknesses, but, in certain situations, their weaknesses are no different from the weaknesses of ordained missionaries. In fact, if we develop appropriate approaches for lay missionaries to enhance their strengths—different from those for ordained workers—it would be possible to create a synergy effect between the two groups of missionaries for their mutual profit. This is an urgent task. We must remind ourselves that we first need to break the traditional dichotomy of missionaries, separating ordained persons from laymen.

4. Limitations of Collaboration and Networking

Conservative groups and evangelicals have experienced more divisions than unions in the past due to their insistence on keeping the orthodox faith. It is a well-known fact that evangelicals have difficulties in cooperation compared to ecumenical groups that emphasize church union and unity. It is somewhat fortunate that the Lausanne Movement formed the center of the evangelical mission movement through the efforts of Billy Graham, and that the World Evangelical Alliance played a pivotal role in global mission movements. However, the Korean evangelical mission movement is still weak in terms of collaboration and networking.

In 1988, David Barrett pointed out that most plans for evangelizing the world failed due to overlapping and unnecessary competitions.¹³ Since then, significant changes occurred in mission strategies of the evangelical mission movement. The key to these mission strategies was a focus on collaboration and networking. The AD2000 and Beyond Movement initiated by Thomas Wang in the 1990s was launched on the basis of David Barrett's insight. The AD2000 and Beyond Movement did not propose new global strategies. Instead, this movement provided platforms for people to discuss, explore, and seek ways to collaborate and build relationships through 16 different tasks and networking groups.¹⁴ Collaboration means joining hands in a ministry, and networking refers to sharing each other's resources. The Korean mission movement seems to be behind in following these trends.

In light of this aspect, let me point out several characteristics and limitations of the Korean evangelical mission movement. Most ministries carried out by Korean missionaries seem to be individual—meaning that Korean missionaries love to work separately. This might be the result of individualism of the churches in Korea. Individualism is a bit different from the autonomy of the local church. In other words, Korean evangelical churches focus on the interest of their own local church, not of the Korean church as a whole, and as a result, they reveal individualistic inclinations.¹⁵ Such individualism of churches is rooted in the culture of denominational egotism. Denominations often value their own denominational growth and expansion most highly, rather than Kingdom growth.

¹³ David Barrett, *Seven Hundred Plans to Evangelize the World* (Birmingham: New Hope, 1988).

¹⁴ Thomas Wang ed., *Countdown to AD 2000* (Pasadena: AD 2000 Movement, 1989), 3–4, xi–xii.

¹⁵ Whal Young Kim, "Direction and Possibility of Collaboration in the Mission Fields," in *Vision of Korean Mission Movement for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Leadership Development Consultation of Korean Missionaries (Seoul: IVP, 1996), 79.

Such culture has produced individualistic and independent activities among Korean evangelical missionaries. Some missionaries work together with missionaries from other agencies and build networks, but most compete with each other. We cannot deny the fact that church individualism and denominational egotism result in such individualistic ministries. Independent and individual mission activities decrease the efficiency of ministries.

Secondly, typical Korean cultural traits affect mission ministries. Recently, as Korea gradually turns into a multiracial society, Korean society is realizing that Koreans have a strong tendency toward racism.¹⁶ Our racism has an inclination toward imperialist attitudes. That is, Koreans tend to treat Westerners from advanced countries more favorably, but easily look down on people from economically underdeveloped countries. Such an attitude comes through easily in cross-cultural ministries. Because most missionary endeavors are carried out in underdeveloped countries, many missionaries assume a superior attitude subconsciously. Some national leaders in the field criticise Korean mission endeavors as “mission imperialism” for their unilateral actions.¹⁷ When we assume an air of superiority or triumphalism, a co-operative movement collapses. It is important that Korean missionaries keep in mind that such an air of superiority was one of the causes of the failure of the Western mission movement in the past, so that we do not repeat the same mistake. Also, many Koreans are brought up in a culture familiar with heavy competition but not teamwork or cooperation. A large part of the Korean peoples’ lifestyle was formed under the mindset of strong competition since

¹⁶ “There is an institutional racism in Korean society,” <http://www.newscham.net/news/view.php?board=news&nid=57888>. (accessed 27 February, 2014).

¹⁷ Jin Ku Lee, “Korean Protestants and Mission Imperialism,” in *A Rude Gospel*, ed. Kyung Jae Kim (Seoul: San Chaek Ja, 2007), 76.

the beginning of the modern era.¹⁸ Koreans often tend to recognize their fellows as competitors instead of partners, and feel stressed in group relationships, which seem to have been influenced from the traditional Korean culture. This weakness results in passive attitudes in cooperative movements and rather encourages people to work individually and independently.

The third point is that the conservative tendency of Korean evangelical churches brings about another limitation. Conservative churches tend to show sectarian inclinations because their main concern is to preserve their own orthodox faith. Arthur F. Glasser pointed to sectarian tendency as the greatest weakness of evangelical mission movements.¹⁹ Korean missionaries also frequently limit their cooperation within their denominational relations. It is necessary to preserve orthodox faith, but sectarian tendency is not a biblical value.

Although it is not easy to overcome the limitations mentioned above, the Korean evangelical mission movement should not remain stagnant, complaining about the limitations. Collaboration and networking are crucial factors to determine the success or failure of mission movements in the twenty-first century. Appropriate strategies and training including cooperation between Korean missionaries as well as with national conventions, foreign missionaries, and international mission agencies, have to be developed. Building collaboration and networking must be recognized as a token of maturity in the Korean evangelical mission movement. It also represents an

¹⁸ Eun Moo Lee, "Missionary Cooperation," in *Vision of Korean Mission Movement for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. William D. Taylor (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 87.

¹⁹ Arthur F. Glasser, "The Evangelicals: Unwavering Commitment, Troublesome Divisions," *Mission in the 1990s*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 7–8.

acknowledgement of mission as the very nature of the church, not as a conspicuous action. To achieve this goal, we have to hold on to the essentials of the Gospel while attempting to escape from the narrow mindset.

5. Assessment of Mission Strategies

Since it is difficult to address a wide range of issues of mission strategy within this short article, we will focus on the assessment of one issue—the Unreached People Group (UPG) movement. For some time, the Korean evangelical mission movement under the leadership of the KWMA strategically focused on the UPG movement. Now, UPG-centered strategies are mission philosophies with a strong biblical foundation. However, within the last 20 years, the Korean evangelical mission movement has fallen short of satisfactory success in the UPG movement. Korean evangelical churches signed a joint resolution during the 1995 Global Consultation on World Evangelization in Seoul (GCOWE 95) to adopt and evangelize more than 2,000 unreached people groups by 2000. However, they only adopted 146 UPGs during the following 19 years and, according to the Unreached People Mission Alliance (UPMA), no UPG was adopted after 2010.²⁰ Despite the fact that mission agencies, missionaries, and local churches were well aware of the importance of and the need for the UPG movement during this period, specific outcomes were not produced. Since the termination of the AD 2000 Movement at the end of 2000, the UPG movement seems to have lost its momentum overall, and also in Korean churches. It is important to explore the reasons for its failure.

²⁰ UPMA, “Status of UPG Adoption in 2012.”

The UPG movement was initiated and led by Ralph Winter as part of the AD2000 movement, and Korean churches took on the role of fast followers. In spite of the suitability and efficiency of the movement, the Korean mission structure was not equipped to carry out the movement—there was no control tower to narrow the gap between theory and reality. Churches focused on practical measures that produced quick results. The lack of the ability to implement control strategies even in the level of denominational agencies is a great weakness of the Korean church. In order to right this situation, mission agencies need to have financial power to control missionaries.

Another reason for the failure of the UPG movement in the Korean church was the lack of the ability to assess and correct mission strategies. The Korean church still lacks the ability to evaluate strategies, to give feedback, and to supplement weaknesses. Commonly, there is a significant gap between initial strategies and the reality. Therefore, several years after the implementation of strategies, it requires correction. To meet this requirement, mission agencies have to foster more experts in the area of designing strategy and assessment. Finally, the Korean church is less skilled at developing tactics for missions than at establishing strategies. Strategies should be comprehensive, all-inclusive, and flexible. But tactics need to be more concrete and specific. For now, mission agencies and head offices only develop strategies and leave the development of tactics to field workers. As a result, tactics often lack expertise and practicality. At times, missionaries even attempt to carry out strategies without proper tactics.

Today, we are facing the need to revise the goals of TARGET 2030 as per the reasons mentioned in this paper. The Korean evangelical mission movement has yet to overcome bigger challenge and achieve maturity.

Closing

Even though this paper discusses several limitations in the Korean mission movement, this does not mean that the Korean evangelical mission movement is a failure overall. I believe that the Lord is still using Korean churches in spite of their many weaknesses. Thanks to the sacrificial efforts of many missionaries, new churches are being planted, and people are learning about the Savior. Identifying the limitations in the Korean mission movement is not meant as a reproach but rather an encouragement to improve Korean ministries. Mission work is demanding, but we continue to devote ourselves and trust in Him because the Lord is our master who works through us for His glory.

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The Essence and Content of Self-theologizing and Self-missilogizing

N. Yong SUNG

The Korean Church has not pursued self-theologizing and self-missilogizing studies seriously enough, largely for the following three reasons. First, the Korean Church has worried about the risks of syncretistic theology. They have often thought that the theologies of ecumenical churches, which are themselves the outcome of self-theologizing, have crossed the boundary of sound biblical theology. Though good attempts to seek solutions for social issues, many of these theologies adopted socio-political ideologies and eventually led to effects that strayed from biblical teachings. Typical examples are Minjung theology, black theology, feminist theology, and liberation theology. No matter how great the philanthropic intent, a theology that denies the historical Jesus Christ, the salvation of Jesus Christ, and the absolute word of God, is not acceptable.

Second, church members have worried about the risk of ethnocentric theologies. To date, several church historians have analyzed the Korean Church from a nationalistic perspective. Many have said that Koreans translated the Bible before any Protestant missionary entered the Korean Peninsula, that they built the first church in Korea before any missionary did, that they established churches that grew rapidly, and that they have become a missionary superpower that leads world missions. So those who study “Korean-mission patterns” have often been misunderstood as studying mis-

sions with an ethnocentric attitude. The term “Korean-style” is regarded as a hindrance for cooperation with global missions because of its exclusive implications, and it was not widely accepted for the aforementioned reasons. The term was in fact coined in order to help share the experiences of the Korean revival with global churches, to overcome the limitations of western missionary efforts which have been pointed out, and to academically seek new directions for Korean missions.

Third, the Korean church was lazy in its theologizing. It was content with the status quo and felt no need for theologizing which would enable the application of God’s words to the context of our lives. From the moment the gospel was first introduced into Korea, it played the role of a “hammer” that reformed the established sociocultural practices of Koreans. That is to say, the gospel was a strong instrument of reformation which eliminated social ignorance and superstition, unfair practices, and cultural falsehoods. Wherever the gospel entered, social reformation and ideological revolution burst out, effectively breaking and demolishing social norms. There is no doubt that the gospel itself was proactive and reformatory in this regard. The Korean church was widely supported by the people. As a result, churches grew remarkably well, and Christians eventually became content with the status quo. But, only 19.4 percent of the general public have a high regard of in Korean Protestantism. Credibility is especially low among the non-religious: the Protestant Church records only 12.5 percent of credibility among the non-religious, much lower than Catholicism’s 47 percent and Buddhism’s 38 percent (The United Christian Newspaper, June 25, 2014). The fundamental reason for the lower credibility is that church leaders have been too lazy to provide solutions for current problems. In the early period of missions, it was enough for them to imitate the West and abolish their

own traditions, but now Korean churches are being told to show how they live out the words of the Bible. Churches have nothing to show because self-theologizing is necessary for biblical words to be lived out in the contemporary lifestyle. From the world's perspective, churches appear to be a group for the privileged. They are regarded as an affluent, ruling group rather than a poor, serving group following the poor, humble Jesus; as the friend of rich and powerful politicians and C.E.O.s rather than of poor and weak widows and orphans. When the public sees certain Christians enter Buddhist temples to pray aloud (in protest), the public unfairly criticizes all Christians as rude, illiberal, and exclusive. This backlash has transpired because Korean churches were content with the status quo after receiving the Christendom theology of the Western church and were too lazy to work at applying the Word of God to their lives.

The same can be said about the discussion of self-missilogizing. To date, Korean missions have made great accomplishments by following and imitating Western missions, but now Korean missions have grown large enough to stop following the examples of others and instead blaze a new trail for world missions. The number of dispatched missionaries and available resources for missions incomparably outweighs that of other countries in the two-thirds world. Statistically, church membership may be declining but the number of missionaries is increasing. Korean missions has grown so large that the world's churches now expect Korea to present a new biblical model of missions. But as the Korean church has not actively self-theologized, its missions have simply continued the course set by Western missions. It has simply adopted Western theologies, and the miserable consequences are clear to all. Self-missilogizing should therefore be an essential part of the accountability system of Korean missions. The nature and

contents of self-theologizing and self-missilogizing are the work of both practical theology and practical missiology, which apply the Bible to life and mission respectively. These studies are critical, and this type of work requires novel thinking, as seen when Isaac Newton discovered the law of universal gravitation. Before Newton, nobody in the world had ever questioned why the apple fell from its tree; they had taken it for granted. But Newton doubted and questioned this phenomenon, so he could discover a new fact. Our discussions of self-theologizing and self-missilogizing are very important because they will awaken Korean churches to realize the importance of self-thinking and self-questioning.

1. Self-theologizing

1) Traces of the discussions of the necessity of self-theologizing

The necessity of self-theologizing has been promoted for many years. Though different terminology has been used, the concept of “self-theologizing” has seemingly been discussed since the 1850s, when it was implied in the three-self policy suggested by Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating (Bosch 1991, 331-333). The concept of self-propagation, an autonomous form of evangelism, especially implies an autonomous theology. The suggestion of this three-self policy stemmed from refusing paternalism and triumphalism which were prevalent attitudes among Western missionaries in the nineteenth century. It was also intended to change the practices of local church members, away from dependence upon missionaries, financially or otherwise. The suggestion was at first deemed rarely necessary but it was eventually widely accepted by missionaries who had been skeptical about the colonialistic

missions practices. The suggestion is not particularly unfamiliar to Koreans, because John Nevius, under their influence, suggested the application of their three self-policy to the Korean Church in 1890 (Charles Allen Clark, 1994). It was suggested as a missions strategy, but we can consider it the starting point of the self-theologizing of Korean churches, based upon which Korean churches were able to autonomously send missionaries overseas and work out their own theologies. Later this discussion continued a little more concretely: in 1973, Alan Tippett (Tippett 1973, 148-163) and Evie Smith (Smith 1976, 41-54) suggested a slightly altered model, the six-self policy. But what triggered the vibrant discussions of self-theologizing was Paul Hiebert's addition of the term self-theologizing as the fourth "self" to the well-known three-self policy (Hiebert 1985, 193-224). This proposal has been energetically discussed in missiological circles. Charles Van Engen (Van Engen 2006, 172-174), David Bosch (Bosch 1991, 452), Steve Strauss (Strauss 2006, 152), and Tite Tienou (Tienou 2006, 37-51) all participated in the discussions. They developed new terminologies such as global theologizing, local theologizing, and meta-theologizing, which means that cross-cultural theologies are alternative expressions of self-theologizing. In South Korea, Moonjang Lee (2006, 89-107, 224-243), Jumsik Ahn (2013, 7-35), and Taewoong Lee (Dowsett 2014, 249-260) have stressed the importance of self-theologizing and attempted to develop it. Once self-theologizing, Hiebert's fourth "self" term, was in common usage, William Taylor, executive director of the World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission, proposed self-missilogizing as the fifth "self" term (Taylor 2004).

2) Similar terminology used in relation to self-theologizing

Before the discussion of self-theologizing, other terms were used to signify similar ideas. These terms are similar to self-theologizing because they value the local cultures where the gospel is preached and try to theologize the Bible accordingly.

(1) “Indigenization” was used for a long time in Evangelical circles to mean the attempt to localize the gospel. It explains the localization of the gospel by utilizing the agricultural terminology of the transplantation of a tree into new soil. When the gospel is transplanted into a new soil, the efforts to make the gospel acceptable to the culture, language, and environment of the mission field are collectively termed indigenization. But it was problematic that the leading agents of the localization of the gospel were not the local churches but the foreign missionaries, and the term is not used very often at this point in time. Since the practitioners of indigenization were missionaries, it was considered an imperialistic form of missions.

(2) “Enculturation” is a Catholic term. In Korean, it is often translated into the same word as “indigenization,” *tochakhwa*. However, its meaning is different to that of “indigenization,” and a better translation is *munhwahwa*. It is widely held that the generosity of Catholics in accommodating local cultures leads to much “cultural acculturation”—the deformation of the gospel by culture. Such a summary, of course, is not based upon historical fact. In Catholic churches, the indigenization of the gospel was so slow that they performed the liturgy in only Latin until the Second Vatican in 1962. In Korea, Catholicism started to spread much earlier and the first believer was baptized in 1784, 101 years before Horace G. Underwood and Henry G. Appenzeller entered the peninsula. However, during the “four major”

persecutions in 1801, 1839, 1846, and 1866, their leaders, national and foreign, and about 10,000 laypeople (50 percent of the 20,000 believers of Catholicism) were martyred because of political reasons. The official charges were primarily the Catholic prohibition of ancestral worship (Mihye Hyun, 2013), their attempts to abolish the status system dividing nobles from commoners, and their heretical teachings against Confucian thought. Catholics are said to have suffered such harsh persecutions because their teachings did not conform to the plausibility structures of Korean society, which was at the time demanding the stability and restoration of social order. The final year of Catholic persecution was 1866, when the British missionary Robert Jermain Thomas visited Korea and was martyred. When Protestant missionaries entered Korea in 1885, the country was full of chaos and turmoil: it had recently witnessed the Gapsin Coup (1884), the three-day rule of revolutionists; the Donghak [Eastern Teaching] Revolution took place in 1894; and Eulmisabyeon took place when Queen Myeongseong was assassinated in 1895. The gospel spread smoothly because it was accepted as fitting for the sociocultural plausibility structure, which was then demanding the reformation of the country and the new society. Here we see how important the relationship between the gospel and social culture is. Thus, the Catholic circle has been led to believe that the Protestant churches are more enculturated.

(3) “Contextualization” was first introduced into theological education in 1972 by the International Missionary Council, which had merged with the World Council of Churches and was in charge of evangelism and world missions. The word was mentioned again at the First Lausanne Congress of 1974, but Evangelical circles intentionally avoided its use because they feared it might distort biblical truth. Some Evangelicals tried to use the term

by altering its form. For example, Dean Flemming put forward the compromise of “contextindigenization” (Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989, 33). But in the 1980s, more Evangelical missiologists started to use the word by redefining it. Byang Kato, George W. Peters (1977, 169), and Harvie Conn (1978, 44–45) were the first missiologists to redefine the word and use it actively (Hesselgrave & Rommen 1989, 33–35). Nevertheless, Evangelical circles still use the word reservedly and cautiously for fear of emphasizing context over the Bible.

3) Purpose of self-theologizing

The purpose of self-theologizing is self-evident, for it enables three things:

(1) Self-theologizing enables Christians to think and live in a Christian way (Tienou 2006, 39). By simply learning and imitating the theologies of outsiders we cannot avoid dichotomistic tendencies, which separate faith from life. The pervasiveness of self-theologizing, which seeks to apply the word of God to the context of our lives, enables us to live as good Christians. The life of a Christian that omits a self-theologizing process of putting biblical truth into practice cannot be called a genuinely spiritual Christian life, because self-theologizing enables Christians to internalize biblical values through considering how the will of God would answer the numerous questions arising from the contexts of their lives and how these answers should be applied. Ryan K. Bolger warns that a new faith community will become only nominally Christian unless it self-theologizes to answer the questions raised from its own culture (Bolger 2007). Rose Dowsett also said that the literal act of translation, which changes the gospel from one

language to another—or superficial contextualization—is not sufficient and that it is important to confess that “Jesus is Lord” in every aspect. Dowsett argues that there must be a profound encounter between the worldview of an individual’s culture and the biblical truth (Rose Dowsett, 2014, 34-49). Churches in the two-thirds world have so far imitated the self-theologizing work of the Western church. For that reason, shallow Christianity seems to prosper without genuine Christian life. Self-theologizing would allow for internalization and better implementation.

(2) Self-theologizing enables the gospel to blossom and produce its fruits in the local culture and context. As Jesus was incarnated, so must the gospel be. The gospel must maintain its holiness and be able to blossom and produce fruits within cultures. Through self-theologizing, the gospel will grow in the soil of a culture. Likewise, as a culture requires evangelization, so does the gospel require enculturation. Warren Beattie argues that the discussion of contextualization must be drawn from the interests of the local believers, based upon the real experiences of their lives (Dowsett, 2014, 189-205). For a long time, the western churches have undertaken self-theologizing. Even now, churches—especially those in the U.S.A. and the U.K.—are putting immense effort into missional and emerging church movements in order to overcome the limitations and inconsistencies created by Christendom. All this stems from the self-theologizing efforts of western churches. When studying missional church movements or emerging church movements, we see Western churches making every effort to apply the gospel to contemporary cultures (*See N.Y. Sung* 2010 & 2013).

(3) Self-theologizing enables us to study Reformed theology. Reformed churches so value the beautiful phrase “the reformed church must be always reformed” so that even those who are unacquainted with Latin enjoy read-

ing it in its original format: *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda est*. The Reformed Church is not a church that judges from or acts upon ecclesiastical traditions or practices which were formed over time but struggles to follow the Word and Truth of God. It is a church that always thinks about the will of God first, a church that recognizes God, not the church, as the agent of the reformation. Therefore, as long as self-theologizing is both the process and outcome of attempts to apply the will of God and the biblical truth to life, it can also become the theology of the Reformed Church. Self-theologizing enables churches to play a prophetic role in revealing the will of God when established churches are straying from biblical teachings and speaking and acting on their own because of selfishness, ignorance, and laziness. Self-theologizing enables Christians to live according to the will and truth of God.

4) Contents of self-theologizing

Self-theologizing is the process and outcome of autonomously identifying questions and of autonomously seeking biblical answers. Doing theology means seeking biblical solutions for contemporary problems. The Bible has all the answers to as many questions as are raised by the world. Therefore, self-theologizing must begin with the identification of the questions. Only then can we seek their answers in the Bible. The questions are differentiated according to the level of the questioners. Children raise questions to learn and imitate something, but when they grow up and accumulate knowledge in a certain field, they will raise questions that are much more creative than mere imitation. So far, Korean churches have posed questions so as to learn and imitate and have studied and accepted Western theologies as truth that transcends time and space. They did not question the background from

which such theologies stem, and instead unquestioningly accepted them as biblical. The Korean Church is now mature enough to raise more creative questions.

The Korean Church has demonstrated its maturity since its conception, most visibly in beginning overseas missions as soon as it received the gospel. Furthermore, the Korean Church has developed its own method of self-theologizing: the rice donation system established the foundation for a self-supporting church during economic hardship; dawn prayer meetings built the foundation of a praying church; the pastoral visitation programs made a spiritually caring and sharing church. Pastoral visitation can be seen in any other country while rice donation and dawn prayer meetings are the results of the self-theologizing of the Korean Church. Likewise, though the term “self-theologizing” was not used, it has been continually sought in a broad sense. Examples include the Exodus Theology of the late Rev. Joongpyo Lee, who applied and theologized the words of God in intense pastoral contexts; the Discipleship Theology of the late Rev. Hanheum Ok; the Canister Church Mission Theology of Rev. Donghee Lee of Antioch Church, Jeonju; the Five-fold Blessings Theology of Rev. David Yonggi Cho of Yoido Full Gospel Church; the Potato Soup Theology of Rev. Hyunsam Cho of Seoul Light and Salt Church. These are all examples of self-theologizing implemented in pastoral contexts. Broadly defined, self-theologizing includes all the processes by which believers seek biblical answers to the questions that arise in the circumstances of every moment of their lives, the ways in which believers apply the answers to their contexts, and the outcomes of such application.

But we should be aware that if self-theologizing drifts away from the scope of universal theology, it will not overcome the limitations of experientialism and will fall into reductionism.

Today the Korean church continually faces new issues which demand solutions. Until recently it sought and found these solutions in Western theologies, which were shaped by the likes of John Calvin and Abraham Kuyper and have held the Korean Church together. But the time has arrived for us to seek our own ways to solve questions that those theologies cannot sufficiently answer. In order to find the biblical answers for those issues, we first have to raise questions, and in order to improve the level of those questions, we have to ponder and study our current issues more profoundly: we must monitor what is happening around us now and check to see that nothing results from our ignorance and laziness. By this I mean that there is an area of nominal faith which separates life within church from life outside of church: this is why some Christians have a very conservative faith but their life is liberal, separate from their faith. For example, some leaders of conservative churches indulge in legal lawsuits but they never ponder what such behaviors imply biblically. While preaching the message of Jesus Christ to be united, churches continue to divide themselves in numerous ways. Theologies have not become channels for implementing the teachings of Jesus Christ, but instruments for speculative debates. We have to find these problems and never stop searching for their biblical answers, for that is task is ours alone. In addition to this, biblical illumination is required to review numerous questions in need of solutions: the influence of Confucian values on respect toward church leadership, the relationship between church and state, the issue of social polarization, conflict between classes and between generations, the dichotomous division between sacred and secular, the social participation of Korean churches, to name a few. We must make every effort to continually question and find answers for the following questions: the cooperation and unity of churches, church-planting strategies, inter-church

relationships, demand and supply of pastors, ways of community-building with an increasing number of foreigners, composition of nationalities, being world citizens, the participation of churches in social improvement, the resolution of generational discontinuity, the selection of pastoral successors, church leadership, forms of worship, forms of praise songs, and so on.

5) Caution in undertaking self-theologizing

We have to be watchful for at least four things in the process of self-theologizing.

(1) We must be guided by the Holy Spirit, who reveals the glory of the Son, Jesus Christ (John 16:14). Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, so he could do only what the Father gave him to do (John 17:4). He said only the words that the Father gave him to say (John 8:28). He suffered and carried the cross not by his own will but by the will of the Father (John 14:10). The Holy Spirit empowers believers so that they may do the will of the Father and Son (Col. 1:29). Therefore, we must be guided by the Holy Spirit, and only then through self-theologizing will we discover not the will of the Korean Church but the will that God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son has for the Church.

(2) We must respect the local cultures but keep the nature of the gospel from being deformed or distorted in the process of self-theologizing. We must keep the nature of the gospel intact, just as Jesus Christ preached the truth in spite of the threat of the Pharisees, and as the Apostle Paul never compromised on the gospel despite threatening situations. The motive of self-theologizing is the delivery of the original gospel as it is, not self-theologizing in itself. We must also not forget the double faces of cultures.

As Rose Dowsett points out, cultures reflect not only humanity, created as they are in the divine image, and the grace of God, but also distortion and rebellion due to our fallen sinfulness. So, we must see both beauty and ugliness, good and evil in cultures (Dowsett 2014, 34–50). This is why we cannot accept any culture completely without criticism, however much we may respect it.

(3) We must limit our discussions to an epistemological dimension, not an ontological one. It is necessary to understand the distinctions between ontology and epistemology. The truth of the gospel never changes: the words of God are infallible and are the same truth yesterday, today, and forever. Such an ontological aspect must be agreed upon before discussing self-theologizing. That is, self-theologizing that interprets the Bible from a new perspective must be undertaken in an epistemological, and not an ontological, dimension. Only then are healthy theological discussions possible. If we understand a theology as a photocopy of the Bible, theologies other than our own become fallible. Epistemologically, such a position is called naive realism. If theological works are undertaken in this manner, any mutual communication becomes impossible and churches are endlessly divided. In this way, Korean churches were endlessly divided by those who have such epistemological beliefs. Therefore, Paul Hiebert advised us to understand theologies as maps of the Bible (Hiebert 1985, 205–207). Just as maps are made in various ways depending on their purpose, though each is designed to show real locations as accurately as possible, so are we supposed to understand theologies. This type of theological understanding is called critical realism. With this epistemology we must try to undertake critical contextualization. This is keeping the Bible as the only truth, evaluating the culture based upon its teaching, and adding a contextualized theology

upon it. Put another way, it is expressing the gospel within culture, while keeping the gospel intact.

(4) We do not need to specialize in cross-cultural areas in the name of self-theologizing. “Cross-cultural” is a sociocultural term that indicates the phenomena commonly found in other cultures as well as one specific culture. Much of life is cross-cultural. First, clothing, food, and housing are cross-cultural. People wear clothes, eat food, and sleep in their places of shelter, no matter what cultures they belong to. There are cross-cultural theologies, too. For example, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Westminster Confession, and the Canons of Dordt are old confessions of faith formed long ago, but they also could be considered cross-cultural theologies that can be commonly confessed. If we define self-theologizing as all of the efforts to apply the word of God to our daily lives, we should do it every moment of every day. But we must not undertake ethnocentric self-theologizing by attempting to rediscover forgotten traces of native culture and squeezing them into a specific cultural frame. Not all people in Korea are influenced by Confucianism or Buddhism. Regardless, cross-cultural spheres are expanding, not only in theology, but in every field.

2. Self-missilogizing

Self-missilogizing starts from self-reflection on our own existing missions. William Carey’s ministry in India in 1793 is generally understood as the beginning of modern missions. It took place during the time when the Western Powers planted colonies around the world, so both missionaries and locals naturally chose to identify missionaries with colonizing rulers. They were leaders, benefactors, and teachers. As colonizing rulers

established viceroys to govern the locals, so did missionaries build mission stations to preach and teach the gospel to the locals. At that time their worldview allowed missionaries to take such relationships for granted. They had been raised and educated in Christian backgrounds similar to such environments, and lived with similar relationships. Charles Van Engen said that Christianity became the official religion of Rome in 313, the sponsored religion in 325, the state religion in 313, and the only legal religion in 392 and that it was thus transformed from oppressed to oppressor in only 80 years (Van Engen 2010, 12–13). During the Medieval Era, kings were regarded both as delegates from the church and as ministers with missional responsibility. Offices in the churches were not considered positions of servitude and sacrifice but of governing and rule. This was the role of the church in Christendom and it was taken for granted for a long time by the Western Church. William Carey and other modern missionaries transferred missionary responsibilities from nation and king to church and missionary.

But, they still took the same Christendom worldview to the mission fields, i.e., they believed that missionaries needed to reform and change the local cultures. That is why Paul Hiebert used the term the “age of non-contextualization” to describe the period of 1800–1950, when such missionaries worked, because they believed that nothing could be built upon non-Christian cultures (Hiebert 1987, 104). When the gospel was first introduced to Korea, missionaries welcomed any course of action to abolish and break the cycles of abuse which had been formed by traditions of pre-existing Buddhism, Confucianism, or deep-rooted shamanism. In the midst of this, the Korean Church and their missionary helpers made efforts to self-theologize by building worship halls in the form of tile-roofed houses, dividing worship areas to separate men from women in respect for the con-

ventional distinction of the sexes, establishing Bible-centered churches, arranging dawn prayer meetings, rice donation, and daily offerings.

As Jonathan Bonk mentions, modern missions carry the form of materialistic missions which conceal the spirits of Western secularism and consumerism (Bonk 1989, 3). If we imitate and follow the forms of Western missions, we will inevitably follow the secular and consumeristic forms of those missions. This is not the biblical method of missions and might be contrary to the nature of the gospel and missions. What, then, will the future of self-missilogizing look like? Here I introduce four characteristics that self-missilogizing should pursue.

1) Self-missilogizing that understands the changed missions paradigm

Today, Christianity has become a religion with multiple centers, shifting from a mono-cultural background in the West, to a multi-cultural background (Tienou 2006, 38). There are many indications, too common to cite, that the center of the Church has shifted from the West to the two-thirds world. Multitudes African, South-American, and Asian missionaries are working around the world. Our self-theologizing studies begin by understanding such changes: many churches are doing missions without a Christian background; the world is shifting into a more democratic and pluralistic structure; missions are being carried out by and to all types of people. Currently, S.I.M. International has South-Asian missionaries working in Africa, and African missionaries in Asia and South America. Naturally the missions paradigm has also changed a lot. S.I.M. removed the distinction between the country sending the missionaries and the mission field itself. The structure is almost revolutionary. The current leader, Joshua Bogunjoko, is not from the United States of America, from where about 55 percent of S.I.M. mis-

sionaries originate, but from Nigeria. He worked in Niger, and then became the vice-director of Europe and West Africa. The reason S.I.M. International sought such change is that they realized the world is changing rapidly. Self-theologizing must begin from the understanding of such changes in missions.

2) Self-missilogizing that restores the true nature

Jesus' incarnation is a model of self-missilogizing. Jesus is God and has all the authority and glory of God (Phil 2:6), but he emptied himself and took the form of a human so as to become a servant (Phil 2:7), and humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, specifically death on the cross (Phil. 2:8). Consequently, God let every knee bow at his name (Phil. 2:10). Not by strength or power but by the love of God, he let people submit. Self-theologizing must take the incarnational attitude of Jesus as its model.

(1) Jesus came to this world as an infant. Over many years, he had to learn how to interact with others around him. Missionaries, like babies, must learn how to interact with locals. As Chua How Chuang has said, they must understand the target of their missions, be aware if their cultural assumptions are deeply intertwined with their own interpretations of the Bible, and must find creative ways to share the gospel in a culturally acceptable manner without compromising the purity of the Bible (Dowsett, 2014, 209–213).

(2) Jesus lived a poor life, without having a place to lay his head. After William Carey's missionary works, the modern missions paradigm allowed missionaries to live according to the modern missions paradigm and to as-

sume the position to give and help financially. In some cases, the living standards of the missionaries working in poor countries are unthinkable high compared to that of locals. Missionaries have to continually ask themselves what Jesus would do in their place. Perhaps we need to learn from the “poor missions” of the Moravians who have practiced tent-making missions since the early 18th century.

(3) Jesus humbled himself and was obedient until his death. Missionaries must ask themselves where they are and how they treat the locals. If necessary, the relationship between missionary and locals must be fixed anew. This type of missiology that restores the true nature is the type of self-missilogizing that we should seek.

3) Self-missilogizing that supports self-theologizing

Paul Hiebert said that missionaries could play the role of mediators in local churches working out their own theologies (Hiebert 2006, 297–299). Missionaries are accustomed to multiple cultures and are therefore able to understand the perspectives of cross-cultural theologies more easily. Through that lens, they can compare local theologies, solution-seeking questions, and sociocultural environments with cross-cultural theological perspectives and then evaluate them (Hiebert 2006, 302). Paul Hiebert talked about the necessity of communication through cross-cultural theologies, while Harvie Conn discussed the necessity of tri-party communication between anthropology, missiology, and theology (Tienou 2006, 51). Both Hiebert and Conn sought to compare the lenses of their theological concepts in the etic view after having studied one’s own theology in the emic view. Missionaries must then allow their theologies to be placed on the same level as local theologies, for the comparison of their strengths and

weaknesses and for the selection. We must listen to Tienou who pointed out the ways that Western missionaries did not give up their own theologies but instead regarded the Third World theologies as exotic fruits added to their traditional European recipes (Tienou 2006, 45). Missionaries must examine themselves to check if their own theologies contain any influences from the Western Church or from their own cultures. Similarly, they must examine from a cross-cultural theological perspective. They should ensure that the theological view be located within the prototype of the biblical gospel. For doing so, as Hiebert points out, the guidance of the Holy Spirit must be the precondition of meta-theology (Hiebert 2006, 307). Only under such conditions can missionaries help the local church leaders to find their own questions and answers for them.

4) Self-missilogizing that presents a new model for world missions

Churches and missions all around the world are currently thirsting for a new mission model, because they are acutely aware of the contradictions in the current paradigms. So, it is critical that we develop new mission models. I hope and pray that all those involved in missions work hard to find good models. It may be said that modern missions began as a form of colonizing. Missionaries went to the mission fields wearing suits, and worked as colonizing rulers in the fields, naturally fulfilling the roles of giver, teacher, and benefactor. In the age of colonialism, nobody rejected this in any way, for such relationships were the norm. Rather, they were puzzled when they saw Hudson Taylor wearing local attire and conducting missions in the lifestyle of the locals. But nowadays we cannot build such unilateral and vertical relationships. Everyone is now expected to make relationships based on mutual giving and taking and mutual teaching and learning. Therefore,

self-missilogizing regarding how to start new relationships is necessary. We must seriously consider and study the lives of missionaries in mission fields, the scope and limit of the ministries of missionaries, the relationship between missions and churches, proper relationships between missionaries and locals, how to plant churches and provide theological education, and so forth. We must also develop a new mission model. All of these things are what self-theologizing is about. The best environment to present a good model of all of the above can be found in the Korean Church. Therefore, I suggest that everyone accepts self-theologizing as their own responsibility and participates in it.

Conclusion

Korean missions are mature enough to show the world new models of self-theologizing and self-missilogizing. As we have benefited from the ideas of the Western Church and other churches, the time has come for the mature Korean Church to show how the Bible has been interpreted and how that interpretation influences the Korean Church and its believers. Like people who fix themselves up by looking in the mirror, the churches in the world can fix themselves by looking at the Korean church as it presents new models through its own self-theologizing and self-missilogizing. Do our theologies honestly reflect biblical teachings? How does the worldwide church interpret the Bible? With those questions in mind, I hope, we can compare, challenge, and learn from one another in the frame of cross-cultural theologies. We must not stop developing and demonstrating new models of mission relevant to this age, new models which are more biblical and pleasing to God than traditional mission methods.

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Theological Method for Self-Theologization of Missionary Professionals¹

Luke MOON

Introduction

If we see the urgency of the need for self-theologization in the Korean church and its mission, we must take the next step of developing good examples and finding ways to approach self-theologization. In other words, maybe the first step for facilitating self-theologization should be the development of sound methods. There could be several valid approaches for the theologizing. A few examples are: the anthropological approach, like the meta-theology of Paul Hiebert; the sociological approach, like questionnaires and interviews; and theological methods.

One of the crucial challenges in my theologizing process for the mission of professionals of the Korean church was to develop a methodology for establishing a missiology for missionary professionals and applying it to my research. In order to collect comprehensive data about missional perspectives and the self-understanding of Korean missionary professionals, I used three methods to approach this problem: a theological method, including missiological and praxeological processes; a case study method,

¹ Most of the ideas in this paper are from a discussion on theological methods in my doctoral dissertation "Toward a Missiology of the Missionary Professional with Special Reference to the Korean Church" (Moon 2004, 10–19). Therefore, I will not make citations for them.

using both historical case studies and case studies through interviews; and finally, a survey research method. In this paper, I will introduce a theological method used in my research.

1. A task for the self-theologization of the missionary professional: Theology by the missionary professional

One of the major difficulties I faced in studying the missiology of missionary professionals was that they were unable to verbalize or delineate their theological and missiological reflections with clarity. That is, though their theological reflections exist as an integral part of their mission praxis, these reflections were intermingled with their lives and ministry. Therefore, my major focus in the research was to identify their missiological perspectives, reflections, and ideas separate from their lives but based on their mission praxis.

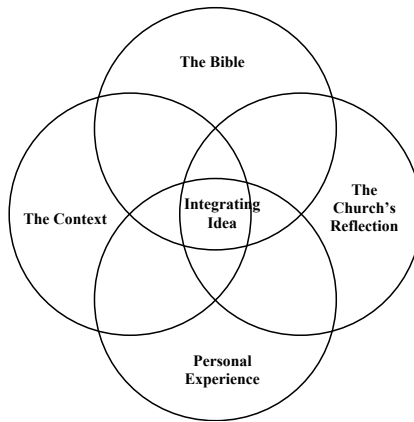
The crucial question of self-theologization is this: who should be the subject or the key agent of theologization? So far theology has been dominated by Western male professional theologians. To pursue self-theologization, however, we must first recognize that the subject of self-theologization should be the insiders themselves. The laity are the insiders in the case of lay theology, the women in feminist theology, and the national believers in indigenous theology. If the insiders do not have the ability for theologizing, they can receive outside advice and support from professional theologians. In this case, the role of the professional theologian has to be that of an encourager or an advocate. The Christian anthropologist Charles Kraft aptly describes this in his advocate-innovator theory (Kraft 1999, 477–491).²

2. Theologizing Process of Charles Van Engen²

Van Engen mentioned four domains, which constitute the basic framework for constructing a contextually appropriate mission theology: Bible, context, church (church's reflection), and personal pilgrimage or experience (2003, 2–3).

2-1. Bible

In this model, the Bible is the revelation of the missionary God and “the exclusive source-text for the process of theologizing in mission” (2003, 4).



<FIGURE 1> Four domains of culturally appropriate mission theology
(Adapted from Van Engen 2003, 7)

² In his advocate-innovator theory, Charles Kraft argues that the innovator or implementer of the changes in the cross-cultural context should be insiders. Outsiders, like missionaries, have to take the role of an advocate (Kraft 1999, 477–491).

2-2. Context

The context is the specific environment in which mission takes place. The context must be taken seriously in the process of theologizing in mission, otherwise the resulting missiology will be irrelevant.

2-3. Church

The church stands for the church's reflection on the Bible. Historical and systemic theologies are among the examples.

2-4. Personal Experience

Personal experience includes personal and cultural backgrounds and spiritual pilgrimages. Personal experience is also an important element in the theologizing process because “[t]he Bible, the church, the context and God's mission are all understood through personal ethnohermeneutical, existential, and experiential lenses” (Van Engen 2003, 5).

2-5. Integrating Idea

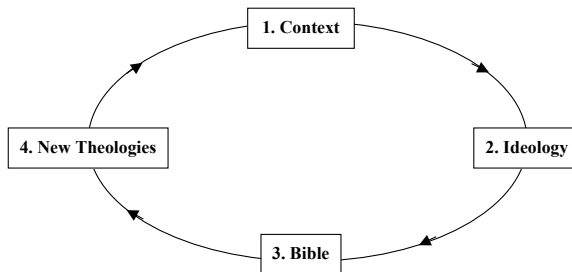
Van Engen introduces another element in the basic framework of missiology—the integrating idea that “expresses the over-arching paradigm, the central themes, perceptions, and thinking patterns that draw from the four domains and combine with each other into a cohesive and at least somewhat integrated concept of mission in a particular local setting at a particular time” (2003, 7).

3. The Praxeological Process of Juan Luis Segundo

In his book *The Liberation of Theology*, Juan Luis Segundo suggests that a “hermeneutic circle” represents “the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal” (1976, 8). Segundo mentions two preconditions for a hermeneutic circle. The first condition is to have profound and essential questions and pervasive suspicions about our reality. The other is to explore a new interpretation of the Scriptures.

This theologizing approach has several significant characteristics. Segundo describes the five decisive factors in the hermeneutic circle:

- 1) Our way of experiencing reality, which leads us to ideological suspicion.
- 2) Application of our ideological suspicion to the whole ideological superstructure and to theology.
- 3) A new way of experiencing theological reality that leads us to exegetical suspicion, that is, suspicion of the prevailing interpretation of the Bible and suspicion of traditional/historical theology.
- 4) Our new hermeneutic, that is, our new way of interpreting the Bible with the new elements at our disposal.



<FIGURE 2> Segundo's hermeneutic circle

5) New encounters with our context with this new hermeneutic.

In spite of its many weaknesses such as ideological bias, the hermeneutic circle of Segundo opens our eyes to the importance of context in the theologizing process.

3-1. David Bosch's Evaluation on the Segundo's Hermeneutic Circle

David Bosch refers positively to the hermeneutic circle as “a two-way interpretative process”, where “a dynamic and creative dialogue takes place between ‘text’ and ‘context’” (1983, 493).

3-2. Robert Banks' Evaluation on Segundo's Hermeneutic Circle

I agree with Robert Banks in his positive evaluation of Segundo's work in developing a missiology of the missionary professional (1993, 168–169). According to Banks, Segundo's criticism of Western theology is correct. It has become too professionalized, too exclusively directed to select well-educated theologians and too focused on ecclesiastical interests. Banks supports Segundo's “common sense theology,”³ which welcomes the return of theology from the rarefied atmosphere of academia to the world of common sense. I feel that theology must address the actual needs of the common person.

³ There are four marks of such a common sense theology:

1. We must move away from an abstract or academic theology to one that grows out of a commitment to change people and improve the world.
2. We must analyze how society works if we are to take the Word of God and convert it from a vague outline to a clearly defined message.
3. We must avoid stating purely timeless, universal truths and address God's Word to specific problems and situations.
4. We must not bend the Word of God to our own ends if we are to say something that is really creative and liberating (Segundo 1976, 39).

