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Progressive Presbyterianism: Missionaries, Modernization, and Protest on the Korean Peninsula, 1884~1919

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INTRODUCTION

This paper explores Presbyterian missionary work in Korea during the Progressive Era from 1884 to 1919.¹ It argues that progressive American Presbyterians developed unique methods of proselytizing, methods that promoted (1) modernization along Western lines and (2) protest against Japanese colonialism. By employing the Nevius System, encouraging literacy and capitalism, and providing expanded opportunities for women, they disseminated a Christianity that helped to modernize Korea in the Western image. By engaging in the “Million Souls for Christ This Year” Campaign of 1910, sharing negative attitudes toward imperial Japan, and, especially, catalyzing the March First Movement of 1919 through a message that inspired Wilsonian self-determination, they formed the backbone of the protests against colonial Japan.

A contextual study of the memoirs of three pioneering Presbyterian missionaries – Horace N. Allen, Annie L. A. Baird, and Horace G. Underwood – demonstrates that American Presbyterians in Korea during the Progressive Era were more than disseminators of conservative Protestant theology, however. Along with preaching the Bible’s inerrancy and literalism, progressive Presbyterians promoted (1) modernization along Western lines and (2) protest against Japanese colonialism. Their commitment to improving the lives of all Koreans by preaching Christ crucified was influenced by their cultural context. Allen’s Things

1. For the purposes of this paper, the terms “Progressive Era,” “progressive,” and “progressivism” refer to a commitment to social progress that acclaimed historian of progressivism Daniel T. Rogers defines expansively and inclusively as a commitment “less to an abstract principle than to a distinctive place at history’s leading edge” in improving life for all people, without exception. See Daniel T. Rogers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998), 52.

Korean (1908), Baird’s *Inside Views of Mission Life* (1913), and Underwood’s *The Call of Korea* (1908) show that they preached a progressive social gospel along with the good news of Jesus.

MODERNIZATION ALONG WESTERN LINES

The Presbyterian progressives of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries entered a nation of Korea that was already churning in a maelstrom of reform. They did not introduce modernization; they joined it. Modern Korea was born during the Kabo Reforms, 1894-1896, during which King Kojong of the Joseon Dynasty, influenced by modernizing

CONTENTS

- 1 Progressive Presbyterianism: Missionaries, Modernization, and Protest on the Korean Peninsula, 1884~1919**
Nicholas W. Gentile
- 10 Journeying in Asia: Incarnational Living in Hope**
Lawrence Ko
- 14 Igniting Intergenerational Mission in a Japanese Context**
Micaela Braithwaite
- 17 The Holy Spirit and Missio Dei**
Humphrey Iheukwumere Okerefor & Timothy U. U. Oguzie
- 25 Mission: Contextualizing Theology & the Gospel**
Chester Jae Young Choi

Japan's victory over China in the First Sino-Japanese War and the autonomy China granted to Korea, appeared to direct sweeping changes. In reality, the Japanese ambassador to Korea and his lackeys in Seoul, directed the weak Kojong, who, as a puppet in power, danced their jig when they pulled the strings. As historian Bruce Cumings explains, "Otori Keisuke, the Japanese minister, and a host of Japanese and Korean aides" sent "reform after reform to Korea under the signature of Kojong (who duly signed every one, and no doubt any autumn leaves that wafted across his desk)."² Over two hundred reforms brought Korea into the modern age by abolishing "class distinctions, slavery, the exam system, even the clothes Koreans wore, even the long pipes that symbolized yangban [Korean aristocracy] status," and even the signature topknots of the Joseon.³ The Kabo Reforms also established Korea's independence from China (even as they reflected Japan's tightening grip on the peninsula), a constitutional monarchy, a modern fiscal system (complete with modern taxation, banking, coinage, weights and measures, and Western calendaring), modern police and military forces, a modern educational system, and a modern judicial system, which included laws to protect children, widows, and families.⁴