3-3. A Praxeological Step

Segundo's hermeneutic circle also opens up ways to a praxeological dimension in studying the missiology of missionary professionals. In his article "Toward a Contextually Appropriate Methodology in Mission Theology," Van Engen outlines five steps of a contextually appropriate mission theology (2003, 1). One of them is a praxeological step, which is to live out theology through appropriate action or to translate the theological reflection into concrete action (2003, 15). For Segundo, like some other Latin American theologians, action cannot be separated from reflection. In their mission praxis, there is a dynamic interaction of action-reflection-action. For them the action itself is theological because it brings up reflection on the action (Van Engen 1998, 44–68). The reflection then brings up transformation of the action, which brings up transformation of reflection (2003, 16).

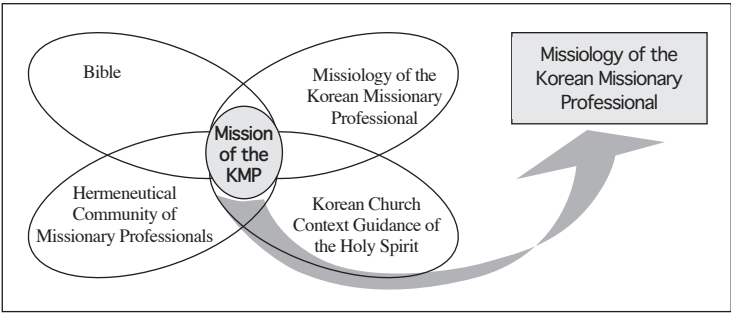
In fact, a missionary professional's mission is praxeological by nature because he or she is usually, consciously or unconsciously, translating a reflection into an action. Therefore, in my study, I did not seek a missionary professional's pure theological reflection but rather the mission praxis, or action-reflection.⁴

⁴ As we invite missionary professionals into the theologizing process, we encounter the critical question "Do missionary professionals have a theology?" Although people tend to separate "pure academic" theology from practice (Browning 1991, 3, 7–8), as R. Paul Stevens points out, action is a part of the truth (1999, 10). We cannot separate thought from action or faith from life. In the biblical and Hebraic sense, what you really know is what you live. However, according to Ellen Charry, the separation of theory and practice in theology did not take place until the eleventh century (1997, viii). By the twelfth century, theology became a speculative science, especially with Thomas Aquinas, as universities became more independent (1997, 13). As a result, in modernity, the connection between knowledge and action is generally lost, and rational justification of the faith became a major role of theology (1997, 4). According to Henri Nouwen, liberation theologians like Segundo and Gutierrez, discovered something essential in their understanding of theology. For them, "*theologia* is not primarily a way of thinking but a way of living. Liberation theologians do not think their way into a new way of living but live

The resulting theological reflections of this study also need to be translated into action in order to be helpful to missionary professionals. Otherwise, my conclusions will be of no use to those who are basically not interested in pure theological reflections.

4. A Model for Self-Theologization by Korean Missionary Professionals

A self-theologizing framework for a missiology of the Korean missionary professional can be summarized by the theologizing model suggested in the following figure.



<FIGURE 3> Self-theologizing framework for a missiology of the Korean missionary professional

This model has six key components for developing a missiology of the Korean missionary professional.

themselves into a new way of thinking” (Nouwen 1983, 159). Although their theologies are often criticized by evangelicals for their flawed hermeneutic, they contribute to developing theology by living out their theological reflections in their own practice and lives.

4-1. Theologizing Axis

The theologizing axis symbolizes the integrating idea—the mission of the Korean Christian professional.

4-2. Bible

In reviewing relevant theology, I focused on the Bible as the center of the theologizing process. It is a fundamental reference point that has served as the foundation of the whole process. Hendrikus Berkhof also uses the Scriptures as one of the key components of his revelational circle⁵ and Paul G. Hiebert uses the Bible in his metacultural grid.⁶ In other words, a sound theology needs to take the Word of God seriously as the rule of faith and life.

⁵ In his work *Introduction to the Study of Dogmatics*, Berkhof distinguishes dogmatics in two categories: foundational dogmatics and material dogmatics. Material dogmatics is composed of each specific area of dogmatics, such as sin, reconciliation, or the church. Foundational dogmatics is a fundamental conceptual framework that serves as “fixed starting points, organizing frameworks, ever-returning points of orientation: formalizing summary concepts that impart to the subdivisions of the field the necessary cohesion and consistency and can therefore also serve as courts of appeal and norms, as our thinking proceeds” (1985, 75). Berkhof suggests the revelational circle is foundational (1985, 87). The circle is made up of four elements: the church, the Scriptures, the revelation, and the Spirit. Each of the four elements of the circle needs to be considered in order to develop a sound theology.

⁶ In his discussion of contextualization, Paul Hiebert introduces the concept of a “metacultural grid.” He says, “Metacultural grid is a conceptual framework that emerges out of and stands above different cultures, allowing us to compare their beliefs and translate between them” (1987, 111). Hiebert’s metacultural grid shows a lot of similarities to Berkhof’s foundational dogmatics, explained as a revelational circle. Characteristics of the critical contextualization are as follows. First, it takes the Bible seriously as the rule of faith and life. Second, it recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all believers open to God’s leading. Third, it recognizes an ahistorical nature of contextualization, pointing out the importance of referring to traditional theology. Finally, in the critical contextualization the church acts as a hermeneutical community.

4-3. Historical/Contemporary Theology

In the theologization process, the historical/contemporary theology is discussed as what Charles Van Engen called *kainos*-type.⁷ This theory provides new revelations of the Holy Spirit to Korean Christian professionals in mission while maintaining the continuity between historical and contemporary theologies.

4-4. Mission Context of the Korean Church

The Korean church context is one focus of the theologizing process. This is because it gives the resulting self-theology a relevancy to the real life of missionary professionals who may find familiar observations here based on their experiences. Another context to be considered is the respective cross-cultural context of the Korean missionary professionals.

4-5. Personal Experience

In order to take the significance of the personal experience of missionary professionals into consideration, the hermeneutical community of missionary professionals is also a crucial element of the theologizing framework. In order to make any theological study practical and relevant to the

⁷ In his writing “The New Covenant: Knowing God in Context,” Van Engen puts forward the *kainos*-type contextualization. Contrary to the *neos*-type contextualization, *kainos*-type contextualization is both continuous with previous understanding of the truth and against the radical interpretation of the Scripture. The *kainos*-type contextualization leads us to be open to the unexpected new disclosure of the truth in each new context. It teaches us to depend on the ever-new inspiration, guidance, and teaching of the Holy Spirit. In his discussion of the *kainos* covenant, Van Engen states, “However, this also means that the *kainos* covenant takes on deeper and fuller, and sometimes quite unexpected, content that was not there before” (1989, 90). This type of contextualization reminds us of the importance of continuity with the basic biblical truth. At the same time, it calls for attention to the unexpected new disclosure of the truth by the Holy Spirit. For further study the meaning of *kainos*, see Johannes Behm (1964, 447–454).

actual needs of Korean missionary professionals, I realized that a missiology for the missionary professional based solely on the insight of academic theologians may not be wholly useful. Therefore, to have self-theologized missiology for the Korean missionary professionals, we need to strive to find ways of encouraging significant participation of missionary professionals in mission and contributions by missionary professionals through the process of theologization. The agent of this theologizing process is as important as, and sometimes even more important than, the content because the agent determines and interprets the text, historical theologies, and context. In other words, in the self-theologizing process, missionary professionals should not remain as mere objects. They are essential members of the hermeneutical community who are to bring new missiological issues to the table from their unique experiences within unique contexts. Because of their importance in the self-theologizing process, I will discuss the issue of a hermeneutical community of missionary professionals in the following section.

4-6. Guidance of the Holy Spirit

Finally, the whole theologizing process is totally dependent on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who led the process to its final destination—a biblically sound, culturally appropriate, common sense based, *kainos* type missiology for the Korean missionary professional.

Epilogue—Missionary Professionals as a Hermeneutical Community of Faith in Mission

As I conclude the discussion on the self-theologization of Korean missionary professionals, I have to emphasize the importance of the par-

ticipation of the missionary professionals themselves as a hermeneutical community in the theologizing process. It is very important because missionary professionals are in a unique situation. Their personal experiences are quite different from those of the ordained missionary. They have a three-fold identity that leads them to unique experiences in their life and ministry. They simultaneously serve as members of the Korean church, as professionals in their workplace, and as missionaries in their specific cross-cultural context. From this three-fold identity arise new needs, new dilemmas, new questions, new concerns, and new interests, which in turn leads to a need for a new missiological paradigm.

It seems that missionary professionals have been given a low priority status in doing missiology. Yet their active participation is needed in creating a mission theology. Only through their participation in this missiological reflection can we discover a more relevant and appropriate missiology for missionary professionals.

Historically, missionary professionals have not understood their theology as a purely rational, objective, and abstract academic reflection. Rather, they have integrated their theological reflections of life and ministry within their specific context as varying forms of a mission praxis. As a result, the crucial question for the proper self-theologization of the missionary professional will be how we can identify their theological understandings that are intermingled into their ministry and life. For this purpose, we need a concrete missiological (or conceptual) framework for analyzing and evaluating each missionary professional's life and ministry.⁸ Through this framework,

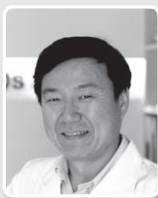
⁸ My Ph.D. dissertation, "Toward a Missiology of the Missionary Professional with Special Reference to the Korean Church," was written as an effort to seek a missiological paradigm in order to study the mission of the missionary professionals.

we can identify their un verbalized theological ideas that are subtly integrated into their life and ministry. Also, a more valid and reliable theologizing work for missionary professionals can be achieved by biblical and historical case studies of missionary professionals, interviews with missionary professionals in their respective ministry contexts, and a research survey of contemporary Korean missionary professionals. With this effort we can include missionary professionals in a hermeneutical community of self-theologization. I put aside a more detailed discussion of each method until a later opportunity.

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Mission for People in Oral Cultures

Yon-Soo KIM

Not long into the Bible storytelling ministry, I came across a certain missionary in Central Asia whose remarks left a lasting impression on me. After attending the workshop that I had put together, he found himself marvelling over an epiphany about the questions that had long beset him. Flushed with enthusiasm, he confessed to me that he had finally found the answer to them. A little over a decade now he had taught Bible classes to local people and trained them as disciples of Christ. All those years he couldn't shake off doubts about himself and the people he taught. He kept asking himself, "Why is it that they seem to learn the Word at the last minute? Why does it take so long for them to get it? Are they naturally slow in their ability to understand? Or is it because they are not as dedicated as others?" But no, that was not it. He shook his head while he thought of the local Christians, many of whom were well advanced in scholarship and social rank, and all very dedicated. He could easily name professionals who made a living out of law, medicine, and teaching, and yet wholeheartedly committed to Christ. But then he attended the workshop and came to face them for who they really were: descendants of nomads with a strong tradition of orality. Those who were somewhat successful at nurturing trainees followed this tradition; they learned the Bible text by heart before they told it as a story, further explaining what puzzled them. This was a whole new revelation to him.

Clearly it wasn't about the sluggish rate at which they pounded at the Scriptures. Nor was it due to their lack of zeal. It all boiled down to a method. Whether to study or to communicate the Word, people with predominantly oral heritage will fare better without the printed pages. Always.

A certain evangelical mission organization carried out a survey on 580 missionaries in Muslim countries. Among them, 280 in 37 countries sat for an in-depth interview. The outcome of both studies showed some 94 ways to evangelize Muslims. Three requirements were deemed crucial for planting a church in Muslim countries: use of the local language, method of communication tailored to the local needs, and minister's fluency in the local tongue. According to the study, the odds of planting a church with the above requirements were one in ten. In the case of missionaries equipped with none of the required three, a scant seven percent succeeded at planting a church. By contrast, those meeting the requirements were mostly able to plant a church, showing an 82-percent success rate. This proves the importance of the method of communication in church planting.

Man derives not only pleasure but the meaning of his existence from the belief in something greater than himself: often work or ministry. But once his belief takes hold of his entire person, he is easily caught up in the cycle of underestimating or dismissing the creeds of other men.

I had long cherished the work of Bible translation and still feel strongly about its importance in missions. I do not have one iota of regret for dedicating a larger part of my work to translating the Holy Word into the local tongue. However, upon leaving the field of mission, I came to realize there

was something missing; something bigger than my paltry belief in my work of mission. I was so consumed by it I was unconsciously (and consciously at times) indifferent to what occupied the ministries of other men. What is true is timeless and held in the highest esteem, I do not dispute that. But the method for achieving a goal can vary in numbers. The question is then to find one's own method and be the brightest.

During the whole time on the mission field and even after returning, I carried a big burden in my heart which beleaguered all my translating work. I was quite distraught at the reality of the local people of Kwerba, a native tribe of a remote jungle area in Indonesia. They hardly read any of my translation of the scriptures, they simply couldn't. I was in bad need of a needle to get a thorn out of my heart. I kept asking, "What is it that stops them from reading my translation of the Bible?" As all my work and ministry hinged upon it, I felt even more guilty when I thought of all the support from brothers and sisters at church back home. Couldn't they or wouldn't they? The more I brooded over the question, the worse my anxiety became. I could only hope that they would one day see the beauty of the Bible and finally learn to cherish it. But even I doubted it.

I made a few more visits to the mission field after my departure. To my despair, I found them still uninterested: unwilling and unable to read it. The saddest part is that those who used to read it with me no longer did. They simply couldn't.

Had I not set foot in that storytelling workshop,¹ I would have had to live with the thorn in my heart all this time. Just like that, it solved all my problems in one go. There, I learned that the tribal people I served come from an orally-oriented background. Centuries of oral tradition defined their way of communicating with one another, radically different from the way we communicate through written words.

Accuracy is guaranteed when information is preserved in hard-set words on paper. Perhaps the best of human achievements, it aids our memory in quantity and quality to store or to transmit knowledge in a written form. It is sad, but true, that such a fine (intangible) artifact is fading into history as two-thirds of literate men and women prefer spoken words as a mode of communication.

By 1980, Walter Ong, an American scholar, put forth the idea that there are two kinds of people: one from an oral background and the other from a written background. He suggested that the latter tends to overwhelmingly prefer an oral mode of communication.

What exactly does this mean for Christians who are committed to mission, and for missionaries who carry out diverse ministries on the field?

Storytelling is an important method of oral communication and has two distinct features. First, it should be noted that approximately 75 percent of the Bible is stories. In the divine providence of our salvation and adoption as His children, was it necessary for God to tell so many stories to reveal the truth and manifest His glory? It was imperative to use stories as over

¹ OS Workshop (Orality and Storytelling Workshop) is held every May in Chiangmai, Thailand for two weeks. It is organized by the One Story Department of Wycliffe Bible Translators Mission where I served.

90 percent of men at that time came from cultures whose lingua franca was predominantly oral in form. And those aware of the excellence of story as a means of communication will no doubt guess at the reason behind His choice to talk to us and teach us through stories.

Secondly, most of our target audience for the gospel truth are people in oral cultures. They are most likely to feel at ease around spoken messages as they come from a background of strong orality. At present, 75 percent of those beyond the reach of missionary zeal are nestled in an orally-oriented environment. The remaining few also prefer oral communication to written communication for the acquirement of knowledge or the passing on of information. Thus, the urgent task of reaching out to native tribes and so completing our mission work seems to lie in the storytelling ministry. You cannot dispute that storytelling is by far the best method there is to deliver the Bible message (75 percent of which is in story form) to the often illiterate peoples of the darkest regions of the world.

After I was first introduced to the storytelling ministry that day, I visited a number of organizations pioneered by Western missionaries, and was initiated by good trainers there. I also read their books. On top of that, I started studying storytelling in general with secondary materials. Thankfully, though they had been frustrating at times, my years of translating the Bible and studying linguistics paid off. My experience with native people from an oral background helped too. Writing my dissertation on Jesus' parables went a long way, as I had enough foundation for the hands-on training I got from them.

After finishing the training, I tried to sum up the five areas that matter most for an effective storytelling ministry. And I set about constructing programs for each area, along with textbooks.

First, storytelling can be used as an effective tool in evangelism. Logic fails and sophistication only complicates matters for people these days. Post-modern kids grew up watching TV, habitually interpreting the world as stories and boasting dominant emotional quotients. Recently, evangelists began to break away from old customs. Instead, they began to approach people, starting with small talk and finishing with a Bible story. This seems to be working well. An evangelist would first approach people with small talk, digging into people's interests and problems in life, further advising and counseling them on their needs. Next, he will introduce the gospel by telling a related story from the Bible. I cannot stress enough the importance of selecting a good story that not only testifies to the gospel but is related to the evangelist himself as well. As a believer, the evangelist also has stories of his life to tell which testifies to God's grace and glorifies His name. His personal life, closely linked to the Bible story as the two intertwine in His grace and truth, will have a holy impact on his audience. As witnesses of God at work, they continue to testify and impact their friends, their acquaintances, and even skeptics or pessimists.

Second, storytelling can be a good way to assist Bible-study classes or discipleship courses. To accompany Bible study, the storytelling can be broken down into the actual telling of a story and the Q&A afterwards. The storyteller must learn the story by heart in advance. In class, he tells the story to his audience, and then asks for a volunteer to retell it. Afterwards,

he asks a bunch of simple questions for observation and understanding, and then he can lead the Bible study with deep questions he prepared for. Overall, the audience gets to hear the story three times and is aided by deep questions for further thought. If all the participants prepare well in advance, there is no need to open a book, whether the Bible or a textbook. If they can only learn the story by heart, they will feel as though they were right in the middle of the scene of the story. Studying a textbook by chapter and volume is not the only way. The storytelling method is just as systematic. The Bible is constructed in a way that any random story connects to another in a mysterious way to converge upon a common point of divine intent. Know the stories by heart and you will gain the full knowledge, in breadth and depth, of a systematic and organized theologian.

Third, it can be used for teaching kids in Sunday school. Filling out answers to questions is monotonous and not a great way for children to learn. It is not only mind-numbingly boring, but also thoroughly ineffective. If kids can enjoy the storytelling method, it will be a lifesaver for the future of churches all over the country. Teachers must prepare by rewriting the Bible text into a story and thinking up a bunch of questions for observation. Should it feel burdensome to memorize it every week, they can just rewrite the story and simply read it out to students several times, encouraging them to retell it afterwards. When students have understood it well enough, questions are raised for further observation and interpretation. A competition or posting their performance on Youtube might be ways to attract their interest.

Fourth, storytelling can be used for good theological education. Young generations these days are increasingly likely to use an oral mode of com-

munication. The storytelling method attracts uninterested people and keeps them hooked. It has all the essentials of a lesson that is both academically fulfilling and entertaining. Adults and teenagers can benefit greatly from this, as well as young children. The Bible is a treasure trove of 500 stories. Select a set of stories under a theme and you have a curriculum of Bible study/storytelling courses. You will come to have a detailed yet comprehensive grasp of the holy text, as organized and systematic as any theological course can offer.

Fifth, it can be used for preaching. As mentioned above, over 75 percent of the Holy Scriptures consists of stories, which means a preacher tells a story on three out of four Lord's Days. An effective preacher is also a good storyteller as he delivers the Word and encourages its application in the real lives of his audience. It takes the preacher a lot of skill and technique as he tells a Bible story as a narrative. There are at least six different ways in which a preacher might tell his story. The simplest way would be to tell it directly in line with the contents of the Bible, leaving the structure and the sequence of events unaltered. Further interpretation, meditation, and application can be added later. Or, in case the audience is quite familiar with the story, he might start off with another episode to introduce the subject, putting back the main story at a later stage of his sermon. Or, he might consider not mentioning the story at all, if it is very well-known, and instead start afresh with a new story under a common theme. Or, he can try knitting several stories together that intertwine nicely into one big story. Or, he can deliver his sermon in the style of the story, but add zest to the finale with a set of lesson points for applications. Or, he can lay out an expository sermon first, and then rearrange the expository sermon as a story type sermon.

I make it a rule to visit different fields of mission each month to provide the Bible storytelling workshop to Korean missionaries abroad. For three days, they learn all there is to know about storytelling and Bible storytelling, and the usage of Bible storytelling. They are also trained to use it for evangelism, Bible study/discipleship courses, Sunday school classes, theological education, and storytelling preaching. But signing up for a three-day workshop certainly won't be sufficient for everyone. To bring a storytelling process to real life and ministry, a graduate of the workshop is encouraged to follow up with a twenty-week homework program. With others in a group, he is assigned 20 stories from the Bible. After completion, he might go on to Workshop II where he spends a day learning how to make a story, a set of stories, and a set of questions. For a domestic ministry this is sufficient. But for an international ministry where barriers of culture and language often present problems, he might consider joining Workshop III after completing another 20-week homework program. It is recommended he attend them with a local partner. The one-day course trains on the principles of Bible translation, accommodating foreign languages and cultures with storytelling, and the method of taking storytelling groups to home churches.

In Korea, the storytelling course runs each semester at the same place. On Mondays, a lecture is given on storytelling. Each semester deals with a new set of eight different stories from the Bible. So far, a total of six sets of eight stories were dealt with under such themes as the divine plan of salvation, evangelical stories, the life of David, the life of Jesus, the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the march of the gospel, the missional church of Antioch, and world mission. Extra workshops are provided at the request of any group, church department, or entire church, with different emphases and schedules according to the needs of the participants.

On the actual fields of overseas mission, the storytelling workshop is given to Korean missionaries to be followed up by a storytelling lecture at Korean theological seminary for locals. As the locals are often feebly versed in their Bible and poorly trained in theology, they find preaching quite challenging and even burdensome. But learning the few things about storytelling gives them a much-needed boost which builds momentum and helps tremendously with their ministry.

We are equal to the task that is equally challenging and at times burdensome. We have the mandate to preach the gospel to five billion souls, of whom two billion are in total darkness where the Light cannot seem to reach. How can we shine on that region? How can we penetrate it with the gospel of Christ? We must find ways to most effectively deliver the message to peoples with different languages, religions, and circumstances, but with the discretion of the missional strategist. For mission to any culture or background, the storytelling method is not only effective, it is indispensable whether its people are inclined towards words spoken or written. I pray that Korean missionaries will take more interest in the variety of methods available to them, and in storytelling for one.



Yon-Soo Kim has translated the Bible into the Kwerba language in Irian Jaya Province, Indonesia (1990–2006). After returning, he taught Linguistics at the graduate school of interpretation/translation at Handong University (2007–2010). He is currently the director of the Storytelling Movement/Ministry Institute and an associate general secretary for international affairs of Korea World Mission Association.

The Role of the Mission Agency for Mission in the Twenty-First Century

Kyungnam PARK

I. Introduction

Over the past two centuries, the formation and activities of mission agencies have led to an active mission movement. Great strides have been made in mission. In addition, non-denominational mission agencies, which emerged in the twentieth century, devised crucial strategies such as inland mission and unreached people group mission, and played a pivotal role in achieving a harvest.

This change occurred with God working through William Carey and his passion. In 1792, Carey wrote “An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens,” which became a starting point in bringing up the necessity of mission agencies as an effective means for missions. This led to the birth of a wide range of agencies including the Baptist Missionary Society, contributing to the modern mission movements.

Despite these successful results, there have been invisible conflicts between mission agencies and local churches. Mission agencies emphasized their know-how and reduced the role of local churches in missions. Even though local churches provided funding, human resources, and materials, they were excluded from mission policies or ministries on the mission field.

As a result, this phenomenon brought about tensions between agencies and churches.

Entering the twenty-first century, the idea that the local church or the mission board of denominations should take over this role from mission agencies came to be more reasonable and persuasive. The effects of liberalization of travel and globalization have narrowed the distance between mission fields and home countries and have contributed to the universalization of mission work. Besides, these changes also had a positive effect in inducing local churches to participate in missions more actively than before. However, the movement, in both the West and the East, has also increased the role of local churches, giving rise to megachurches with their own mission organizations or independent mission departments that dispatch missionaries in place of mission agencies.

Taking these situations into account, it seems appropriate to discuss the following questions at this time: “Will mission agencies be necessary in the future?” and “What should the mission agency of the twenty-first century be like, based on the biblical backgrounds and basis?”

II. The Biblical Basis of the Mission Agency

It would be necessary to examine the issue of whether a mission agency is a biblical structure or not before delving into the discussion of the necessity or the role of mission agencies. This section examines the biblical basis of mission agencies through the understanding of Jesus’ ministry, local churches, and the model of agency as it appears in the Book of Acts, and the universal church mentioned in Ephesians.

1. The Structure of Jesus' Ministry

In the Bible, Jesus did not mention church structures or buildings except in Mathew 16:18, in which Jesus said he would build His church on the rock and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.¹ However, according to Patrick Johnstone, Jesus carried out a tripartite ministry—namely disciplining and training his 12 disciples, dispatching his disciples' two by two for evangelical activities, and gathering and nurturing the crowds of people in the synagogue on the Sabbath. This is directly connected to the tripartite structure of local churches, apostolic teams, and training institutions, and therefore it can be assumed that the tripartite structure originated from Jesus' ministry.

2. The Structures in Acts²

Acts 13:1–4 has been quoted often to prove that the local church is the only God-permitted structure for mission. However, Johnstone suggests that these verses could be understood as the Holy Spirit's command to separate missions from the local church for the following reasons:

1) Paul and Barnabas had already been called by the Holy Spirit for the ministry of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15–16, Acts 11:22). The local church did not call them but simply recognized the call of the Spirit for them, and let them go. Ralph Winter understood this struc-

¹ Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger than You Think*, 6th ed., (Seoul: WEC International Korea, 2010).

² Ibid., 232–235.

ture of the local church and referred to it as the “New Testament Church.”³

Paul Pierson described Paul and Barnabas’ case as the formation of “the first mission agency” and explained that “mission via mission agencies was the mission principle in Acts as well as throughout the history.”⁴

2) Paul and Barnabas were set apart from the ministry and activities of the local church. They had to make decisions about their ministry on their own without consulting the Antioch church during the mission journey (Acts 13:13). For instance, it is difficult to find any evidence of the Antioch church’s involvement in Paul and Barnabas’ decision to take Mark with them on their trip (Acts 15:36–41).

3) In terms of the original text, the verb *apoluo* was used instead of *apostello*, which would indicate that the local church had sent them out. Furthermore, the word *ekpempo* was used, which means being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, showing that the local church did not send out them but simply supported the Holy Spirit’s will by releasing them.

4) Even though the two apostles were able to make decisions independently, they reported with accountability to the church (Acts 14:27–28). However, they did not seem to have consulted the Antioch church in making decisions such as allowing Mark to return home or choosing the places they would visit during their missionary journey.

5) Paul enlarged his team by including other disciples, such as Timothy and Luke, and trained them to work together (Acts 16). Just as Jesus trained his disciples and sent them out to every nation, Paul adopted Jesus’ pattern

³ Ralph Winter, “The Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission,” *Perspectives* Vol. 1. (2010): 404.

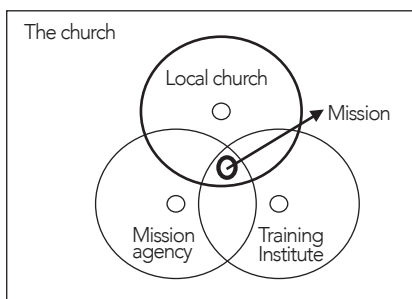
⁴ Paul Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History through a Missiological Perspective*, (Pasadena, CA: WCIU Press, 2009), 65.

in training and sending out around 40 men who had been with him. It can be understood as the third structure of the model of training institutions in Acts.

3. The Three-Fold Ministry and the Tripartite Structure of the Church

Robert Brow looks upon the church as the Body (ecclesiastical structures, which are fixed and parochial) and the bloodstream (mission structures, which are flexible and serve the whole church).⁵

Ralph Winter expresses it as modalities (synagogue/diocese structures) and sodalities (monastery/missionary bands structures).⁶ Pierson insists that God's people should be included in two structures. Johnstone understands it as three structures by adding a training institution to two structures, as in this picture.



This idea originated from the concept of the “church” in Ephesians as the universal church, which consists of all Christian communities, as the body of Christ, rather than a “local church” (New Testament Church, synagogue-centered parochial church). The gifts (service) of ministry mentioned in Ephesians 4:11–12 is classified into two or three structures according to its roles in building up the universal church as the body of Christ. In addition, Johnstone noted that the key to global missions would depend on sincere endeavors to answer the question, “How can these structures play their

⁵ Robert Brow, *Twenty Century Church*, (London: Victory Press, 1968), 85–91.

⁶ Winter, “Two Structures,” 407.

roles in one mind for the evangelization of the world?” Pierson asserted that “the argument that having a separated mission agency other than the local church is not necessary is not right” while quoting La Tourette: “A healthy church will continue to organize new mission agencies to serve for a specific ministry. It is apparent that the mission agency is to be a component of the church in accordance with the concept of church understood in a broad sense,”⁷ even though there are other arguments from different perspectives.

This model seems to take a different approach compared to the evangelical traditional church, whose approach understands the universal church as church and parachurch. However, the fact that this approach understands the churches in the New Testament more comprehensively and holistically is far from insignificant. Ralph Winter understood the role of mission agencies or missionary bands as another form of church suggesting the idea of “mobile church,” which is different from “local church.” In addition, the Cape Town Commitment expressed it as “partnership” within the body of Christ Jesus, and proposed alternatives of the union of local churches for the perfect partnership, extensive cooperation for global mission, and mission-centered theological education.⁸ Furthermore, he suggested and emphasized three possible frameworks of church-planting ministry, church nurturing ministry, and mission-oriented theological education.

After all, mission agencies have to be understood in the larger picture of the universal church, as God’s instruments following Jesus’ ministry. In spite of the situations that change daily, mission agencies will remain effective until the kingdom of God finally comes. In addition, it is essential to

⁷ Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission*, 74.

⁸ Korean Lausanne Committee, trans. *The Cape Town Commitment*, (2014), 121–128.

recognize that mission work has to be accomplished through partnership in ministry by being united in the three-fold structure of local church, mission agency, and training institution, or in modality and sodality.

III. Mission Agencies in History

Examining the mission agency as a component of the church described above, of how it functioned in history and how it correlated to the development of world mission in history might give us guidance in finding the ideal model of agency suitable for the circumstances of the twenty-first century. Therefore, this section explores mission agencies from the past in an attempt to learn from history.

1. The Mission Agency of Post-Apostolic Age⁹

1) Official mission agencies (“Missionary bands”) are vital. The missionary bands of Paul and Barnabas, Barnabas and Mark, Peter and Mark, Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke were important mission agencies.

2) Historical documents of the post-apostolic age reveal that there were two kinds of ministries. The first was a stable local church ministry and the second was a mobile itinerant mission ministry. Despite the tension between the two structures, they continued to develop in interaction with each other.

2. The Monastic Movement and the Mission Agency

While Winter regards the monastic movement as an important flow in mission, Pierson has a negative view, pointing out the secluded life of the

⁹ Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission*, 107–108.

monk as a truth-seeker, although he acknowledges its contribution to the expansion of missions through the spiritual renewal.

However, “Peregrini (wandering evangelists)” monks sent by Island Monastery made a great contribution to evangelizing Western and Central Europe. Also, the monastic movement, including the Benedict monastery, played a great role in reaching out to barbarian tribes. In fact, the number of mission bases founded by the monastic movement, which were being used as a stronghold for mission work, already numbered over 1000 before the Vikings’ invasion.¹⁰

The influence of the early monasteries was contrasted with the corrupt monastic movement in the Middle Ages, and it was handed down onto Monastic orders such as the Franciscans in the Middle Ages. In particular, the Franciscans founded 17 mission bases in Central Asia, Russia, and China. Although the Reformation took place against the negative influence of medieval monasteries, the monasteries’ contribution to spiritual renewal, revival, and further expansion of missions had a positive effect on the mission movement and was very significant in history.

3. The Mission Agencies after the Reformation

It is not reasonable to call the Reformers non-missional. Of course, it is quite certain that the mission activities of the Reformers were very marginal compared to those of the Catholic Church of the day. However, according to the ecclesiology of the Reformers, church is theologically to be a place where the “Word is rightly preached and the sacraments properly

¹⁰ Ralph Winter, “The Kingdom Strikes Back,” *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th ed., (London: William Carey Library, 2010), 473–475.

administered,”¹¹ so they naturally had a limitation in exercising mission outreach through churches. In addition, since the Reformers took a negative stance against the monastic movement, the dynamics and drive for mission aroused by the spiritual renewal and revival of the monastery ended up being lost.

After the Reformation, Revivalism led to the birth of Halle Mission in 1706 and the formation of “Mustard-seed Mission,” the first student mission community. The latter had a direct impact on Zinzendorf and John Wesley’s revival movements, and the Moravian Movement. All of the movements had in common an active mission outreach. For instance, although the Moravian church was a local church, its structure and ministry was very close to the sodality structure in practice. The history of this era has clearly shown us the importance of the interactions between modality and sodality.

4. The Mission Agency after William Carey

Carey’s essay aroused a great response, and the Baptist Mission Society was established in response to the need for mission agencies. This movement became a catalyst for the founding of other mission agencies, including British mission agencies such as the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Wesley Mission, and Gospel Evangelical Mission. As a result of Revivalism, the early mission agencies in Europe were led by non-ministers on the fringes of established denominations. As the flame of missions spread to the United States, the American Mission Board was formed as a result of the Student Volunteer Movement, and denominational mission boards were established for each

¹¹ Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission*, 321.

denomination. However, after the turn of the twentieth century, denominational mission boards rapidly declined in number, as denominations were theologically unable to prioritize missions. They merged their mission boards with other ministry departments, viewing missions as simply another ministry in their denomination.

From the mid-twentieth century, mission agencies began to strategically differentiate themselves from the local church. There have been studies on different missions, such as tribes mission, which focuses on approaching different tribes effectively, Bible translation mission, and unreached people group mission. In addition, holistic mission has also been developed, centering on gospel's impact on society, such as compassion ministries for the poor or for hospitals. Another trend marker of the time was the fact that ministry for mission was specialized by specific area.

5. The Lessons of History

The characteristics of mission agencies throughout history lie in people who were called by God, voluntarily joining the agency as a result of Revivalism. Besides, the mission movement did not begin with existing institutionalized organizations, but with monasteries that arose from Revivalism, local churches with sodality structures, or mission agencies. Furthermore, it can be said that mission agencies, including the Korean mission agencies, have played a pivotal role in bringing about fruitful achievements in leading the mission movements over the past 200 years.

IV. The Unique Role and the Direction of Change of Mission Agency

Even though it is evident that mission work in the twenty-first century has become universalized, replacing the local church with a sodality structure seems impossible, since the fundamental function of local churches as a nurturing structure has not changed. Therefore, it is essential to examine the role of each mission agency as a structure that sends out missionaries and to search for the direction of changes for the agencies in the context of the twenty-first century.

1. The Role of Mission Agencies Prior to Dispatching Missionaries

1) Missionary Recruitment: Shifting from Mission Agency's Initiative to Churches, Missionaries, and Agencies' Cooperation for Recruitment

So far, mission agencies have actively recruited missionary candidates from the local church, the seedbed for missions, and has then trained them to send them to the mission fields. However, local churches have stayed inactive in the training process, only providing missionaries support on the mission field. As a result, local churches have remained as passive assistants.

However, in the future, a supporting system needs to be established so that when a committed worker volunteers to become a missionary, both the church concerned and the volunteer could work together to find a suitable mission agency that would provide missionary training for him, in consideration of the church policy, philosophy, and applicant's personality. In particular, an active cooperative relationship based upon mutual agreement is necessary for the volunteer to join a healthy mission agency. In fact, an

increasing number of churches in Korea have made stipulations, stating that a mission agency must be involved in sending missionaries out to mission fields.

For example, W.E.C. International has seen an increasing number of candidates applying for mission work at the recommendation of their pastors or the leadership of church. The advantage of this is that it allows for close cooperation between the church and the mission agency in observing and checking missionary's situations and the level of development relative to the beginning stages of training. It also allows the two organizations to go further into mission work, such as mission field settlement or ministry expansion in consideration of both organizations' visions and circumstances.

In addition, it helps both the church mission committee (or other departments or the leadership of the church) and the missionary review board of mission agencies (or the board director) to decide whether to accept the volunteer candidate or not. The candidate's lifestyle, their sincerity and devotion to the church are key elements in assessing the qualities and the gifts of a missionary. Especially, the leaders and the church members of the community to which the candidate belongs can help the mission agency in reviewing the candidate's qualities by notifying the mission agency of the candidates merits and demerits and relevant training.

W.E.C. International Australia has a system where the members of the church mission committee themselves take part in the screening process for sending out missionaries. In this system, from the early stages of selection, the church and the mission agency can divide the roles and share the responsibilities in preparing the candidate to become a balanced missionary. Inviting the mission agency to the church's screening process for sending missionaries is also recommended, since the church gains an opportunity to

learn about the attributes and assessment results of the candidate, which it can then use when evaluating the candidate.

After all, a new paradigm of missionary training should be based on the fact that all three bodies—local churches, agencies, and missionaries—are to participate equally in the discussion of assessing candidates for mission work, instead of having one party leading and dominating the process. The key to this paradigm is the common understanding of the churches and mission agencies of missions as well as close communication, necessary throughout all processes of missionary selection, training, and mission work, especially from the early stage of application.

2) Missionary Training - Well-trained Missionaries Lead Successful Missions

In addition to theological education, it is absolutely necessary for missionaries to receive cross-cultural training, language training, spiritual training, interpersonal relationship skill training, missiology, and team work training related to mission fields in order to carry out mission work. This requires understanding the ministry in a completely different context, instead of in our culture. The agency to which I belong has seen differences in the missionaries' field adaptability and fruits of ministries, depending on the training period and training sessions.

For training, those who are getting ready for tent-making missions which are popular in the twenty-first century (and include professional missions and business missions) may need separate, specialized training, rather than training in a traditional seminary. Theoretical understanding and information delivery will be part of basic training, yet at the same time, the focus has to be on the maturity of the missionary's character and personality

throughout the training. If shortcomings are found, encouragement is also necessary in preparing the candidate, along with extra training in the community.

In consideration of the nature of the mission training, it is necessary for local churches to train candidates together with mission agencies, recognizing the expertise necessary in mission training. Recently, W.E.C. and some local churches have shared information from the early stages of training, addressing candidates' shortcomings based on the specific strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. This has led to goals being achieved. In addition, local churches were able to form a close partnership with the mission agency in dealing with issues such as field selection or missionary member care on the basis of training results. In this way, the partnership between local churches and agencies is set to enable the ministry to be more effective on the mission field by minimizing missionary dropout rate.

2. The Role of Mission Agencies in the Mission Field

1) Helping to Adjust into the Local Life

The main role of mission agencies is to help missionaries to settle into their mission fields by providing linguistic and cultural education for the first two years and fostering relationships with their coworkers. Furthermore, this role can become even more effective by inviting local churches to participate in not only providing for the missionaries so that they can work together in partnership but also in evaluating the development of the missionary's language skills, cultural adaptation, and spiritual, physical and mental health.

2) Ministry Preparation and Team Assignment

As the preparation for language and culture in Stage 1 progresses, each team's task should be assigned under God's guidance. It is recommended for new missionaries to join already established mission teams in order to learn the ministry and work in partnership. If there are no existing teams, it is recommended that the mission agency and the local church to deliberate on starting a completely new mission or in sending them to other existing mission fields, although generally this depends on the missionary's vision and the cultural analysis of the mission field. In light of this, the importance of missionaries' reports containing detailed information of the mission fields cannot be emphasized more.

3) Member-care for Missionaries (pastoral care)

The mission agency must bear the responsibility of pastoral care via providing regular services, gatherings, and team activities. The key idea is to help the missionary form a close relationship with Jesus Christ when considering his/her personal health or family's need (John 15:5). In regards to this point, it is very important to uphold a default policy to send missionaries in teams.

The key to the effective member care at mission agencies is a caring heart. I have encountered some people who understand caring for members as part of missionary management and ministry guidance. While I agree with the importance of those roles, I believe that such interpretations miss the big picture. If there is too much weight on management, missionaries might feel more controlled than cared for, which could lead to the missionaries having difficulties in sharing problems openly, and eventually leading them to exhaustion. Therefore, it is very important for the mission

department of local churches to adopt a holistic picture of what a caring role should be, so that a proper frame can be established for missionaries to work healthily and sustainably.

4) Mission Report and Evaluation

Mission agencies should also care for their missionaries through a report system, in which the leaders can regularly check up on the missionary's psychological, spiritual, familial, and work-related conditions to monitor the missionary's development and balance. The motivation of this evaluation system, however, is not placing the blame but monitoring in order to help missionaries work healthily and sustainably for the long run.

5) Providing Opportunities for Work-Related and Personal Development

The most important part is "self-awareness" so that missionaries can "grow up into [Christ]" (Ephesians 4:15). Self-development was mostly understood as acquiring an academic degree during the sabbatical leave, but from henceforth both mission agencies and local churches should serve in the training and development of missionaries by providing reeducation, additional education, spiritual training, language training, time for establishing relations with local church communities, and other activities related to the various needs of the mission field.

As we have explored thus far, mission agencies have mostly played a pivotal role in dispatching and caring for missionaries. This was also the case for Barnabas and Paul's missionary journey. However, in light of this age of well-developed modern telecommunication and transportation, adopting a new paradigm in which mission agencies and local churches

share and cooperate in mission activities in close partnership is more future-oriented than sticking to the traditional model.

3. The Role of Mission Agencies after Missionaries Return from the Mission Field

Prior to dispatching the missionaries to the mission fields, mission agencies and local churches must discuss and arrange assignments and roles in the event of furloughs, short visits for ministry development, sick leave, family issues, or permanent return. Possible activities during a return stay include:

- 1) Debriefing: an opportunity to share and arrange the information on experiences from the mission field
- 2) Re-adaptation program: a guide for helping the missionaries adjust to a changed society and life style
- 3) Provision of health-checkups and treatment networks: in consideration of physical, psychological, and mental care of the missionaries
- 4) Provision of opportunity for recharge and recovery
- 5) In case of a permanent return, to which ministry should the missionaries be assigned to serve with their new skills and experiences from the mission field?
- 6) Retirement plans

The fifth and sixth issues mentioned above are areas that the concerned churches and agencies should come together around to plan and carry out in cooperation, as these are beyond the responsibilities of a missionary, a local church, or an agency. The Korea World Missions Association (KWMA)

needs to take this role. In Korea, mission work has always been focused on sending missionaries. As a result, there are many areas that Korean missionaries, churches, and mission agencies do not have much experience or knowledge of. Now it is time for Korean mission agencies and denominations to create a new model by researching the Western models and by considering the changes of Korean society.

V. Advice for the Korean Church and World Mission in the Twenty-First Century

1. A Catalyst for the Korean Church

The history of missions was the result of waves of revival which spread to other cultures. In other words, without revival, it will be too difficult for missions to stay active. When the drive for mission in the early church was in decline and local churches became stagnant, the Monastic Movement exerted a strong influence. In addition, the Moravian churches and the modern mission movement led to the revival and renewal of existing local churches, which resulted in a more powerful mission movement.

At the present time, given the prevalence of pessimism regarding the future of Korean churches, mission agencies need to consider the ways they can serve and help in reviving the local churches, which are the providers of missions. That is, mission agencies should first experience the revival through self-transformation and spirituality of the cross, and then play a role as the catalysts for the revival of Korean churches. For this purpose, the focus must be placed not on a ministry or a project, nor on the agents or outcomes, but on the self-transformation and self-reflection on how much the principle of the cross is applied to mission agencies.

2. A Pivotal Role in Developing and Supporting a New Mission Model

During the Professionals/Tentmakers Forum, there was an agreement on the issue of Christians leading a mission-oriented disciples' life in cross-cultural societies all over the world. There is a need for the grassroots to lead the missions of the twenty-first century, moving away from the tradition of missionary-centered missions.¹² In other words, beyond working as a full-time “missionary,” we now need the movement of “mission-oriented Christians” as disciples overseas. The Korean diaspora churches were mentioned as a model, but in reality this is not an easy feat, since it is far more difficult for the Korean diaspora churches to lead a mission-oriented life in other cultures than in the Korean culture. Naturally it is not easy for these Christians to sustain a mission-centered life with few channels to receive spiritual and strategic mission-related support as traditional missionaries.

While working in a mission agency, I was able to meet people who had once dedicated themselves to such a life, but gave up after encountering a number of difficulties. I also met a Christian living in the Middle East, who was not sure about the ways to evangelize locals, despite frequent contacts with them. From these experiences, I came to conclude that there must be a new model of mission movement that can empower these people. In contrast to these examples, a grassroots model called “tent-making mission movement” took place in the Philippines and met with some success.¹³ Therefore, the questions of “How can mission agencies recruit, train, and support these individuals?” and “What kind of partnership can the mission agencies form

¹² Son, “What kind of missionary should be sent?” Keynote of Partners Forum, (2012): 10–22.

¹³ David S. Lim, “Indigenous Mission Movement of the Philippines,” *KMQ* Vol 14:4, (2015): 82–95.

with diaspora churches?” can lead to a breakthrough for missions in the twenty-first century, which is bringing more and more difficulties.

To develop this model, new approaches are required in all aspects of mission training, missionary recruitment, and post-dispatch care. For the new model of mission, specific efforts are crucial for both mission agencies and local churches to recognize the importance of the new model and to establish this model as a standard framework in Korean society.

3. The Mission Movement that Focuses on “Senders”

Most of the mission schools or mission training programs in Korea with the exception of a few programs, such as “Perspectives (PSP),” are focused on training missionaries. However, 99 percent of the graduates from these programs end up leading their lives as typical Christians in Korea. After mission school, many find themselves unable to leave for mission fields, due to a sense of burden or self-responsibility, and often decide to participate in missions as supporters.

However, financial or prayer support from such people out of self-placed burden is definitely insufficient for effective mission. Only when the believers of local churches learn “how to engage voluntarily with the mission as senders,” will there be a new revival of missions. The mission agency to which I belong began a new mission-training program titled the “Sender School” with local churches. When this movement takes place throughout mission agency networks, there can be a catalytic revival of missions among the local churches—the “Senders’ Mission Movement.”

4. A New Chapter for Cross-Cultural Ministry with Local Churches

It has been reported that the rate of evangelization among immigrants in North America has been higher than that of their own countries. However, this has not been the case for immigrants in Korea. In fact, the number of immigrants in Korea is over two million, with the prediction that the this number will increase to four or five million in ten years and to ten million in 25 years. Therefore, it is now necessary to contemplate a new approach.

The missionaries who are already equipped with abilities to understand and adapt to other culture groups from their past experiences on the cross-cultural mission field can maximize the opportunity of immigrant ministry with the help of local churches which understand the surrounding area well as a local community center. Especially, an interest in discipleship training of students coming over for studies will be a stepping stone for the evangelization of multicultural societies in the future. Until recently, cross-cultural mission has mainly focused on providing a place of worship. This focus needs to shift to discipleship-oriented work here “at home” and to locals-centered church-planting on the mission field.

5. The Necessity for a Cooperative Mission Movement with Local Churches.

As I have discussed above, there is a need for mission agencies to develop more cooperative engagement with the churches in Korea.

Furthermore, there is also a need to consider building a cooperative system with the local churches already established in mission fields. For example, a missionary in our mission agency recently joined the Bible Society in his field as a member working under the locals’ leadership. Not only was this missionary able to overcome the barrier that had once blocked

missionaries as he began to work under the leadership of the locals, but he has also shown success in helping the local churches participate in missions. Furthermore, this progress has developed to the stage of training new missionaries with the local denomination, which had been established by the agency I belong to, and sending the newly trained missionaries to similar cultures. Some elements required for such successful progress include practicing self-denial and humility, forgoing the missionary-centered model, making use of the resources in Korea, and taking an active stance and practice to support cooperative partnerships.

6. Mission Agencies as a Hub for Collaborations

So far, most missions have been carried out individually by churches or agencies. As a result, some of the weaknesses in mission activities included inefficient management of mission resources, missionary's obligations, and care for missionaries. Moreover, certain cases show missionaries inflicting negative influences on the locals as well. To overcome these problems, mission agencies must step forward in collaboration with local churches toward the same vision.

VI. Final Words

“History repeats itself.” This saying could be taken to mean that the principle that worked in the past can also be applied to our lives now and also in the future. Likewise, when we think about the role of the mission agency in the twenty-first century, we need to first look for the answer in the Bible and in history. In this sense, mission agencies are still a valid structure of the church and a tool used by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, history shows

that maximum synergy can be produced in missions when mission agencies work together with the local churches. When each organization of this three-fold structure of the universal church begins to function properly on their own, as well as in congruence with each other through a mutually respectful partnership, the Great Commission of Jesus Christ will soon be fulfilled.

The mission field and society of the twenty-first century are no longer about a few talented elite missionaries or selected mission agencies. Rather, it is now an era of mission teams, working together toward sustainable ministry, fulfilling the needs of one another beyond cross-cultural and linguistic barriers, and also beyond agencies to pave the way for an era of united partnership. In order to carry out this ministry in an effective way, mission agencies need to improve their unique specialties and take a more collaborative stance with local churches that befits the demands of the twenty-first century.

Mission agencies as one of the three structures of the universal church should use their experiential faith acquired from the mission fields to serve local churches. They should become a catalyst for the spiritual revival of the Korean churches, impart the mission spirituality to the missionaries, and dedicate themselves to bringing about a new missions movement. When mission agencies continue to reflect upon themselves and on what their role should be in the changing Korean society and when they continue to work together with local churches in partnership, they will continue to be used for God's mission as kingdom builders in His history.



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A Critical Assessment of the Understanding of God in Mbiti's Theology

Yong Seung HAN

1. Introduction

John Samuel Mbiti, one of the leading African theologians, has explored the question “How could the gospel be proclaimed authentically and effectively to the African people in a way that is meaningful and relevant to them?” and attempted to theologically reflect on the African religio-cultural form of the gospel message that is familiar to the African people's thought-patterns and way of life.

Mbiti rejects missionaries' derogatory attitude towards the African cultural-religious traditions as well as the prevailing and dominant Western interpretation of the gospel in Africa. He claims that theological reflection in Africa must be articulated in each distinct context of the African continent. Mbiti reaffirms the African traditional religio-cultural heritage with the intention to secure the African cultural identity on the theological level.

This article investigates how John Samuel Mbiti articulates theological reflections on the understanding of God in connection with the African traditional religio-cultural heritage, and evaluates his attempt to draw out a dialogue and integration between the Christian faith and the traditional African religiosity.

2. Mbiti's Understanding of God

2.1. Mbiti's methodology: Anthropological research and theological interpretation

One of Mbiti's theological concerns is the cultural embodiment of the gospel in "a manner suitable to African conditions and background" (Mbiti 1972: 53). Therefore, the search for ways and means of communicating the gospel to Africans has been placed at the forefront of his theological tasks.

According to Mbiti (1970b: 430), "Christianity has Christianized Africa, but Africa has not yet Africanized Christianity." He diagnoses the African Church as "a Church without a theology, without theologians, and without theological concern" (Mbiti 1972: 51). In order to remedy symptoms, the gospel and Christianity have to be deeply rooted within "the point of African religiosity" (Mbiti 1970b: 430).

In addressing his theological concern of relating the gospel to the African religiosity, Mbiti begins his study on the concepts of God. The reasons he paid attention to the concepts of God in Africa are that African traditional religions (hereafter referred to as ATRs) revolve around the concepts of God (Mbiti 2004: 228), and the concepts of God as a kernel of ATRs "provide one area of great commonality" between Biblical records and the traditional African religiosity (Mbiti 1980: 817). Mbiti, therefore, performed his research on more than 300 tribes' concepts of God in Africa across the continent.

The beliefs and practices of ATRs are not formulated into a "systematic set of dogmas" (Mbiti [1969] 1975: 3). However, as a theologically trained

scholar Mbiti approaches and constructs ATRs in a doctrinal system, which is markedly theocentric. His method of approaching ATRs and the way he lists the contents of his book, *Concepts of God in Africa* (Mbiti 1970a), show that he has his own theological presuppositions about ATRs. First, the concepts of God were collected from various African ethnic groups and were lined up in comparison to the concepts of God as seen in Christian systematic theology. Mbiti, therefore, gives a Christian theological response to his anthropological research, and interprets and systematizes the anthropological data of more than 300 African tribes' concepts of God in a set of Western Christian doctrinal systems.

The questions to be considered here are: How could Mbiti perform a theological interpretation of an anthropological study of the concepts of God in Africa? What are Mbiti's theological presuppositions or underlying considerations that led him to adopt his methodology?

2.2. Mbiti's theological presuppositions

2.2.1. ATRs as monotheism

Some scholars, such as Taylor, Parrinder, Idowu, and Ikenga-Metuh, emphasize the underlying similarities or a great homogeneity among the various religious systems of the African peoples. They underscore a basic worldview which fundamentally is the same everywhere and a single African belief system across the whole African continent, even though they recognize some differences in the beliefs and practices of different African communities.

From his early writings to the present, Mbiti ([1969] 1975: 30) insists on the "common factors" of African culture and "the unified concept of

God in Africa” on a continental scale. Mbiti is convinced that “every African people recognizes God as One” ([1969] 1975: 36), and African religion is “a deeply monotheistic religion” (2009: 147). According to Mbiti, the notion of one God is the most minimal and fundamental idea about God, and it seems to be found in all African societies.

Consequently, Mbiti’s theological presupposition of ATRs as monotheism enables him to speak of a single, comprehensive African Traditional Religion (Mbiti 1975), even though he once used African traditional religions in the plural form, admitting that Africa holds many ethnic groups and hence different systems of ideas, religious beliefs, and practices (Mbiti [1969] 1975: 1, 30).

2.2.2. ATRs as *praeparatio evangelica*

According to Mbiti (1970b: 436), ATRs are largely compatible with Christianity, especially a great deal of religious and cultural elements in the Old Testament. Many parallel elements of these two religions match, or do not contradict each other, and can merge without conflict. Therefore, African religiosity has provided the religious groundwork, vocabulary, aspirations, and direction for “the gospel to find a hearing and an acceptance among African peoples” (Mbiti 1979: 68). This traditional religiosity has done the “donkey work” of paving the road for Christianity to come “marching in” to African people. In this regard, ATRs have equipped people to listen to the gospel, to discover meaningful passages in the Bible, and to avoid unhealthy religious conflict.

Mbiti, therefore, maintains that pre-Christian African religious heritage is a crucial stepping stone towards the Ultimate light ([1969] 1975: 32), and “should be regarded as a preparation for the Christian gospel” (1970b: 432).

Consequently, ATRs as a “fundamental foundation” on which the Christian faith can be understood effectively in Africa are placed on equal footing with the Old Testament as preparation for the coming of Christ (Mbiti 1970b: 436).

On the basis of his theological presuppositions—African monotheism and ATRs as *a praeparatio evangelica*—Mbiti prepares room for pre-Christian African religious heritage within Christian theology without sacrificing the African cultural identity, and pursues a combination of the traditional African religious heritage and the gospel.

2.3. Mbiti's Understanding of God

2.3.1 One God

In reaction to the presupposition of some anthropologists and Christian missionaries that “an African could not conceive the idea of the Supreme God” or “the Supreme being is a *deus otiosus*,” African scholars such as Danquah and Idowu asserted, respectively, that the Akan religion had known only one God (Danqua 1944) and the Yoruba religion was originally primitive monotheism (Idowu 1973).

Mbiti ([1969] 1975: 29) investigates the traditional African concepts and knowledge of God in “proverbs, short statements, songs, prayers, names, myths, stories, and religious ceremonies.” Then, he ([1969] 1975: 30, 36) reaches the conclusion that all African peoples clearly have a notion of one Supreme Being. The idea of one God in Africa is, says Mbiti, strongly supported by the fact that the name of God or the word for God is used in singular form in many African languages (Mbiti 2004: 222).

2.3.2 The Same God

Mbiti challenges the basic theological tradition of the Western distinction between “Natural Revelation” and “Supernatural Revelation.” He abolishes the distinction between the two because it is “inadequate,” “unfreeing,” not “a biblical distinction,” and only “an academic distinction” (Mbiti 1980: 817–818).

For Mbiti, “any act of revelation has both natural and supernatural dimensions,” and “grace and nature belong to God” (quoted by Nieder-Heitmann 1981: 109). Mbiti, therefore, asserts that any attempt to distinguish between natural revelation and supernatural revelation leads to a false dichotomy between the two (quoted by Nieder-Heitmann 1981: 109). In Mbiti’s understanding of revelation, there is no difference between “natural” knowledge of God and “revealed” knowledge of God, and God’s revelation is not confined to the Bible.

God has revealed Himself not only to the people of Israel but also to the traditional adherents of ATRs. The only difference between the two revelations is that the Jews produced a written record of their revelation, while Africans kept their revelation in non-written forms, such as oral tradition, rituals, and symbols (Mbiti 1970b: 436; 1980: 818).

In this regard, God, who has revealed Himself in both ATRs and the Bible, is essentially the same. Moreover, Mbiti claims that all revelations in both ATRs and the Bible are essentially the same and have the same value (Mbiti 1980:818). God’s revelation in ATRs, therefore, is equal to the revelation in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament.

In consequence, Mbiti maintains that the God who has been already known and worshipped by African peoples as *Mungu*, *Mulungu*, and *Ngai*

is the same God who has revealed Himself in the Bible as the creator of the world and the Father of Lord Jesus Christ (Mbiti 1979: 68; 2009: 151).

On the basis of the assumption that God's revelations in Israel and Africa are the same, Mbiti (1988-1989:67) attempts to integrate the history of the African religious tradition into the Biblical salvation history. In other words, Mbiti amalgamates all history with salvation history, making both indistinct. Mbiti (1979: 68) says that God handles this world "both historically and geographically" and exists "among the peoples of the world" including the African people. God's involvement with people was not restricted to Israel. God has intervened in human history in order to extend a universal offer of salvation. These historic events were specifically grounded in Hebrew culture but with universal effect. Mbiti combines Africa's religious history with the Christian theological category of salvation history.

3. Evaluation of Mbiti's Understanding of God

3.1. The Tendency to Generalize

The validity of his hypothesis of unity or a common basic structure of ATRs, which treats all tribal religions in Africa somewhat homogeneously, has been seriously questioned.

Mbiti frequently overgeneralizes various African beliefs into a single unified system called African Traditional Religion. In his study of the African concepts of God, Mbiti gathers "bits and pieces" from different societies (Ray 1972: 86), and categorizes them into a set of "doctrines," which are analogous in structure to Christian faith, without considering the socio-cultural and ritual fabric within which they are imbedded.

A fine example of overgeneralization is Mbiti's assertion that all African peoples attribute creation to God. However, although God is widely conceived of as the Creator of all things in Africa, many exceptional cases demonstrate that some African people do not recognize God as the Creator of the universe and humankind (Smith 1950: 7; Setiloane 1976: 81; p'Bitek 1971: 45, 50).

The Igbo God, *Chineke*, *Kalunga*, God of the Ambo, and *Ngewo*, God of the Mende, are conceived of as the Creator. However, *Ruwa*, the Chagga God is not the Creator of the universe and humankind (Dundas [1924] 1968: 107). The Sotho-Tswana have no creation story (Setiloane 1976: 81). In the Central Luo, there are no words for "creation" and "to create" (p'Bitek 1971: 45), or the notion of a Creator God (p'Bitek 1971: 50). In Mbiti's assertion that "all" African peoples attribute creation to God, the term "all" is incorrect.

It should also be noted that when God is spoken of as the Creator in ATRs, the meaning of the word "creation," differs among the various African peoples, and also differs from the Biblical meaning of creation. The Banyarwand God, *Imana*, who is conceived of as a creator *ex nihilo*, is more like the Christian concept of God in regards to the concept of creation (Wiredu 2006: 327). To the Akan, however, God is not thought of as a creator who creates or brings something into existence out of nothing. Instead of a creator *ex nihilo*, the Akan God is thought of as a "cosmic architect" (Wiredu 2006: 309-311).

Without examining a particular people's relationship to God in depth, Mbiti makes hasty generalizations from what he observed from a very small part of Africa and applies it to the whole of Africa. Mbiti interprets various attributes of the African God in a Christian theological scheme and classifies

African religious thoughts and symbols according to the table of contents of a Christian systematic theology (Ray 1972: 86). This attempt, however, results in the subordination of African religious ideas to Christian theological concepts. Mbiti seriously distorts the actual African religious situation.

3.2. African Monotheism

Anthropologists are reluctant to discuss “African religion” or “African monotheism” and argue that the term “African monotheism” is not always appropriate, and, in fact, unrealistic (p’Bitek 1970: 47), since each cultural unit conceptualizes its own notion of God due to a particular historical, religio-cultural context in which the religious elements have developed.

According to p’Bitek (1971), his people of southern Acholi believe in many *jogi* (gods) instead of one *jok* (God). Not all African peoples have a homogenous or a unified concept of God.

Has African monotheism resulted from an “independent reflection” upon the One Supreme God? Has the notion of one God in ATRs existed from time immemorial?

During the period of agitation for independence in the African continent, African nationalists pursued the unity of each “nation” and of “Africa” as a whole to resist Western colonialism and ultimately to gain independence. The ethnic diversity and/or the unity of the tribe were the issues that had to be overcome. Yet instead, “social solidarity” and “national integration” were necessary in religiously and tribally divided African countries (West-erlund 1985: 58).

In this situation, the nationalist inspiration and/or the urgent political desire to want unity influenced the interpretation of ATRs. Common religious

elements, in general, and the belief in one God or the hypothesis of one and the same African God, in particular, functioned as useful and decisive factors in uniting peoples who might be in religious and tribal antagonism attributed to the religiously and tribally pluralist situation (Westerlund 1985: 89).

In this sense, it can therefore be argued that African monotheism is mainly “the result of a response of theologians to African nationalists,” and the notion of “one God” is or seems to be a theological-religious version of the African nationalistic political slogan, “One Africa.”

This concept of one same God in Africa, therefore, is an “a priori theological presumption, not a historical datum” (Ray 1972: 87), and such a God is in fact not real. Rather he is a new God produced by mosaic reconstruction. Therefore, to claim one God who is commonly considered as identical in all parts of Africa is to impose a non-existent or unrealistic God on each African ethnic group, and force each African ethnic group to believe the mosaic God as their own.

To some extent, there are similarities among the expressions of religious beliefs and practices of different peoples on the African continent. However, when their respective contexts are taken into account, the similarities might be found to be very different, because each ethnic group or every religion has its own religious beliefs and practices. The Yoruba concept of God cannot be understood in the terms of the Luo religious system. The Akan God has to be interpreted by the Akan religious system itself, not by a Christian systematic theological framework.

It is therefore impossible to designate a systematic description of a homogenous or unified concept of God for the whole continent. Most strikingly, the attempt to assert the idea of one and the same God for all ethnic groups is rushing into “the twin dangers of ‘reading-in’ what is not in fact

there and of ‘reading-out’ what is not in fact indigenous” (Smith 1950: 3). The African traditional concepts of God will be distorted by this kind of eisegesis.

Therefore, theological presupposition of African monotheism should be abandoned.

3.3. ATRs as *Praeparatio Evangelica*

It cannot be denied that there are certain positive elements of ATRs and other religious systems. These elements provide an interface or a meeting point of ATRs and the Christian belief when communicating the gospel. A certain religion that confronts people with the “issues of ultimate concern” or “fundamental questions” can help produce a milieu in which the gospel can be positively comprehended.

This, however, is far from saying that the elements function to reveal the will of God or guarantee that people of other religions will accept the gospel, or that it has salvific power.

The notion of *praeparatio evangelica* (literally, preparation for the Gospel) raises several issues. First, when African theologians regard ATRs as *praeparatio evangelica*, it seems that the “negative” elements in ATRs are not identified or even remain unevaluated, while they identify or exaggerate some of the positive elements of ATRs. To receive blessings and avoid death, illness, infertility, drought, accident, and other misfortunes, people keep “living together with ancestors,” remembering their names and making appropriate offerings to them. The plurality of gods, the African identification of God with elements of nature, and a God who has wives cannot be paralleled with the God of the Bible.

Secondly, *praeparatio evangelica* is based on the continuity between Christianity and ATRs that is attributed to the monotheistic notion of God. Mbiti affirms that the God of the Bible is the same as the God worshipped in ATRs. However, how do the attributes of *Chineka* or of the Supreme Being of 300 ethnic groups that were surveyed in Mbiti's research actually correspond to those of the Christian God? If some descriptions of the concept of God among different ethnic groups are contradictory, which concept of God among them is the most trustworthy?

ATRs are mainly concerned with human life and welfare, have a secular outlook, and have no yearning for spiritual redemption (Mbiti [1969] 1975: 5). Man's act of worshipping God in ATRs is pragmatic and utilitarian rather than spiritual (Mbiti [1969] 1975: 5).

The fact that there are decisive differences between the African concepts of God and the Christian concept of God should not be minimized but maintained. It is, therefore, evident at this point that the idea of a radical continuity between the African concepts of God and the Christian concepts and teachings of God are incompatible.

It seems quite probable that the concept of *praeparatio evangelica* has been motivated by a "conscious and deliberate apologetic intent" (Ferdinando 2007: 128) to: (1) secure the African traditional religio-cultural heritage as the key element for establishing African Christian identity, (2) to make Christian Africans identify themselves as African Christians without having to sacrifice the religion of their ancestors and the African cultural identity, and (3) to reclaim Christianity with an African face by revitalizing Africa's rich cultural-religious heritage and consciousness.

For the reasons mentioned above, ATRs cannot be regarded as *praeparatio evangelica* in the same way as the Old Testament, which stands in a

unique relationship to Christ, and the notion of ATR(s) as *praeparatio evangelica* is unsustainable.

4. Conclusion

4.1. From “Inculturation” to “Interculturation”

African theology as “a theological reflection and expression by African Christians” primarily intends to make the gospel intelligible to its hearers. African theology, to some extent, seems to attain African expression and relevancy to Africans.

However, African theology, does not seem to succeed in creating genuine dialogue and integration between the Christian faith and African culture. African theology makes excessive use of the “African medium” to meet the needs and mentality of the African peoples without considering dialogue with the global church. African culture, African cultural expression, traditional religiosity, or some ideological interests have been strongly emphasized in the African Christian faith. In consequence, African theology becomes weak in its Christian identity.

Theology in Africa should be contextualized. However, even though context plays an important role in theology to make the gospel relevant to secular cultures, it is not normative or absolute.

African theologians have vehemently criticized and rejected Western theology as a product of Western ethnocentrism. They have been opposed to absolutizing theology. However, when they put their emphasis on African context, they seem to absolutize the African context, African cultural superiority, and contextual theology, paradoxically encouraging what they

have strongly opposed and criticized. It should be noted that the African cultural identity and contemporary political agenda should not be taken as decisive and dominant over the Bible in studying theology. The cultural context should constantly be brought under, measured, and reinterpreted by the authoritative Word of God. Contextual theology cannot stand as Christian theology if it does not hold a Christian identity that is sustained by the Christian tradition.

In this sense, African theological discourses must move beyond the mere cultural-political identity debate. In the interaction and dialogue among various sets of cultures, each culture is required to be willing to listen to, and learn from the other. The African church as part of the universal church must identify, listen to, and clarify “what has been believed everywhere, always and by all” for the benefit of the African people (Kombo 2000: 256). African theology is also required to move from “inculturation” to “interculturation” by “a continuous dialogue” of “mutual correction and mutual enrichment” with the global theological situation, keeping a particular perspective, conditioned by a specific situation and the distinctiveness of each context in Africa.

4.2. Understanding God as Trinity

Christianity has taken old local names which designate God. Similarly, African theology, has taken the names for God from the cultural context. Certain characteristics of the African God are directly contrary to the God of the Bible. Therefore, when African theologians adopt local names for God, theologians are required to acknowledge the negative characteristics and attributes that are implied in the local names for God. Furthermore, African

theologians should put the new biblical and Christian meanings in the local name, eliminating the negative characteristics and attributes.

Therefore, what African theology needs is not an emphasis on the African concept of God, but clarification and articulation of a clear picture of the Christian view of God. The name and the “robe” of *Nkulunkulu*, the Zulu God, can remain but the “content” of *Nkulunkulu* has to be completely different from the traditional meaning. *Nkulunkulu* of Christianity differs from the *Nkulunkulu* of the tradition. The form is old, but the old form contains completely new content and meaning. The Christianized *Modimo* for the Sotho-Tswana is no longer “enabler” or “midwife” in the story of the creation. The name *Modimo* refers to God in the biblical and Christian theological sense, who is known through the Son and worshipped through the Holy Spirit (Kombo 2000: 219).

While African theologians attribute the rapid growth of Christianity in Africa to the African monotheistic concept of God, the concept of the divine Trinity is an absolutely new concept that is even “revolutionary” to the African people (Kombo 2000: 221).

Therefore, African theologians should work hard to articulate their understanding of God within the Trinitarian context, and reveal all the richness of and the whole mystery of the Trinity. The only God whom Christians know and confess is the God who exists as the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The understanding of God as the Trinity is the church’s response to the revelation of God in history and the Bible. The Trinitarian understanding of God as a profound confession of the Christian faith should also be articulated in African theology.

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The Issue of Replacement Theology of Christian Zionism

John H.N. CHUNG

I. Introduction

① The founding of the nation of Israel (1948). ② Israel's recapturing of East Jerusalem from Jordan (1967). ③ The reconstruction of the third Jewish Temple on the temple grounds of Jerusalem (future). According to Christian Zionism, which is based on dispensationalism, ①, ②, and ③ are all fulfillments or preparation for fulfillments of biblical prophecy. Approximately 27 years ago (Sep. 1989), an Arab pastor and I were attending a meeting at his church in Bahrain and were both asked whether we agreed with the previous three statements claimed by dispensationalists. While I was hesitating to answer, the Arab pastor hastily answered "yes" and explained his reasoning. This caused a great commotion among the church people. Although he belonged to the Egyptian Presbyterian church, he was heavily influenced by dispensationalism rather than reformed/covenant theology. In truth, I hesitated to answer for the same reason, even though I also belonged to the Korean Presbyterian church.

The first Western evangelical missionary in Jordan was Roy Whitman (1904–1992). At the age of 14, Whitman was deeply inspired by a sermon about the rapture and later dedicated his life as a missionary, moving to Jerusalem at the age of 21 (1925). During his ministry in Jordan, the nation

of Israel was established (May 17, 1948). He interpreted this event as a fulfillment of a biblical prophecy. He justified his interpretation by reminding the Arab congregation that Judas Iscariot's very betrayal of Christ was part of the process of fulfilling a biblical prophecy. Many evangelical church leaders in Jordan are from Palestine and are also disciples of Roy Whitman. They believe that the term "his kingdom" in Matthew 6:33 ("But seek his kingdom and his righteousness") refers to the millennium kingdom of Jerusalem in which Jesus will return and reign as the Messiah. They also believe that the founding of Israel in 1948 is a foundational step to His kingdom and that they therefore must bless Israel. In addition, they apply the passage "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24) by explaining that even though it is painful and sorrowful to be Israel, it is their cross to bear.

The dispensationalists' claim of ①, ②, and ③ brings up a question: "Who do the biblical prophecies refer to?" According to dispensationalism, they refer to the bloodline descendants of Jacob. According to reformed/covenant theology, the prophecy is in reference to the church community redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, dispensationalism criticizes reformed/covenant theology as "replacement theology" or supersessionism.¹ They claim that reformed/covenant theology replaces Israel with the church community as the true fulfillment to biblical prophecy. This means that biblical prophecy refers not to the blood of Jesus Christ but rather to the bloodline of Jacob. The term replacement theology indicates that the church has taken the place of Israel and was formulated by dispensationalists in order

¹ Craig A. Blaising, "The Future of Israel as a Theological Question," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44:3, (2001): 435.

to discredit reformed/covenant theology. The term was coined by dispensationalists in an effort to criticize reformed/covenant theology. Sizer explains that replacement theology is a favorite “straw man” of Christian Zionists.² A straw man is a common form of *argument* and is an *informal fallacy* based on giving the impression of refuting an opponent’s argument, while actually refuting an argument that was not advanced by that opponent. Warner states the following in his conclusion in Replacement Theology:

In conclusion, there is no such thing as “Replacement Theology.” The Gentiles have been grafted in to Israel, and now they are sharers together in the promises of God in Jesus Christ. To propagate this notion of the church replacing Israel is divisive. It necessitates an on-going pejorative use of the term “Replacement Theology.” This term should be redacted from Christian discourse. Using this device to portray other Christians as anti-Semitic is unfair, and also should find cessation.³

In actuality, the concept of replacement is found in each Abrahamic religion: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. More accurately, it is the concept of “replacement sacrifices.” Although this concept is a part of each religion, a closer look will reveal how Judaism’s replacement sacrifice is merely a shadow, and Islam’s replacement sacrifice just an imitation of Judaism’s shadow. It is only in Christianity where the reality (true nature) of the replacement sacrifice is revealed as Jesus Christ, along with the church community which has been redeemed through his blood. Therefore, reformed/

² Stephen Sizer, *Zion’s Christian Soldier?* (England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 16.

³ www.replacementtheology.org. Brian D. Warner Brian is the lead teaching pastor at Fairport Community Baptist Church (<http://www.fairportcommunity.org>).

covenant theology is technically “reality theology,” the exact opposite of the inaccurately coined “replacement theology.”

II. Judaism and the Replacement Sacrifice

After God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as an offering on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem, He granted Abraham a replacement sacrifice shortly before Abraham followed through. The ram caught by its horns (Gen. 22:13) took the place of Isaac and spared his life. Subsequently, Abraham named the location “The Lord will Provide (Gen. 22:14).” Later in history, Solomon built the temple/house of God on Mt. Moriah, a place the Lord had prepared to build His temple during the time of Solomon’s father, David (2 Chron. 3:10). Before the house of God was built, the house of David was founded first. The house of David represents the Kingdom of Judah, where the throne of David and his descendants is (Psalms 122:5). Furthermore, there is a precedent in Israel that is based on the two houses of Jerusalem (Psalms 122:4). It is a tri-annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Sukkoth. In the house of David, they pledged an oath of obedience to the authority of the kingdom and provided an offering as a replacement sacrifice in the house of God.

With the destruction of the two houses of Jerusalem—David’s Palace and God’s house (the temple)—the nation of Israel was destroyed in 586 BC. Today, the Wailing Wall, located on the west side of Jerusalem’s temple grounds, is all that remains. Consequently, the precedents of Jerusalem are being impeded. The only one who can restore Israel and continue its precedents is the Messiah of Eschatology. When the two destroyed houses of Jerusalem are restored by the Messiah, ① the house of David will become

the Messianic Kingdom and ② the House of God (temple) will become the Messianic Temple. According to Judaism, because the Messiah (Christ) has not come, the House of David (Messianic Kingdom) and the House of God (Messianic Temple) have not yet been rebuilt. In other words, those who are not part of Judaism do not have an altar or a temple to offer their replacement sacrifices. Instead, the grounds where they plan to rebuild their temple are occupied by the Dome of the Rock, an Islamic mosque. Additionally, according to Jewish folklore, the rock placed inside the Dome is also the same rock where Abraham sacrificed the replacement offering in place of Isaac.

III. Islam and the Replacement Sacrifice

There are two Islamic mosques in Jerusalem's temple grounds, one being the Dome of the Rock and the other being the Al Aqsa Mosque. Similar to other typical mosques, there is a large carpet covering the floors of the Al Aqsa mosque for prayer. However, unlike the Al Aqsa and standard mosques, the Dome of the Rock simply has a rock inside. In other words, this building is not necessarily a mosque, but rather a shrine dedicated to a rock. Jews believe that the rock is where Abraham offered the ram as a replacement sacrifice. Muslims, on the other hand, believe it to be associated with two journeys which took place in Muhammad's vision in Mecca.

① Al-Isra' is a journey from Mecca all the way to the rock in Jerusalem (Qur'an 17:1). At Muhammad's arrival, multiple prophets came down from heaven to greet him and worship Allah together. ② Al Mi'raj is a journey from the rock up to the heavens (Qur'an 53:8-15). According to Islam, the two following journeys of Muhammad confirmed him as the greatest Mes-

senger, which became the foundation of Islam's confession of faith, the Shahadah: "There is no other god but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger."

Roughly two years prior to the 9/11 terrorist attack on, Osama Bin Laden and five of his associates announced an important Fatwa regarding the Al Aqsa Mosque standing on the old temple grounds of Jerusalem. The main message was essentially a Jihad proclamation to defend and liberate the Al Aqsa mosque.⁴ The Al Aqsa mosque refers to both the Al Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock located in Jerusalem's holy grounds (Qur'an 17:1). With the rock playing a critical role in the founding of Islam, they were determined to not let it become an altar for Jews to offer their replacement sacrifices.

In the Qur'an, the location of Abraham's offering did not take place on Mt. Moriah, but in Mecca in the Arabian Peninsula. Abraham in the Qur'an also had to almost give up his son as a sacrifice, a decision referred to as "a great sacrifice" (Qur'an 37:107). The Qur'an does not go into detail about the incident, but there is an old Arabic folklore that does. It states that a ram was fattened for forty autumns and was hastily transported by an angel to Abraham in Mecca. Due to the speed at which the ram was travelling, its wool came off in process, creating the Milky Way that shines above the Arabian Peninsula.

To this day, Muslims have their own way of offering replacement sacrifices in the Haram Mosque of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. This is known as "Eid al-Adha," and is one of Islam's greatest religious holidays. This religious ceremony is called "Hajj" in Arabic. The Hajj prayers are supposedly one

⁴ www.fas.org/irp/world/par/docs/98023-fatwa.htm.

hundred thousand times more effective than praying anywhere else in the world. Hajj is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and over 250,000 Hajjis from all over the world carry out a pilgrimage to the Haram Mosque every year. They also offer up replacement sacrifices, just as Muhammad did, following in the footsteps of Abraham. However, the Qur'an does not acknowledge the concept of transfer of sins through a replacement sacrifice. The Qur'an repeats in five passages "No one laden with burdens can bear another's burden (Qur'an 6:614; 7:15; 35:18; 39:7; 53:38-42)" and denies the principle of a sinner transferring his sins to an offering. Simply put, Islam does not recognize Jesus Christ as the true replacement sacrifice, the Son of God who died for the atonement and covenant of his people.

IV. Christianity and the Replacement Sacrifice

According to the New Testament, the replacement sacrifice that took Isaac's place was more of a shadow; the reality of the shadow was the true descendant of Abraham, Jesus Christ.⁵ Through his death on the cross, Jesus became the true sacrifice of the countless replacement offerings that had been sacrificed since Abraham. Hebrews and Colossians stated:

They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven... (Heb. 8:5)

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves... (Heb. 10:1)

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with

⁵ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Israel of God*, (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R, 2000), 4.

regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. (Col. 2:16, 17)

The replacement sacrifice, the temple for offerings, religious holidays, the new moon celebration and the Sabbath, representing the traditions of the Old Testament and Mosaic Law, are all but a shadow and a remnant of the past. The true identity behind this shadow is none other than Jesus Christ, who came down from Heaven. Judaism, being solely based on the Old Testament is merely a shadow, compared to Jesus Christ who fulfilled both the Old and New Testaments as the reality. Despite the coming of Jesus Christ, Paul's adversaries continued to obsess over the shadow of the past and persecuted him and criticized his gospel (Col. 2:16–17). The first one to identify Jesus as the reality was not one of his twelve disciples or Paul, but John the Baptist. In John 1:29, when John saw Jesus coming towards him, he announced, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

When did John the Baptist declare this affirmation? This must have taken place shortly after Jesus spent forty days for fasting prayer in the wilderness. They first met when John baptized Jesus and then met again after Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. During their first encounter, John was not able to introduce Jesus to his own disciples; Jesus was baptized with the Holy Spirit and was sent to the wilderness soon after (Mark 1:12). John was unable to meet up with Jesus during his time out there, while the devil came to him and tempted him and only angels came to him and attended him, but Jesus came back to see John after his trial. What was the reason behind this? It was so that Jesus could recruit some of John's disciples as his own, and John was fully aware of this. The forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness

was also a time for John to prepare for a transfer or farewell ceremony in order to send his disciples to Jesus. The passage of John 1:29-34 is a summary of John's message during this event:

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"...the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit..."

Let us take a closer look at God's command and promise given to John the Baptist. God commanded John to baptize with water (John 1:33a). Then what was God's promise for John (John 1:33)? The Messiah, the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, will come to John in order to be baptized with water, and the Spirit will visibly come down on him and God will visibly send the Spirit down onto him to distinguish him as the Messiah. According to the synoptic gospels, God's promise was fulfilled when the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove (Matt. 3:1, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22). Taking Luke 1:39-56 into consideration, it can be assumed that John the Baptist expected that the Messiah, who would baptize with the Holy Spirit, was none other than Jesus of Nazareth. One would assume John was eagerly waiting to fulfill God's promise by baptizing Jesus. However, Matthew 3:14 reveals the contrary. John insists, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" John did not follow through with God's command or plan and instead acted as if he had forgotten about the promise of God and fulfilling it. What would the reasoning behind this be?

Up until now, John had been baptizing people with water, signifying the repentance of sinners. He would openly preach “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven has come near” and carry out baptisms of repentance (Matt. 3:2). He could not make himself baptize Jesus: he was without sin and the Son of God, who was born by a virgin birth. Regardless, Jesus replied “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness” and convinced John to baptize him with water (Matt. 3:15). John reluctantly complied. At that moment, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove and God’s message was proclaimed: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased (Matthew 3:16–17).”

This declaration was a combined reference to the verses Psalms 2:7 (“You are my son...”) and Isaiah 42:1 (“...in whom I delight...”). Psalms 2 is an enthronement poem written by David for his descendants. When David’s descendants are enthroned, a person opens the Old Testament scroll and reads Psalms 2. However, when Jesus was enthroned, God the Holy Spirit personally descended from the heavens and proclaimed that Jesus of Nazareth, the spotlight of the enthronement, is His own son. Therefore, the baptism of Jesus was his enthronement ceremony as a king to the messianic kingdom. In addition, John the Baptist realized that Jesus was the Messiah who was to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 42, by receiving the baptism of repentance to carry the sins of his kingdom’s people. In other words, He also discovered that the baptism of Jesus was not only his enthronement, but also a transferring of sins for Jesus to carry the sins of the world. Finally, John affirmed to his disciples, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” The crucifixion of Jesus Christ is a clear indication of Jesus becoming the true sacrifice of the replacement sacrifices that have been offered since the time of Abraham. In addition, his resurrection, ascension,

and sitting on the heavenly thrones are clear evidence that His enthronement, which began with His baptism, was completed as Jesus became the king of the messianic kingdom.⁶ The establishment of the church community on the Pentecost through the coming of the Holy Spirit confirms that the church community is also the reality along with Jesus Christ.

V. Jesus Christ and the Church as the Reality

Jesus Christ being revealed as the reality of the replacement sacrifices solidifies that the church community that has been redeemed by his blood is also the reality. That is why the church community celebrates communion, which has been claimed by Jesus as part of the new covenant. It commemorates the flesh and blood Jesus bled for the church community with bread and wine. This reveals that the replacement sacrifice and three religious holidays of Judaism are nothing more than a shadow and that Jesus Christ is the reality. Reformed/covenant theology believes that the old covenant has been replaced by the new covenant, contrary to the dispensationalists who disparage this interpretation for replacing Israel with the church. Hebrew 8:13 states, “By calling this covenant ‘new’ he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.”⁷ From this perspective, the church community of Jesus Christ supersedes the old Jewish communities due to the fact that the New Testament was written on the basis that Jesus Christ has fulfilled, excelled, and superseded the Old Testament.

⁶ John H.N. Chung, *Islam and the Issue of Messianic Kingdom*, (Seoul: CLC, 2009), 155-175.

⁷ Sizer, *Christian Soldier*, 16, 37, 125, 159.

Dispensationalists often quote Revelation 7:1-8 to support their argument that the biblical prophecies are in reference to Jacob's descendants. The twelve descendants of Jacob will each lead a tribe of 12,000 who are sealed by God, amounting to a total number of 144,000. According to dispensationalists, the 144,000 are all direct descendants of Jacob. Reformed/covenant theology believes that they are the representatives of the church community of Jesus Christ who have been called as spiritual soldiers of the earth. Just like the Israelites during the Exodus who counted their numbers with men over the age of twenty who had been called as soldiers of the army (Num. 1, 26), their place is not the heavens but the earth (Rev. 7:1). According to an angel, the ones with a seal on their foreheads are servants of God (Rev. 7:2-4). These servants of God are those who belong to all the churches of Jesus Christ, represented by the seven churches of Asia Minor, which are revealed as recipients of the revelation (Rev. 1:1). The number 144,000 here is not only a representative number, but also a symbolic and complete number. If they try to literally interpret the book of Revelation, they are greatly deviating from the author's intention. The same applies for those who interpret the leaders of the twelve tribes as the bloodline descendants of Jacob. They are actually the soldiers of the church community of Jesus Christ who endure the spiritual battle on earth. Then what is the total number of God's spiritual soldiers who are saved and are represented by the 144,000? The total number is revealed in Revelation 7:9.

There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands." (Rev. 7:9).

Bauckham explains that the role of Revelation 7:9 is to reinterpret Revelation 7:1-8.⁸ If we take a look at the following explanation of Pilchan Lee, we can see how incorrect it is for dispensationalists to criticize reformed/covenant theology as replacement theology.

Revelations 7:9 alludes to the fact that the church community of God is not overtaking the place of Israel, but is eradicating boundaries and differences, opening up the new covenant to every nation, tribe, people, and language. However, the previous verses 1-8 cause a juxtaposition with the verses that follows it. The number 144,000 in Revelation 7:1-8 makes another appearance in Revelation 14:1-5. They are introduced as victors of the beast, introduced in chapter 13. However, they are not on earth but in Mt. Zion of the heavens with the Lamb of Jesus Christ (Rev. 14:1). It can be speculated that Mt. Zion is not on earth but in the heavens, because they are singing a new song before the four living creatures and the elders (Rev. 14:3). Expressing the 'heavens' as 'Mt. Zion' is an Old Testament concept of succession, for 'Mt. Zion' of the Old Testament has been regarded with Heavenly attributes. The number 144,000 introduced twice in Revelation Chapter 7 and 14 is a representation and symbolism of the complete number of the countless great multitudes. In other words, the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 7:1-8 and 'the great multitude that no one could count' in Revelation 7:9-17 was consolidated and referred to as the 144,000 in Revelation 14:1-4. The same consolidation takes place on the basis of the church regarding the trumpets in chapter 8-9, the spiritual battle between the church and

⁸ Richard Bauckham, *The Climax of Revelation*, (Cambridge: CPY, 1993), 225.

the dragon in chapter 10-12, and the church which stands up to the two Beasts in chapter 13.⁹

According to the book of John, during his first miracle performance (John 2:4) and last public appearance on the cross (John 19:26), Jesus calls his mother “woman” both times, thereby identifying himself as “the offspring of the woman,” described in Genesis 3:15, which is known as the “First Gospel”.¹⁰ The coming of Jesus was not only for the bloodline of Jacob, but for all the descendants of Adam, especially for the church community that was redeemed by His blood. When Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 1:4 “For he chose ‘us’ in him before the creation,” the term “us” is the church of Jesus Christ, represented by Apostle Paul himself and the church of Ephesus. In addition, looking through Paul’s message—“Now, through the church... according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord...” (Eph. 3:10–11)—it is for certain that the church of Jesus Christ was prepared by God in the eternal past.

The dichotomous question of who the biblical prophecies are referring to, “Israel or the community,” is the same question as “Is it the bloodline of Jacob, or the blood of Jesus?” Furthermore, it is also the equivalent to the questions of “The Wailing Wall, or the church (community),” “The rock/altar of the Jerusalem temple grounds, or Jesus Christ/sacrifice?” “The old walls of the in-laws or the new walls of the in-laws?” What does this all mean? There is a Korean proverb that says: “If the wife is beautiful, one will bow down to even the wall of the in-laws’ house. Now let’s say the in-

⁹ Pilchan Lee, *I will come soon*, (Seoul: Iresewon, 2006), 607.

¹⁰ Goredon J. Wehnam, *Genesis 1-15*, (Wacko, Texas: WBC, 1987), 81

laws moved to a different house, we can presume that the son-in-law would be bowing down to the wall at the new house. The son-in-law would have to be in serious denial to refuse to bow at the new house and stubbornly continue to bow at the old one. Unfortunately, there are those like the son-in-law in denial who continue to bow down to the old house. These are the Jews and dispensationalist Christians. In other words, the Wailing Wall in the Jerusalem temple grounds is just one of the walls of the in-laws' old house. What once was the temple ground for Jews has now been occupied by the Muslims, along with its rock in the Dome of Rock located on the temple grounds of Jerusalem.

Muslims believe the rock has a significant role in the birth of Islam and its confession: "There is no other god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet." On the other hand, Jews believe that the rock was the altar at which Abraham attempted to sacrifice Isaac and instead offered the ram as a replacement sacrifice. Finally, as Jesus Christ carried the sins of the world by becoming the Lamb of God and dying on the cross, he became the only true sacrifice in place of all replacement sacrifices. Jesus is not only the reality of the replacement sacrifice, but also the true temple. His church community is also the temple. The church community is the Messianic Kingdom, because Jesus was enthroned as the King of the Messianic Kingdom when he first came to Earth. Therefore, the reconstruction of the two destroyed houses of Israel/restoration of Israel—① the house of David and ② the house of Jehovah God (the temple)—has in fact already begun with the first coming of Jesus and will be complete when He returns. In other words, the two houses have combined as one, for it is Jesus Christ alone who is the owner of both houses. The house is the church community which has been

redeemed through the blood of Christ. Additionally, the church community of Jesus Christ is his bride, and New Jerusalem.

Jerusalem-centered Christianity must be reborn as New-Jerusalem centered Christianity. We must no longer bow down to the old walls of the in-laws/the Wailing Wall, but to the new in-laws' house, the New Jerusalem revealed as the church community of Jesus Christ. According to Judaism, Islam, and dispensationalist Christianity, the rock laying in the Dome of Rock standing on the Jerusalem temple grounds becomes an absolute necessity. According to non-dispensationalism, represented by reformed/covenant theology, this rock and the replacement sacrifice that was offered on the rock are merely shadow, and Jesus Christ the Lamb is the only true sacrifice as reality, substance, or fulfillment. That is why the church community that has been redeemed by His blood is also the reality.

VI. Conclusion

Dispensationalists claim that the biblical prophecies refer to the bloodline of Jacob/Israel, the grandson of Abraham. Therefore, they denigrate reformed/covenant theology for supporting a replacement theology that believes the church community, redeemed by the blood of Christ, is the truth behind biblical prophecies. However, the concept of replacement is shared by all three Abrahamic religions. To be more specific, it is a replacement sacrifice. Although Judaism identifies the ram caught in its horns as the replacement sacrifice, it was no more than a shadow, and the true identity of the shadow is never revealed. Islam provides no further explanation or identification either, merely imitating the shadow Judaism examines. According to Christianity that is based on reformed/covenant theology, Jesus Christ is

the reality of the replacement theology, along with the church community that was redeemed by his blood. Therefore, it is more appropriate to refer to reformed/covenant theology as “reality theology” rather than “replacement theology.” Unfortunately, Judaism does not know of Jesus Christ and his church as the reality and still holds on to the shadow. More regrettably, despite dispensationalist Christianity’s faith in Jesus Christ, it still holds on to the shadow alongside Judaism and is caught up in the confrontation between Judaism and Islam. In fact, it only antagonizes more Muslims and increases the tension by siding with the Jews. What is even more unfortunate is that some Arab evangelical church leaders are being branded as advocates of the deeply rooted dispensationalist theology of Zionist Christians. If a church community based on reformed/covenant theology is reality, we can assume that Jerusalem-centered dispensationalist Christianity is a mix of reality and shadow. On the other hand, Islam imitates Judaism’s shadow, with its biggest holiday being an imitation of Judaism’s three religious holidays. “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

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The Religious Phenomenon of Popular Islam and Missional Approaches

C. S. Caleb KIM

Multiple Faces of Islam and Popular/Folk Islamic Features

It is always a daunting task to define what Islam is. Is it merely a religion like many others? More often than not, the religion of Islam has been described in terms of its basic tenets and religious requirements that are incumbent upon Muslims. Islam defined in this way is often presented as the real face of Islam. It may not be too much of an exaggeration to say that Islam has been perceived and understood by Christians mostly in terms of its dogmatic differences from Christianity ever since its rise in the seventh century. Certainly, the dogmatic aspect and theological issues provide a very important clue to understanding the fundamental premise of Islam as a religion. However, Islam has not remained solely a dogmatic religion; it has continued to grow in history as a religious culture and influential civilization whose worldview governs the minds of all Muslims and directs their lives holistically, regardless of their racial or cultural differences. Thus, Islam is much bigger and broader than can be depicted only through a dogmatic lens or religious perspective.

On the 7th through 11th of April 2014, the Lausanne Movement held a consultation in Ghana, West Africa, to discuss a number of missional issues

pertaining to evangelical missions to the Muslim world. More than forty Christian Islamicists and practitioners working among Muslims gathered together to elucidate the resolution on Muslim evangelism that was agreed upon at the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, held in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2010. The resolution was about living the love of Christ among people of other faiths as God's mission. So all the participants in the Ghanaian consultation made efforts to better understand how to implement the resolution in a concrete way. Agreeing that Islam is a complex entity, the meeting attempted to summarize its complexity in terms of five major faces.¹ I was also asked to make a presentation on the popular face of Islam. In this essay, I will discuss this intriguing face as one of Islam's distinctive characteristics. This aspect, however, should not be understood as a type or branch of Islam but as a common and candid religious-cultural experience lived out by Muslims in their various social contexts. In other words, while the term "Islam" refers to a religious ideology or system, the term "popular Islam" or "folk Islam" points to the religious inclination of ordinary Muslims and the practical dimension of their spiritual world.

“Official/orthodox” versus “Popular/folk” Islam?²

It is a well-known fact that Western Christianity as a part of Western civilization was influenced by a cultural worldview that is characterized by the Hellenistic dichotomy. This has naturally affected many missionar-

¹ The Ghanaian consultation meeting presents five faces of Islam: namely, the popular face of Islam (or popular Muslim piety), the missionary/polemic face of Islam, the ideological/ political face of Islam, the militant/violent face of Islam, and the progressive/liberative face of Islam.

² For further discussions on these technical terms, see my articles (Kim and Travis 2010) and Kim (2014).

ies and missiologists in their understanding of world religions. As a result, both secular and Christian theorists have developed an antithetical concept of dichotomy such as “official” versus “unofficial” or “high” versus “low” in analyzing and describing religio-cultural phenomena outside Western Christendom. This dualistic view then became a standardized framework in examining religious phenomena when missionaries were carrying out world missions (especially in and after the twentieth century). However, this kind of dichotomous distinction does not seem helpful in accurately depicting the reality in which most Muslims live. To the contrary, it tends to offer a bi-ased perspective, like an optical illusion, based on an outsider’s worldview. If we look deeply (especially from an anthropological viewpoint) into the cultural minds and behaviors of Muslims who follow religious tenets and socio-cultural values of Islam, the kind of Islam that is experienced among ordinary Muslims often looks quite distant from what outsiders (especially Christians) may expect to see. It looks different even from the ideal Islam that Islamic leaders (such as highly educated scholars and idealists) attempt to present. One may then be curious to know which Islam is the real one. This very question may result from the aforementioned dichotomous paradigm that views a religion in terms of the antithetical notion of “orthodoxy” versus “unorthodoxy.” This theoretical paradigm may be useful to provide a theological tool for Christians to analyze religious elements from a dualistic perspective, but Muslims themselves would not regard such a dichotomous approach to Islamic experiences as a reliable instrument for analysis.

In order to comprehend Islam as it is experienced by Muslims, we need to approach it from an insider’s (emic) perspective by using anthropological tools and concepts. As a total way of life for all Muslims, Islam is often

manifested through Muslims' cultural behaviors and thoughts in day-to-day life, and many of them appear to be just a folk practice or popular custom rather than demonstrating a formal religious appearance that Christians may anticipate. However, what may look like a popular custom in Muslim societies is in many cases actually an integral part of Islam. Distinguishing between official and popular Islam should be regarded as only a methodical tool expediently designed to differentiate between the ideological aspects of Islam (based on its dogmatic tenets) and the realities of Muslim life (in terms of its practicalities). This distinction does not indicate the existence of different kinds of Islam that are antithetically in contrast with each other. Nor does the term popular Islam imply any Islamic heresy. Popular Islam should be treated only as a technical term to point to the aspect of the ordinariness of Muslim life. In this short essay, I will summarize this aspect of Islam (the so-called "popular face"). Then, I will make some suggestions for our missional approach to Muslims with the gospel of Jesus.

Muslims' Supernatural Worldview and Spiritual Felt Needs

The popular Islamic phenomenon is generally characterized by supernaturalism. However, it is not simply a result of the lack of answers in official Islam for ordinary Muslims when they face life challenges. Rather, popular Islam can be explained better in terms of the supernaturalistic worldview (or cosmology) that is inherently embedded within the religion of Islam itself. As the Islamic supernaturalism is experienced through cultural behaviors, thoughts, and customs, Muslims naturally carry a strong sense of exposure to the dangerous supernatural world. A serious dilemma, then, is that Islam itself provides a supernaturalistic cultural paradigm that

allows ordinary Muslims to seek solutions from pre-Islamic sources even in the name of Islam. As official Islamic leaders are often concerned, many common Muslims go beyond the religious parameters set by official Islam in their efforts to deal with challenges coming from the supernatural. This evidences that the popular Islamic culture does not only comprise non-Islamic elements. In fact, popular Islam is a religio-cultural entity that consists of both Islamic and non-Islamic (or pre-Islamic) elements. Since both the categories are found in Muslim practices—though some of them are not clearly distinguishable, even non-Islamic components within a given Muslim culture should also be considered as an integral part of the Islamic phenomenon. I often encounter Christians who believe that popular Islam is not really true Islam, but their view is inaccurate, perhaps because of the dualistic viewpoint mentioned above.

Below, I will briefly describe popular/folk Islamic features. Based on my own ministry experiences and field research, I am certain that the religiosity and lifestyle shared among ordinary Muslims has much to do with the concept of *ghaib*—the uncanny, supernatural world. This is a fundamentally important concept in understanding the Islamic worldview in general. This mystical world is fully known to no one else but Allah, and it is a supernatural realm that is governed and controlled solely by Allah. But, at the same time, this invisible world is also closely connected to the physical world of human beings.³ Since myriad events taking place in the human world are believed to have a spiritual link with *ghaib*, physical phenomena can also

³ For Islamic cosmology, see my chart utilizing Paul Hiebert's diagram that analyzes religious systems (Kim and Travis 2010, 242).

be explained in terms of spiritual causalities. Therefore, this mystical world is as real to Muslims as is this physical world. However, the world of *ghaib* is not a pleasant area to deal with; it is a realm that most Muslims fear and wish to avoid by all means. *Ghaib* teems with spiritual forces, especially the spirits of jinn that are believed to be a major cause of all kinds of evil and misfortune among human beings.⁴

As we are well aware, Islam does not view Allah as a God with whom one can build a personal relationship as in Christianity. Such an understanding of God is likely to lead Muslims, who live under a strong sense of supernaturalism, to holding a deistic view of God, as Musk points out (1989, 198). Muslims may be highly conscious of God's sovereign power and all other divine attributes based on Islamic doctrines, but it is theologically impossible to think of having a personal relationship with him. With such a religious premise, they hardly expect God to protect them as a father; instead, they feel somewhat fatalistically that it is the believer's responsibility to deal with uncountable challenges coming from the supernatural world. Thus, in Islamic traditions the Quran as the word of God is perceived to be the most powerful divine source of healing power that cures all human problems, and quite a number of Muslim scholars have made efforts to develop even a theology of healing.⁵ They also look for effective prophylactic methods and powerful remedies from both the Quran and Hadith (or *Sunnah*) so as to ward off the evil eye (or evil of the envious), to break a spell of witchcraft (*sahir* in Arabic), to evade *jinn*'s harassment, to diagnose effects of the infil-

⁴ For further discussions on *jinn*, see the fifth and sixth chapters of my book (Kim 2004).

⁵ For example, see Al-Akili (1993), Al-Ashqar (1998), Ameen (2005), Philips (1997), and Sakr (1994).

tration of *jinn* into human life, and to know how to heal different sicknesses inflicted by *jinn*. According to the Quran and Hadith, even Muhammad, the founder of Islam himself, was bewitched by his enemies with black magic (*sihr*), but he was able to overcome all the evil attacks with Allah's help.⁶ All this is evidence that official Islam recognizes the existence of evil powers and allows Muslim practitioners to deal with them.

Although the official Islamic way to remedy problems caused by supernatural powers is sternly confined to the use of the Quran and Hadith, it is interesting to note that official Islam shares almost the same supernaturalistic worldview as many Muslim customs whose sources are found outside the Islamic scriptures. Both strictly Islamic Muslims and quite liberal Muslims are usually present in the same Muslim community, and each type acknowledges the reality of supernatural beings and forces that affect their lives. They may differ in their understanding of the concept of *ghaib*, but the differences are not profound and are often negligible. A great difference between orthodoxy and unorthodoxy lies mainly in the methods of remedying or solving problems. Some may seek solutions strictly from official Islamic traditions, while others may attempt to go beyond an Islamic boundary to other non-Islamic sources for their answers. In short, while sharing in the same supernaturalistic worldview, orthodoxy and non-orthodoxy find their boundary only in the area of prescription and treatment.

⁶ Sura 113 (Sura al-Falaq) is a good example for this. See my article (Kim 2013, 87–94) for the accounts of the evil eye (*hasad*) and magic (*sihr*) in Islam.

Muslim Power Encounter in the Islamic World

Muslims are also engaged in a type of spiritual warfare. Their spiritual battle is a fierce one. The spiritual life of an ordinary Muslim is more complex than an outsider can ever imagine. Their spiritual life may be characterized by acute pain and weariness. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that the everyday life of Muslims is a spiritual battlefield. Although Islamic theology teaches that the ultimate causation of all occurrences is God himself, the cultural psychology of ordinary Muslims in general shows that the Islamic teaching is not quite comforting and heartening. In other words, Muslims generally feel God is too far from their everyday lives and thus feel responsible for preventing painful misfortunes from taking place. In reality, tomorrow is another uncanny world to them. Even some of their “neighbors” can be malignant against them and thus may harm them with witchcraft; so they must be vigilant enough to protect their family and themselves. (In Muslim minds, “neighbors” include both humans and jinn, and the latter are believed to be always involved in the practice of bewitchment (*sihr*)).

Muslim scholars like Ameen also believe that all sorts of physical diseases and psychological sicknesses are caused by bewitchment (Kim 2013, 96). In order to avoid jinn attacks, devout Muslims must recite by memory important Quranic verses whenever needed, and they ought to make all efforts to increase their faith through deep meditation on the Quran (*dhikr*) and personal prayers (*du'a*). They can also eat dates called *'azwah* in imitating their prophet who ate them to overcome harassment by *jinn*. In so doing, these Muslims believe that they can protect themselves from the poison of bewitchment by their enemies (Ameen 2005, 210–211). If, how-

ever, anyone has already been affected by *jinn* or has been bewitched, they must perform the ritual of *ruqyah*, which is the recitation of certain Quranic verses for healing (which looks to outsiders like an incantation). In performing *ruqyah*, Muslims are encouraged to recite mostly the first Quranic Surah (Fātiḥah) or the famous verse 2:255, known as the “Verse of the Throne (Ayat Al-Kursī).”⁷

As seen above, official Islam stipulates that Muslims stay keenly aware of the existence of the supernatural and its harmful effects on their life. In order to remain a faithful Muslim without being defeated by evil forces, all Muslims are required to continuously nurture their inner spiritual power. This spiritual power is well elucidated in the concept of *baraka* (literally meaning “blessings”). In order to obtain possession of more spiritual power, Muslims perform various rituals as illustrated above, individually or collectively as a community. Religious sincerity and dedication often witnessed among devout Muslims is also not totally unrelated to a spiritual need to seek *baraka*.

Non-Islamic Elements of Folk Islam

However, many Muslims do not seem to mind receiving even non-Islamic help when official Islam fails to provide solutions to various hardships that they undergo in everyday life. This may not be quite true of Arab Muslim societies where the Islamic law (*shariah*) is followed strictly, but

⁷ In addition, Muslims use the following Quranic Suras or verses for ruqya: Surat Al-A‘rāf (7:117–122), Surat Yūnus (10:81–82), Surat Tāhā (20:69), Surat ‘Ikhlāṣ (112), and Surat Al-Falaq (113).

many non-Islamic or pre-Islamic religio-cultural elements are easily observed in Muslim communities of Sub-Saharan Africa or Southeastern Asia where the shariah is complied with rather slackly.

For example, among Swahili Muslims on the East African coast, the practice of Bantu traditional witchcraft (*uchawi* in Swahili) coexists with Islamic magic (*sihr* in Arabic). My field research among them has uncovered that these concepts are used almost interchangeably.⁸ Many non-Islamic elements are also found in various healing rituals that are related to *jinn*, which are quite common throughout almost all Muslim societies: such as the *zar* (or *sar*) ritual in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt; the *shetani* ritual among Swahilis; and the *bori* ritual in Nigeria.⁹ Furthermore, the veneration of saints in Sufism often goes beyond the official Islamic boundary to become transmuted into a pagan practice that seeks earthly blessings only. These are only a few examples of non-Islamic elements that are observable in many Muslim societies. Such non-Islamic religio-cultural features in Muslim communities also evidence that many Muslims often find Islamic guidelines to be inadequate to provide effective solutions to spiritual problems in daily life or to satisfy their profound spiritual thirst.

Some Suggestions for Missional Approach

All the practices of popular (or folk) Islam illustrated above show where the spiritual locus of ordinary Muslims actually is. These practices

⁸ See Kim (2013).

⁹ See Kim's works (2004, 2010, and 2012) on *jinn*-possession therapeutic rituals and anthropological and missiological issues related to them.

may look entirely unorthodox to the eyes of non-Muslims (especially Christians), but it should be kept in mind that they represent Muslim realities, which do indeed make up the whole of a Muslim society. And innumerable Muslims whom we meet in various contexts are the real people of Islam whose cultural upbringing is deeply rooted in such a religious milieu. Whether they are ruthless *mujahidin* or highly educated intellectuals, they all hold essentially the same Islamic worldview and constantly seek in their own ways for solutions to the life challenges with which they struggle day-to-day.

In past centuries, evangelical missions to the Islamic world have been weak in considering the “people factor,” that is, the cultural and psychological dimension of Muslims. The strength of evangelical traditions has been witnessed in apologetic approaches which are intended to reveal Islam’s doctrinal fallacies, but unfortunately they seem to have overlooked many redemptive elements within Muslim cultures. Personal interactions rather than polemical encounters with Muslims could have aroused more interest in Christian views of God and an appreciation for the Christian love for God. They then may have given their ears more attentively to Christian witness. As we learn lessons from past history, I’d like to suggest some missional approaches as a conclusion.

First of all, we need to understand Islam and its religious worldview more comprehensively from a multi-disciplinary viewpoint. When Christians carry on their ministries among Muslims, they naturally engage with one another to debate on critical doctrinal issues. A hot dispute may well be expected particularly over Christology. But, despite this being the core

area of the gospel message, the debate usually creates a very tense situation hindering any further relationship. In such difficult circumstances, we need to consider making all efforts to not lose the “relationship” with Muslims in order to retain a social environment in which the gospel can continue to be heard. For an amicable environment to be created and maintained, we as the communicators of the gospel need to endeavor to better understand Muslim minds and hearts. It is also necessary for us to continuously labor hard to keep a meaningful friendship with them and to do good to them without becoming weary (cf. Gal. 6:9). When they truly recognize our pure conscience and genuine hospitality for them, one day they will come to ask us about the hope that we have (1 Pet. 3:15) despite doctrinal differences. Through such an ingenuous friendship we can also go beyond the doctrinal barrier to demonstrate the true love of Jesus for us (cf. John 15:13–15). It is when this kind of friendship can occur that we will be able to penetrate into their hearts, help them with their spiritual needs, and share the gospel with more clarity.

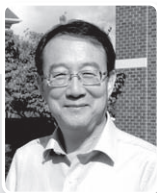
For us to carry out this missional task, I would like to encourage all of us to attempt prayer ministries. A few years ago I wrote an article together with my colleagues, John and Anna Travis. In the article we recommended approaching “popular/folk Muslims” with three kinds of prayer ministries (Kim and Travis 2010, 245–248). Certainly, this approach would be possible when there is a sufficient friendship established between our Muslim friends and us or when there is at least a peaceful rapport without any suspicion or enmity against each other. With this positive relational condition (and we must make every effort to maintain this atmosphere), we can pray the following prayers: 1) “breaking prayers” to break the power of evil spirits and

forces, 2) “healing prayers” to help Muslims to forgive their enemies, and 3) “deliverance prayers” to protect them from attacks by evil spirits (that is, *jinn* for them).¹⁰ In this short essay I cannot explain each prayer ministry in detail, but I wish to emphasize at least that many Muslims would appreciate our prayers for them when there is a trustful relationship. We can also befriend them more easily, especially when we discuss their supernaturalistic worldview. Our deeply compassionate prayers for their critical spiritual issues can become an effective channel of gospel communication. I am sure that Jesus Christ in us will become more manifest to Muslims when they trust that the helping hands are a result of a truthful heart and sincere love for them.

¹⁰ I have hardly witnessed any resistance from Muslims for whom I prayed. In my experiences, those Muslim friends for whom I prayed were very appreciative of my prayers. I can also reminisce about their appreciation of my respect and love for Jesus although their understanding of him was different from mine.

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A Neglected Alternative: Liberal Islam

Ah Young KIM

Introduction

On March 19, a large anti-Islamic rally, led by conservative Korean Christians, was held at Seoul Station Square. It was just one in a series of such rallies since Islam-related issues began to surface in Korea. However, this rally deserves particular attention because of statements that were made at this event. One of the speakers, a former missionary who served in a predominantly Muslim nation, said, “Muslims and I.S. (Islamic State) are the same and the Quran never teaches religious peace among people from different faiths.”

Ever since Islam first appeared in history, some Christian groups have held hostile attitudes towards Muslims. But due to the current climate created by I.S., this hostile attitude has been rapidly spreading among Christians at large, including Korean Christians. Now, Christians believe erroneous generalizations such as “Muslims and jihadists are the same” and “all Muslims are possible terrorists”.

In October 2014, more than 120 Muslim scholars headed by Tariq Ramadan, a leading Islamic scholar at Oxford, released a letter, in which they referred to I.S. as un-Islamic and argued that the group was incorrectly using the scripture (Quran) to support its cause. They also said that I.S.’ actions are causing a backlash among Muslims who see I.S. in contrast to

their religion and past caliphate famed for tolerance. “They are distorting the whole message. So we have to respond to this by saying...what you are doing, killing innocent people, implementing so-called ‘sharia’ or so-called ‘Islamic State,’ this is against everything that is coming from Islam,” said Tariq Ramadan. He also added, “It is not a caliphate. It is just people playing with politics referring to religious sources... They have nothing to do with [Islamic] principles, because our principles are clear: that the one who is leading should be chosen by people who are followers or citizens... The main problems of Muslims are coming from the Muslims; from Muslim-majority countries.”¹ In contrast to what the aforementioned former Christian missionary said during the rally in Seoul Station Square, many ordinary Muslims believe that I.S.’ acts are un-Islamic and criticize the violence and religious oppression in Muslim-majority countries.

Like Tariq Ramadan, there are Muslims who have developed a considerable body of reformative, modernized, and progressive thoughts on the re-interpretation and reform of Islamic understanding and practice. They are called liberal Muslims. The phrases liberal Muslims or liberal Islam can seem like oxymorons or contradictions, similar to the phrase “postmodern Islam.” This is because Islam has been presented as an obstinate religion, which has stubbornly maintained its traditions and principles that had been instituted fourteen centuries ago, despite the ever-changing world. Even some Muslims claim that Islam is timeless and unchanging and that Muslims should interpret and submit to the words of Allah as literally as possible.

¹ Tariq Ramadan, “ISIL’s acts are un-Islamic” in Talk to Al Jazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2014/10/tariq-ramadan-isil-not-islamic-2014101015462542487.html>, (accessed 17 Oct. 2014).

For ages, the non-Muslim world identified Islam as fanaticism, lacking in rationality. Even the title of French enlightenment philosopher Voltaire's play "Mahomet or Fanaticism," shows the perception once held by those of the "enlightened" West. The Iranian Islamic revolution in 1970s and the rise of the Islamic Revival Movement that swept from West Africa to Southeast Asia have reinforced this perception. Now it is reaching its peak with the rise of I.S. or Daesh.

Yet this view of Islam, a kind of Islamophobia, is inadequate in describing the whole Islamic world consisting of more than 1.6 billion adherents all over the world. From a historical view, Islam has developed various traditions and interpretations. Broadly speaking, three ideological groupings among Muslims in modern times include: Islamic revivalists (also known as "Islamists" or "Islamic Fundamentalists"), Islamic neo-traditionalists, and Islamic modernists (or Islamic Liberals).² Among them, the last tradition is found in parallel to Western liberalism.³ However, exponents of this last tradition have expressed resentment that their positions have been generally ignored by Western audiences.⁴ Among the concerns of this neglected tradition are opposition to theocracy, support for democracy, guarantees of the rights of women and non-Muslims in Islamic countries, defense of the freedom of thought, and belief in the potential for human progress. Claiming and advocating such perspectives can be dangerous in some countries, and proponents of this tradition have suffered for their beliefs.

² Jon Armajani, *Dynamic Islam: Liberal Muslim Perspectives in a Transnational Age*, (Oxford, UK: University Press of America, INC: 2004), 11.

³ Charles Kurzman, *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook* (NY: Oxford University Press: 1998), 4.

⁴ Yvonne Y. Haddad, *Islamists and the Challenge of Pluralism* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Occasional Paper, 1995), 4.

There have been various suggestions as to what to call this tradition, but the best may come from Indian jurist Asaf Ali Asghar Fyzee (1899–1981) who wrote, “We need not bother about nomenclature, but if some name has to be given to it, let us call it ‘Liberal Islam,’”⁵ a newer “protestant” Islam, which was born in conformity with the conditions of life in the contemporary world. Charles Kurzman warned that we should not analyze liberal Islam by comparing it with Western liberalism, judging it according to Western standards. Rather, he contended that the study of liberal Islam should focus on its Islamic dimension: “The similarity of liberal Islam and Western liberalism does not imply that liberal Muslims are stale and reassuring imitators of Western philosophy. Many of their writings are firmly rooted in Qur’anic exegesis, in the lives of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslims and in traditional Islamic forms of debate.”⁶

With this awareness and definition, I will briefly survey the history of the tradition of liberal Islam and its modern development in this article.

The Origin of Liberal Islam: Shah Wali-Allah (India, 1703–1762)

Liberal Islam emerged out of the revivalist movements of the eighteenth century which occurred during a tumultuous period in the Islamic world.⁷ Politically, the great Muslim dynasties of the Mediterranean basin

⁵ Asaf A. A. Fyzee, “The Reinterpretation of Islam,” in *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives 2nd edition*, eds. John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 156.

⁶ Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, 5.

⁷ For the debates of this period see Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll, eds. *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*, (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1987); John O. Voll,

(the Ottoman Empire), Southwest Asia (Safavid dynasty), and South Asia (Mughul dynasty) were in various stages of collapse.

In its first seven centuries, Islam burst out of the Arabian Desert and rapidly exploded in a wide belt across North Africa, into the Middle East and then across Asia until it reached the southern islands of the Philippines. This period saw the “Golden Age of Islam,” beginning with the Umayyad Dynasty based in Baghdad. During this period, Islamic dynasties were on a par with China in its developments of art, science, education, agriculture, political structure, and military strategy.

These seven centuries of growth and geographic expansion in the Islamic world were followed by seven centuries of decline, during which Western European nations gained control of most of the world in a period of exploration and colonialism, led by Portugal and Spain and later followed by the British, Dutch, and French. “The Christian nations” of Western Europe colonized most of these former Islamic strongholds.⁸

Islam, however, continued to win converts to the west, in West Africa, and the east, in Southeast Asia, and the community of Islamic scholars was expanding, building up international communities of religious scholars. These scholars blamed un-Islamic practices and traditions as the causes that brought about the extensive decline of the Islamic world. With a growing sense of inadequacy and weakness in the face of the expanding European imperial and industrial powers, they launched a series of revivalist movements that sought to rid Islam of un-Islamic practices not sanctioned by orthodox sources.

Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1982), Chapter 2; John Esposito ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

⁸ Robert Day McAmis, *Malay Muslims: The History and Challenge of Resurgent Islam in Southeast Asia*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 1–2.

Liberal Islam has its roots in this revivalist context in the person of Shah Wali-Allah (1702–1762), who is considered the godfather of “revivalist” Islam. Born in the last years of the Mughul dynasty, Wali-Allah inherited his father’s position as the head of a religious school. To complete his education, he traveled to Mecca, the holy site and the center of religious study in Arabia. On his return, he began to espouse a form of revivalism. Like other revivalists, Wali-Allah viewed the un-Islamic customary tradition as a major source of Islam’s problems and sought to revitalize the Islamic community through a combination of theological renovation and sociopolitical organization.⁹

Wali-Allah’s revivalism was a combination of “sufism” and sharia-oriented thought. Within this Sufi tone, Wali-Allah succeeded in being critical of the Classical structure of sharia. He was able to reject *taqlid*, the uncritical adherence to the opinions of the *ulama* of the Classical schools of law, and to revive interest in the use of personal effort in deciding a point of law, *ijtihad*. He emphasized the spirit of law and its applicability in all times and places, rather than the form of law, which is shaped and formulated in accordance with conditions of time and place.¹⁰

In this way, Wali-Allah also developed a considerably more humanistic response to customary tradition than other revivalists. He was, for example, relatively tolerant of certain practices that other revivalists considered beyond the pale, arguing that Islamic law, while divinely inspired, must be adapted for the needs of different peoples and eras. He said, “It is not considered desirable to replace it by a different [Islamic law] which is absolute-

⁹ Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, 7

¹⁰ Nasr Abu Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought: A Critical Historical Analysis*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 16–17.

ly unknown to [the local people]... The basic purpose is that these reforms should be introduced in such a way that [local people's] faculty of reasoning is satisfied and does not repel them."¹¹ The importance of human reasoning was a recurrent emphasis in Wali-Allah's work and a major precedent for later liberal Muslim thinkers. As a jurist Sufi, Shah Wali-Allah considered theology to be the imposition of rational contemplation on matters that are either clearly indicated in the Quran and Hadith or matters unmentioned.

Yet, Wali-Allah was in many ways a revivalist and not a reformer. Despite his comments about the age of reason, Wali-Allah did not place any great stock in "modern" forms of knowledge and deemed traditional Islamic scholarship to be sufficient to meet the demands of the contemporary world.

The Development of Liberal Islam in Modern Times

The nineteenth century, especially the later years, witnessed fundamental changes in Islamic thought, and these changes touched almost all aspects of the Islamic intellectual debate including issues of identity, women, the state, tradition and renewal, text and reason, and Islam and the West.

Albert Hourani, in his classical work *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798–1938*, projected nineteenth-century liberal thoughts in relation to the overwhelming sense of crisis that swept the Muslim states and their elite circles in the face of the rise and military advances of the West.¹² Confronted with a number of challenges, nineteenth-century Islamic communi-

¹¹ Mi'raj Muhammad, "Shah Wali-Allah's Concept of the Shari'ah," in *Islamic Perspectives: Studies in Honour of Mawlana Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudy*, ed. Khurshid Ahmad and Zafar Ishaq Ansari, (Leicester, England: The Islamic Foundation, 1979), 346.

¹² Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798–1939*. Revised edition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

ties engaged in a wide range of activities that were aimed at both creative preservation and active adaptation.¹³

First, on the intellectual level, liberals began to separate *ijtihad* from *taqlid*, reason from authority. Most of the major figures of nineteenth-century liberal Islam echoed these thoughts. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), an Iranian scholar who inspired and instigated the need for reformation across the Muslim world by combining active opposition with imperial power, on the political and intellectual contributions in India, Iran, Egypt, and Turkey¹⁴ said, “in their beliefs [the members of each community] must shun submission to conjectures and not be content with mere *taqlid* of their ancestors. For if man believes in things without proof or reason, makes a practice of following unproven opinions, and is satisfied to imitate and follow his ancestors, his mind inevitably desists from intellectual movement, and little by little stupidity and imbecility overcome him—until his mind becomes completely idle and he becomes unable to perceive his own good and evil; and adversity and misfortune overtake him from all sides.”¹⁵

Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–1898) was the first Indian modernist to introduce new themes in his interpretation. As an apologist, he tried to justify the religious dogmas presented in the Quran in light of modern scientific discoveries. He believed that a considerable part of the classical commentaries was “worthless and full of weak and fabricated [Prophetic] tradition” or comprised of baseless stories borrowed from Judaism. In his view, it was imperative to free the field of Quranic exegesis from tradition, substituting

¹³ John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, 2nd edition, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 149.

¹⁴ Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought*, 25.

¹⁵ Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din “al-Afghani”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 171.

instead the principles of “reason” and “nature.” He proposed that the Quran stand on its own, requiring only application of a dedicated and enlightened mind for its understanding. The principles of interpretation should not depend on hadith because this would jeopardize the eternal and universal quality of the Quran. For him, the great miracle of the Quran is its universality, which allows every generation to find in it the meaning relevant to the generation’s situation, despite the constant increase in human knowledge. Hadith based interpretation tends to limit the meaning of the Quran to a particular historical situation, thus obscuring its universality.¹⁶

Like Ahmad Khan, the Egyptian Muhammad “Abduh” (1849–1905) seems to have taken a critical attitude towards the material handed down in the canonized collections of the Sunna. He refuted traditions that contradicted either the explicit meaning of certain Quranic passages or contradicted both reason and common sense. This is quite apparent from his rejection of traditions related either to magic or satanic elements, and those concerning angels descending to fight the enemy alongside Muslim warriors.¹⁷ He emphasized, “First, to liberate thought from the shackles of taqlid...to return, in the acquisition of religious knowledge, to its first sources, and to weigh them in the scales of human reason, which God has created in order to prevent excess or adulteration in religion... and to prove that, seen in this light, religion must be accounted a friend to science, pushing man to investigate the secrets of existence...”¹⁸

¹⁶ Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 44

¹⁷ Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought*, 29.

¹⁸ Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 140–141, quoted in Kurzman, (1998), 8.

Taqlid, which means blind submission to tradition and authority, became anathema to liberals of the early twentieth century as it symbolized the popular influence of the liberals' traditionalist opponents. *Ijtihad*, by contrast, allowed Islam to be interpreted in accordance with the perceived needs of the modern age. Liberal Muslims sought to impose themselves as tutelary authorities of *ijtihad*, and their primary means of activism was in the field of educational reform. Though many of them were the product of traditional religious education, they deemed these institutions insufficient to meet the needs of the day and sought to reform them or to create new institutions combining traditional and modern approaches. For example, the abovementioned Sayyid Ahmad Khan founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, India, and Muhammad 'Abduh attempted to reform the ancient al-Azhar University in Cairo.

The distinguishing feature of these new reforms was their introduction of Western subjects into the traditional curriculum, a practice that reflected the liberals' second intellectual contribution, respect for "modernity." While refocusing on the seventh century sources of Islamic faith to cure the ills of the Muslim world, liberals sought to combine this refocus with an additional focus on Western disciplines such as engineering, military science, medicine, natural sciences, comparative legal studies, social sciences, and modern languages. For this reason, liberal Islam of this period came to be known by the rubric of "Islamic modernism."¹⁹

The second institutional base for liberal Islam in this period was journalism. As literacy increased through education, Islamic liberals made active use of this new medium to communicate with their followers. Indeed,

¹⁹ Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, 8.

the names of many leading liberals of the era are associated with various periodicals, but some of these periodicals were only published and not distributed due to political pressure in some Islamic countries. Nevertheless, these journals had a tremendous reach and influence among educated Muslims. For example, Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq's *al-Jawa'ib* (*Rumors*), published in Constantinople, was read "in all countries of the Arabic speech" in the 1870s; Rashid Rida's *al-Manar* (*The Lighthouse*) was to be the organ of reform according to the ideas of Muhammad Abdu. *Al-manar* was widely read in the Islamic world and was a major factor in shaping Muslim thought from North Africa to Southeast Asia."²⁰

Liberal Islam reached its political apogee in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In colonized regions, Muslim communities came to be represented by liberal organizations such as Ittifaq al-Muslimin (Russia), Muhammadiyah (Dutch Indonesia), and the Aligarh establishment (British India). In still-independent lands, liberals gained state power through constitutional revolutions in Iran (1906) and the Ottoman Empire (1908).²¹

The Development of Liberal Islam since 1970s

Since the 1970s, liberal Islam, which had been stagnant due to the accusation of secularism and undermining of the Islam faith, has enjoyed a renewed popularity. The timing is perhaps unexpected, since this period is also when Islamic revivalism has gained adherents. These two traditions have clashed on numerous occasions, usually in intellectual debate but sometimes violently.

²⁰ Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 223; Voll, *Islam*, 163

²¹ Kurzman, *Liberal Islam*, 10.

Liberals of diverse ideologies are disproportionately the victims of such violence. Mahmoud Mohammed Taha, who opposed the revivalist Sudanese government's interpretation of Sharia law based on his famous argument in the "Second Message of Islam," was executed for alleged apostasy in 1985. Taha's own interpretation was that the Meccan message, which is basically spiritualistic, accommodating justice, freedom, and equality, was replaced by the Medinan message emphasizing law, order, and obedience. This was done because the Arabs were unable to appreciate the Meccan message in the context of seventh-century Arabia. According to Taha, however, it is both possible and imperative to return to the Meccan message and abrogate the Medinan message that was designed to fit in with the social and cultural confines experienced by the Arabs in the seventh century.²² Due to his legal interpretation, Taha was executed after having been condemned as an apostate and heretic by the legal system of the Numari regime.

On a less violent scale, a number of authors were subjected to confrontations that go beyond intellectual debate. Muhammad Khalaf-Allah, an Egyptian writer, was urged not only to burn all the copies of his work but also to reaffirm his faith in Islam and renew his marriage vows; Syrian writer Muhammad Shahrour's works were banned in several Middle Eastern countries; Abdul-Karim Soroush from Iran was barred from speaking publicly in his own country and publicly threatened with assassination. With the rise of Islamic revivalism, some liberal Muslims are now growing pessimistic and believe "the time for Muslim liberalism has certainly passed."²³

²² Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought*, 87.

²³ Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*, (London: Verso, 1993), 33.

At the same time, on the intellectual level, some liberal Islamic thinkers are building a more self-confident liberalism. The current generation is far more familiar with Western society and education compared to previous generations. They have even held faculty positions at prestigious Western universities, as in the cases of Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim, Mohammed Arkoun, and Tariq Ramadan.

Algerian-born Arkoun was a professor emeritus at the Sorbonne, Paris, and the director of *Arabica: Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies*. He was very active in applying a modern interdisciplinary approach to the critical study of Islamic culture, tradition, and scriptures. His chief concern was the deconstruction of the “unthought” and the “unthinkable” in classical and modern Islamic thought, leading to an unprecedented shift from “rethinking tradition” or even “rethinking the Quran” to “rethinking Islam.”²⁴

Originally from Sudan, Abdullahi An-Naim is a human rights activist and professor of law at Emory University. He propagates the reconstruction of sharia to comply with international law and human rights. An-Naim was a student of Mahmud Muhammad Taha. When Taha was executed, An-Naim went into exile, and from there he continued with his teacher’s basic arguments on the “Second Message of Islam.” An-Naim’s aim is to reconstruct sharia so that it complies with civil liberties, human rights, and international law. Although these concepts are the product of modernity, he does not appear to accept their secular foundations. By keeping the domain of Islamic reformation separate from the domain of modernity, he tries to Islamize these concepts by presenting a fresh rereading and new interpretation of its sources in order to reconstruct Sharia.²⁵

²⁴ Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic Thought*, 83–86

²⁵Tariq Ramadan, who was mentioned in the introduction of the article, is the only one to propose the concept of European Islam, or European Muslim citizenship. Ramadan's grandfather, Hasan al-Banna, founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928. Ramadan identifies himself as a European who does not deny his Muslim roots but wants to develop an identity that combines Islam with European-ness. With some 15 million Muslims in Europe, he feels it is time to abandon the dichotomy in Muslim thought that defines Islam as in opposition to the West. According to him, this is possible if one separates Islamic principles from their culture of origin and anchors them in the cultural reality of Western Europe.

Conclusion

Muslims who are living in North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, North America, Europe, and even in Korea are puzzled as they face challenges that come with modernity and post-modernity.

A host of questions, many of them urgently concerning the immediate future, are thus thrown up for consideration: Is the postmodern age intrinsically hostile to Islam? Why do media commentators, both academics and journalists, consistently and unanimously disparage Islam? Is the Muslim response, rejecting the Western media as biased, an effective one? If so, how long can they isolate themselves from global civilization? Will the lampooning and vilification divert Muslims from the values of a religion that advocates compassion and balance? And where are these virtues, so emphasized in the Quran, to be located in the present Islamic turbulence?

²⁵ Ibid., 87.

What intellectual and cultural changes are taking place among Muslims? Is the mosque in danger of being replaced by the mall as the focus of Muslim social and community activity? How can Muslims retain their central Islamic features, family life, care for children, respect for elders, and the concept of modesty in the face of contrary philosophies of the postmodernist age? And how can Muslims successfully convey the relevance of their beliefs and customs, their “message,” to the world community of which they are part?²⁶

These questions are similar to those asked by members of different faiths. They also struggle to advocate their religious virtues and uniqueness while trying to adjust to the rapidly changing world. For some Muslims, it means preserving religious tradition through devotion to customary or folk Islam. For other Muslims, it is going back to the first generation of Muslims who opened the Islamic era with Prophet Muhammad. I.S. is one of the extreme cases of this kind of religious tradition.

Many other Muslims hold to the modernist or liberal perspective, that even though Islam is the religion for all generations, it needs to be interpreted and adjusted according to each generation. In this way, liberal Muslims are trying to build up a progressive theory and religious system for religious freedom against religious intolerance among the Muslims.

Both the so-called “soft” Islam, which Tariq Ramadan and his colleagues follow, and “hard” Islam, which brutal I.S. jihadists follow, belong to the same Islamic tradition. As with many other world religions, Islam also has a wide spectrum of religious diversity. Yet most Christian perspectives

²⁶ Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise*, (London: Routledge, 1992), 3–5.

towards Muslims still remain in the fourteenth-century paradigm. Theories like the clash of civilizations and the hostile attitude of Islamophobia have incited and intensified this negative perspective of Muslims and the religion of Islam.

The ways Christians and Muslims are viewed by many correspond neither with factual reality nor with the way in which they view themselves. In part, such views are normative, in the sense that they state how these people should behave and think in a given context according to certain religious norms or moral criteria. In part, however, the views which Christians and Muslims hold of themselves and of each other have a much longer history. From the beginning of Islam, Muslims defined what Christians were, and in the same way Christians defined what Muslims were.

Throughout history, normative views about the others and their identity developed and strengthened the normative views that Christians and Muslims had of themselves. The history of Muslim-Christian relations contains the construction of identity, not only one's own but also the others. These identities have been handed down through tradition and have been accepted to the present day.²⁷

As the circumstances surrounding Christian mission are rapidly changing, the first step in approaching Muslims, who as a group remain mostly resistant toward the gospel, should be having an accurate understanding and an un-biased view about the religion of Islam, its culture, its wide spectrum of Muslim identities, and the various contexts in which Muslims live.

²⁷ Jacques Waardenburg, "Muslims and Christians: Changing Identities," in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Basingstoke, Hants UK: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2000), 158.

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A Reflection on Insider Movements in Islamic Communities

John KIM

1. INTRODUCTION

“Insider Movements” has become a main theme often referred in many missiological journals and conferences since John Travis introduced the “C-1 to C-6 Spectrum.”¹ This is a typological description of the ecclesia or different types of “Christ-Centered-Communities” existing in Islam societies, categorized by the Islamic and non-Islamic cultural elements in the worship service such as language, traditional non-Islamic culture (clothing, music, etc.), Islamic culture, and religious identities.

Islam is the main subject of this issue of *KMQ*. Thus, this small article attempts to deal with insider movements among Islam communities. Insider movements, however, do not take place only in Islamic society. I once wrote about the insider movements that we could observe in the early Korean church history.² Here, I will present a general overview of insider movements and the movements specific to Islam communities. This paper will also discuss various issues related to the insider movements in Islam communities and propose a direction for future missions.

¹ John Travis, “The C1 to C6 Spectrum,” *EMQ*, October 1998, 407-408.

² The author made a presentation about this subject at NCOWE V conference in 2010. (See KWMA proceedings.)

I have been part of insider movements and discipleship training for insiders while working in Southeast Asian Muslim communities for the last 20 years. Before delving into the main theme, I would like to make clear that insider movements are neither an artificial nor a manipulative mission strategy designed by expatriate missionaries who pretend to be Muslims. This kind of misunderstanding of insider movements seems to come mainly from traditional workers who maintain religious structuralism but lack incarnational ministry experiences. Furthermore, the movement is not an ill-advised mission strategy that may result in the formation of a secret believer's group in syncretism due to compromise of their faith.

Most of the critics of insider movements rarely evaluate it as a contemporary missiological phenomenon that requires Biblical understanding but as a movement that requires theological judgment mostly depending on indirect sources. However, a doctoral thesis at Biola University presents a surprising result.³ The research was conducted through firsthand interviews using emic methods with 26 insiders who were involved in on-field insider movements. The research results indicate that the theological understanding and faith in Jesus is astonishingly close to that of conservative evangelicals. I hope that many more proper evaluations using firsthand sources will be made, even by Korean mission societies. *Understanding Insider*

³ Anthropologists realized that communication was distorted whenever they tried to apply the so-called "objective tool of evaluation" they brought from outside in an attempt to understand the indigenous people's worldview without using the symbols and signs that the local people used. Therefore they try to use the local indigenous people's (insider's) terms and views in their efforts to facilitate meaningful communication and to translate the Bible. The local people's view is called "emic" and the outsider's "etic." The following dissertation was based on a study conducted from an emic view by interviewing many leaders in insider movements. This will be helpful in understanding insider movements: Jan Hendrick Frenger, "Muslim Insider Christ Followers: A Grounded Theory," dissertation, Biola University, May 2014.

Movements, a book published by William Carey Library would certainly be helpful in understanding insider movements.⁴ About 50 authors took part in giving valuable information to the book, which deals with a lot of issues relating to the insider movements.

2. INSIDER MOVEMENTS

A definition of insider movements is found in Wikipedia.⁵ It provides a general, and rather credible definition, as many practitioners with long-term field experiences have tried to figure out the underlying issues of insider movements and drew out a definition as theoreticians in a cooperative way. Insider movements are described as follows:⁶

In Christian missiology, an insider movement is a group or network of people from a non-Christian religion who consider themselves followers of Jesus while remaining relationally, culturally, and socially a part of the religious community of their birth. Though members of insider movements do not typically join Christian churches in their area or region, they may see themselves as part of the wider Body of Christ. It has been observed that as members of these groups follow Jesus and the Bible, they personally reject, reinterpret, or modify the non-biblical beliefs found in their religious communities. This process makes them different in some ways from their co-religionists, yet when groups can faithfully follow Jesus without formally disassociating themselves from their religious communities, insider move-

⁴ Harley Talman and John Travis, "Understanding Insider Movements," William Carey Library Publishers, 2015.

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insider_movement

⁶ You may refer to the Wikipedia definition. (Korean translation: KJFM, May-June, 2012.)

ments can occur. Such movements have been observed among a number of religious groups, most notably among Jews, Muslims, and Hindus.

In *Jesus Coming into Muslim Communities*, I once introduced insiders as follows:⁷

An insider is one who keeps remaining within the context where he or she is called by God.⁸ In another word, the nature of calling by God to anyone in a given situational context is providential. This providential calling includes all the aspects of one's life such as family, profession, personal interests, societal needs, communal functions of a community, etc. For an example, Jesus was born as a Jew in Jewish context just like us as human being and kept remaining within the Jewish socio-religious context to live together with other Jews in it and thus he was a thorough Jewish insider indeed (John Kim 2008, 400).

As indicated above, a natural man is born and brought up in a providentially given socio-religious and cultural context where he or she can be given God's gracious calling for a new life in Jesus. Such a person is called an insider as he decides to remain within the context in which he is called by God, and he can be a witness to the people who live in the same context. It is interesting to study how those insiders coming to Jesus from non-Christian socio-religious context can be connected with the existing Christian faith communities, as well as other issues, such as discipleship training for the insiders and the kind of spiritual growth they must undergo. However, those issues only begin to surface when an insider movement takes place.

⁷ John Kim, "Jesus coming into Muslim communities. (INSIDERS Book Publisher: 2008. Revised, 2015), 400.

⁸ 1 Cor. 7:17-24

In a sense, Donald McGavran's "People Movements to Christ" can now be understood as an insider movement undertaken by frontier mission practitioners. But these movements took place in such a way that the people converted religion to Christianity. Insider movements have been discussed by many scholars. Here are two representative examples given by Rebecca Lewis and Kevin Higgins:⁹

An insider movement is any movement to faith in Christ where a) the gospel flows through pre-existing communities and social networks and where b) believing families, as valid expressions of the Body of Christ, remain within their socio-religious communities, retaining their identity as members of that community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible (Lewis 2007, 75).

A growing number of families, individuals, clans, and/or friendship-webs becoming faithful disciples of Jesus within the culture of their people group, including their religious culture. This faithful discipleship will express itself in culturally appropriate communities of believers who will also continue to live within as much of their culture, including the religious life of the culture, as is biblically faithful. The Holy Spirit, through the Word and through His people will also begin to transform His people and their culture, religious life and worldview (Higgins 2004, 155).

In fact, insider movements were observed as social phenomena especially in Muslim communities. Frontier mission practitioners working in contextualized situations could be partly involved in the movements as they

⁹ *KJFM*, May-June 2012.

practiced incarnational ministry. The phenomenon of a group of Muslims coming to Jesus collectively from within their socio-religious communities, taking their own initiative to follow Jesus, is called an insider movement. The above definitions were given after a long debate among many missiologists after John Travis introduced the C1-C6 Spectrum. Islam is not the only socio-religious context in which this kind of group conversion takes place. Now similar movements can be observed in other socio-religious contexts such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Shinto, and Judaism.

In this paper, Islamic insider movements refer to the people who are called Muslims from birth¹⁰ who come to Jesus while maintaining their own socio-religious identities and becoming witnesses to their families, neighbors, and other socio-religious surroundings so that the Gospel continues to spread within and outside of the contexts where the movements begin.

3. ISSUES UNDER DEBATE

3.1. Syncretism

Syncretism seems to be a common issue addressed by most critics of insider movements. As a matter of fact, contextualization and syncretism are two sides of the same insider movement coin.

¹⁰ In most Muslim countries or Muslim-dominating communities, being a Muslim is not a personal choice or an option but a given identity and belief that a person gains from one's birth. In Korea, no religious identity is given to any person at birth, and acquiring a religious identity is one's decision. Religious identity doesn't need to be registered officially. However, in the Islamic context, all of the people living in Islamic communities are called Muslims. Being Muslim is a socio-religious identity. Therefore, even though Muslim followers of Jesus maintain the same socio-religious identity as other Muslims, they acquire a different internal identity—they have been transformed in their hearts by Jesus. In this sense, they are still Muslims but are distinct from typical Muslims.

The essential part of an insider movement is whether insiders coming to Jesus submit completely to the authority of the Word of God. They need to be encouraged to take their own initiatives in interpreting the Word of God to resolve any issues they have in their contexts. The Holy Spirit will guide them in this process. If they don't have such initiatives, their faith can become syncretic. This issue has been often discussed, in many articles. (For an example, refer to Eo-Won Kim 2014, 1259).¹¹

However, insiders' initiatives have rarely been realized through the interpretation of the Word of God from the insider's perspective for the following reasons.

Contextualization is not one-for-all or a final decision that is made when a culture is in communication with the Word of God. Rather, it is a time-dependent process. A good contextualization results in sound faith in Jesus and an appropriate communication of the correct biblical meaning in a specific culture. However, in dealing with cultural relevance, tension always arises when an effort is made to avoid any distortion of the original meaning of the Gospel, resulting in syncretism. Even without the intention to create syncretism, syncretism begins to cast its shadow when a form and its meaning are regarded as an inseparable entity. Paul Hiebert mentioned,¹² in the era of positivism, many missionaries believed that form and meaning were essentially one. And they believed that the Scripture had to be trans-

¹¹ Refer to the following articles on this subject: Eo-Won Kim, "Covenant and Church" (The Kingdom Books Pub.), 2014; John Kim (김요한), "Evangelical Missiology of Contextualization and Missional Tasks in the Global Era (복음주의 상황화 선교신학과 글로벌 시대의 선교적 과제)," p. 1259. For further information, refer to the author's book: *Jesus Coming into Muslim Communities* (INSIDERS, 2015).

¹² Paul G. Hiebert, "Form and Meaning in the Contextualization of the Gospel," in *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Dallas: Word, 1989), 102-103.

lated literally and the gospel expressed in the exact words and characters or the meanings would be lost. There was a widespread fear that the use of native characters and forms would introduce pagan meanings, leading to syncretism (Hiebert 1989, 102). To avoid syncretism, they tried to sustain the use of the forms that they believed to have correct Christian meanings. However ironically, such effort resulted in syncretism and dualism. The recipients of the gospel acted or pretended as if they understood the meanings of the forms that foreign missionaries brought to them. However, due to the foreignness of the forms, their intended meanings were not communicated to the recipients, who ended up following and imitating the foreigners without understanding or misunderstanding the meanings. In fact, syncretism has been identified as an issue by two thirds of Western missionaries and traditional churches. Even though it has not been seriously examined in the Western church communities, a lot of syncretistic elements can be found in different mission fields, including chronic symptoms of materialism and managing tendency of a faith community among others, rather than pastoral caring, new age movement, extreme individualism, and homosexuality. According to Charles Kraft, the belief that most American Christians have, considering their lives as biblical, has syncretistic nature (Winter 1999, 390).

We need to understand that the key point of contextualization is self-theologizing, which Hiebert emphasized. Missiologically speaking, we need an emic attitude in handling the hermeneutics from an insider's perspective rather than an etic judgment that tends to focus on syncretism.

3.2. Identity

Identity is an issue that appears in John Travis' C1–C6 Spectrum— in C-3, C-4, and C-5. While the believers in C-1 through C-3 communities

call themselves as Christians, in C-4 they are called “the followers of Jesus” or “the followers of the Way” and in C-5 “Muslim believers in Jesus” or “Muslim followers of Jesus.” Phil Parshall argued that the C-5 identity is a syncretism that should be avoided (404–410).¹³ The identity the insiders wish to have is one issue, while the names expatriate workers call them by is another. Previously, I dealt with the identity issue as follows:

Insiders are those who remain within their socio-religious context after they are called by God. As they stay within the context where they’ve been called by God, physical separation doesn’t take place. Instead, they experience spiritual transformation into a totally new world, where they gain a new identity as members of the kingdom of God—the kingdom identity. This means that they gain a new spiritual identity but do not need to be separated from their old identity related to their own ethnicity and socio-religious cultural background (John Kim 2008, 408).

Rick Brown, who has been working in the area of Bible translation, once defined “Biblical Muslims” as those who remain within their socio-religious and cultural backgrounds but live with genuine faith in Jesus.¹⁴ He explains Muslims as follows:

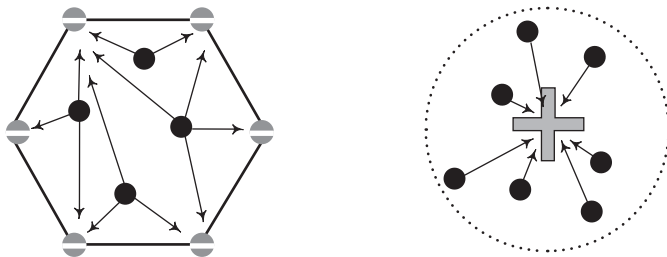
From sociological perspective, Muslims are people who have a social identity as members of a traditionally Muslim community. They may be religiously observant or secularly nominal, but they are in the same

¹³ Phil Parshall, “Danger! New Direction in Contextualization,” *EMQ*, Oct. 1999, 404–410.

¹⁴ Rick Brown, “Biblical Muslims,” *IJFM*, 24:2 Summer 2007, 65 (*KJFM*, vol. 12, Sep–Oct, 2007, 34).

socioreligious group, that of Muslims. For many Muslims, being a Muslim is an inseparable part of their self-identity, their background, their family, their community, and their cultural heritage, regardless of what they actually believe about God. It is this everyday sociological sense of the term “Muslim” that is used in what follows (Brown 34).

This alludes to the fact that they can earn the new kingdom identity through internal conversion by faith in Jesus without denying their naturally given identities as Muslims since their birth. Paul Hiebert once introduced a “centered-set,” which is differentiated from traditional socio-religiously “bounded-set” in order to describe a group of people who have such identity (Hiebert). In a bounded-set, anyone who is within the boundary is considered as a member regardless of one’s orientation. On the other hand, being a member of the centered-set group is a matter of orientation. Paul Hiebert described the members of the kingdom of God as the people who have oriented their lives toward Jesus (Jesus-centered). In this way, the centered-set can better describe the nature of the kingdom of God.



Bounded set (left) and Centered set (right).

In regard to this, Rick Brown makes the following assertion:

Some missionaries see their task as assisting the expansion and strength of their boundary-defined socio-religious group while others see their task as assisting the growth of God's Christ-centered kingdom. While both groups can speak in support of contextualization, they are contextualizing different things. One group is seeking to contextualize their brand of Christian religion, while the other is seeking to contextualize collective discipleship to Christ. So each sees the other as deficient and sometimes as threatening. Personally, I think there is a place for both in God's plan, but the bounded-set approach often leads to conflict and re-crimination between socio-religious groups and to suffering and shame within families (Brown 2007).

3.3. Difference Between Insider Movements and Church-Planting Movements

Many critics of insider movements often mention the issue of church planting. For those who focus on church planting, John Travis' C1-C6 Spectrum is used to typologically describe the Christ-centered communities in Muslim contexts in different levels of contextualization for missionaries to adopt and aim for when establishing churches. However, this kind of application comes from a misunderstanding about the C1-C6 Spectrum, which is different from what John Travis originally introduced. Below is a list of certain differences (Winter 2009, 676):

	Community		Identity	
	Natural communities follow Christ together	Followers of Christ become part of new structure or church	Spiritual identity as Christ followers	Socio-religious identity changed to become "Christian"
People movements	Yes	Usually	Yes	Usually
Church Planting movements	Usually	Yes	Yes	Usually
Insider movements	Yes	Rarely	Yes	Rarely

In the table above, the comparison was made among three kingdom movements. For most cases in the church planting approach, expatriate missionaries practice church planting with a preliminary understanding of the structure of a church. However, in an insider movement, pre-existing ethnic and socio-religious fabric-like networks can become Jesus-oriented faith communities, as described by Rebecca Lewis (Winter 2009, 673). Among many other forms of such networks, a family or household can be the smallest unit of the faith community. Working among Muslims in SEA for about 20 years, I have observed collective conversion including of families and village scale communities.¹⁵ While an accurate understanding of insider movements is one task, discipleship and leadership training in insider movements is another. The latter will be explored in the following section.

¹⁵ I introduced my cases in the following books: "Jesus coming into Muslim Communities," (INSIDERS 2015); David Greenlee, "From the Straight Path to the Narrow Way," (Authentic: 2006); "Longing for Community," (William Carey 2013).

4. THE PROSPECTS OF INSIDER MOVEMENTS

As mentioned earlier, insider movements do not take place only within Islamic contexts. There are many issues that we need to consider in terms of insider movements, such as the issue of discipleship, the role of expatriate workers, and the relationship between the insiders and the existing bodies of Christianity. These issues need to be examined carefully from various perspectives for the Christian church to fulfill its remaining tasks in frontier mission. Although there are a number of issues to be examined, due to the limited amount of space, this paper will present a brief review of the above-mentioned three issues.

4.1. Discipleship of Insiders

Insiders remain within their socio-religious context, in which they spend their daily lives. As a result, it is important that they resolve the problems they face in their situations with the help of the Word of God. This is actually an issue of contextualization in the sense that it must be a time-dependent process of communication between their cultures and the Word of God. This would result in transformational reorientation so that the community they belong to would become a Christ-centered community that is appropriate for the culture and the Word of God (Kraft).¹⁶ Tensions cannot be avoided between a culture and the Word of God during the process of contextualization. An improper contextualization can lead to syncretism. Syncretism and contextualization are like the two sides of the same coin.¹⁷

¹⁶ Charles Kraft, *Appropriate Christianity* (jeokhaphan gidokgyo), trans. John Kim et. al., (Seoul: Saengmyeong-eui malsseumsa, 2007).

¹⁷ Eo-Won Kim, "Covenant and Church," (Seoul: Kingdom Books Publishing, 2014), 1259.

The key point in training the insiders as disciples is the emphasis on following the Great Commission that Jesus asked of His disciples. It should not be pedagogical teaching¹⁸ of Christian doctrines. In this sense, discipleship training should be a part of mission planting from the beginning.¹⁹ This means that a hermeneutical community needs to be formed in line with what Paul Hiebert introduced as self-theologizing. In this mission planting, the role of expatriate workers is also important.

4.2. The Role of Expatriate Workers

As mentioned earlier, the discussion on insider movements often includes questions regarding the role of expatriate workers. Recently, John Travis explained the role of an expatriate worker by using the term “alongsiders” (37)²⁰ defined as follows:

“*Alongsiders*” refers to outsiders (those of other cultures or areas) whom God has prepared to walk alongside insiders on their journey of faith in Jesus. Alongsiders we know spend many hundreds of hours with those yet outside God’s kingdom, learning language and culture and developing a deep love for a people not their own. ... Alongsid-

¹⁸ I have dealt with this at a forum called ATEA. John Kim, “Theological Education Model required in Mission Field (in Korean),” ed. Oan-ik Jang, (Seoul: Cheomtap Publishing, 2013), 86.

¹⁹ Planting a church is often regarded as the flower of mission. And thus the role of a missionary seems to be found in the effort of planting a church and pastoring the members. However, the planting is done in ethnocentric view. Genuine discipleship can be proven in fulfilling the Great Commission. In frontier mission, an expatriate work’s role is the Gospel sower rather than a church planter. What needs to be planted is a “missional” structure for cooperation in fulfilling the remaining task in frontier mission.

²⁰ John Travis, “*Seven Roles of Alongsiders in Insider Movements: Recent Examples and Biblical Reflections*,” *AFMI/ASFM Bulletin*, No.11, (2013): 37.

ers may be young or old, from various educational and cultural backgrounds. Yet two traits seem common to them all. The first is having a servant's heart. They realize it is not "about them" or building up "their ministry." The second trait, related to the first, is a willingness to take whatever role God assigns them to assist in seeing the good news embraced and moving through Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or other community and family networks (Travis).

He describes the alongsiders by using different names according to the type of role as follows: intercessors, learners, friends, workers of miracles, proclaimers, equippers, and interfacers.²¹

4.3. The Relationship Between the Insiders and Existing Bodies of Christianity

The insiders do not refer to themselves as Christians. Therefore, it is worth considering the issue of relationship between insiders and traditional Christians. It may be inappropriate to judge whether they belong to Christianity or not, as their membership cannot be given in a religiously bound set of structure. They can be regarded as those who still live in the world (within their own context) but do not necessarily belong to the world. They are sent into the world as followers of Jesus as described in John 17. Thus they are found on common ground with Christians as both groups were sent by Jesus into the world. This reminds us of the issue of identity. We may be able to live in this world while holding different identities in various socio-

²¹ For more detail, refer to the following: John Travis, "Seven Roles of Alongsiders in Insider Movements: Recent Examples and Biblical Reflections," *AFMI/ASFM Bulletin* No.11, (2013): 37.

religious structures and at the same time have kingdom citizenship. The Holy Spirit can discern who belongs to the kingdom. The historical event in Acts 15 gives us a great instruction. Fulfilling the Great Commission with a sense of urgency must be an essential part of the lives of the people of God's kingdom. As long as they recognize themselves as eleventh-hour workers for the development of the kingdom, both insiders and Christians can partake in missions as partners (Kim, 2008).

For many years in the U.S., great endeavors have been made among practitioners, theologians, and even insiders to narrow the gap in understanding the act of God for spreading His kingdom.²² Although a lot has been achieved on both sides, it seems that we still need more time to arrive at a common understanding.

5. CONCLUSION

This short article did not explore something new. Rather, it was a personal review of insider movements. This paper was intended to help those who misunderstood insider movements due to simply wrong information or biased interpretation. I hope that the readers can now understand the ways in which works in this post-modern mission age save as many of His people as possible.

Even though the paper dealt with some issues related to insider movements, there are many other issues that still require our attention. Certain terms I have used in this paper might sound unfamiliar to some readers.

²² This is an example of BtD (Bridging the Divide) consultation.

Those who are not yet familiar with the C1-C6 Spectrum are encouraged to read the articles written by John Travis in the references.

The issues I've mentioned in this paper are still in the process of development and understanding. Therefore, it may be very difficult to clarify everything at this time. We are living in a rapidly changing world, and a paradigm shift may be needed to understand what God is doing in this last mission age. Certain terms we use with good intent might be changing to convey erroneous meanings without our knowledge. That is the nature of the post-modern age, and we need to be sensitive and considerate in using the correct terms. We are living in the last mission age with God performing His marvelous work. I hope and pray that many more Korean field practitioners and theoreticians would be involved in such discussions of frontier mission issues.

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A Concern about the Recent Trends in Contextualization Discussions: A Lack or Absence of a Biblical-Theological Emphasis

Wonjoo HWANG

Since missions to Muslim nations began, many missionaries and missiologists have searched for more effective approaches to lead Muslims to Christ. While myriad types of ministry to Muslims have been developed over time, the search for newer approaches is ongoing. This writer has identified five discernable approaches in his study on the historical development of Muslim evangelism: a confrontational approach, a traditional-theological approach, a dialogical approach, a contextual approach, and finally a radically contextualized approach.¹ At a glance, it seems apparent that contextualization has increasingly occupied the central place in ministry approaches to Muslims. In recent years, for example, the most sharply debated issue involves a radical form of contextualization models such as the “Insider Movement” and Muslim Idiom Bible translation. As emphasis on contextualization has increased, several creative contextualization proposals and claims have aroused concerns and debates among evangelical missiologists

¹ Wonjoo Hwang, “Historical Development of Muslim Evangelism,” *Korean Journal of Frontier Missions* 33 (2011): 72–97 (in Korean). The earliest version of this paper was presented in the annual Southwest Regional Meeting of Evangelical Missiological Society, Dallas, TX, 27–28 March, 2009. An English version is available upon request. See also Samuel Schlorff, *Missiological Models in Ministry to Muslims* (Upper Darby, PA: Middle East Resources, 2006): 3–27.

and biblical scholars either because of the lack of biblical and theological analysis or because of unsound biblical interpretations.

Contextualization is not only a biblical mandate but is also necessary for an effective gospel ministry to Muslims. As long as the essence of the gospel remains intact, the Christian witness must take a careful account of the cultural factors and indigenous worldviews of the recipient people group. The premise is that any attempts in the name of contextualization should neither violate nor change biblical truths. This is achieved by taking biblical authority to be the guiding rule in encounters with local cultural or religious factors. Paul provides a strong warning on this matter in Galatians: no one should “preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached” (Gal. 1:8) and that no one should “preach the gospel contrary to the one you received” (Gal. 1:9). In other words, a biblical contextualization must ensure that both “the gospel the preachers proclaim” and “the gospel the recipients understand” become the same gospel that is taught in the Bible. One must, therefore, recognize that any discussion on contextualization necessitates biblical and theological content and that every contextualization model must,² first of all, pass a biblical theological test to confirm its validity.²

A few decades ago, several evangelical scholars warned against the dangers of mitigating the biblical theological emphasis in contextualization discussions because they had witnessed an increasing influence of social sciences in the missiological discussion of contextualization. Having

² One of the most comprehensive and congruent studies on an evangelical approach to contextualization is David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989).

observed a tendency toward decreasing emphasis on biblical theological perspectives, Edward Rommen described this phenomenon as the “de-theologizing of missiology.”³ In the same line of reasoning, Hesselgrave contended for a healthy connection between missiology and theology through “re-missionizing of theology” and “re-theologizing of missiology.”⁴ D. A. Carson, a prominent evangelical biblical scholar, also asserted that any training program for field missionaries had to include legitimate biblical theological teachings out of the same concern.⁵ Sadly, however, it seems that their prophetic voices have not drawn the attention of some contemporary missionaries and missiologists who are relentless in their drive for innovative contextualization models and approaches. The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate the diminishing emphasis of a biblical theological evaluation in recent discussions of contextualization in ministry to Muslims. Included in this essay are three approaches: the Insider Movement (“I.M.” hereafter) as a radicalized form of contextualization, Muslim-Idiom Bible translation (hereafter “M.I.B.T.”), and new favorable approaches to Islam and the Qur’an.

³ Edward Rommen, “De-Theologizing of Missiology,” *Trinity World Forum* 19 (1993): 1–4.

⁴ David Hesselgrave, “Third Millennium Missiology and the Use of Egyptian Gold,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 42 (1999): 589.

⁵ D. A. Carson, “Response to Paul Hiebert’s ‘Sets and Structures: A Study of Church Patterns,’” in *New Horizons in World Mission: Evangelicals and the Christian Mission in the 1980s*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 231–32.

A Critical Evaluation of Three Contextualization Proposals

I. The Insider Movement⁶

The I.M. was originally a descriptive term explaining the phenomenon that Muslims followed Isa Al Masih (Jesus Christ) in certain Asian countries. Later this became a prescriptive term for a radical contextualization model that emphasizes the accommodation of not only cultural factors but also religious factors of Islam. In the so-called C-spectrum first introduced

⁶ While there exist a wide variety of writings of IM proponents, it is not possible to describe a homogeneous model of the IM from their writings. This fact does make a critical evaluation more challenging. This essay deals with the writings of the primary proponents of the IM including John Travis, Kevin Higgins, Dudley Woodberry, and Rebecca Lewis. Many of their writings are published in the *International Journal of Frontier Missions* while its Korean partner, the *Korean Journal of Frontier Missions*, has been a major platform for introducing the IM to Korean readers. The main claims and validations are found in an extensive collection of articles written by the proponents, Harley Talman and John Jay Travis, eds. *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples of Jesus within Diverse Religious Communities*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2015).

On the other hand, many have expressed serious concerns about the IM and criticized the biblical theological reasoning of IM proponents. For the major counter-arguments against the IM, see many articles which appeared in *St. Francis Magazine (SFM)* and a book by Joshua Lingel, Jeff Morton, and Bill Nikides, eds., *Chrislam: How Missionaries are Promoting Islamicized Gospel* (Garden Grove, CA: i2 Ministries, 2011). It is also worthwhile mentioning that three doctoral dissertations were completed on the IM in 2011–12. All three works concluded that IM could not be fully endorsed from an evangelical theological perspective. The most serious concern commonly expressed in all three doctoral dissertations is related to the fragile biblical-theological ground of the IM theology of missions.

Looking at the current debates between the two sides, one must admit that the IM is far from being a proven contextualization model within an evangelical community, and that the IM theology of missions currently has serious problems due to the lack of concrete biblical validation. Field reports also reveal mixed results. While many commendable reports about the IM are in circulation, many national church leaders disapprove of the results or the claims. In short, the evangelical community is still evaluating this new phenomenon and cautiously discussing the claims of the proponents of IM.

by John Travis, the critical distinction between C4 and C5 centers on the question of whether one can accommodate Islamic religious factors.⁷ The two major points of disputes may reveal why the I.M. has been debated so seriously within the evangelical community.

First, I.M. proponents contend that Muslims can maintain their religious identity as Muslims and remain within their Islamic socio-religious community. In other words, Muslims do not have to be converted to “Christianity as a religion” (religious conversion), and thus they can both maintain their religious identity as Muslims and remain within the Islamic community. The term “Insiders” derives from the notion that these “Muslim followers of Jesus” can remain within the Islamic community as Insiders to bring many lost Muslims to Christ. These Insiders are claimed to be true believers in Christ who are part of the kingdom.

Second, I.M. proponents contend that Muslim Insiders can continue to practice Islamic religious practices as long as they do not violate the biblical truths. When certain religious practices are incompatible with the biblical teachings, the Insiders may still implement them by reinterpreting Islamic factors personally or by subjectively inserting personal meanings that are different from the ordinary Islamic teachings. In this approach, the assumption is that Islam has positive components as a religion that one can affirm in the life of new followers of Jesus.

⁷ For the C-spectrum, see John Travis, “The C1 to C6 Spectrum,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34 (1998): 407–408; “Must All Muslims Leave ‘Islam’ to Follow Jesus?” *EMQ* 34 (1998): 411–15. In his recent article on the definition of the IM, Travis provides five characteristics of the IM as follows: following Jesus and the Bible, fellowship with indigenous leadership, spiritual transformation, remaining as witnesses, and multiplication. John Travis, “Insider Movements: Coming to Terms with Terms,” [on-line]. <https://missionbooks.org/products/detail/understanding-insider-movements>. According to these characteristics, there is hardly any objection one can raise. The matter, however, is far more complex than it seems.

Several I.M. proponents have attempted to provide biblical and theological validations to support this new contextualization model. Some demonstrative biblical passages for this purpose include the early church context in Acts 2–3, the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, Paul’s preaching in Acts 17, and Paul’s various instructions in 1 Corinthians 7–10.⁸ This section will highlight representative biblical and theological reasoning of I.M. proponents in view of the two major claims. This writer will then present a critical evaluation from a brief exegetical consideration.

The most common approach favored by I.M. proponents for their biblical validation is to point out biblical examples (or biblical precedents) and present their arguments based on simple parallelism. For instance, the early church believers in Acts 2–3 and Acts 15 are taken to have similarities and parallel features with the Insiders within the Islamic context and the Jewish believers of the first century. The early church believers maintained their socio-religious identity as both Jews and followers of Jesus based on the new covenant. They continued to remain within the Jewish religious community for some time and further continued to observe their Jewish religious practices. After noting these similar characteristics, I.M. proponents contend that Muslim Insiders can do the same based on this historical precedence in the Bible. Dudley Woodberry expresses his view in the following words:

⁸ Some other passages include the Samaritan woman in John 4, the Assyrian general Naaman in 2 Kings 5, and so-called “holy pagans” in the Bible. Due to the space limit, this essay cannot provide a full elaboration of the biblical reasoning. This writer provides an extensive exegetical evaluation of these passages in his doctoral dissertation: “A Critical Evaluation of the Insider Movement as a Contextualization Model among Muslims,” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 146–203.

The [Jewish] leaders of the Temple and synagogues had corrupted Judaic worship and rejected Jesus, but he and his first followers continued to identify with Judaism and to participate in temple and synagogue worship. Therefore a case may be made for Muslims who follow Jesus to continue to identify with their Muslim community and participate, to the extent their consciences allow, in its religious observance.⁹

In his exegetical study of Acts 2, Kevin Higgins develops a more detailed biblical reasoning for the same assertions. For instance, Higgins takes “the taking of bread” and “the prayers” in Acts 2:42 to denote “early celebration of the Lord’s Supper” and “(Jewish congregational) prayers in the Temple” respectively.¹⁰ He takes these religious rituals as an indication that “even as the new community continued to embrace the temple prayers, it also added major new emphases and interpretations.”¹¹ Therefore, he concludes, Muslim Insiders can remain in their former Islamic religious communities and observe Islamic religious practices by incorporating radically new meanings and reinterpretations into the previous Islamic religious forms and practices: “Proponents of Insider Movements, especially among Muslims, have pointed to a possible parallel here. They have argued from this passage and others [Acts 2:42] that a biblical precedent exists for new believers from Islam to remain in the mosque and continue to practice other religious expressions of Islamic life.”¹²

⁹ Dudley J. Woodberry, “To the Muslim I Became a Muslim,” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 24.

¹⁰ Kevin Higgins, “The Key to Insider Movements: The ‘Devoted’s’ of Acts,” *IJFM* 21 (2004): 156–60. The italics in parenthesis are added by this writer for clarification.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹² *Ibid.*, 158.

Several quick comments would suffice to point out a few vital problems in the exegetical conclusions of I.M. proponents. First, Higgins' undertaking of the two components of early church life, "the taking of bread" and "the prayers," is exegetically not warranted, and furthermore his conclusion on this questionable assumption simply collapses because of the following exegetical grounds. Darrel Bock, a prominent New Testament scholar, argues that the phrase "the taking of bread" refers to a common meal, in which the meal at the Lord's Table might have been included. This is convincing because this passage emphasizes the radically distinctive nature of the early church as a new covenant community in contrast to the existing Jewish communities.¹³ In other words, Luke's primary focus in Acts 2 lies in the radical discontinuity of a radical communal lifestyle under the new covenant.

Second, the definite article of "the prayers" should be taken to be a "well-known or celebratory article," and therefore "the prayers" does not refer to "a designated set of prayers" of Judaism. Daniel Wallace, a prominent Greek grammarian, asserts: "The article points out an object that is well known... Either the pattern of worship was well known in the early church because it was the common manner in which it was done, or Luke was attempting to convey that each element of the worship was the only one deserving of the name (*par excellence*)."¹⁴ Therefore, prayer is better viewed as an integral part of the early church life in connection with the Apostles' teachings, the fellowship, and the breaking of bread. There is no indication

¹³ Darrell Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 150–51.

¹⁴ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 225. (Emphasis in the original).

of a particular type of set prayers in Judaism as Higgins asserts. Based upon these two exegetical weaknesses, the conclusion of Higgins simply does not hold.

There is an even more serious problem in the reasoning of I.M. proponents. As noted above, the I.M. depends on simplistic parallelism between the early Jewish believers and the Muslim Insiders thus only allowing selective biblical precedents to be the basis for validating the I.M. Higgins is well aware of the dangers and the complicated issues of applying this Jewish model to other religious contexts such as Islam or Hinduism, but at the same time he also holds the parallelism as a crucial backbone of his conclusions.¹⁵

The real problem in the use of parallelism between early disciples and Muslim Insiders lies in the unspoken theological presupposition held by I.M. advocates. When they compare Judaism and Islam at a practical level, they make a subtle assumption that Islam contains valid expressions of God's revelation, though imperfect, like Judaism. Islam is taken to be a valid religion containing God's revelation as much as Judaism was part of God's revelation in biblical history. Therefore, they accept that there exists a valid theological continuity between Christianity and Islam as much as the continuity that existed between Judaism and Christianity. Redemptive history does progressively develop throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament, and Judaism certainly holds theological connections with Christianity. However, the continuity between Judaism and Islam cannot be claimed in the same way. In order to draw such parallels between the early church believers and Muslim Insiders, it is necessary to prove that Islam

¹⁵ Higgins, "The Key to Insider Movements," 158–59. He states: "Islam does not occupy the same position in salvation history as Judaism...So, while I would grant that Judaism is in fact a different case than, say, Islam, the parallel still holds."

contains God-ordained revelations that are consistent with previous revelation in the Old and New Testament. These unspoken presuppositions of I.M. advocates are certainly far beyond what they can prove biblically and theologically.

This brings out another important aspect of the biblical theological method of I.M. proponents. Several erroneous hermeneutical errors are found in their biblical interpretations. First, they tend to use the historical precedents in the Bible as a normative guideline or principle for the contemporary I.M. context. As demonstrated in the case of Acts 2–3, this kind of hermeneutical interpretation continues in other biblical passages in their attempts to biblically validate the I.M.

The Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 is a representative example. I.M. proponents contend that the Jerusalem Council can be a normative guideline for the contemporary church to emulate in contextualization discussions. While not going into a detailed evaluation of the biblical reasoning of I.M. proponents due to the space limit,¹⁶ it is still worthwhile mentioning the serious hermeneutical error behind this biblical interpretation. Two prominent evangelical scholars, Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, provide well-reasoned guidelines to interpret and apply biblical narratives and historical precedents in the book of Acts.¹⁷ Several points of their work shed important light on the question of whether the pattern of the Jerusalem Council can be repeated by a contemporary church.

¹⁶ For a detailed exegetical analysis, see Kevin Higgins, “Acts 15 and Insider Movements among Muslims: Questions, Process, and Conclusions,” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 29–40.

¹⁷ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 78–112.

1. It is probably never valid to use an analogy based on biblical precedent as giving biblical authority for present-day actions...
2. Although it may not have been the author's primary purpose, biblical narratives do have illustrative and, sometimes, "pattern" value... But none of us has God's authority to reproduce the sort of exegesis and analogical analyses that the New Testament authors occasionally applied to the Old Testament. It should be noted especially in cases where the precedent justifies a present action, that *the precedent does not establish a norm for specific action*... A warning is in order here. If one wishes to use a biblical precedent to justify some present action, one is on safer ground if the principle of the action is taught elsewhere, where it is the primary intent so to teach.¹⁸

The Jerusalem Council demonstrates the importance of careful exegesis of Scriptures based on scriptural authority, together with the apostolic authority of a unique historical context. On the contrary, church leaders today cannot claim the apostolic authority of the first century Jerusalem Council and thus this kind of decision-making process cannot be repeated.¹⁹

In addition to contextual analogies, some I.M. proponents reach erroneous conclusions by adopting overly simplistic analogies based on words or expressions in the Bible. One such example is to take 1 Corinthians 7:17,

¹⁸ Ibid., 110–11 (emphasis in the original).

¹⁹ Gary Corwin and Ralph Winter, "Reviewing September-October *Mission Frontiers*: A Conversation about Insider Movements," *Mission Frontiers* 28 (2006): 19–20. In his humble appeal, Corwin states, "The Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, rather than providing a theological and practical template for us to follow by analogy when introducing the gospel into new contexts, should perhaps be understood only as a one-time seminal event marking the final stage in the early church coming to fully understand that the old covenant and its requirements were fulfilled in Christ and that the new covenant was for all people and peoples, Jews and Gentiles."

20, 24 where Paul says “Everyone should remain in the situation they were in when God called them” as a proof text for the I.M.²⁰ According to their conclusion from this text, it is argued that Insiders can remain within their previous Islamic religious community by maintaining their religious identity. This conclusion is completely false because the proponents do not pay attention to the immediate literary context surrounding the given texts, but simply borrow the specific phrase that seems to be supportive to the I.M. claims. Paul’s main concern in the larger literary context of 1 Corinthians 7 is marriage and celibacy. The key idea can be summarized as follows: No matter what conditions they were living in, the Corinthian believers could still accomplish God’s calling. They did not have to try to change their social and civil conditions in order to fulfill God’s calling in their lives. Since there is no religious affiliation in the original context, the claim of I.M. proponents simply falls apart.

In addition to hermeneutical errors, I.M. proponents do not pay attention to biblical theology as a framework for establishing their arguments and their theology of missions. While searching for possible biblical precedents and analogies in the Bible, they do not pay sufficient attention to the exclusive truth claim of the Bible. An overarching biblical theology of religions both in the Old and New Testament unapologetically teaches exclusivism (Exod. 20:2–6; Deut. 6:4–6; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5). I.M. proponents do not deal with this overarching framework, but primarily focus on their biased positive view of human cultures and religions in their treatment of Islam. I.M. proponents generally give more weight to the positive aspects

²⁰ John Ridgway, “Insider Movements in the Gospels and Acts,” *IJFM* 24 (2007): 85; Rebecca Lewis, “The Integrity of the Gospel and Insider Movements,” *IJFM* 27 (2010): 41–48.

of Islam and religious zeal of devout Muslims, and thus a biblical theological evaluation of Islam is seriously lacking in their writings.

One most disturbing conclusion in this regard appears in the interpretations of Act 17. Higgins, for instance, in his evaluation of Paul's approach to Athenians, states that "Paul not only affirms the religiosity of the Athenians, but also sees the altar to an unknown god as preparation for what he will say about the gospel."²¹ Paul's quotations of pagan poets in Acts 17:28 together with his mentioning of a pagan altar in a positive light in Acts 17:23 lead Higgins to conclude that it is valid to affirm religious aspects of other religions and to use religious resources such as the Qur'an to support biblical truths in a Muslim context. Furthermore, Higgins develops his theology of religions from Acts 17:26–27 as follows:

In these verses Paul argues that God has created every nation, every culture, "*pan ethnos*." And not only did He create them, He also determined the era of history in which they would live and the geographical area they would inhabit. This is very careful, sovereign planning on God's part, and encompasses, again, every nation and people. But there is a purpose for this careful planning and design; verse 27 makes this very clear. The purpose is so that they (the nations) should "seek God," "feel after Him," and indeed "find Him," although in fact "He is not far from us..." Paul's use of the altar and the poets is a very logical outworking of his worldview, which can be summarized in this way: The true God has designed the cultures, seasons, and locations of the nations

²¹ Higgins, "The Key to Insider Movements," 161.

to further the process by which all peoples might seek after and actually find Him.²²

In this quote, Higgins makes an error that seriously weakens his assertion. While Acts 17:26 apparently describes God's sovereignty over all nations in terms of divine care and providence for his creation, the purpose statement in Acts 17:27 does not support Higgins' conclusion of "actually finding God." Paul is simply referring to general revelation through which "people would seek God." That means Paul does not affirm cultures and religions as the product of God's design and further he does not approve them as a valid process for actually finding God. This point is clearly revealed in the use of two Greek optative verbs, *ψηλαφήσειαν* (feel, touch, handle, grope) and *εὑροῖεν* (find, discover), that express only a possibility of groping or finding God.²³ The optative verbs neither describe actual seeking for God nor actual finding of God through cultures and religions. In contrast to Higgins' positive view of religions as a valid foundation for seeking God, Hesselgrave contends that "it is wrong to assume that the search for God

²² Ibid., 161 (emphasis in the original). Rebecca Lewis also arrives at a similar conclusion that Muslim Insiders need not leave their cultural-religious identity as Muslims based on her interpretation of Acts 17:26. See her article, "Insider Movements: Honoring God-Given Identity and Community," *IJFM* 26 (2009): 16–19.

²³ For the syntactical significance of the optative verb, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 483–84 and 699–701. The optative is used to denote "a possible condition in the future, usually a remote possibility (such as *if he could do something, if perhaps this should occur*)." For the lexical meanings of these two verbs, see Bauer, Walter, Frederick William Denker, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [BDAG], 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 412 and 1097–98. Both Bock and Witherington agree on this point. Bock, Acts, 566; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 528. BDAG translates verse 27: "if perhaps (in the hope that) they might grope for him and find him."

is common” among men because “that idea is in stark contrast to biblical teachings, which indicate that it is God who searches and God who draws men and women to himself.”²⁴ Therefore, it is clear that Higgins’ arguments from Acts 17 contradict the overarching biblical principle of the total depravity of mankind in knowing God.

The attempts of I.M. proponents for the biblical and theological validation of the I.M. have been futile, as briefly demonstrated above. Since all of their previous biblical theological reasoning has been proven unsuccessful, I.M. proponents must come up with newer solutions and alternative responses. The recent book *Understanding Insider Movements* was expected to include more legitimate biblical theological validations in response to all the previous criticisms, but it does not contain any new material in this regard.

I.M. proponents have endeavored to continue various missiological dialogues with critics, and they try to bridge the gap between themselves and the larger evangelical community. Yet, it is this writer’s observation that they simply assume that the biblical and theological validation for the I.M. is complete and that there is no need for additional validation. As this essay demonstrates, the biblical and theological validation is the most serious problem of the I.M., and I.M. proponents must carry the burden of proving their cases. The lack of a biblical and theological consideration in the discussion of the I.M. is certainly a major problem in contemporary missiological trends.

²⁴ David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 102. William J. Larkin Jr. contends that human religious response is only “blind ignorance and foolish rebellion” because sin’s intervention produced this serious condition of men. Larkin, “The Contribution of the Gospels and Acts to a Biblical Theology of Religions,” in *Christianity and the Religions*, eds. Edward Rommen and Harold Netland (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1995), 82.

II. Muslim-Idiom Bible Translations (M.I.B.T.)

Theoretically speaking, two paradigmatic approaches have been utilized in various Bible translations: the Formal Correspondence translation and the Dynamic Equivalence translation. Muslim-friendly Bible translations (M.I.B.T.) stand on the theoretical underpinning of dynamic equivalence theory in the communication theory. Certainly the theory of dynamic equivalence may have some advantages in cross-cultural communication, but one must remember that this theory has critical limitations in Bible translations.²⁵

The major arguments for M.I.B.T. stand on the following reasoning: One can communicate the gospel message more effectively by increasing acceptability to readers. This acceptability implies that all the unnecessarily offensive terms or expressions to Muslims are substituted by dynamically equivalent terms while securing the same meanings.²⁶ Specifically, Muslims are repelled by familial terms in the Bible such as the Father, the Son of God, and the Son. Therefore, it is suggested that all these familial terms be replaced with dynamically equivalent terms depending on the meaning in each case.²⁷ One such term, which aroused much debate among evangeli-

²⁵ Michael Marlow provides a thorough critical study on the dangers and limitations of the dynamic equivalence theory in Bible translation: "Against the Theory of 'Dynamic Equivalence,'" Revised and Expanded, 2012; [on-line]; accessed February 23, 2016. <http://www.bible-researcher.com/dynamic-equivalence.html>. D. A. Carson also sees the same limit of this theory in Bible translation. See his article, "The Limits of Dynamic Equivalence in Bible Translation," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 9 (1985): 200–13.

²⁶ Eugene Nida, "Intelligibility and Acceptability in Bible Translating," *The Bible Translator* 39 (1988): 301–302.

²⁷ Rick Brown, "Why Muslims are Repelled by the Term 'Son of God'?" *EMQ* 43 (2007): 422–29. For objections to the Muslim-friendly Bible translation, see Matthew Carlton, "Jesus, the son of God: Biblical Meaning, Muslim Understanding, and Implications for Translation and

cals, is “the Son of God.” Some alternative terms for replacing this or “the Son” include “God’s Beloved Christ,” “God’s Beloved,” “God’s Eternal Word,” “the Christ whom God loves as a Father loves his Son,” “the Spiritual Son of God,” “the Prince of God,” and “the Beloved Son who comes from God.”²⁸ Brown, for instance, contends that the “Son of God” in the Bible is functionally equivalent to “the Messiah” or “the Christ” and that they are interchangeable.²⁹

Biblical Literacy,” *SFM* 7 (2011): 1–30; J. Scott Horrel, “Cautions Regarding ‘Son of God’ in Muslim-Idiom Translations of the Bible: Seeking Sensible Balance,” *SFM* 6 (2010): 639–66; David Abernathy, “Jesus is the Eternal Son of God,” *SFM* 6 (2010): 327–94. It is useful to read the dialogue between IM critics and IM advocates on this translation issue. See Rick Brown, John Penny, and Leith Gray, “Muslim-Idiom Bible Translations: Claims and Facts,” *SFM* 5 (2009): 87–105; David Abernathy, “Translating ‘Son of God’ in Missionary bible Translation: A Critique of ‘Muslim-Idiom Bible Translations: Claims and Facts,’ by Rick Brown, John Penny, and Leith Gray,” *SFM* 6 (2010): 176–203; Bradford Greer, “‘Son of God’ in Biblical Perspective: A Contrast to David Abernathy’s Articles,” *SFM* 6 (2010): 464–70; Roger Dixon, “Some Questions about Bradford Greer’s Principles of Exegesis,” *SFM* 6 (2010): 911–14. One recent introduction to this issue for general readers appears in Collin Hansen, “The Son and the Crescent,” *Christianity Today* (Feb. 2011): 19–23.

²⁸ Brown, “Why Muslims are Repelled,” 422–29. A more recent example of Muslim-Idiom Bible translation is critically evaluated by Adam Simnowitz: “Jeff Hayes and Al-Injil: Another Mistranslation of the New Testament in Arabic Intended for ‘Insider Movements of Muslims’ or C5 (C5/IM)”]; [on-line]; accessed February 23, 2016. <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2016/01/23/jeff-hayes-and-al-injil-another-mistranslation-of-the-new-testament-in-arabic-intended-for-insider-movements-of-muslims-or-c5-c5im/>. When this issue drew public attention, many supporting evangelical churches could not endorse such Bible translation projects and placed pressure on those ministry organizations. Wycliffe Bible Translators took a careful review of the principles and practices of Bible translation in partnership with World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). After the partnership with WEA, Wycliffe Bible Translators accepted the recommendations from WEA. http://www.worldea.org/images/wimg/files/2013_0429-Final%20Report%20of%20the%20WEA%20Independent%20Bible%20Translation%20Review%20Panel.pdf.

²⁹ Brown, “Why Muslims are Repelled,” 428. John Travis agrees with Rick Brown by quoting his work: “Often in Scripture ‘Son of God’ is clearly an alternative term that simply means the Messiah. See Luke 1:32–33; 4:41; Mark 14:61; Matt. 16:16, 20.” See Travis, “Producing and Using Meaningful Translations,” 75.

One must ask whether these alternative terms can deliver the same biblical meanings about the deity, the humanity of Jesus Christ, and the relational dimensions between the Father and the Son in the Bible. This question is of utmost importance for any Bible translation and certainly demands careful biblical and theological investigations. In other words, this controversy extends far beyond a simple missiological application of certain linguistic or communication theories favoring one method over another. Georges Houssney, a long-time missionary among Muslims and a Bible translator of several languages including Arabic, argues that there cannot be an alternative term that can replace the Bible's term "Son" for the rich meanings it contains.³⁰

Concerning Brown's claim for "the Son of God" is an equivalent term to "the Messiah" in the gospels, long-time cumulative research results prove otherwise about this unique familial term "Son of God." This term reveals the comprehensive essence of who Jesus is in terms of His uniquely intimate relationship with God the Father, His pre-existence, and His divine nature whereas the term "Christ" emphasizes the ministry and mission of Jesus.³¹ No other words can express such a deep and inclusive meaning in

³⁰ Georges Houssney, "Meaning Discrepancy in Terminology Between Christians and Muslims, Part V: Translating Son and Father Terminology," [on-line]; accessed February 23, 2016. <http://biblicalmissiology.org/2013/11/21/meaning-discrepancy-in-terminology-between-christians-and-muslims-pt-v/>. For instance, Houssney provides a list of the biblical meanings of the Son under the following subheadings: "Heir of all things, Exact representation, Lord of the House, Exercise full authority, Self-sustaining, Equal with God."

³¹ Millard Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 35; David Bauer, "Son of God," in *Dictionary and the Gospels*, eds. Joel B. Green, Scot McNight, and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove: IVP, 1992), 772–75. Matthew Carlton, "Jesus, the Son of God," 22. Abernathy provides a succinct summary of the main claims of Brown et. al., "Muslim-Idiom Bible Translations," and the major points of his response in "Translating 'Son of God'," 199–201.

the same manner. Brown's attempt to change "the Son of God" to "the Messiah," inescapably causes serious theological reductionism.

Even though some biblical terms may become obstacles for Muslims when they try to read and understand the Bible, one can serve them far better if one clarifies and explains these distinctive terms within the biblical theological framework. This will further provide a clear and better understanding to Muslims because the identification of Jesus Christ is directly and deeply connected to the essence of the gospel. Vern S. Poythress states: "Language that explicitly indicates a sonship relation between Jesus and God the Father needs to be present in translations, both for accuracy and for the spiritual health of the church. The same goes for translating the word "Father" (Greek *pater*). The Father-Son relation is an important aspect of Trinitarian teaching, which needs to be communicated clearly in translation."³² As demonstrated above, the proponents of M.I.B.T. rely more on dynamic equivalence theory and linguistic arguments than on sound biblical and theological considerations to attempt to support their arguments.³³

III. New Favorable Approaches to Islam and the Qur'an

In a witnessing conversation with a Muslim, mentioning the Qur'an or some contents in the Qur'an may be unavoidable. How to deal with the

³² Requested from "Like Father, Like Son: The Familial Language in Bible Translation," A Partial Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Insider Movements to the Fortieth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, 2012; [on-line]. accessed on February 23, 2016. <http://www.bible-researcher.com/pca.mit.report1.pdf>.

³³ The proponents of MIBT have provided some biblical analysis for their claims, but their analyses have difficulty gaining acceptance because of the skewed biblical theological reasoning. One such example is Brown's claim that "the Christ" and "the Son of God" carry the same meaning.

Qur'an has been an important question for a long time.³⁴ Several peculiar proposals in recent contextualization discussions are noteworthy. First, some contend that one can proactively use the Qur'an or the Qur'anic verses for gospel presentation. These proponents have noticed the affirmative value of some Qur'anic verses that portray Jesus in a positive light, such as Jesus' miracles and his titles, such as "Al-Masih."³⁵ They contend that these verses can be utilized for the confirmation of biblical truths about Jesus in regards to his death and resurrection as long as these Qur'anic verses are correctly interpreted. This approach is fundamentally different from quoting the Qur'anic verses as a point of contact before quickly moving to the biblical truths of Jesus.³⁶

Second, in the process of using these Qur'anic verses affirmatively for biblical truths, this approach usually employs a different set of hermeneutical lenses to the Qur'an that is foreign both to a traditional evangelical hermeneutics and to an Islamic theology. For instance, Higgins contends

³⁴ Samuel Schlorff provides a careful study on the use/misuse of the Quran in Muslim evangelism. After making a distinction between negative and positive use of the Quran, he provides a very insightful evaluation from a biblical-theological basis. See *Missiological Models in Ministry to Muslims*, (Upper Darby, PA: Middle East Resources, 2006), 3–27.

³⁵ One early proponent of this approach is Fouad Accad, *Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997). The following statement demonstrates his view in a succinct manner: "Muhammad did not in any way intend for the Quran to be anti-Christ or an anti-Christian document...Because of the largely pro-Christian attitude in the Quran, it seems just as legitimate to use it in our witnessing as to use a pro-Christian quote from any other respected book or leader." See his book, 28. See also his article "The Quran: A Bridge to Christian Faith," *An International Review of Missiology* 4 (1976): 331–42.

³⁶ For example, Kevin Greeson, who has been working in South Asia, developed an evangelistic method called the Camel Manual Method. This method uses Sura 3:42–55 for initiating a dialogue with a Muslim before a Christian witness moves to biblical truths of Jesus. Greeson reports this method as very fruitful in several fields. Kevin Greeson, *Camel Training Method*, (Bangalore, India: WIGTake, 2004).

for the Christocentric hermeneutical lens in order to reinterpret the Qur'an to find common ground for Muslim evangelism.³⁷ His reasoning is based on two biblical antecedents: Jesus reinterpreted the Old Testaments from a Christocentric perspective, and Paul preached to Athenians "by applying a 'Jesus Key' to the interpretation of their poets and religious hymns."³⁸ Third, there is yet a more striking attempt to discover the authentic religion of Islam and the "historical Muhammad" with his original teachings through re-examining all the historical resources and re-interpreting them.³⁹ This approach is to separate historical Islam and the authentic meanings of the Qur'an during the lifetime of Muhammad from the traditional Islamic teachings that have evolved over 1400 years of Islamic history. The core contention of this reasoning leads to the conclusion that Islam has much common ground with biblical truths, and that this common ground can provide a space for Muslim Insiders to remain within the Islamic community and to observe Islamic practices through reinterpretation.

In the effort to evaluate these proposals and trends, two related aspects deserve at least a careful assessment. First, one must notice that all these

37 Higgins, "The Key to the Insider Movements," 163–64; "Acts 15 and Insider Movements," 38.

38 Higgins, "The Key to the Insider Movements," 163.

39 Doug Coleman's book introduces a portion of Kevin Higgins' writing under the titles of "Islam As It Was: Abraham, Allah, and the Arabs, Muhammad's Life, Muhammad's Teaching" and "Islam As It Was: The Quran." See Doug Coleman, *A Theological Analysis of the Insider Movement Paradigm: Theology of Religions, Revelation, Soteriology and Ecclesiology*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2010), 256–308. Also see Harley Talman, "Is Muhammad Also Among the Prophets?" *IJFM* 31 (2014): 169–90. Talman boldly claims to provide "a *potentially more objective* portrayal of Muhammad's character and actions" when he says: "The sub-sections which follow reflect on various Christian views of Islam, a revised history of Muhammad and the movement he founded, and a theological reassessment of the prophet of Islam, all based on a *potentially more objective* portrayal of his character and actions." See Talman, 171. (Italics added)

proponents fundamentally employ a specific form of theology of religions. Second, since several proponents establish their own arguments on the passage in Acts 17 and develop their theology of Islam and the Qur'an accordingly, it is necessary to evaluate their interpretations of this passage. Due to limited space, this section only highlights the main points of their interpretation of Acts 17 with some exegetical responses before assessing their specific theology of religions (Islam).

Several of Higgins' interpretive results can be summarized as follows: First, when Paul affirms the religiosity of Athenians in Acts 17:22, Paul assumes that they worship the true God. Second, Paul sees "the altar to an unknown god as preparation for what he will say about the gospel" (Acts 17:22).⁴⁰ Third, based on Acts 17:26, Higgins contends that "God is at work in the world, including the religions of the world, and [that] God is drawing people to Himself beyond the confines and boundaries we normally refer to as 'His people'."⁴¹ All these statements carry significant implications for radical contextualization approaches and for a troublesome theology of religions.

While commending the exegetical efforts of Kevin Higgins for the methodological arguments and a theology of religion, one will easily find his exegetical methods and conclusions problematic. His exegetical analysis contains several critical problems. In response to Higgins' contention that Paul affirms Athenians for the worship of the same God based on the expression "you are religious," it must be noted that the Greek word, *δαιοδύμων*, can be used either in a laudatory sense ("sincere pursuit of a

⁴⁰ Higgins, "The Key to the Insider Movements," 161.

⁴¹ Kevin Higgins, "Inside What? Church, Culture, Religion and Insider Movements in Biblical Perspective," *SFM* 5 (2009), 85.

divine transcendent being (whether a true pursuit or not)”) or in a denigrating sense (“am embracing of superstition”).⁴² From the contextual reading of the entire passage, it is certainly correct to take this to mean a positive recognition of their religious devotion to “an unknown god.” It is not, however, because Paul affirms their religion to be valid, but because Paul simply used this rhetorical device to draw their attention in the beginning of his speech.⁴³ This is further supported by the fact that Paul’s spirit is provoked in him when he saw that the city was full of idols (Acts 17:16). Moreover, Paul talks about the future judgment of God and invites Athenians to repentance (17:30–31). Paul could not possibly have meant to affirm their religious pursuits with the assumption that they had been worshipping the same God he was about to preach.

Concerning Higgins’ second point, one must first ask why Paul quotes such pagan sources in his evangelistic approach, specifically in Acts 17:28. John Polhill states: “For Aratus, ‘we are his offspring’ referred to Zeus and to humanity’s sharing in the divine nature. In the context of Paul’s speech, it referred to God and to humanity’s being his creation.”⁴⁴ It is certain that Paul cited this simply because his audience was well acquainted with this statement. His purpose was to set the stage in preparation to make a counter argument against idol worship of the Athenians (17:29–30). Even based upon what they knew from general revelation revealed in creation, they should have avoided idol worship in fashioning images with gold or silver

⁴² BDAG, 216.

⁴³ Bock, Acts, 564.

⁴⁴ Polhill, Acts, 376. This poet is quoted from Aratus (ca. 315–240 BC), *Phaenomena* 5, but probably this appears in other Greek poets as well. Howard Marshall also notes Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus* as a source. Paul indicates that this idea is popular among the Athenians as he uses the term “some of your own poets have said.”

while they were still in desperate need of special revelation. Therefore, the Athenians are condemned by what they already know about the divine nature of God given through general revelation (Rom 1:18–23; 2:14–15). This was an effective Pauline rhetorical device employed to condemn the audience by what they already knew.⁴⁵ Therefore, this passage cannot support the idea that pagan sources play a preparatory role in gospel proclamation as Higgins asserts.

Concerning the third point, the previous section on the I.M. already pointed out several faulty exegetical conclusions of Higgins. He claims that God is at work in the religious life of mankind under the divine coordination of God's sovereign will for human cultures and religions (Acts 17:26). By implication he concludes that since the Qur'an contains significant factors of general revelation for Muslims to know about Christ, it is valid to use the Qur'an to affirm biblical truths. All these, however, are much wider theological assertions than what he can prove from this single passage. To provide such a theology of religion, he must rely on a much wider biblical

⁴⁵ Polhill, Acts, 376. Bock shares the same view when he states, "Paul contextualizes the citation and presents it in a fresh light, setting up his critique." Bock, Acts, 568. See Wonjoo Hwang, "Does the NT Quotation of Non-Canonical Sources Validate the Use of the Quran in Christian Witness to Muslims?" *Journal of Arab and Islamic World Studies* 2 (2015): 217–18. In this article, this writer demonstrates that the other non-canonical quotations in addition to Acts 17 share the following three features. First, the tone of the quotes of non-canonical sources is entirely negative, and thus the biblical writers do not employ them to support or affirm biblical truth. Second, the quotation of non-canonical sources is entirely a rhetorical device because these sources were well known to the respective readers or hearers from a communication perspective. Third, the expected result of quoting these sources that the readers or hearers were familiar with was to create a self-condemning or self-defeating effect based upon their own sources. There is no effect such as affirming biblical truths by quoting these non-canonical sources. Therefore, it is concluded that the NT use of non-canonical sources cannot be used as a biblical support to validate the use of the Quran (or any religious Scriptures) in Christian witness in order to affirm biblical truths.

theological ground rather than solely depend on some ambiguous biblical accounts.⁴⁶

Based on the problems mentioned above, the faulty biblical interpretation and the unproven theological assertions, the proposed methodologies must be rejected. One cannot accept the possibility of using Christocentric hermeneutics to the Qur'an to prove the Qur'anic support for the biblical truths about Jesus. Even though one may find some Qur'anic or Islamic terms that also appear in the Bible or in Christian theology, one should not confuse them with Christian meanings. The terms used in the Qur'an must be defined within Islamic theology. Il Joo Kong, an expert in Arabic language studies and a long-time investigator of the Qur'an, convincingly argues that Qur'anic terms such as "the word (Kalima)" or "Ruh (spirit)" cannot be equated with "the incarnate Word (the Logos)" or "the Holy Spirit" of the Bible respectively.⁴⁷ Can it be acceptable for Muslim apologists to use the Bible to affirm Islamic teachings through an arbitrary Islamic reinterpretation? How valid then is it to use certain parts of the Qur'an that seem to coincide with the biblical truths and reinterpret them while ignoring all the other conflicting statements in the Qur'an? Therefore, one must conclude that it is a completely unjust treatment of the Qur'an to use Christological hermeneutics in attempts to reinterpret the Qur'an for the purpose of affirming biblical truths about Jesus. One must read and understand the

⁴⁶ Higgins uses the so-called "holy pagans" argument for general revelation in other religions and the salvific factors of the general revelation. He thinks that the biblical examples of holy pagans demonstrate that "in at least some cases the members of other religions are in a relationship with God." See his article, "Insider What?" 85. However, according to exclusivism, the majority position of the evangelical community, general revelation is not salvific.

⁴⁷ Il Joo Kong, "Interpretation and Meaning of Arabic Words in the Quran from Linguistic and Hermeneutic Perspectives," *Journal of Arab and Islamic World Studies* 1 (2014): 193–243 [in Korean].

Qur'an holistically within the Islamic theological framework, and use proper Qur'anic hermeneutics.

One may simply use Qur'anic verses as points of contact and even as bridges for Christian witness. Some representative concepts or terms may include sin, judgment, forgiveness, sacrifice, and God's love. As this writer argues in another paper, Paul's use of the pagan poem is simply an attempt to build a bridge with the Athenians. The next step though, as is in the case of Paul, must be to cross the bridge to proclaim biblical truths about Jesus. Therefore, one must perceive the points of contact as "points of departure" rather than "common ground."⁴⁸ In this sense, one may find the Camel Training Method less problematic because it only uses a certain part of the Qur'an as a stepping-stone or a point of contact before moving rather quickly to the biblical truths. However, there still remain concerns that selective Qur'anic verses are interpreted from a Christological lens and that this method provides an incorrect impression that the Qur'an is taken to be a valid Scripture of God's revelation.

An Appeal for Healthier Missiological Discussions on Muslim Evangelism

This essay selectively reviewed the recent missiological discussions and debates on Muslim evangelism and demonstrated a worrying phenomenon: the lack or absence of biblical and theological perspective in Muslim contextualization. This is concerning as some of these practices may mislead

⁴⁸ For a theoretical analysis of communication concepts such as points of contact or common ground, see an excellent book, Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Missions: The Communication of the Christian Faith*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 211–14.

field missionaries or national leaders and may further cause chaotic results in missions to Muslims. Certainly, contextualization is a biblical principle as can be traced all the way back to the ministries of Jesus and Paul. However, any contextualization discussion apart from a biblical-theological framework will produce dangerous and counter-biblical results in mission fields. Both anthropology and communication theories have contributed to the formation of contemporary missiological thinking. However, some assumptions or presuppositions behind these two social sciences were not passed through a sound biblical and theological framework before they were utilized in missiology.⁴⁹

Both evangelical missionary movements and mission theologies for the ministries among Muslims must stand on sound biblical and theological foundation. First and foremost, the understanding of Islam must come from a biblical-theological foundation in a fair and objective manner. It is certainly helpful to use a phenomenological study of Islam or a comparative study of religions for a specific purpose. It is not, however, biblically and theologically healthy to conclude that one can accept Islam itself as a valid religion or a religion that contains much common ground based solely on similarities and historical connections between Islam and Christianity. The river separating Islamic theology and Christian biblical truths is very wide

⁴⁹ This writer demonstrated how Charles Kraft provided a theology of missions for radical forms of Muslim contextualization in his paper, Wonjoo Hwang, “An Evangelical Evaluation of Charles Kraft’s Missiological Model for Contextualization,” presented in the Annual Meeting of Evangelical Theological Society, Milwaukee, WI, 14–16, 2012. Enoch Wan also observes the misuse of social sciences in Kraft’s missiological model in his essay: “A Critique of Charles Kraft’s Use/Misuse of Communication and Social Sciences in Biblical Interpretation and Missiological Formulation,” in *Missiology and Social Sciences: Contributions, Cautions and Conclusions*, eds. Edward Rommen and Gary Corwin, EMS Series 4, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1996), 121–64.

and deep. Therefore, it is indeed necessary to build a solid bridge over this river for Christians to meet with Muslims, and this is certainly possible. However, it is another thing completely to consider this bridge a common ground by accepting the Islamic theological factors as biblical equivalents. The overarching exclusivist stance of biblical theology does not provide a venue for this common ground approach.

Second, understanding the Qur'an must be achieved within an Islamic theological framework, and at the same time a biblical theological evaluation of the Qur'an must stand under the authority of Scripture. One cannot neglect or overlook the Islamic theological criticism on the major biblical truths because the Bible contradicts the Qur'an and Islamic theology. If one observes some positive portrayals of Jesus in the Qur'an, the contradictory statements about Jesus between the Qur'an and the Bible must be equally weighted for a fair treatment. It is crucial for evangelists to lead Muslims to realize that the Qur'an does not stand on the continuation of God's revelation in the Old and the New Testament.

Third, it is far safer and fairer to explain the differences between biblical truths and Islamic teachings from a genuine caring heart and with an honest and objective evaluation. It is almost impossible to communicate the gospel only through emphasizing similarities or commonalities. On the contrary, demonstrating the differences or contradictions between Islamic teachings and biblical truths may communicate the gospel better for illuminating the hearts and minds of Muslims.⁵⁰ This coincides with Paul's principle of "telling the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).

⁵⁰ David Hesselgrave, "Christian Communication and Religious Pluralism: Capitalizing on Differences," *Missiology* 18 (1990): 131–38.

This writer believes that the desperate heart of Christians for lost Muslim souls lies behind the ongoing pursuit of more effective approaches and/or methods of Muslim evangelism. This motivation derives from a genuine concern for the lost Muslim nations. All the contextualization models reviewed in this essay have originated from those who have this godly desire. However, any contextualization approach or evangelism methods that do not pass sound biblical theological tests, however fruitful they may seem in the field, will eventually produce dangerous results. The evangelical missions community must return to the very foundation of biblical theological thinking in its effort to make disciples of all Muslim nations by re-emphasizing the authority of Scripture.

Carson's advice deserves a renewed hearing in the evangelical missionary community:

Missionary training must include substantive courses in biblical theology; for, although the study of contextualization may help the missionary free himself from the cultural accretions of his own society, there is a growing danger that contextualization will be used as a new tool to pervert the gospel into something unrecognizable. Nothing will provide a better safeguard than the constant study of the Word of God.⁵¹

⁵¹ D. A. Carson, "Response to Paul Hiebert's 'Sets and Structures: A Study of Church Patterns,'" in *New Horizons in World Mission: Evangelicals and the Christian Mission in the 1980s*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 231–32.

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Hindu Festival: Unification of a Sacred World and a Secular World

Bright LEE

1. Introduction

A festival is an enjoyable and cheerful party for the social community. The meaning of the word is based on joy, a feeling of human nature.¹ Human civilization has pursued the maintenance and integration of society by developing festivals. In particular, a Hindu festival could be called a “cultural drama,” which aims at the peace of the community at large while socially constructing a sacred world through elaborate religious rituals (Singer 1972, 64).

In performing this cultural drama, as Eliade (1959) commented, a sacred world is constructed from a profane world through a certain social mechanism. A sacred world made from this social mechanism becomes a field for Hindu festivals and the performance of festivals take places in this field. The social mechanism through which a sacred world is created from a profane world is composed of: (1) transition of time, (2) transcendence of space, and (3) transformation of objects.² As Visvanathan (1993, 217) said,

¹ Festival, as an English word, derives from the Latin word *festivus* meaning “gay, merry, lighthearted” and from *festum* indicating “festival,” or “festival time.” Thus festival can be defined as “a certain joyous mood” or “a time of celebration marked by special observances and a program of public festivity.”

² This methodology was created by the author and explained in his Ph.D. dissertation (Lee 2012).

“The festival is celebratory but liminal phase, lying between the profane life as anticipating transformation and the profane life as transformed... The self reflexivity brought about liminality and impending *communitas* is the central dynamic of the festival.” From this perspective, this paper analyzes the social process of constructing the sacred world in terms of three categories—time, space, and objects—and discusses the social connotation of Hindu festivals.

2. The Social Creation of a Sacred World

(1) Transition of Time:

Time, as defined by a dictionary, is a system measuring the movement of the earth around the sun. Through this movement, the future becomes the present, and the present becomes the past, and the momentary position of an event changes ceaselessly. The concept of time, however, takes the form of a calendar system as a guide for practical life in society. For example, a calendar is closely related to industrial worlds such as agriculture and husbandry. Furthermore, the development of a calendar system is closely related to religious rituals, in which sacrifices are offered at specific times (Ahn 2013).

According to the calendar system used in Hindu festivals, one month is divided into 30 days, and one year into 12 months. A month is also divided into two parts, *Badi* (Krishna Paksha) and *Sudi* (Shukla Paksha). *Badi* begins on the day after the full moon. The fifteenth day of *Badi* is a no-moon day, known as *Amavasya*. *Sudi* starts on the day of *Amavasya* and the fifteenth day of *Sudi* is a full-moon day, called *Purnima*. The months in the Hindu *Vikram Sambat* calendar and their corresponding Gregorian months

can be illustrated as follows: Chaitra (mid-March to mid-April), Vaishakha (mid-April to mid-May), Jyeshtha (mid-May to mid-June), Ashadha (mid-June to mid-July), Shravana (mid-July to mid-August), Bhadra (mid-August to mid-September), Ashvina (mid-September to mid-October), Karttika (mid-October to mid-November), Agrahayana (mid-November to mid-December), Pausha (mid-December to mid-January), Magha (mid-January to mid-February), and Phalguna (mid-February to mid-March).

In this flow of time, Holi, the spring festival, and Diwali, the winter festival, could be analyzed as follows: Holi is performed for two days — Holi Dahan, the first day of Holi, falls on the last day of Phalgun (Purnima) and the second day falls on the first day of Chaitra. This arrangement of time signifies the new beginning of the spring season after winter is over. Diwali lasts for five days and consists of Lakshmi Puja, a sacrifice to the god of fortune and well-being, and the most important event of the festival, is performed on the last day of Krishna Paksha, or *amavasya*, in the month of Karttika. Amavasya is a no-moon day, which provides a clue for understanding the reason people welcomed Rama—who came back to his kingdom after 14 years of exile with oil lamps. Moreover, *amavasya* is in the middle of the month, symbolizing balance, on which Libra (the Balance) is lined up on the equator in the sky.

The flow of profane time experiences the transition into the flow of sacred time by applying the concept of mythical time. This concept of sacred time is expressed in diverse mythical stories. In the Hindu tradition, a long period of time is divided into *yuga* and *kalpa*.³ Four *yugas* — Krita, Treta,

³ The generic expression of time, *kala*, is derived from the word root “*kal*,” meaning “to calculate or enumerate.” For Vedic agriculturists and herdmen, time meant the season of the year.

Dvapara and Kali—constitute an aeon—*kalpa*. An age becomes a new age through the process of destruction. In the fifth century, a *kalpa* was even calculated as 4,320,000 years (Thapar 1996, 14-16).

This concept of time shows that the span of each age was shortened because of moral degradation of the people and that Vishnu, the Preserver, was reincarnated to save the world.⁴ In this context, ten avatars of Vishnu turned up as in the list below, which connotes the division of ten specific ages. Logically the fall and rise of these ages is supposed to repeat in the wheel of bigger time spans. The table below shows the avatars of Vishnu who emerged in four *yugas* and the names of Hindu festivals related to them.

1. Krita Yuga	(1) The fish (Matsya)	
	(2) The tortoise (Kurma)	
	(3) The bear (Varaha)	
	(4) The man-lion (Narsingh)	Holi
2. Treta Yuga	(5) The dwarf (Vamana)	Onam (in Kerala)
	(6) Parashurama	Parashurama Jayanti
	(7) Rama	Diwali, Rama Navami
3. Dvapara Yuga	(8) Krishna	Krishna Janmashtami, Govardhan Puja
	(9) Buddha	Buddha Purnima
4. Kali Yuga	(10) Kalkin	

<Table 1> **Ten avatars of Vishnu and Hindu festivals related to them**

⁴ *Yuga*-related theory of ages, associated with the theory of social degeneration, is connected to the ten avatars of Vishnu. Kalkin, the last preserver, is expected to turn up in the last age of this world, which connotes that the world at present is supposed to be in the lowest moral level.

In this context, Narsingh, a man-lion god in Krita *yuga*, appears in Holi festivals and Rama, a god in Treta *yuga*, in Diwali festivals. According to a Hindu myth, there was a pious king named Hiranyakashap, who was given a boon from Brahma that made him indestructible. Growing proud, he ordered his people not to worship gods other than himself. However, Prahlada, the king's son, was a faithful devotee of Vishnu, who refused to worship his father as a god. Out of fury, the king summoned his sister Holika, Prahlad's aunt, who had a special gift of invulnerability from fire. By the king's orders, she took the child Prahlada on her lap and sat on a wooden pyre which was set on fire. However, against the expectation of the king, Holika died in the fire while Prahlada remained unharmed. Afterwards, the king attempted to kill his son several times, which all ended in failure. Eventually, Narsingh, an avatar of Vishnu, appeared and killed the evil king. With the death of the king, people became joyous and expressed their happiness by hurling dust into the air.⁵

In this way, the stories of Hindu gods based on the concept of sacred time turn up in the form of myths, and Hindu festivals are celebrated in the context of this sacred time-flow. In the consciousness of the participants in a festival, the transition of time is to be made from the flow of profane time to the flow of sacred time. In this transition of time, the liminal condition emerged in the context of rites of passage.⁶ This liminal condition could be

⁵ "Dhul" in Hindi means dust, from which Dhulendi, the second day of Holi, was named.

⁶ Rites of passage are defined as "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age" (Turner 1969, 94). All rites of passage are marked by three phases: separation, margin (*limen*, signifying "threshold" in Latin), and aggregation. In the liminal stage, the identity of passers becomes ambiguous. On the basis of the study of van Gennep (1960), Turner (1969) explains about the liminal stage as "neither here nor there," signifying that the passer is in the middle of two organized social status and conditions.

understood, from the context of time, as chaos, neither in sacred nor profane time (Turner 1969). The story of these gods is “the matter of faith, it cannot by definition be a matter of history” (Thapar 2007, 395).

(2) Transcendence of Space:

Space can be understood as a relationship of objects and therefore can be divided into “social space” and “mythical space” (Sun 2003, 3). In the field where a Hindu festival is celebrated, the profane space (social world) transcends into sacred space (mythical world) through sacred performances such as religious rituals. Even though space itself is composed of visible elements, it ushers all people who enter the space into the flow of invisible time, and renders the new space invisible and sacred (Eck 1985, 1998, Parry 1994). For example, on the first day of Holi, the place where a wooden pile is kept and set on fire is transformed into a temple. On the second day of Holi, the physical space of the local community becomes a cultural space where the local people celebrate the festival by painting each other, singing loudly, and dancing energetically. In the case of Diwali, places or business or living spaces are transformed into temples through the performance of the ritual, Lakshmi Puja. On the same day, people light oil lamps and fire-works to welcome Lakshmi—theoretically Rama. This celebratory activity transforms the whole area into a cultural space.

Apart from the festivals that are celebrated in everyday space, many Hindu festivals are performed in specific geographical areas on the Indian subcontinent, which have religious importance. In the transformation of a geographical space into a sacred space, the location of water is of the greatest importance (Sin 2003). For example, tens of millions of Hindus gather

at certain rivers to celebrate Kumb Mela, and the festival of Pushkar Mela is celebrated around the Pushkar Lake surrounded by the natural environment of mountains and deserts. In fact, the importance of Pushkar Lake is based on the traditional belief that the Sarasvati River, a tributary of the Ganges, emerged at the lake. Such a natural environment carries the image of “universal pillar” or axis mundi, which is considered as the center of the world (Eliade 1959, 37).

In relation to Hindu festivals, a historical scheme has been applied to turn the whole of the Indian subcontinent into sacred places for pilgrimage. Apart from the abovementioned Kumb Mela, Char Dham, the names of four sacred pilgrimage sites and twelve Jyotirlinga shrines, each of which houses one of the twelve devotional objects representing the supreme god Shiva, are part of such history. In this context, man-made objects such as *ghat* (a set of steps leading down to a body of water) and temples apart from the natural environment, are considered to contribute to the transcendence of space in a profane world into a sacred world.

Furthermore, economic space participates in the festival as a non-official domain. In the study conducted by Visvanathan (1993), the space of a festival is divided into official and non-official domains. Even though it is true that markets do not appear to be official domains, they play an obvious and essential role in the process of a Hindu festival. In the case of Pushkar Mela, however, the economic space of the camel market and the cultural space where many cultural programs take place appear as official domain of the festival.

(3) Transformation of Objects:

The objects mentioned here refer to things that fill the realms of time and space yet are not categorized as material objects. These objects are transformed to support the transition of time and transcendence of space during performances and then partake in the construction of the sacred world. From this perspective, the objects that make up a sacred world in the case of Pushkar Mela can be categorized as follows:

Categories of objects	Domain of time	Domain of space	
Kinds of objects	Combination of numbers; Myths and legends	Religious space	Natural environment (lake, mountain, sky); Man-made structures (temple, <i>ghat</i> , <i>dharam shala</i>); Living creatures (flower, body); Sacrifice ritual (a sacrifice of fire)
		Cultural space	Cultural objects (temple dance and song, circus, cultural programs)
		Economic space	Natural environment (desert, street), Man-made structures (tent, commercial facilities), Living creatures (animals)

<Table 2> Categories of objects in Pushkar Mela

3. Unification of the Sacred World and the Secular World through Hindu Festivals

Even though Hindu festivals are religious festivals with sacred significance, they are unified into economic and political domains in the secular world through the unfolding process of a festival. In fact the traditional industries in India are agriculture and husbandry. In this respect, Ratnagar

mentions that “wheat, barley, lentils, peas, cotton, sesame, and humped cattle, goats, sheep continued to be of importance in the Ganga valley and other regions in the first millennium B.C. (Ratnagar 2001, 4). In the discussion of the importance of agriculture and animal-rearing in the early history of India, Thapar, a famous Indian historian, also comments that cattle were “the main wealth of the Aryans” who were semi-nomadic pastoralists (Thapar 1966, 34). The historical traces of the fact that many Hindu festivals are rooted in ancient society based on agriculture and husbandry are found even today in Hindu festivals.

In India, double cropping is practiced in general, and crops are divided into *rabi* crops and *kharif* crops. The *rabi* crops, such as wheat and barley, are sown between October and December and harvested between February and April, while the *kharif* crops, including rice and sugarcane, are sown between May and June and harvested between September and October after the rainy season. Given that the harvest of these crops is connected to Hindu festivals, the festivals are considered to be thanksgiving ceremonies. For example, in the Holi festival, *rabi* crops such as wheat and barley are offered as sacrifices to the gods in celebration of the harvest of *rabi* crops, which increases the sale of *rabi* crops in markets. In the Diwali festival, *kharif* crops such as rice and sugarcane are used for Lakshmi Puja, the celebration of the harvest of *kharif* crops. In the market, the sale of not only rice and sugarcane but also numerous types of sweets and gifts grow at a rapid pace. Especially on the first day of Diwali, Dhanteras, the sales of many kinds of jewels and kitchen items are promoted. Diwali, in fact, is considered as a New Year’s celebration for business caste groups, and the new fiscal year starts from the first day of Diwali for balancing financial accounts. The symbolic importance of this beginning is elaborately expressed during the

ritual of Lakshmi Puja. The Indian market becomes most active during this season of the year.

Husbandry in particular has been developed the most in Rajasthan, the home of ten largest animal markets in India. Most of these markets are, of course, related to Hindu festivals. For example, Pushkar Mela, which is celebrated around the Pushkar Lake, is not only about religious rituals but also triggers commercial trade of many kinds of animals in great quantities. In fact, 65 percent of camels in India are from Rajasthan, which accounts for the most number of camels in India (Sharma 2007, 55). In 2010, the total trade volume was INR 72,425,394, and the numbers of animals traded, as announced by the State Government, are shown in Table 3.⁷

Categories	No. of animals participated	No. of animals which came from outside of Rajasthan	No. of animals sold
Cow	3,352		1,037
Buffalo	472		125
Camel	9,419	45	2,386
Horse	5,339	455	1,231
Total	18,582	500	4,779

<Table 3> **The number of animals traded at the Pushkar animal market in 2010**

More than 500 shops were opened in 2010 and the total sales volume reached INR 50 *crore* (approx. USD 76 million). In fact, most shops witnessed a 50 percent increase in sales during the festival compared to everyday sales. The number of tourists and visitors also increased during the

⁷ These numbers were obtained by the author from the government office in Pushkar in the research process for Ph.D. thesis.

festival season. The number of Indians and foreigners who visited Pushkar during this season in 2010 reached 250,000 and 5,546 respectively.⁸ Likewise, it is obvious that there would be an increase of tourism-related income and market income during Kumb Mela. According to Parry (1994), economic intention has shaped the religious city Varanasi through a historical process.

Further, in most festivals, the liminal condition—neither here nor there, betwixt and between—is formulated, providing people an opportunity to meet others on a personal level, or as “I” and “thou” in an ideal *communitas* (Turner 1969). In a sense, an open society is created. Even though the construction of an open society may not be undertaken perfectly it seems to be possible to integrate the whole community into a stable and harmonious society.

A similar phenomenon can be noticed in Pushkar Mela, in which a space of community is symbolically constructed as an open society called *communitas*, with most people half naked, including women as they expose their breasts in public while taking a bath in the lake. In the cultural space called the Mela Ground, social barriers of caste, nationality, and sex collapse at once through numerous events and sports, and it becomes possible for people to experience strong humanity and friendship. Through this, Pushkar Mela is transformed into something more than religious performances. It becomes a joyful festival where all participants become one, in which “I” and “thou” are experienced. A communal identity, which could be understood as a kind of political domain, is created invisibly among the participants.

⁸ These numbers were obtained from a state government officer via phone by the author.

In the construction and unfolding of Hindu festivals, the role of knowledge, in particular, becomes prominent in the caste-based Indian society. The role of knowledge becomes remarkably apparent in the social mechanism in which a sacred world is constructed in a profane world. And the knowledge, further, promotes the stability and progressive management of the society at large in relation to secular power. In this respect, it is quite true when Thapar indicates that knowledge in the sacred world can be “an agency of social control” (Thapar 1996, 11). The Brahmans were able to dominate other castes throughout Indian history because they were discoverers and managers of knowledge. In this regard Saberwal argues:

Brahmins were the prime beneficiaries of the ideology they propounded. It gave them a monopoly over the most prestigious forms of sacred knowledge... Their control, furthermore, over most sacred centers of the high tradition, their associations with kings and deities, and the roles of their local segments in their localities gave some of them unrivalled social pre-eminence [*italic is mine*] (Saberwal 1995, 112).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Hindu festivals have a mechanism in which a sacred world is socially created in a profane world. This mechanism comprises transition of time, transcendence of space, and transformation of objects. In this process of social construction, the worldview of Hinduism and cultural elements melt into the whole society. Hindu festivals, further, take the role of pursuing the stability and prosperity of Indian society at large by integrating economic and political domains. Moreover, these festivals attempt to

integrate religious (ritualistic), economic, and political natures of the caste system, so as to become cultural devices for building a more stable Indian society on the basis of the caste system. In this respect, the social implications of Hindu festivals could be understood fully when they are examined in relation to the whole sphere of Indian society.

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A Prospect for Korean Mission Work in the “Secular World” of Hinduism

Seung Ho KUG

1. Introduction

Religions have developed through historical events and interpretations. Hinduism, in particular, has been developed by the way of life of Hindus throughout history. Looking at Korean missions in India over the last several decades, it is necessary to examine how Hindus in India think of Korean missionaries working in India and how much, in turn, Koreans understand and sensitively reflect on spiritual needs. Korean missions have grown significantly and rapidly accomplished their tasks. A lot of local churches in India have been built, and many local pastors were trained and sent to places where they are required by Korean missionaries and their organizations. However, some opine that Korean Missions need to question and examine their work and efforts, as well as the motives of local churches and church members in India, to make sure they are based on true concerns for God’s kingdom. In this paper the writer examines what missionaries are, how we should understand the Hindu religion, and how the “secular world” in which Hindus live may suggest in which direction and with which attitude missionaries can approach their work and mission in the Hindu context.

2. The Biblical understanding of “missions to a secular¹ world”

God is, in essence, a missional God. Mission to the world derives from God’s heart. The cause of and source for God’s mission to the world caused is His love. Mission exists, because God loves humans.² Israel was chosen as a symbolic nation that could be viewed as an extension of God’s mission. Israel was selected as a priest and a holy nation because God has loved the (secular) world (Exod. 19:3-6). Therefore, the relation of the secular world and the kingdom of God from a missional perspective is not in opposition to but dynamically bound to God’s will. From a historical standpoint, unremarkable events can be reinterpreted with religious symbolism to be seen as watershed events. Donald Senior, C. P., explains in his book that there are three important steps which transform secular events into holy events in God’s sovereignty: 1. A task may be granted to the leading figure of a particular event with a religious motive or from direct “encounter with God” [theophany]. Yet, the event in itself is developed as a “secular event.” 2. When the task granted to the leading figure of the event is accomplished, there is a step of praise or celebration. 3. A liturgical ceremony may then

¹ There are various definitions of “secularism.” It is a principle that involves two basic propositions. The first is the strict separation of the state from religious institutions. The second is that people of different religions and beliefs are equal before the law. The separation of religion and state is the foundation of secularism. My observation in the Bible, however, is that there is no difference between the “secular world” and “the world,” as Jesus says in the Bible. The term “religion” is set and limited by humans and “following and believing in Jesus” is a choice for a humanity created by God. In the divine perspective, therefore, to separate the “secular world” from the “world” is meaningless and we instead require a holistic view to see “the world.”

² David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, (Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2006), 492.

be developed.³ For example, the Exodus of Moses might not be viewed as a noticeable event. Rather it could be said that a group of one tribe, being oppressed and enslaved, tried to escape from Egypt. In fact, the Exodus of Israelites seems to have taken place sequentially over the period of a century (Exod. 6:1b; 10:27–29; 11:1). Moses grasped to God by faith, however, transforming the Exodus, a secular event, into a sovereign event arising from God’s providence, and a spiritual, redemptive event. Israelites gained freedom through the Exodus that naturally and subsequently led to praise and celebration (Exod. 15:20–21). In the Exodus, we find a centrifugal redemptive work in which the third step as a liturgical celebration is caused by God’s care for those who were suppressed, but this is only possible when the first two steps of secular freedom and celebration are considered as centripetal (inward) events through which God had brought Israelites out of Egypt and granted them new lives.⁴

With the deep love and compassion of Jesus’ ministries in the world, churches have been built, and disciples trained. Discipleship is centered in the book of Matthew’s understanding of church and mission. According to David Bosch, the term “disciples of Jesus” in the gospels is not restricted to Jesus’ 12 disciples. In particular, the disciples in the book of Matthew can be understood as the prototype of the Church. The concept of a “disciple” in the gospel can be extended to include churches of Matthew’s time and further developed to become a church community. The core of the connection between the times of Jesus’ disciples and Matthew’s community is well-expressed in the Great Commission: “make disciples of all nations” (Matt.

³ Donald Senior, C. P. & Carroll Stuhlmueller, C. P., *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, (Orbis Books, 1983), 12–3.

⁴ Ibid. p. 15.

28:19). Therefore, there is no gap or discontinuity between the two communities of the Church.⁵ The characteristics of Jesus' disciples in the gospel appear in churches and their congregations: People expecting God's reign (Matt 5:20), the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt 5:13,14), God is the Father of them and they are the children of God (Matt 5:9, 5:42), brothers or part of the community that is inseparable from Jesus (adelphoi, Matt 5:22, 23, 24, 47; 18:15, 21, 35; 23:8). David Bosch states that the disciples of Matthew's time were spiritually bound to the disciples of Jesus and even to themselves. Every disciple follows the Lord Jesus. They are not alone. Each disciple is part of the Lord's body and a member of the disciples' community. Otherwise they are not disciples at all.⁶ Disciples can't be imagined without the community, the body of the Lord. And the community has the function of a union with society or the secular world. The ultimate purpose of the Church is not the Church itself but the glory of the Father and the Son in the spirit of freedom. Church is, in the strict sense, not the kingdom of God. The Church built on the earth is the seed and the beginning of the kingdom of God. It is the tool of God's reign that is coming. The Church commits heresy when it intends to separate itself from the world and if her function and spiritual and institutional systems disrupt its duties and tasks to do the necessary action for the world. The ministries, direction, and institutes of the Church should be driven and systematized in such a way as to serve the world. The vitality and ministry of the Church are deeply bound to God's universal plan to save the world.⁷ To the disciples, work of faith is not in the realm of simple confession but is intended to ac-

⁵ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 91–92.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 473.

compish social or communal responsibilities, maintaining accountability, and making more disciples. Faithful, biblical work therefore must go along with the world to progress in an extension of a secular event and celebration and be transformed to liturgical ceremony.

3. Understanding Hinduism in the Secular World

Hinduism, by nature, can be understood in terms of the concepts of change and “diversity.” The origin and founder of Hinduism are not known. Oddie, who wrote about the historical understanding of Hinduism, states that the word “Hindu” derives from “Sindhu,” an ancient kingdom situated on the bank of the River Indus. Over time, it enlarged in scope to refer to the people who lived across the whole of India.⁸ Since Indians are called “Hindu,” people outside India see that Hinduism has derived from the concept of a holistic system characterizing India, including her cultures and religions. For a deeper understanding of Hinduism, people need to know the insider’s views of Hinduism and to have a historical perspective of missionaries.

In the eighteenth century, the system of Hindus was called “the Hindu Religion.” Alexander Dow (1768) claimed this system as “the Hindoo faith” or “the Hindoo religion.”⁹ This was simplified, often mentioned, and later named “Hinduism.” The term was first used by William Ward who worked with William Carey of “Serampore” at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Ward understood Hinduism as the “Hindoo System,”

⁸ Robert Eric Frykenberg, ed., *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication Since 1500*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 156.

⁹ Ibid., 156.

¹⁰ Ibid., 157.

which referred to all the principles and ways in which Indians lived on their land, and “Hindoo Superstition,” the religious expression of their beliefs and principles. In contrast, Zaehner explained that Hinduism is a way of life, and a thoroughly planned social, religious system. Hinduism is free from dogma or doctrine about divine nature. And the core of Hinduism may not depend on the truth of monotheism or the existence of a deity because someone can be a good Hindu whether he defines himself as a monotheist, polytheist, or atheist.¹¹ Hinduism is not purely a religion but should rather be seen as a way of living holistically in the secular world. In fact, a Hindu calls his religion “sanatana dharma” or “eternal dharma.” There are no words more important than “dharma” in the Hindu scriptures. The word is usually used in two ways. One is for the Hindu law of custom which is very similar to canon law in Christianity. This is clearly defined and so that it is able to be explained even in legal writings. So dharma can be translated as “religion” or “law.” Dharma is also an expression for the fundamental law or “eternal law” reigning over every human and even non-person beings, and “the law of nature” determining the order of nature. The word dharma derives from “hold,” “maintain,” or “form.” So Hinduism is described as “eternal law (*sanatana dharma*)” maintaining the whole universe, and, in moral areas, *Dharma* (moral law) ruling humankind.¹² For Hindus, religion and the world cannot be separated from each other. To Hindus, the world is closely related to and interacts with it in social, political, and cultural dimensions. And in the center there are humans whose essence is considered the “true self.” When one realizes his “true self,” he is believed to unite

¹¹ R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1–2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 2–3.

with the universal self (*Atman*, eternal self) so that he may participate in the eternal divine area (*brahman*). One of the essential characteristics of Hindu doctrine is the view of non-personal divinity—that is, Hinduism is based on a “self-built system,” in which people attempt to reach the ultimate goodness of humanity (*Summum Bonum*). One of the six philosophical schools in Hinduism is the school of “Vedanta.” This school teaches that the world is not real but an illusion (*maya*). Hinduism is more than this teaching, but it presents the dualistic tension that results from illusionary world in Hindu religion that causes the balance and interaction to desire for emancipation (*moksha*) out of the world and to do right in the world (*dharma*, Law), and between eternal law (*sanatana dharma*, “vague”) and canon law (*dharma of caste*, “clearly understandable”).¹³ The “world” in Hindu teaching, therefore, represents the sole place for practicing Hindus’ goals of life, and at the same time, finding the “true self.”

4. The desirable efforts of Korean Missionaries in Hindu Context

As acknowledged above, there are many cultural and worldview differences between the Hindu scriptures and the Christian Bible. Several important insights can be found within that acknowledgement.

1) We need to make efforts to integrate the dualistic value system to understand the contemporary secular world. For the Hindu, the secular world is the sole place for practicing his goals of life, finding his true self, and, at the same time, implementing moral values for actualizing justice.

¹³ Ibid., 7–8.

Religion and secular world are minutely bound in oneness. A good life in the present results in a better incarnation in the next generation. Although the motivation to escape the bridle of the contemporary secular world may be religious goals, this doesn't undermine the seriousness for the real world. Meanwhile, for the missionary the "secular world" is the place he must go to make disciples in the Great Commission. Since spreading the knowledge of Jesus is the content of mission work, the "secular place" is the place where mission work takes place.

There is no reason for mission work to exist if the world was not secular and was not the place of mission. However, the world is secular, and Jesus is working freely in the tension between the secular world and the kingdom of God, between the "now and not yet." Over time, dualistic thinking has set into Christianity: good and evil, light and darkness, Church and world, etc. Some churches even consider that no contact with the world is the better way of faith. Nevertheless, mission work is not supposed to be the only program or celebration of church, but an effort to develop a rejoicing ministry, applauded by the society where the ministry belongs. God has deep concern for the "secular world" in which people "keep on listening, but do not perceive, and keep on looking, but do not understand" (Isa. 6:8–13). Jesus also concentrated on the lost, whether or not they were Jewish people (John 4:34–35). Hindu people don't need another religion, but the true and real God, Jesus, who is able to console those when in hardship and suffering, who is able to encourage those who are tired. Hindu people, even now, are overcoming the limits of a non-personal view of deities. They are overcoming a dualistic value system. They are desperately waiting for Jesus to

come step by step through the door of their lives.¹⁴

2) Mission work requires integrity, and missionaries need to be equipped with the truth. The Hindu religion is inclusive and tolerant. As a religion of diversity, Hinduism accepts all gods. It is receptive of all religions and is still creating more gods in the Hindu religious system, which is centered on humans and human superiority. Hinduism develops itself by avoiding confrontation and conflict and seeking to process adopt, absorb, and integrate such thought systems as evolution and the Enlightenment. What effort should Korean missionaries make in Hindu contexts? Rev. Jang Sun-ho who serves in Bangladesh suggests missionaries should strive to more deeply understand and adopt the local culture and language, and to continue the research and study of mission. Especially, honesty and holy living should extend to the entirety of life, and personal character should be more sharply trained.¹⁵ Korea sends the third most missionaries overseas. Korean world mission has grown admirably. However, the form and function of mission and strategic thinking and practice needs to be reformed. Missionaries used to spend seven or eight years on work preparation, field experience, and learning. And it can take eight to seventeen years to establish a local church in the mission field.¹⁶ After settling in the field, Korean missionaries tend to start their work quickly, and about 82 percent of the total missionaries are

¹⁴ Seung Ho Kug, "Beyond the Religious System in Hinduism: Logos and the Making of Self-theologizing in India," *The First Regional Consultation on World Evangelization in 2014* (2014 RCOWE 1), ed. KWMA Main Office, (Seoul: KWMA, 2014), 201.

¹⁵ Sun-ho Jang, "The future of Korean missions and the role of missionaries (Hanguk seongyo-eui mirae-wa seongyosa-eui yeokhal)," in *The future of Korean missions and frontier missions* (Hanguk seongyo-eui mirae-wa jeonbang gaecheok seongyo), ed. Seungsam Kang, (Seoul: KWMA, 2006), 71–73.

¹⁶ Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church*, trans. Jeong Okbae and Han Hwaryong, (Seoul: Korean InterVarsity Press, 2013), 241, 247.

involved with or participate in church planting and disciple training.¹⁷ Such rapid participation in local ministries can result in a negative influence on the local church. Mission works can often be influenced by the circumstance or situation. Proper and effective mission work leads to integrity, which is one of the most essential qualities of missionaries. This is the most effective missional strategy that makes both those who come first and last the children of God and witness Jesus, the eternal truth.

3) A core of contemporary mission work is “connecting.” The goals of Hindu religion are emancipation (*moksha*) out of suffering, that can be reached through knowledge (*jnana marga*), devotion to gods (*bhakti marga*), and behavior (*karma marga*). On the other hand, the Bible says “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32) and the purpose of Jesus coming is “... to release the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18). God’s Word makes us free. Secular world should be understood in terms of the place of the mission work. Mission work is like a bowl—its content changes depending on what you put in it, whether it be Hindu religion or faith in Jesus. Rev. Jang Sun-ho, speaking regarding the missionary’s attitude, emphasizes receptiveness, reconciliation, forgiveness, and mission to human needs.¹⁸ Mission work, embracing the secular world, should be a medium that enables Hindus to receive the gospel, to open their hearts and receive the only truth. Accommodating mission that is able to understand others, empathic mission that is able to celebrate with others, and concerned mission that is

¹⁷ This part of the study was based on answers to the questions regarding missions in progress based on the results from a survey conducted among missionaries with less than seven years of experience who participated in the Second All-India Missionary Society Field Orientation held in 2011.

¹⁸ Jang, 74–77.

able to worship “by spirit and truth” are apparent not only in Moses’ Exodus in the Old Testament, but also at the table at which gospel is served as food to a Hindu in India, home to the most unreached groups. Connecting is important. And the humble and considerate attitude of missionaries working for mission must be central to their mission work.

5. Outgoing words: Korean Mission facing challenge and crisis in the Hindu Context

In missional respects, the concepts of the secular world and the kingdom of God are not in opposition; rather they are deeply linked. For disciples, the work of faith resides not only in the realm of confession, but in the whole of life, making disciples for Jesus, and in fulfilling social and communal responsibilities. The work described in the Bible, therefore, cannot be separated from secular world, and it must progress as an extension of worldly “events” and “celebration”—sublimating the events to a liturgical ceremony. Hinduism can be seen as a multifarious body of interlinking aspects of religion, society, culture, and politics. It can also be understood as a system of thought, rather than as a religion. Although the religious dimensions of Hinduism cannot be neglected, Hindu thought is a philosophy of religious diversity. Teachings of Hinduism and the secular world of Hindus are the only ways and places for Hindus to lead their lives, yet at the same time, these are also the ways and places to find their true selves. The secular world emphasized in the Bible and Hindu thought is the workplace of mission and the field of practice for the gospel. In this respect, Hindu religion and the secular world are no different. Hinduism is receptive and tolerant to every philosophy and religion. A Hindu accepts everyone in their own

places of life, and at same time desires true freedom. To a Hindu, Hinduism is the understanding of and participation in the “secular world.” Missionaries working in the Hindu context must strive for a holistic worldview.

Those who have been changed must kneel down in front of the spirit of constant “love.” Therefore, the cycle of raising up Jesus and lowering oneself can provide Hindu people the true freedom (*moksha*) that they desperately thirst for.

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Mission Movements of Churches in China and Cooperative Programs

Amos Jongku KIM

Introduction

This article explores missions movements of churches in China, which I regard as a part of the missions movements of the majority world, including Brazil, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Chile. With this perspective, I will examine the status, prospects, and cooperative programs of the missions. In order to make this study more dynamic, I will incorporate the contents of interview which I recorded while visiting a mission organization (WH Mission Center) on one mission field.

In this paper, I will expand our understanding of missions movements of churches in China, and seek ways to maintain and revitalize such movements. Then, I will introduce the mission works which my mission organization has carried out since 2010 to promote missions in China. I would like to clarify, in advance, that this article does not present theoretical articulation but focuses on examining mission practices in which I am personally involved.

I. An Outline of the Christian Churches in China

The Chinese church has two hundred years of history. In such a brief period, however, the Chinese church has undergone several major shifts. The first one was China becoming a Communist country in 1949, at which time the Chinese Communist Party established the Committee of the Three Self Patriotic Movement to enforce strong control, management, and supervision of churches. After this incident, the churches in China were divided into two groups: the “Three Self Patriotic Movement,” a state-sanctioned and registered Protestant church, and the “house church” which was not sanctioned by or registered to the state, and has undergone ceaseless tribulation and persecution.

The second major shift was the Cultural Revolution, which lasted from 1966 through 1976. During this period, all religions, including Christianity, were almost eradicated due to extreme and severe persecution. Both the Three Self churches and house churches could not maintain their faith. All churches and seminaries were shut down, and believers kept a low profile.

The third major shift was the Communist party’s launch of economic reforms and the opening of China’s market after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Churches in China sprung up again and opened their doors to people. Churches, once thought to have been uprooted during the harsh Cultural Revolution, have now revived and house churches, especially, are growing at amazingly explosive rates.

Around 2000, another type of church, the so-called “urban house church,” appeared in China.¹ Unlike the traditional churches, which were

¹ The name varies depending on perspectives: “emerging urban house church,” “urban emerging

characterized by the phenomenon of “three excessives,” urban house churches attracted younger generations and white-collar workers, such as intellectuals, chief executives, and professionals. The social stances and economic capacity of urban house churches were different from those of the traditional ones. These churches do not belong to either the Three Self churches or house churches.

The above was a brief outline of major changes related to churches in China. In the following section of this article, this paper will focus on urban house churches within the missions movements of churches in China.

II. Missions Practices of Churches in China

In this section, I would like to present the mission activities of an urban house church in a city in Zhejiang Province, China. Since becoming a member of this organization in 2006, I have been involved in their ministries in the seminary, biblical counseling training, and missionary training. I conducted a survey of the opinions of the leaders of Chinese churches to gain a sense of their awareness of missions and conducted a written interview with an operating mission society.² In this article I will examine the interviews I conducted at this mission organization along with their published resources.

The organization has had a vision of world missions and dispatched missionaries, albeit a small number at present, and formed networks with local Chinese churches in India, Indonesia, and Thailand in order to send

house church,” “urban house church,” “the third factory,” etc.

² For the questionnaire, I have visited churches and seminaries affiliated with this organization several times in April and May 2014, had meetings with the director of board of trustees and executives of this mission organization, and also conducted a written survey for concrete information for this research.

them. In mainland China, this organization carries out both evangelism and church-planting ministries among ethnic minorities as well as at the state level, including higher cities, where there is no church.

1. WH Mission Center

1) Mission

XJ Missions takes as the foundation of their mission statement the following verses: “And he said unto them, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (KJV, Mark 16:15); “I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also” (KJV, Rom. 1:14–15).

2) History

Originally founded in 1989, this organization was renamed to WH Mission Center in 2006, and the Board of Trustees was formed in 2009. As is characteristic of mission organizations, the WH Mission Center states its acceptance of and support for the spirits of the Apostle’s Creed, Reformation tradition, and Lausanne Declaration. It also seeks to spread the mission’s movement throughout mainland China by inviting churches and organizations to join world missions and evangelism in China.

3) Policy

The basic ideas of the WH Mission Center are that churches, mission agencies, business enterprises, and individuals must be of one mind for the sake of missions, and that churches are to commit all their capabilities to evangelism and church-planting. This is further described in the following:

Missions are the obligations of all saints and churches, and our own calling. Mission organization, therefore, prioritizes world missions over all and considers it as the calling for each believer and church to share the good news in China, esp. among the ethnic minorities. For this cause, our mission is to go to evangelize all the nations with all of our capabilities and experiences in order to perform our role of connecting the church and the world.

The basic missions policies of this organization are: first, for WH to directly send missionaries to plant churches; second, for mission groups to connect each church, organization, and individual with mission fields to provide support for missions, either independently or through commissioning mission organizations to implement evangelism ministries; and third, to plant churches in every province of China.

4) Mission Status³

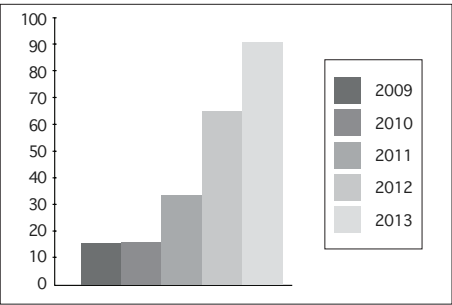
This organization requires three years of theological training as a basic qualification to be a missionary. According to the data from the current field missionaries, 60 percent of the missionaries are male, and 40 percent are female; as for ages, 40 percent are 25–35 years old, 50 percent are 36–50 years old, and 10 percent are 51–60 years old.

a. Number of Missionaries

This organization began to send missionaries to domestic regions in

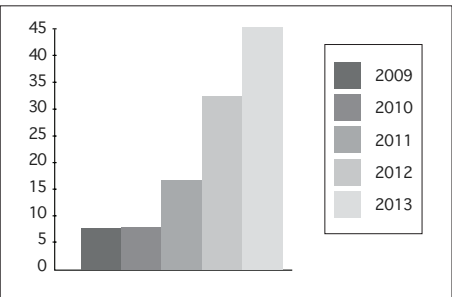
³ As mentioned before, missions examined in this paper refer not only to overseas missions but also to evangelism and church-planting in the churchless county-level cities in China. These are good training fields for overseas missionaries.

China. Sixteen missionaries were dispatched in 2009. No missionaries were sent in 2010, but 34 were sent in 2011, 65 in 2012, and 91 new missionaries were sent in 2013 (Figure 1). Three other missionaries are currently stationed overseas.



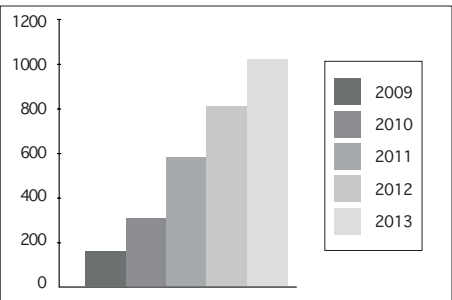
b. The Number of Mission Fields

In 2009, seven mission fields were planted by 16 dispatched missionaries from this organization; 17 in 2010, 23 in 2011, 33 in 2012, and 42 in 2013 (Figure 2). Three ministry fields have been planted overseas.



c. The Number of the Baptized

A total of 163 people received Jesus Christ and were baptized through this organization in 2009, 312 in 2010, 585 in 2011, 812 in 2012, and 1,024 in 2013. It seems that the number of the baptized are rapidly increasing each year.



2. Strategy of WH Mission Center

The ultimate goal of this organization is not simply preaching the gospel and planting churches in ethnic minority districts or churchless areas. Through these ministries, missionaries, who had been sent out to different places, have accomplished a variety of mission works, and the mission organization, which dispatched, supports, and supervises them, has encountered a number of different cases. Such experiences will doubtless become great assets and resources for future missions. By utilizing the skills acquired from these experiences, this organization has formed a network with overseas Chinese churches. Through its cooperation with Korean churches, it also has sent missionaries to three overseas fields and has plans to send missionaries to other foreign countries.

Working with this organization, I have helped open classes for mission-oriented theological training and provided lectures and training for missions.

III. A Case of Cooperative Ministries in the Missions Movements of Churches in China and Cooperative Programs

In carrying out missions across the world, churches in China have some weaknesses: political issues, a lack of missionary candidates, a constantly unstable economy, and Chinese ethnocentrism. They also have little experience in overseas missions. These barriers cannot be overcome by Chinese churches alone but require help from experienced mission agencies from other countries.

1. Ministries of Billion Mission

The mission agency that I belong to acknowledged the weaknesses and needs of the Chinese churches and formed a team named B.A.M.T. through a missions conference held in 2010 in order to carry out the ministries required to open the era of missions in China. B.A.M.T. is a research team, primarily devoted to the study of sending Chinese missionaries to Asian countries bordering mainland China. Let us briefly examine their work until now.

First, for concentrated ministries, the mission organization focused on some of the seven essential elements⁴ Howard Brant suggested as essential for the settlement, advancement, continuation, and vitalization of the emerging missions movement in the majority world. The seven essential elements, which Howard Brant presented, are 1) individuals called to missions, 2) visionary leaders with the vision of missions, 3) missional churches, 4) appropriate training for missionaries, 5) a flexible structure, 6) a sustainable financial system, and 7) a powerful prayer movement.

B.A.M.T.'s ministries are focused on two missionary-related elements—individuals called to missions and appropriate training for missionaries. B.A.M.T. has already sent one mission unit to Myanmar in partnership and continues to operate the following ministries:

1) Mission Camp

In missions, the awareness of the obligation to go on missions is very important. Without hearing or learning about missions, people cannot gain

⁴ Howard Brant outlined seven elements in his presentation at the seminar held by KWMA. Refer to Howard Brant, "Seven Essentials of Majority World Emerging Mission Movements," KWMA Seminar. 3–5 Nov. 2009. Presentation.

information about missions, which makes it difficult for recruiting people for missions. Therefore we held a mission camp predominantly for seminary graduates. In April 2012, about 30 participants attended the camp in a place close to Beijing. Four “Perspectives on Missions” were delivered in lecture and discussion format over four days and three nights. The lecturers even discussed the specific steps which churches and their members take in their commitment to world missions. At this camp, a Chinese brother, one of my trainees who had volunteered to go to Myanmar as a missionary, was commissioned to begin his ministry in Myanmar with the partnership of a Chinese church. As they did with all the other participants who had been present at the camp, the local Chinese church and the mission organization promised to support him, which they have continued to do so until now.

The second camp was postponed several times due to unexpected events in China and was finally held in January 2015 near Shanghai. About 50 people from all around the world attended the camp for four days and three nights. Participants were Chinese church ministers, representatives of mission agencies, and house church leaders. Unlike at the first camp, Chinese coworkers paid for lodging and expenses and participated in the programs. At this camp we were able to notice the enhanced status and awareness of the missions of Chinese churches and made a decision about Indonesia Missions Research Expedition Training.

2) Missions Research Expedition Training

I led the Myanmar Research Expedition Training with my Chinese coworkers in 2012. When we visited the mission field, where a Chinese missionary who had been commissioned at the first Mission Camp was working, I led the participants across the border of China and made observations

of mission fields in different cultures. After this Research Expedition Training, two leaders at my church had changed. Now they not only participate actively in the missions program but also enthusiastically recruit younger members of our church to become missionaries.

In 2014, fourteen Chinese coworkers and six Korean missionaries from the mission agency gathered in a remote area in southwest China to hold meetings to prepare for the next mission camp and discuss strategic planning. Afterwards, we went to Laos for Research Expedition Training, in which one brother was motivated to dedicate himself to missions and go on short-term missions.

In June 2015, four missionaries from the mission agency and nine Chinese coworkers went to lead Research Expedition Training in the Jakarta region in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, with many growing Chinese churches. The trip was designed to scrutinize the possibility of missions for Indonesia, especially to Muslims, through the cooperation and network of churches in mainland China and Chinese diaspora churches. A Chinese diaspora church showed a big interest in this task, and we had an opportunity to learn about the ways Chinese diaspora churches think about missionary candidates from mainland China.

We have found that individuals and churches were challenged through Missions Research Expedition Training to participate in missions.

3) Preparation of Mission Training Center

As the missions movement develops efficiently and volunteers commit themselves to missions, the issue of mission training rises to the fore. **Billion Mission** planned to establish a mission center in Cambodia and proceeded, but the project was held up for a while for various reasons. This

year, Billion Mission made the decision to launch a Mission Training Center in South China and organized a taskforce team, which will continue to recruit, mobilize, and train the graduates of the seminary, which is operated by the mission agency and its missionaries, local coworkers, and church members in order to produce missionaries. It is no wonder that local Chinese coworkers would like to collaborate in this ministry.

2. Mission China Conference

Korean China Mission Association is composed of organizations with a focus on sending missionaries to China. This association was created with the hope that churches in China would become missionary churches. Its main ministries include holding a conference every two years since 2007.⁵ Many leaders from Chinese churches and Chinese diaspora churches participate in this conference, which helps churches in the mainland to take part in missions in China. Billion Mission and I actively participate in this conference as well.

Through this conference, Korean churches as well as diaspora and mainland Chinese churches came to collaborate with each other, and they started sharing their vision and concrete methods of world missions. The conference seems to have presented a model of cooperation in missions.

⁵ The first conference was held in Korea in 2007, the second in 2009, the third in 2011, and the fourth in 2013. The fifth was scheduled to be held in 2015.

Conclusion

This paper on mission movements in the churches in the majority world, examined mission work in China, focusing on a mission organization in a particular region. Also, we examined the cooperative programs that have already been implemented by certain ministries to vitalize missions movements of churches in China, such as Mission Camp, Missions Research Expedition Training, and Mission Training Center by the mission organization with which I am affiliated. Furthermore, this paper explored the Mission China Conference, which has facilitated mission movements of churches in China.

I hope churches throughout mainland China would be equally equipped with the seven essential elements that Howard Brant offered for the attempt, settlement, and development of emerging missions movements: 1) individuals called to missions, 2) visionary leaders with the vision of missions, 3) missional churches, 4) appropriate training for missionaries, 5) a flexible structure, 6) a sustainable financial system, and 7) a powerful prayer movement. I also pray that the churches of China would thereby partake in the world of missions at this last age.

Missionary Jongku Kim ministered in country C for fifteen years and is currently the co-chair of the Billion Mission. He was previously an editor of *Mission Times*, a member of the Korea World Missions Association committee and the *KMQ* editorial team. He studied missiology at Seoul Bible Seminary University with Ph.D. degree. He is the author of *Eastern Lightning, a Heterodox Church of China* (Mokyang, 2011).

The Late Rev. Chiyil Pang : “An Everlasting Youth”

Taekyung HAM

“Why does having a long life matter? To live a life according to the will of God is what truly matters.”

“Faith is a surrender, but we are armed with our own subjective views, experiences, ideas, and intellect. When we are all led by the Holy Spirit, our Counselor, and are disarmed, and then we will be able to become one in the Lord.”

These words were the last message to everyone of our generation from the late Rev. Chiyil Pang, who passed away at the dawn of October 10, 2015, after having lived a fiery life as an “ever active worker.” He had led a proactive life—even blessing and participating in a Christian meeting related to North Korea missions four days before his death. “Faith can be like a long tube that may be deep but is not wide enough, or it also can be a bowl that may be wide but shallow. Let us not take pride in our depth but make efforts to become wider, and let us not complain about being narrow and shallow but try to become deeper.” These are just some of the numerous sayings of Rev. Kwagsong Chiyil Pang. His pen name, Kwagsong (郭松), means that he always preached the words of God just like the cuckoo on a pine tree always sings.

“I will never rust out, rather I would like to wear out.”

“I have heard a lot of the expression ‘Repent and confess,’ but it seems that it is all talk and no action. Tears of repentance are not simply meant to be personal tears through awakening. God values tears of repentance shed under the work of the Counselor.”

Rev. Chiyil Pang was a living witness of historic events such as the Japanese occupation of Korea, the Korean War, military dictatorship, the industrialization period, and the period of democratization—over 103 years of history of Korea and the Korean Church. In preparation for the first anniversary of his death, I am reminded of the interview article in *Kookmin Ilbo*, which I wrote ten years ago in January 2005. At that time he had insisted that Korean churches and believers should be renewed and awakened.

“Believers must live ‘from oracle to revelation.’ The oracle which gives the assurance of salvation is received only once in a life. But the revelation of God is delivered to us at every moment; whenever we worship God, whenever we pray to God, we must receive the revelation of God.”

Reverend Chiyil Pang, “an eternal youth,” humbly expressed what a Christian life should look like after retirement. He never rejected requests for preaching. Whenever he was asked to write, he wrote his manuscripts using Eagle Finger typing. For the sake of the gospel, he went everywhere and anywhere as long as he was able. For half a year, he led crusades and encouraged younger missionaries and ministers in North America, Europe, Asia, South America, and more. He never once lost sight of his duty as “an

eternal missionary and minister” for 21 years in Communist China until he was deported in 1957. In this paper, I will introduce his life and sayings based upon the recordings of interviews with him.

He inherited a deep and wide faith

On May 21, 1911, Rev. Chiyil Pang was born as the first son among five sons and five daughters of Reverend Hyowon Pang, and his wife, Eun-seung Kye, at Cheonbuk-dong, Seoncheon-eup, Seoncheon-gun, Pyonganbuk-do. Rev. Hyowon Pang was one of the first missionaries to China in the history of the early Korean Church. Rev. Chiyil Pang recalled memories of his family:

“I don’t remember my mother’s face since she died not long after I was born. I was raised by my grandfather and grandmother. My grandfather was like Abraham for the Onyang Pang family clan. He was not well-educated but had a profound faith.”

One of the most prominent influences on the direction of Rev. Chiyil Pang’s life was the spiritual legacy he inherited from his grandfather and father. He never forgot that he had been called for evangelism. Because of his awareness of this calling, he never hesitated to do whatever God assigned him to do, and he was able to overcome his formidable surroundings. Let us first examine the spiritual legacy of his family. Manjoon Pang, Rev. Chiyil Pang’s grandfather, also called “Little Jesus Pang,” left a spiritual legacy to him and his father.

“Two hundred and fifty households of the Pang family clan lived together in a village; my grandfather was the first in our family line who ever believed in Jesus. He was so faithful that he never skipped the Wednesday prayer meetings at Cheolsan-eup Church, located eight kilometers from his house, from the day he was determined to believe in Christ. His villagers persecuted him because he did not worship his ancestors. When my great grandfather passed away, my grandfather buried him in a Christian-style funeral. Then the villagers expelled my grandfather from the village. The whole family was forced to move to Yunsoo-dong, 12 kilometers away from Yeongdong, Cheolsan-eup, and was ridiculed as ‘a family excommunicated because of their belief in Jesus.’”

His grandfather was expelled from his home without any of his possessions. He had no house to live in so he had to dig a hole in the ground to reside in. He tried to lease farming fields to no avail. “His villagers did not entrust him with their land for farming, saying that they did not trust Christians, who go to church instead of working on Sundays. Eventually one villager did ask him to work on his field, which was full of rocks and pebbles, practically uncultivable.” It was a scornful joke, as if he was saying, “do whatever you can.” “For days and nights my grandfather removed rocks and pebbles, and pulled weeds. Then finally something grew out of that once deserted piece of land.” People were impressed and thought that “Jesus must have blessed him.” After that, his grandfather was able to lease cultivable fields. He was a tenant farmer for his entire life, and he had to support his six children. After threshing the crops, he would separate one tenth of his grain as God’s. His diligence and faithfulness enabled his vil-

lage to build a church and a school. “I witnessed the life and faith of my grandfather up close until I graduated from middle school. Observing Sunday worship services and giving tithes were natural to our lifestyle.”

Pang recollected that he was fed on chestnuts, grinded up by his grandmother as his mother had passed away. “Chestnuts became darker when grinded up and soaked in water. I survived on chestnut for years.” At a spring picnic in his first year in school, he had a stomachache, possibly from all the chestnuts he’d eaten in his life. He took medication and tried natural therapy, but he was unable to treat his digestive problems. After years of suffering from indigestion for several years, he was miraculously healed by the grace of God.

Pang was intelligent, having received a strict education since childhood, and he particularly excelled at mathematics. His family expected him to become a medical doctor at Severance College. But at the critical moment of his future, he chose to attend Pyongyang Soongsil Technical School (now Soongsil University). Then he chose to become a minister. He was able to accept the disappointment of his relatives but he could not abandon the will of God who called him to be a minister of the gospel. After he graduated from Sinsung School, he attended Pyongyang Soongsil Technical School, graduating in 1933 with a major in English, and then graduated from Pyongyang Theological Seminary in 1937. Even in his youth, such was his passion for evangelism that he planted Jeongo-ri Church right after graduating from Sinsung School in 1929. After he enrolled at Pyongyang Theological Seminary, he served as an evangelist at Jangdaehyun Church, the home church of Rev. Seonju Gil. He recalls that time as follows:

“When I was an evangelist at the Jangdaehyun Church, Rev. Seonju Gil had already retired. Many people attended his eschatology lectures. At that time he had vision problems, so I had to escort him in person. His strict teaching was very influential. I guess I learned practical theologies from him.”

**Rev. Chiyl Pang stayed in his mission field until
the last moment of his life.**

On April 28, 1937, when he was 26 years old and commissioned by the general assembly of the Chosun Presbyterian Church of Jesus, he left for Shandong, China, where his father had been stationed for missions. “As a fledgling missionary, I left for Shandong, the origin of Chinese civilization as well as the capital of Confucianism, right after ministerial ordination while my best friends left to study overseas.” Pang was so driven by his calling that he was more than willing to sacrifice his own personal dream. Originally, he’d planned to go to Westminster Theological Seminary with his friends, Yunseon Park and Jinhong Kim, whom he had met at Pyongyang Theological Seminary. However, he gave up on the application process, which he had nearly finished, the moment the General Assembly offered him the opportunity to go to China as a missionary. Rev. Seokhang Kim from the Mission Board of the General Assembly contacted him and informed him that they were looking for a missionary to replace his father, Rev. Hyowon Pang, and asked him if he would be willing to go to China to succeed his father. Rev. Pang confessed his feelings of that moment: “I couldn’t ignore it. I asked for God’s will and received my family’s approval. After about a week I told them yes, I would go.” He decided to devote his

future to the lives of the Chinese people rather than studying abroad.

Missionary Chiyil Pang arrived in China with his wife and three children. China was the mission field where American Presbyterians played a leading role in missions since 1861. It also was the mission field of the missionary John Livingston Nevius, who was one of the most prominent missionaries of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) and had influenced the Korean church with his three-self missionary plan: self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-ruling. In Laiyang, Shandong, missionary Hyowon Pang had served for twenty years, planting seven churches and operating an elementary school and a Bible school, until he moved to the Shanghai Church. Rev. Chiyil Pang recalled that his father had been a dedicated servant who worked hard:

“I did not have many chances to see my father. I only saw him when he came back to Korea on his sabbatical year to raise funds for building the Shanghai Church. At the time, I was ministering in the Jangdaehyun Church in Pyongyang.”

Rev. Chiyil Pang could not be at his father's deathbed or attend the funeral. Even the news of his father's death reached him after a long delay because he was in the middle of his mission in China and the Korean Peninsula was in a slew of politically chaotic situations.

Shandong was an uncompromising area. The people were strongly rooted in Confucianism. China was in a terrible situation during the time of Rev. Chiyil Pang ministries. He went through five different periods of social upheaval: the rule of the Kuomintang, the Japanese Occupation, the U.S. Military Regime, the second rule of the Kuomintang, and the Communist

regime. Surprisingly, the Chinese people accepted him favorably, not simply because of Missionary Hyowon Pang's previous works but because of the dedication he showed in his ministry for the salvation of souls. He even took care of the Korean diaspora which comprised those who had fled from the turmoil and were in refuge.

“After the Communists came in, numerous refugees also followed. Tens of thousands of Koreans came to the place where I was ministering. I had to care for those Koreans, because they were foreigners in China. When I spent lots of time with the Korean people, my Chinese congregation came to me and cried, saying, ‘We thought you were our pastor, but you are the pastor for the Koreans.’ I cried, too. And I said ‘Please, wait a little bit more. When these people get better, I will spend more time with you.’”

During his ministries in Shandong, Rev. Chiyil Pang planted five churches, including Zhongjiawa (仲家窪) Church, and dedicated the worship halls of two churches.

After the Communist Party conquered mainland China, they closed down churches and used the buildings for schools, factories, stables, etc. Christians were even executed because of their belief in the gospel. But Pang continued to share the gospel for 21 years until he was deported in 1957. At one point, there were more than 5,000 missionaries operating in China. Yet, all the Western missionaries left China under the Communist rule, but Pang stayed in his mission field until the last possible moment as a foreign missionary. He was the only foreign missionary who stayed in his

mission field for that long. Then, he was almost deported to Pyongyang. But as other countries came to learn about the issue of the “deportation of the only Korean missionary remaining in China,” the Chinese government was pressured into sending him to South Korea instead of North Korea.

The 20,000-ton transport ship that the Pang family boarded left Hong Kong and arrived at the Port of Busan on September 23, 1957. On that day, the Busan police found 20 yuan inside Rev. Pang’s Bible while examining his luggage. Twenty yuan was just enough money for one family to live on for a month. “The police asked me why I brought 20 yuan and where I acquired such a huge amount of money. I guessed that a Chinese church member had secretly put it in my Bible.”

Because of such love and care of the Chinese people, Pang was able to endure nine years under the Communist regime. “The congregation of my church made clothes using the fabric distributed by the Communist Party and discretely threw them over the wall to us, along with food. They risked their lives in doing so. I received life-risking love from them.”

Rev. Chiyl Pang said, “Love once, love forever”

How did Pang nurture the Chinese people? Though he went to China without having learned the Chinese language, he did try to live with the Chinese people according to the Word of God.

“I emphasized the Bible over everything else. I taught illiterate people Chinese characters through the Bible. I led them through all of the 66 books of the Bible by holding a short-term Bible School called ‘The





Way Class (道理班)’ appropriately designed for people of all levels. I concentrated on helping them to understand the heart of God.”

He appointed people, who’d studied at least ten books of the Bible, to teach Sunday schools and The Way classes or the First Level Beginners’ Classes. Once they mastered the Old and New Testaments, they were given the equivalent license of a Bible School graduate to serve as evangelists. Those church members, who properly studied the Bible, naturally became community leaders who guided others to social enlightenment, in line with what Rev. Pang once said: “The church is supposed to be a living organism, alive and active at all times. If so, it can nurture talented people.”

I once asked him about the Chinese churches today, as they were divided into state-sanctioned and non-sanctioned groups. His answer to this question and the Chinese Communist Party was as follows:

“Still, too many people are unaware of the truth of the Chinese Communist Party. It is a misunderstanding if you think that there is complete freedom of religion because the Party left it to the local authorities to decide on building chapels and holding meetings. In the past, numerous ministers were killed because of their Christian faith. The sermons preached in Communist-sanctioned Three Self churches could not be considered authentic sermons. It’s like the Japanese occupation period when Shinto Worship was enforced. Now the situation is different, but there are still secret Christian meetings held in many places. Now is the time to make bridges between house churches and Three Self churches. House churches must pray for the Three Self churches and have pity on them.”

Rev. Chiyil Pang traveled around the world but he never visited China again until his death. Since he was deported from China, he was worried that his previous church members would get in trouble if he contacted them. In China, he itinerated and ministered for three or four years under the regime of the Communist Party. He even dedicated new church buildings. But he learned a lot once he was placed on the “blacklist” and went through interrogations. The Communist Party knew details of his ministries such as where and how he expounded the Bible in the past. He described that period of time as a period of “imprisonment” when he’d felt like a “fish in an aquarium”:

“At that time whenever I met someone, the first thing I did was worry about that person. I was more worried about the person I encountered than I was about myself. The only place [the Communist Party] did not make trouble was the church sepulcher. I visited the tombs of the deceased church members and prayed for their children there. Sons or daughters of the Chinese church members, whom I had served, sometimes sent me greetings or even visited me after they had grown up.”

Numerous times he visited the tombs of the dead church members and called their names one by one and prayed for them there. He was able to remain in his mission field under the Communist regime because of his Chinese congregation. But he had to leave China for their safety. He felt that it would be a burden on the church members if he stayed with them under the Communist surveillance. “I thought that I should have left earlier when I saw them suffering because of me.”

Rev. Chiyil Pang advised candidates of Chinese missions to not to go to China without the knowledge of China, the Chinese people, and Chinese culture and history.

“You should be aware that China accepted the gospel before Korea, and their faith is profound. If you take this fact lightly, you will be in big trouble. It is important to have a sense of an ‘equal’ mission of giving and taking. If you only give, you are forcing them to be subordinate. You need to develop an attitude of learning. If you desire a lifetime of learning and knowing, your improvement will be guaranteed. There is an old saying, ‘When there are three men walking together, one is bound to be a teacher.’ It means that there is something that you can learn even from those who seem inferior to me in terms of knowledge or experience. Your attitude to learn makes a good impression on others. You should communicate this with sincerity.”

Chiyil Pang led his life as a Christian

Upon returning to South Korea, Rev. Chiyil Pang was installed to minister as the pastor of the Yeongdeungpo Church. He served there for 21 years, completed the preparation for the construction of the new chapel, and then retired and was nominated as Pastor Emeritus in 1979. His philosophy of ministry can be found in his book, *Jehovah Nissi*, published by the Yeongdeungpo Church in celebration of his retirement. “Each person’s field must be respected.” In ministry, the first thing to do is to separate the variable elements from the invariable. The essentials such as the Lord and the Bible will never change. Everything else can change. Secondly, you need

to maintain the balance of subjectivity and objectivity. In other words, you should be careful when judging others. The third is the harmony of centrifugal and centripetal forces. You should be centered on conservative faith but embrace progressive opinions in theology and thought.

Rev. Chiyl Pang advised us to be conscious of the working God. Pastors should not think, 'I am ministering.' "It is an illusion to think that one can serve in ministry with his own thoughts and plans. Ministers are required to follow what God is doing." According to Pang, ministers must abandon authoritarianism but also build the leadership of authority. "The authority is given from above. If I set up my own authority, I will be laughed at. Ministers must have authority and power given by God. Authority must not be used to overwhelm anyone." Ministers should secure their authority by delivering the words of God and pointing at sins with the authority of the divine messenger. Submission takes place through this process. Therefore, ministers with authority first need to make sacrifices. Pang said emphatically: "[Ministers] must talk less instead of being loquacious. They must be humble. They ought to be humble instead of being proud. These virtues must always come from prayers." His logic was that authority could be built upon prayer. Only after being filled with the Word and prayers would ministers be able to execute their heavenly authority. Pang categorized submissive leadership as a virtue for ministers. This meant that faith comes from submission. Even men of the Word and prayer would fail if they did not obey God. "It is a requirement and a command for those who have been given trust. In the Scriptures, many people faced loss because of their lack of obedience. An example is King Saul. When the Lord speaks, we must obey. Without reason, we simply have to obey." Pang said that when pastors

become role models, church members would be able to become obedient as well.

Rev. Chiyil Pang emphasized that pastors must continue to study to improve their competence but spirituality is much more important than competence. “Prophet Amos was an uneducated farmer, but he worked for God’s calling. To whom can he be compared? Today, pastoral ability should not depend upon scholarly ability but upon spirituality.” He said that it was a pity that the pastoral nominations were based upon worldly competence, instead of spirituality. He added that pastors, therefore, must pray adventurously to maintain their spirituality and read the Bible adventurously. Pastors must become professionals of God’s Word and prayer. Church members should not be led by self-assertion, but rather by three standards of conscience, Bible, and prayer:

“Pastors are not charitable benefactors. Their priority is the salvation of sinners. If they carry this out well they will contribute to their society, country, and nation. To forget this is betrayal. It is hurtful. We must think about why pastors are concerned with academic degrees, why they are cowardly before money, why they have cravings.”

Rev. Chiyil Pang carried out an excellent service as a church administrator. Two times he was elected to be the Presbyter of Gyeonggi Presbytery (which includes Seoul, Gyeonggi-do, and Incheon areas) before the division of the Korean Presbyterian Church. He served as the director of the Evangelism Team at the General Assembly, then as the vice president, and was elected the president of the General Assembly in 1971. He was so passion-

ate for missions and evangelism that he served as the director of the Evangelism Team of the General Assembly for 18 years. He served as midwife to the formation of the Chinese Diaspora Church in South Korea. He was the third recipient of the Underwood Prize and was awarded the Korean Moran Order of Civil Merit. He served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Preservation of Chinese Diaspora Church Foundation in South Korea. In 2013, at the age of 102 he preached at the Easter Joint Service of Korean Churches, emphasizing the importance of unity between Korean churches.

The Monday Bible Study meeting, which he led since 1958, is well known among Christians. Originally this meeting was organized at his parsonage of Yeongdeungpo Church. Thousands of pastors learned from his ministerial calling and qualifications, principles of worship, sermons, visitation skills, and church administration. As a writer, Rev. Chiyil Pang published more than 100 books. He was able to fully develop his potential as a writer thanks to his previous experience in the foundation and distribution of *Mustard Seed*, a monthly Christian Journal, at Soongsil University in 1933. He wrote and edited *The Gospel of Blood*, and the Chinese translation of the book was used as the main textbook for house churches in China. The main point of *The Gospel of Blood* was that the deeper one's faith is, the more one must rely on the blood of the cross. He preached the original "gospel of blood" at the Easter Joint Service of Korean Churches in 2013. His faith can be summed up in one phrase: the gospel of blood. This gospel could only be preached through the Holy Spirit, because this is given by God. In 1992, Rev. Pang completed the publication of 66 expository commentaries of the Old and New Testaments, due to his grandfather's influence, as Rev. Chiyil Pang read the Bible numerous times and memorized many of the verses in his childhood. Thus, he mastered even the detailed contents of all 66 books

of the Bible. He transformed his perspectives on the Bible into the “gospel of blood” and interpreted the Bible from the perspective of the history of salvation, which was completed with Jesus Christ on the cross. In this way, he maintained the fall of humans and divine grace as continuous themes in his sermons throughout his entire life.

What were his thoughts on qualifications for missionaries and ministers? “[Ministers and missionaries] are required to deny themselves like John the Baptist: to those who thought that he was the messiah, he said clearly that the one who comes after him is greater and more powerful. He stressed that he is just a voice in the desert paving the way for Jesus Christ.” Likewise, ministers should say ‘no’ to themselves but ‘yes’ to God unconditionally. “Pastors and missionaries must deny themselves and be humble. Of course, self-denial is difficult. But they must go on this path. Then their sermons will change. In many cases our experiences and artificial interpretations become the center of our sermons. However, sermons should touch souls, not bodies. Preachers must not be the center of their sermons. Sermons need to lead to the confession of sins, repentance, and salvation.”

The pastor who sublimated his pains into the “theology of tears”

Rev. Pang suffered considerable pain in his personal life. Above all, he suffered the most when two of his children passed away. When he was present at the 100th Anniversary of Taiwanese Christianity as a representative of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, he received a telegram requesting him to return home quickly. When he arrived at Gimpo International Airport, people welcomed him with rigid faces. Reportedly his second and youngest son, Seonlim, then a sophomore at Yonsei University,

was missing. At first they thought that he went into hiding since college students who went to the streets to demonstrate against the government at the time often hid from the police. People inquired everywhere, but Seonlim was never found. Pang's youngest son had left home on a bike with a portable radio at night and never came back. They searched everywhere and advertised for a missing person in the newspapers, but never found any sign of him.

His second daughter, Seonhye, was teaching as a college professor after her completion of a Bachelor's and Master's degrees in piano at Ewha Womans University. She, then, went to the Netherlands with a government grant to study for two years at the Royal Conservatoire. It seemed that she had inherited a passion for missions from her grandfather (Missionary Hyowon Pang) and her father (Rev. Chiyil Pang) for she spent her time sharing the gospel with everyone, from the building guards to the dean of the Conservatoire. Seonhye sent letters to her father twice a week while studying in the Netherlands—sending almost two hundred letters in total. In every letter she wrote about her faith. Then suddenly Seonhye died. Rev. Chiyil Pang confessed that whenever he thought about Seonlim and Seonhye, he couldn't stop crying; "How can I describe what I felt with letters or words? Whenever I prayed to God around that time, I could not say anything but 'Father!' I repeated 'Father!' a hundred times." Nevertheless, Pang praised the faithful God who turns "unbearable trials" into "bearable tests." Currently his first daughter, Seonja, and his first son, Seonju, reside in the United States. Rev. Pang is also a relative of Rev. Young Hoon Lee, the senior pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church. Pang was known to have loved Lee very much. Lee shared a memory of Pang: "He was a giant of faith and full of humor. I remember a lot about him—he liked coffee with lots of sugar."

He spoke significant words when he was visited by Jongguk Kim, the president of the Korean War Memorial Foundation (K.W.M.F.), and Seongwon Ahn, the general secretary of the foundation, four days before his death: “Share your ‘life’ and ‘affection’ with local people.” This was consistent with the title and content of his sermon preached at nearly the last moment of his life: “Where beans are planted, beans will sprout.” This sermon was preached in December 2012. In this sermon Pang said:

“People commonly quote the saying ‘Where a cucumber is sown, a cucumber is harvested,’ and ‘Where the bean is sown, beans are harvested.’ In the letter to the Galatians, Apostle Paul also said, ‘A man reaps what he sows.’ No matter how good the seeds may be, they should be sown in good and proper soil in order to produce thirty, sixty, or a hundred times more. If the soil were not good, even the good seeds would not be able to produce much. We should always look at our own hearts to remove rocks. When the soil is dry, we should provide it with moisture. If it is hardened, we must soften it and turn it into good soil. We must always cultivate the soil of our hearts so that it would be ready to receive the seed and raise it well. We always have to be prepared to do so.”

Pang preferred an economy class seat when flying to other countries, even in old age. When staying at a hotel, he liked to share his room with others. He usually got up at 3:30 am, prayed and memorized Bible verses, and opened the laptop computer he always carried to check and reply to emails using hunt and peck typing for almost two hours. He responded accordingly in Korean, English, Japanese, and Chinese to the emails people sent from all around the world.

I would like to conclude this paper by discussing Rev. Chiyil Pang “theology of tears,” from his book *Pour My Tears into Your Bottle*, Lord, published by Tyrannus Books.

“God listens to prayers of tears and fills the bottle of tears, and the Holy Spirit fills the bottle. By this I mean that one’s tears have the power to impress oneself, one’s neighbors, and God, based on the following words: ‘You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are *they* not in Your book?’ (NASB, Psalm 56:8). Tears give comfort to withered hearts and leave an impression on others. God *does* see our tears of repentance and cleanses us. God listens to the prayers of tears of his saints, when they confess from their tribulations that they cannot win by themselves and admit their weaknesses like a child.”

In three ways Pang explained the tears, with which God fills the bottle. First, the tears of repentance are shed when one recognizes one’s sins and repents through the power of the Holy Spirit. Second, tears of gratitude are shed when we reach the grace of God. Third, tears of love are shed in one’s compassion for the miserable souls who are running down the slope toward hell. They are the tears that we will shed when we realize that we do not have the power to help the miserable souls who do not know Jesus, and we appeal to God for them. “When we shed tears of repentance, then come tears of gratitude. When you shed tears of gratitude, then come the tears of love. God gathers into the bottle all the tears of the highest form of love. When you shed tears of love, you will taste the ultimate victory.” When we apply this message to missions, we can embody his last appeal that we should share “life” and “affection” with the local people.

In this respect, it is worth re-digesting the meaning of the theology of tears, contained in *Pour My Tears into Your Bottle, Lord*, the book he published at the age of 100. “In order to shed those tears, one should receive God’s grace properly through the awareness of sin. Only then can one perform the Spirit-loving missions of the gospel. We can possess tears of repentance in proportion to our consciousness of sinfulness, tears of gratitude in proportion to gratitude, and tears of love in proportion to love of the Spirit.”

* * *

The consummation of prayer is the prayer of tears. The best of prayers is the prayer of tears. We have to learn this type of prayer from babies. In a sense, children express their desires with crying. Crying is calling to their mothers. Babies solve their problems by crying. When we approach God to appeal to him with tears, he will give us everything according to our desires (*Man of Tears, Prayer of Tears*).

Church is like a boat floating on the ocean, the sea of hardships. Sailing boats undergo hardships when facing the storm; but when they are stranded on a reef, they cannot proceed nor retreat. Once stranded, the boat may face difficulties with the possibility of being wrecked. Navigators must be able to steer the boat skillfully to avoid the reefs, and they must be well-informed of where the reefs are located in advance (*Body Stranded on Reef*).

Asking God to make me a person of tears does not mean that I want to become a pessimist but that I want to become a person of tears who serves God more closely, a person who lives solely dependent on God (*Let Me Become a Man of Tears*).

No prayer is more powerful than the prayer of confessions of sins. The power of tears of repentance moves the will of the Lord. Therefore tears of repentance can move the Lord (*Power of Tears*).

Those who have received much grace must work on giving much thanks. We must not forget the fact that those who give thanks are given more grace. Grace flows in those who give thanks. When this gratitude is transformed into tears, we reach the culmination of gratitude. God pours the tears shed at that moment into His prepared bottle (*Tears of Thanksgiving*).

Those who love souls to the end will receive a reward from God for their tears of love. It is God's work that makes us cry and move others with our tears (*Tears of Love*).

Tears of repentance flow from the awareness of sin; gratitude multiplies according to grace; and tears of gratitude come because of the culmination of gratitude. From the climax of gratitude onward we cannot dedicate anything but our bodies, for we have nothing else to offer. Then we can live as people of God (*To become a man of Tears*).

Since God has come to me and is weeping with me, I can lay down my burden and writhe in agony in front of Him. Then I will become like blank paper. I will become an empty vessel. God will then fill the vessel that I am with what is to be given (*Invisible Tears*).



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The Ministry of Jesus' Mission: Seven Ways of Mission

John 1:14, Mark 10:45

Myung Hyuk KIM

While I was getting old and when I was thinking about the “life,” “faith,” “gospel,” and “mission,” I came to say “seven ways of life,” “five ways of faith,” “three ways of gospel,” and “seven ways of mission.” When I thought about mission I thought about the life and ministry of Jesus, the supreme model of mission. Then I counted “seven ways” in which Jesus walked and followed. Jesus was sent by God the Father to the world to carry out the mission of God. Jesus said: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work” (John 4:34) and “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21). Jesus was the first missionary sent by God the Father to carry out the mission of God. Before I explore “The ministry of Jesus’ mission: Seven ways of mission,” I’ll first mention introductory stories in connection with mission.

Whereas the perspective of God the Father is worldwide, universal, and mission directed, the perspective of human beings is individualistic, racial, national, and mission denial. I myself was individualistic, sensual, national, critical, exclusive and hypocritical. There were a number of teachers who awoke me to hold and cherish the worldwide, universal, and mission directed perspective and vision of God. They were the Rev. Cho Dong-jin, Dr. Ralph Winter, professors at the Fuller School of Mission, Dr. John Stott, and Dr. Peter Beyerhaus. When I was about to return home after studying

in the USA for 11 years, I met the Rev. Cho Dong-jin. He advised me to go to the Fuller School of Mission before returning home. With an open mind, I agreed, went to the Fuller School of Mission and stayed there for eight months doing research and studying about world mission. While I was attending classes and listening to the lectures of world-renowned scholars of mission I was able to widen my perspective about my life and ministry. I was able to graft and combine theology of history and theology of mission. The lectures of Dr. Winter were especially impressive. While I was somewhat critical about Dr. Winter's progressive positions I was challenged and awakened to admit some of the new important insights. Since then we have become close friends. When Dr. Winter visited Korea in 1976, I interpreted his lectures. When he revisited Korea in May 2008, we enjoyed a happy reunion and delivered lectures and interviews together. At that time, Dr. Winter pointed out the following very important insights: 1) It is very wrong to say that salvation is immediately gained from confessing a few words, 2) Short term mission trips are very harmful to mission, 3) Noisy singing with drums is very harmful to worship services, 4) It is very wrong to make churches specialized groups of meetings since Christian churches are originally family and community oriented. Such insights were very precious. I have also learned from Dr. John Stott about balanced views of mission, balanced views of evangelism, balanced views of dialogue, balanced views of salvation, and balanced views of conversion. Phrases like "dynamic unity holding both extremes" were very impressive to me. I also learned from Dr. Peter Beyerhaus about trends in evangelical mission theology as well as modern ecumenical mission.

I think we have to look up to Jesus, the supreme model of mission, in order to understand what mission is all about. I think the best Scriptural

passages describing the life and ministry of Jesus are John 1:14 and Mark 10:45. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many “ (Mark 10:45). Now we will concretely consider: “The ministry of Jesus’ mission: Seven ways of mission.”

First, Jesus’ mission was “abandoning,” “leaving,” and “going somewhere.” Jesus, the supreme model of mission, abandoned heavenly glory, left his heavenly home, and came to the world. “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Phil. 2:6–7). The Bible points out that “He made himself nothing.” The Rev. Park Yune Sun interpreted this passage as meaning that Jesus abandoned and left the heavenly glory. Jesus, the Son of God, abandoned heavenly glory, left his heavenly home, and came to the world, even to a manger of animals. Jesus lived almost his whole life in the house of a poor carpenter. The ministry of Jesus’ mission was “abandoning,” “leaving,” and “going somewhere.” The ministry of Jesus’ mission was going to the poor and sick people who were despised and condemned. In fact Abraham, Moses, and the disciples of Jesus followed the ways of “abandoning,” “leaving,” and “going somewhere.” Robert Jermaine Thomas left his home country of Wales and came to the poor country of Korea. Underwood and Appenzeller left their home country of the USA and came to the poor country of Korea. They were precious and honorable forefathers of missionaries in Korea. They became honorable forefathers of the Korean church.

Second, Jesus' mission was not simply "going somewhere" but "becoming" one of the people of that place. Jesus was originally God and the Logos but abandoned and left his heavenly home and came to the world and "became" a man with human flesh and blood. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). This was called "incarnation." Jesus even became a kind of sinful man. The apostle Paul pointed out that God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful man. "For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3,4). It is an unthinkable and amazing truth that God the almighty became a man with sinful flesh and blood. To the Jews as well as to the Greeks it was unthinkable, foolish, and despicable. But the Bible repeatedly pointed out the unthinkable truth as follows. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

Mission is "becoming." Mission is "becoming" even poor, weak, and despised. Jesus became a similar person to the sinful Samaritan woman in order to do mission. Jesus became tired and thirsty because she was tired and thirsty. The apostle Paul confessed that he became many different kinds of things in order to carry out the ministry of mission. "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became

like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor. 9:19–23). Mission is white people becoming colored people, American people becoming Korean people, and Korean people becoming Thai people. St. Francis was born a son of a wealthy man in Assisi and became a beggar and a sick person. The Rev. Son-yang Won had a sincere desire to become a leper. Mission is denying one's own being and becoming another kind of being. A good missionary is a missionary who can eat whatever kinds of food the native people eat and who can live whatever kinds of life the native people live. Mission is not just "going somewhere" but "becoming" a kind of people of the place.

Third, Jesus' mission was "dwelling together." Jesus was originally living in glory together with God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and angels. In time, Jesus came to this world and dwelt with all kinds of human beings. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). Mission is not just "becoming" but "dwelling together" among us. Jesus was born as a human baby and lived with a human mother and human father. Jesus later lived together with his disciples and even with all kinds of sinners. Jesus went to the sinners and ate with them. "While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples" (Matt. 9:10). Mission is white people living together with African people, like Livingstone and Schweitzer. Mission is American people living together with Korean people like Underwood and Appenzeller. Mission is Korean people living together with Thai people like

Shin Hong-shik and his descendants. St. Francis and the Rev. Son Yang-won left home and lived together with the lepers. Mission is not just going somewhere and providing a large camp of evangelism and returning soon. Mission is going somewhere and “living together” with other people.

Dr. Sundermeier, a German missiologist, defined mission as “konvivenz” which means “living together.” The word “konvivenz” came from the Brazilian villages where village peoples were living together, helping each other, and celebrating together. The word meant “mutual helping, mutual learning, and mutual celebrating.” Dr. Sundermeier found the principle of “konvivenz” in the life of Jesus recorded in the Gospels of the New Testament. He said, “Jesus lived together with the people and shared pains and joy together with them. Jesus lived not only for them but also with them. Jesus often shared a table with people. A missionary church is the church ‘living together’ with others.” It is true. Mission is “living together” with other people.

Fourth, Jesus’ mission was “serving” with compassion, forgiveness, and love. Jesus said the following: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45), “I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27). There was always compassion, forgiveness, and love in the heart of Jesus when he served sinners and sick people. Jesus touched the body of a leper and served him kindly. Jesus touched the hand of a woman with fever and served her kindly. Jesus touched the eyes of blind men and served them kindly. Jesus extended his hands of compassion, forgiveness, and love even to the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus on the cross and even to the robbers beside him and served them kindly. Jesus told his disciples to love enemies and even

those who persecute them. Mission is “serving” with compassion, forgiveness and love. St. Francis and the Rev. Son Yang-won extended the hands of compassion, forgiveness, and love to all kinds of peoples and served them kindly. Mission is “serving” with compassion, forgiveness, and love.

Even though I am a lacking and shameful sinner I have visited various places of the world and tried to extend hands of love and service to poor people. In the summer of 1988, I visited Burkina Faso in North Africa and helped them to dig more than ten wells for the famine stricken Muslim people. In 1989, I visited Pangeladesh and helped them to build an eye clinic for the calamity stricken poor and sick people and sent a nutritionist missionary. Since 1995, I have helped flood stricken North Korean people as well as leprosy people. Since 1999, I have helped about 160 orphans and poor students in Yanbian province, China. In 2005, I helped Afghanistan people to build a school for the poor students in Murodsheh, Afghanistan. I also arranged for nine leaders from five different religions in Korea to visit Kaesong in North Korea with 300 tons of flour on August 27, 2010. In January 2014, I visited Pakistan to comfort the terror stricken people in Peshawar.

I have learned, to my surprise, how extending hands of love and service creates remarkably warm responses. When I visited Muslim or Communist countries I did not preach or give lectures. I just extended hands of love and service. There were, however, always remarkable responses of gratitude and thanksgiving. In some Muslim places they expressed gratitude and thanksgiving by singing: “We thank you in the name of Jesus, Hallelujah. We welcome you in the name of Jesus, Halleluiah.” I was really surprised and shocked. I have found out the remarkable truth that the way of mission is not necessarily the way of preaching or lecturing. The way of mission is the way of “serving” with compassion, forgiveness, and love. I have found

out such remarkable truths in Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, Yanbian area in China, Afghanistan, and North Korea.

Fifth, Jesus' mission was bringing "reconciliation" and "peace." The ultimate purpose of Jesus' coming was bringing and fulfilling "reconciliation" and "peace" together with saving sinners on earth. He came as the King of Peace. "For to us a child is born.... He will be called Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14). "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Eph. 2:14–16). Jesus visited a Samaritan woman as the Lord of "reconciliation" and "peace." She was living in despair and hatred against the world. Jesus approached her with a humble and warm attitude and began to talk to her. She was at first resistant to Jesus. Jesus was, however, patient and continued to talk gently. At the end she surrendered. She was finally reconciled with Jesus and gained peace. She was even reconciled with Samaritan people and gained peace.

St. Francis followed the footsteps of Jesus bringing "reconciliation" and "peace." He even went to the animals and plants and realized "reconciliation" and "peace" with them. St. Francis prayed: "Lord, make me an instrument of peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Lord, make me an instrument of peace." Rev. Son Yang-won and the Rev. Han Kyung-chik also

approached all kinds of poor and despised people with humble and warm hearts and realized “reconciliation” and “peace” with them.

Mission is bringing “reconciliation” and “peace.” I firmly believe that the kind of missionary which the modern world needs badly is the missionary who can bring “reconciliation” and “peace.” I believe that bringing and realizing these is the goal and omega point of the Bible and the salvation history. Mission is the means and process of accomplishing reconciliation and peace. Reconciliation and peace between South and North as well as with Muslim countries is not an elective task but an indispensable and required task. It is the will of God and the commandment of God. “Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand” (Ezek. 37:17). “To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ” (Eph. 1:10).

How can we bring reconciliation and peace? It is impossible by means of political or military approaches. It is impossible through holding up high the flags of truth. First of all, we have to be washed through the blood of Jesus Christ. There should appear men of God carrying humble compassion, forgiveness, love, and reconciliation in their hearts and bodies. Men of God such as Jacob and Joseph who did not seek revenge on their brothers but knelt down before them and wept with compassion and love. “And Joseph wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him. Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you’” (Gen. 45:2–5). The kind of missionaries God wants and the world needs are such missionaries who could go to the various places suffering from anger, hatred, and battles and could bring and realize reconciliation and peace there.

I hated the Japanese, the North Korean, the Chinese, the Muslims and other religious peoples. I hated even liberals as well as Full Gospel Christians. I have, however, gradually changed. St. Francis, the Rev. Son Yang-won, and the Rev. Han Kyung-chik played important influences in my changes. I came to respect and love the Japanese, the North Koreans, the Chinese, and other kinds of peoples and played important roles in expanding fellowship and mutual help. I took the initiative in helping poor North Korean people as well as poor Korean Chinese children in the Yanbian area in China. I visited Muslim countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan and helped them to build an eye clinic in Bangladesh and a school in Afghanistan. I came to respect such liberal church leaders as the Rev. Kang Won-yong and such full gospel church leaders as the Rev. Cho Yong-gi and came to enjoy intimate fellowship with them. I even came to make intimate fellowship with the leaders of five other religions in Korea. I arranged that the nine leaders of five other religions visited Kaesong in North Korea and delivered 300 tons of flour to the North Korean delegates on August 27, 2010. I have to confess that all of these changed things happened through the abundant mercy and grace of God and through the influences of forefathers of faith. I firmly believe that the kind of missionaries which the modern world needs badly are missionaries who can bring and realize reconciliation and peace.

Sixth, Jesus' mission was "playing together" with others. Jesus was eating and chatting and playing together with children and with all kinds of sinners. Mission is not merely preaching, lecturing, or teaching. I believe that mission is "becoming," "living together," "serving with love," "making peace," and "playing together." I have many happy experiences of "play-

ing together” with missionaries and local people. Sometimes I went bowling. Sometimes I played ping pong. Sometimes I played soccer. Playing together has brought many happy fruits. Once I bowled with three young missionaries in Brazil on two evenings. Later, I found out that a younger missionary was experiencing much stress and despair in the field of mission and was about to quit and return home. After bowling with a professor for two evenings he came to change his mind about leaving the mission field and going home. I was very happy to hear the good news. Playing together brings much good fruit in mission fields. Once I played games with about twenty children in Vladivostok for about four hours. I played basketball, soccer, swing, and other games. I distributed gifts. They were the children of the Korean missionaries in Russia. The children became very happy and were much encouraged after playing games with a grandfather. A small boy handed me a gift of box when I left. Inside the box there was a sentence that said, “Pastor. Thank you. Come again. Chung Ye Chan. 2000.6.10.” I still keep the box in my office. In the afternoon I took half a dozen wives of missionaries to the beach and entertained them with delicious seafood. They were happy and very encouraged. Five years later, I visited Vladivostok again and met them again. The forty-six missionaries, together with their children, gathered at a Korean restaurant. They were very happy. The children were extremely happy. Some of them showed me a picture. It was a picture of the children and me taken together five years previously. I was deeply moved. Once I took the local Russian pastors to lunch and played ping pong with them. They were very happy and we became closer and friendly. I still believe that mission is not simply preaching, lecturing, or teaching. Mission is playing together with other people. When we are playing together our minds are touched and moved. I have such moving experi-

ences in Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Hong Kong. Mission is playing together.

Seventh, Jesus' mission was living a "life of sacrifice" and dying a "death of sacrifice." Jesus the supreme model of missionary lived a life of sacrifice and died a death of sacrifice. "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2). Christianity is the religion of sacrificial life and sacrificial death. Mission was never accomplished without a life of sacrifice and a death of sacrifice. Mission in Korea started with the life of sacrifice and the death of sacrifice of the Rev. Robert Jermaine Thomas, the young missionary from Wales. He died a death of sacrifice at the Daedong River in Pyongyang North Korea on September 5, 1866. If there were no sacrifice of the Rev. Thomas there could have never been the coming of such missionaries as the Rev. Underwood and Appenzeller in 1885. Sixteen years later, the commercial treaty between Korea and America was made, in 1882. Two years later, in 1884, Dr. Allen came to Korea. In the following year of 1885, missionary Appenzeller and missionary Underwood came to Korea. We are really surprised and deeply moved to find out what kind of lengthy, deep and amazing influences lives and deaths of sacrifice brought in the history of salvation. The Rev. Horace Underwood and the Rev. Henry Appenzeller came to Korea and they lived the life of sacrifice and died the death of sacrifice. They built the foundations of the Korean churches as well as Korean schools and hospitals. Mission is living a life of sacrifice and dying a death of sacrifice. The life of sacrifice and death of sacrifice create the history of salvation and the history of mission. Mission is living a life of sacrifice and dying a death of sacrifice.

Now I am going to summarize what I have said about the mission of

Jesus Christ. First, Jesus' mission was "abandoning," "leaving," and "going somewhere." Second, Jesus' mission was not simply "going somewhere" but "becoming" one of the people of that place. Third, Jesus' mission was "dwelling together." Fourth, Jesus' mission was "serving" with compassion, forgiveness, and love. Fifth, Jesus' mission was bringing "reconciliation" and "peace." Sixth, Jesus' mission was "playing together" with others. Seventh, Jesus' mission was living a "life of sacrifice" and dying a "death of sacrifice." If we follow the ways and footsteps of mission and if we carry the seven characteristics of mission in our body and heart, the result will be the remarkable ministries of compassion, forgiveness, love, salvation, reconciliation, and mission in the world. To add one more, "partnership and cooperation" are badly needed in the ministries of mission. I really wish and pray that I could imitate the missionary life of Jesus and missionary lives of the forefathers of faith.

Finally, I will quote "My wish and prayer" which I wrote a few years ago. "O God, my father, I confess I am the chief of sinners. Have mercy upon me and wash me thoroughly from all my iniquities through the blood of Jesus. Please let me follow the footsteps of the Lord and let me go to the suffering people and extend hands of comfort and encouragement. Please let me follow the footsteps of the apostle Paul and the footsteps of the Rev. Ju Gi-cheol and the Rev. Son Yang-won and let me live a life of sacrifice and let me die a death of sacrifice for such suffering people as the North Korean brothers and Muslim brothers. Please let me become a small fertilizer and seed to bring mercy, forgiveness, and love where there are enmity, anger, and hatred. Please let me bring reconciliation, unity, and peace where there are division, conflict, and confrontation. Please do not let me just deliver fluent sermons or profound lectures. Please let me carry the tears of

mercy which the Lord carried. Please let me carry the heart of love which the Lord carried. Please let me carry the marks of death which the Lord carried. I pray these things in the name of Jesus relying upon the blood of Jesus and relying upon the mercy and love of God the Father. O God, my father, have mercy upon the Korean church, upon the North Korean people, upon the Japanese and Muslim people.” (2011. 3. 29).



Rev. Myung Hyuk Kim is a retired pastor of the Kangbyun Presbyterian Church, the chairman of the Korea Evangelical Fellowship, and a juridical trustee of the Korea World Missions Association.

Statistics of Korean Missionaries as of December, 2015

– 27,205 missionaries in 171 countries,
an increase of 528 last year alone

KWMA¹

1. Prior to the Statistical Analysis

The second five year plan of ‘Target 2030’ was completed in 2015, ten years after its vision proclamation in 2006. In the Korean Global Mission Leadership Forum held in November, 2015, we reviewed the first and second five year plans and made further plans for the third five years. Over the past 10 years (2006-2016), the number of Korean missionaries has been increased by 12,309. (14,896 in 2006, 27,205 in 2015), making an average annual increase of 1,200 missionaries. Along with this quantitative growth, there has been development in professional areas such as Mission Theory and Practices, Mission Mobilization and Public Relations, Mission Training, Mission Administration, Mission Strategies, and Mission Support.

The very fact that the number of Korean missionaries has increased even during the 21st century, where the Korean Church as a whole shares a sense of crisis, is quite stimulating; it implies that the missional efforts for world evangelization still exist. Followed by last year’s decrease from a four-digit number to a three-digit number, this year’s number remains to be three-digit; to be more specific, we have 27,205 Korean missionaries

¹ The Korea World Missions Association

serving in 171 countries in total. As we are about to begin the third five year plan of “Target 2030” (2016-2020), an increase of 528 missionaries certainly gives Korean mission stakeholders both a homework and a challenge. These statistics should offer a turning point for Korean missions to set the balance between the quantitative and qualitative growth. Korean mission stakeholders have already laid a foundation for qualitative growth since 2000 through NCOWE. For instance, strategic missionary arrangement(3rd), presentation of vision ‘Target 2030’ for the future of Korean mission (4th), finding Korean mission models for cooperating with emerging non-western mission leaders(5th), and the pursuit of Self-Theologizing and Self-Missilogizing (6th) indicate Korean mission stakeholders’ efforts to keep missions in balance. It is also observed that Frontier Missions is still being emphasized and as mission fields are strategically divided into 18 areas, more strategical meetings in each of these areas have been vitalized for the past ten years, especially during the second five year period, from 2010 to 2015.

The statistical figures presented above are being used as preliminary data for strategic mission activities, including Frontier Missions. It is the reason why KWMA integrates and organizes such statistics annually. The number of missionaries presented includes both KWMA- and non-KWMA members who belong to 39 denominational mission departments as well as 195 para-churches. KWMA began to include non-KWMA members in its statistics since year 2006. Despite such efforts, the number of Korean missionaries is not accurate due to limitations involved in investigation processes.

One must thus remember that a certain number of missionaries are not counted in the KWMA statistics, for example, those sent by local churches

and/or particular denominations’ presbytery itself. Moreover, there are organizations that are not willing to expose their data. The quantitative growth of the Korean Church should thus be analyzed keeping this in mind.

In 2012, a survey was conducted in a selected number of mission fields in order to identify and confirm the number of missionaries backwards, and the results implied that the actual number of Korean missionaries should outnumber at least by one thousand. Consequently, one must remember that the actual number of missionaries exceeds the statistical figure.

2. A Summary of Respondents

The statistical research was conducted for more than a month. A request to fill out the survey was emailed to each organization, and 234 organizations in total, including both denominational mission departments and parachurches, responded. Here is a summary of the respondents:

<TABLE 1> **Respondents and Their Size**

	Number of Missionaries	Number of Departments		Number of Missionaries	Number of Parachurches
Denomina- tional Mission Departments	over 1000	3	Parachurches	over 100	37
	over 100	15		over 50	26
	over 20	9		over 10	76
	less than 20	12		less than 10	56
Total		39			195

42% of the respondents belonged to denominational mission departments whereas 52%, to para-churches.

**<TABLE 2> Comparison between the Respondents:
Denominational Mission Departments and Para-Churches**

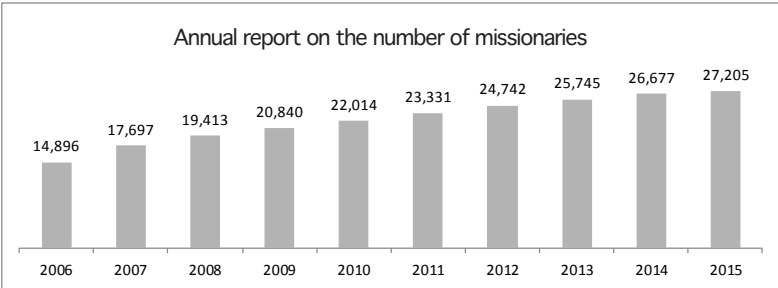
	Number of Re- spondents	Number of Missionaries	Rate(%)	Dual Membership
Denominational Mission Depart- ments	39	11,930	42%	402
Para-Churches	195	16,396	58%	1,841
Total	234	28,326	100%	2,243

3. Numerical Data of Missionaries in 2015.

The data collected indicate that there are 27,205 Korean missionaries serving in 171 countries in 2015. The Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Cape Verde, and Djibouti were newly added whereas Eritrea and Puerto Rico were excluded due to the lack of mission activity report.

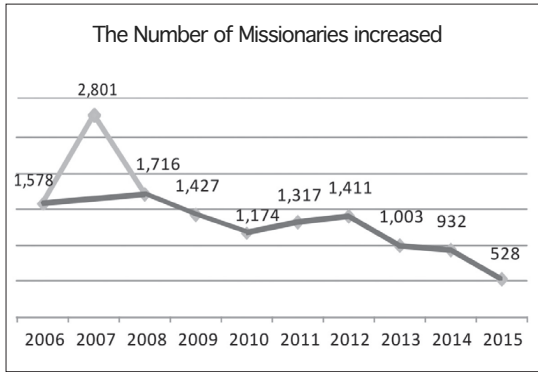
1) Status by Year (2006-2015 / 1st and 2nd Five Year Periods of “Target 2030”)

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Number of Missionaries	16,616	18,625	20,503	22,130	22,685	24,001	25,665	26,703	27,767	28,326
Dual Membership	1,984	1,856	2,180	2,579	1,341	1,341	1,847	1,916	2,180	2,243
Number of In-Field Missionaries	14,896	17,679	19,413	20,840	22,014	23,331	24,742	25,745	26,677	27,205



2) Increase in Number of Missionaries by Year

year	increment
2006	1,578
2007	2,801
2008	1,716
2009	1,427
2010	1,174
2011	1,317
2012	1,411
2013	1,003
2014	932
2015	528



(* A noticeable increase in 2007 was due to the extended target groups)

After the vision proclamation of ‘Target 2030’, the number of missionaries has been increased steadily for 10 consecutive years since 2006. An average annual increase of 1,200 can be observed.

3) Increase in Organization Numbers

Even though mission fields sense that the number of missionaries in training is decreasing, the actual number of missionaries sent by GMS,

PCKWM, KMCMISSION has steadily increased as observed in 2014. Para-churches such as InterCop that has experienced an increase of 100 missionaries and Paul Mission International, TIM, and OM have also been consistent in terms of sending missionaries.

Some of para-churches, however, did respond saying that the number of missionaries decreased, for “nominal” missionaries were eventually excluded from their count. The same phenomenon was observed among denominational mission departments. For instance, FMB’s missionary number dropped down to a two-digit number because they wanted to define the imaginary number for further qualitative growth. This seems to be one of the positive results of the statistical research system that KWMA developed since 2011.

4) A Comparison of Frontier Missions Status between 2014 and 2015

‘Target 2030’ emphasizes the importance of Frontier Missions and suggests directions. Pioneer Status Index shows that a considerable number of missionaries work in general missions areas codified as G2 and G1. It is encouraging to know that the number of missionaries in Frontier Missions still increased in 2015, though it is not a remarkable increase. In the area of F2, the number increased by 163 and in F3, by 325. On the other hand, there was a decrease in number in F1 compared to year 2014. This must be because of the difficulties experienced in visa extension processes.

Pioneer Status Index

Section	Number of Total Countries	Number of Dispatched Countries in 2015	Number of Necessary Korean Missionaries until 2030	Number of Dispatched Missionaries in 2014	Number of Dispatched Missionaries in 2015	Needed Number of Korean Missionaries until 2030	Needed Number of Global Missionaries until 2030
F1	11	10	22,316	4,629	4,581	17,735	102,840
F2	41	40	9,911	6,396	6,549	3,362	45,694
F3	43	39	58,890	5,233	5,576	53,314	271,433
G1	74	42	4,733	3,557	3,593	1,140	21,811
G2	55	40	4,150	7,952	8,027	-3,877	19,124
계	224	171	100,000	27,767	28,326	71,840	460,902

* reference : G is the abbreviation for General Missions and F is for Frontier Missions. In the area of G2, the rate of evangelist is above 15.5%, in the case of G1, the rate of evangelist is 10-15.5%. F1 is the area that the rate of evangelist is 5-10%, in F2, the rate of evangelist is 0-5%(areas of christian non-persecution), in the case of F3, the rate of evangelist is 0-5%(areas of christian persecution).

5) Status by Region (A Comparison between 2014 and 2015)

Asia is the most common area for Korean missionaries. Compared to 2014, the number of missionaries sent to Asia increased in 2015. Many missionaries are sent to Asia because of its religious background as well as geographical location. 53% of Korean missionaries which comes to 15,068 in number, are currently serving in Northeast, Southeast, South, and Central Asia.

The area in which the number of Korean missionaries increased the most compared to 2014 is Southeast Asia (229 more missionaries were sent in 2015), followed by South Asia (increased by 94), Middle East (increased by 67), and Central Asia (increased by 59). Northeast Asia, compared to

2014, has experienced a decrease in number by 69. It must have been a result of involuntary evacuation and/or banishment.

Area	Number of Missionaries	
	2015	2014
Northeast Asia	6,430	6,499
Southeast Asia	5,575	5,346
North America	3,196	3,199
Korea	1,906	1,863
South Asia	1,860	1,766
Western Europe	1,368	1,351
Middle East	1,315	1,248
Latin America	1,222	1,236
Central Asia	1,203	1,144
Southeast Africa	1,200	1,167
Eastern Europe	1,101	1,095
the South Pacific	951	910
North Africa	553	518
Western and central Africa	348	332
the Caribbean Sea	98	93
Total	28,326	27,767

6) The Present Status of Most Dynamic Countries

Countries where Korean missionaries are most dynamically involved in missions include ‘X’ in Northeast Asia, the United States of America, the Philippines, Japan, India, Thailand, ‘I’ in Southeast Asia, Cambodia, Russia, ‘T’, and Germany. More than 600 Korean missionaries which counts for more than 50 percent of the total number of Korean missionaries are found to be working there. Whereas the United States of America, the Philip-

pines, and Germany are considered to be G (General Missions Area), 'X' in Northeast Asia, Japan, India, Thailand, 'I' in Southeast Asia, Cambodia, Russia, and 'T' are F (Frontier Missions Area). Hence, though more than 50 percent of Korean missionaries are concentrated in these countries, it must be said that the Korean mission stakeholders recognize them as strategically important mission fields.

10 Most Dynamic Countries

	Name of the Country	Type of Mission Field	Number of Mission Organizations	Total Number of Missionaries
1	'X' in the Northeast Asia	F1	151	4,162
2	America	G2	76	2,668
3	Philippines	G2	92	1,672
4	Japan	F2	86	1,494
5	India	F3	87	1,059
6	Thailand	F2	66	854
7	'I' in the Southeast Asia	F3	58	769
8	Cambodia	F2	80	744
9	Russia/the Maritime Province	F2	60	639
10	'T'	F3	60	583
Total/Rate		14,644/51.6%		
Total Number of Missionaries		28,326		

7) The Present Status of Major Ministries

The present status of major ministries of Korean missionaries can be understood only comprehensively because it is characteristic of Korean missionaries to be involved in a variety of mission tasks. From this perspective, it may be argued that the statistics help one understand “the ministry

tendency of Korean missionaries.” The largest part of Korean missionaries has been church planting, discipleship training, campus missions, and education missions. Table 4 summarizes mission ministries that more than 500 Korean missionaries are committed to.

In 2015, compared to 2014, the number of countries with church planting emphasis increased (from 137 to 140). Also the number of missionaries involved in church planting ministry increased by 484, making the total number increase from 11,095 to 11,579).

Type of Ministry	Number of Countries	Number of Missionaries
Church Planting	140	11,579
Disciple Training	142	9,033
Campus	70	2,470
Education	78	1,418
Welfare/Development	80	1,306
Medical Care	55	679
Culture/Sports	52	552
Children/Youth	69	490
Total		27,527

8) Current Status of Missionary Kids

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of Missionary Kids	10,433	11,885	12,674	13,868	14,200	15,913	16,586	17,618	18,442	18,543

(The figure in 2010 is an estimate.)

4. Conclusion

1) Meaning of Numbers

Compared to previous years, there was only an insignificant increase in the number of Korean missionaries in 2015. Just as in case of FMB, missionaries over 75 and nominal missionaries will not be counted. This is a desirable phenomenon, the one that can be observed in the process of keeping the balance between qualitative and quantitative growth.

Looking back on the past 10 years of ‘Target 2030’, one may assert that all six areas of missions (Mission Theory and Practices, Mission Mobilization and Public Relations, Mission Training, Mission Administration, Mission Strategies, and Mission Support) have grown consistently.

Section	1st five years (2006-2010)	2nd 5 years (2011-2015)
Theory / Practices	3	3.05
Mobilization / Public Relations	2.6	3.01
Training / Sending	2.7	3.19
Mission Administration	2.7	3.86
Strategy	2.9	3.28
Support	2.8	3.23
Total	2.8	3.27

The most underdeveloped area of missions turns out to be ‘mission mobilization and public relations’ which is directly related to the increase in the number of missionaries sent. The drop in the number of participants in ‘Mission Korea,’ a place for young adults’ recruitment, draws an external downward curve. Though there are external factors involved, such as Ko-

rea becoming an aging society as well as a rapid fall in younger population, the Korean Church should take mobilization as a critical task, not overlooking the change of ‘quantitative index.’ Missionary statistical research thus offers many insights and direction for Korean mission stakeholders. Hence, it is a meaningful task to carry out.

2) Cooperation for Research Scope Expansion

The statistical research has been systematized since 2011 and has been made easy. Nevertheless, it still takes much energy and physical labor to collect responses. Furthermore, due to lack of human resources, researches are still not prioritized. Yet at the same time, though it is inferred that administrative system in both denominational mission departs and parachurches is still poor, one must admit that for the past 10 years much has been developed in the area of mission administration.

Also, for the purpose of grasping a more reliable numerical status of missionaries as well as member care, Mission Field Headquarters need to be established. With Mission Field Headquarter established, more accurate statics will result which in turn will help bridge the gap between the actual numbers counted in the field and the ones estimated back in Korea.

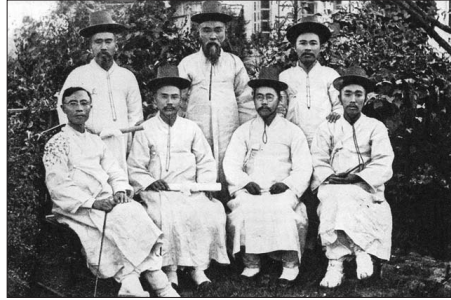
Soon the 3rd five years of ‘Target 2030’ project will begin. Some may feel anxious about it, but it must be said that it is not a must that a great number of missionaries are sent out. It seems legitimate to argue that ever since 2000 efforts to keep quantitative growth in balance with qualitative one have been made. With an increasing number of retired missionaries, it may not be easy to expect an increase in missionary number. However, we still have hope in raising and training older missionaries (in their 40s and the early of 50s) as the society ages. Moreover, in the midst of crises, it is

anticipated that in prayers and petition movement for advanced Korean missions will be further be activated.

I want to thank all administrative personnel for their cooperation and sincerely offer words of encouragement and consolation to many faithful missionaries who serve in different parts of the world.

(It has been translated by Eunpyo JEON.)

The First Seven Graduates of Presbyterian Seminary in Pyongyang, 1907



Front row, from the left: Seokjin Han, Gipoong Lee, Seonju Gil, Inseo Song
Back row, from the left: Kichang Bang, Kyengjo Seo, Jeonbaek Yang

Story

Six of the seven people in the photograph wore full Korean attire. Seokjin Han probably did not have a topknot on account of the short length of his hair; he did not even wear a gat (Korean traditional hat made of bamboo and horsehair). Their attires show that all except one kept their traditions. Each of them was ordained at the Presbytery Council in September 1907. The formation of the presbytery of the Korean Presbyterian Church only 22 years after the first missionary arrived in Korea in 1885 shows that the three principles of the Nevius mission strategy had been fully implemented. (1: Self-supporting: Accomplish economic independence by constructing chapels and elementary schools without assistance from overseas missionary societies. 2: Self-propagating: Send money gathered from the Korean church fellowship to missionaries in regional and overseas areas. 3: Self-governing: Produce Korean elders and ministers, support the formation of presbyteries and annual conferences, and help Koreans to manage and govern churches autonomously). The seven students graduated after five years of theological studies in a seminary and practical activities in local churches. Their ordination was a symbol of "self-governance," which is the third principle.

(Sung-Deuk Oak. 2009. *The First Great Revivals*. Seoul: Hongsungsa.)

The Korea World Missions Association



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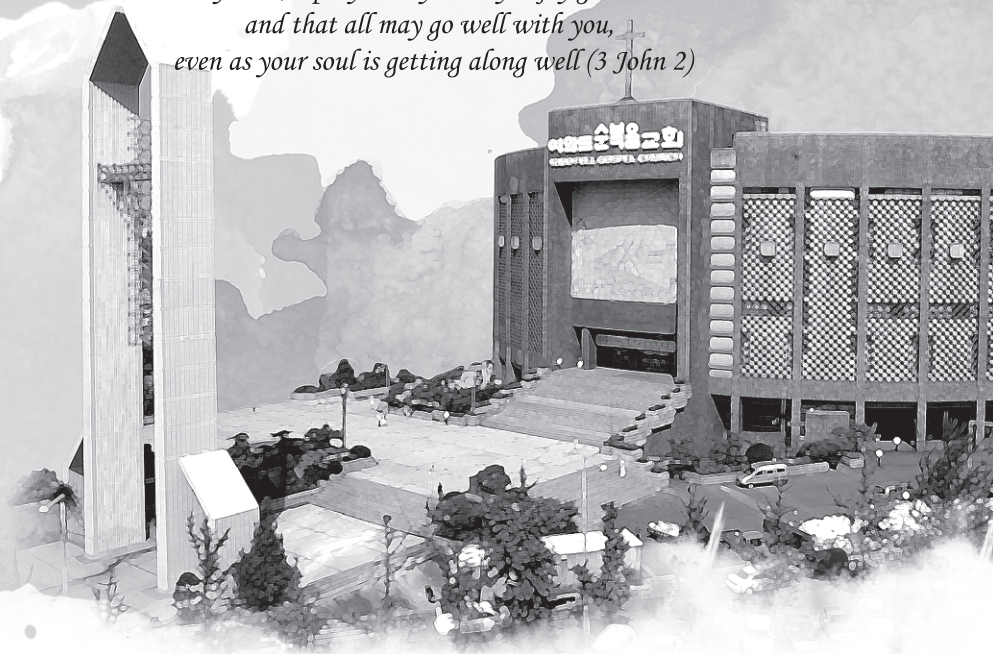
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*Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health
and that all may go well with you,
even as your soul is getting along well (3 John 2)*



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