The Nevius System

One way that the Presbyterian progressives joined and influenced the modernization of Korean society was through the Nevius System. The Nevius System was the brainchild of John L. Nevius, an American Presbyterian missionary in China for four decades. Nevius organized his congregation of Chinese converts according to Western principles of representation, self-sufficiency, and stewardship. As Allen remembered, "In the spring of 1890, Dr. and Mrs. Nevius, of Chefoo, China, visited Seoul, and in several conferences, laid before the missionaries there the methods of missionary work known as the Nevius method."⁵ By 1891, his methods had diffused throughout the Presbyterian missions in Korea, where the missionaries in Pyongyang were his most ardent disciples. As Kim and Kim summarize, the Nevius congregations in Korea were characterized by "a strong, independent native church which was missionary in its own right and not dependent on the foreign mission" and a superintendent who was trained by the American missionaries but who was paid by his own congregation and who exercised "pastoral responsibility over [a] 'circuit' of churches."⁶ The Western ideals that the Nevius System

inculcated dovetailed nicely with the modernization of the Kabo Reforms because they diffused power and responsibility among the many, rather than concentrating them among the few. Koreans who accepted a Western-style king in parliament in Gojong's new constitutional monarchy were more ready to accept a Western-style superintendent who acted with the advice and consent of the Presbyterian missionaries to lead his circuit's congregations. The two Western systems, both new and both modern, developed simultaneously.

The Nevius System's diffusion of power among all levels flew in the face of the top-down hierarchy of pre-modern Korean society. In pre-modern Korea, social status was hereditary and rigid. Yangban, the group of Confucian scholar-officials who formed the Korean aristocracy of the Joseon period, remained yangban throughout the generations and worked with their heads, while peasants remained peasants throughout the generations and worked with their hands. Power and privilege were divided along these hereditary lines, and an exceptionally bright peasant rarely crossed the social chasm and became a yangban. As scholars of history and literature Yongho Ch'oe, Peter Lee, and Theodore de Bary explain, this "social hierarchy remained largely intact until it shattered under the impact of the modern world at the end of the [Joseon] dynasty. ... A small hereditary elite of Confucian scholar-officials continued to monopolize office-holding and dominate land-owning while preserving the status distinctions that set it apart from the rest of society."⁷

In 1908, Underwood noted that the Nevius System disrupted the traditional social hierarchy and replaced it with a modern division of labor in which Korean converts shared power in the local ecclesiastical organization. As he explained, "In a peculiar way has it been demonstrated in Korea that from the very start the growth of the Church has been due to the 'laymen's movement.'"⁸ In 1913, Baird painted a clearer picture of the scope of the "laymen's movement"—the meaningful participation of Korean converts in their local congregations—by stating that "the seven city churches with congregations totaling about four thousand" were "very largely in the hands of Koreans."⁹ Indeed, as Allen summarized in 1908, missionaries created seminaries for the express purpose of educating the "native ministry that shall do the actual work among the people of the interior."¹⁰ Sharing power, rather than concentrating it in a religious aristocracy of American missionaries, was a Western, modern notion that encouraged self-respect and self-sufficiency for a people who had been taught

2. Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2005), 120.

3. Ibid.

4. Carter J. Eckert et al., *Korea Old and New: A History* (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers for the Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990), 225-228.

5. Horace G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 109.

6. Kim and Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 73-74.

7. Yongho Ch'oe, Peter H. Lee, and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 144.

8. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 124.

9. Annie L. A. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1913), 87.

10. Horace N. Allen, *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 184.

the traditional Confucian ideals of deference to, and reliance on, the elite.

Literacy

Alongside with promoting a Western, modern ideology of power-sharing in ecclesiastical organizations, Presbyterian missionaries like Allen, Baird, and Underwood encouraged the sharing of power by promoting literacy. Literacy grants access to knowledge, knowledge fosters self-sufficiency, self-sufficiency creates independence, and independence is power. Missionary literacy programs put this type of power into the hands of the Korean masses, male and female. As Kim and Kim assert, "They introduced mass adult education in the form of Bible classes," and "thus Protestant churches became centers of literacy."¹¹ Koreans attended the classes and learned to read "by hundreds, and sometimes by thousands, ... some of whom walked more than a hundred miles to get to them," and it must have been a moving sight to view a sea of peasants, clothed in traditional white, being empowered by the gift of literacy.¹² In 1913, Baird recounted the thirst for knowledge that animated these early converts by telling the story of one who attended the "Workers' Class": "This class is attended by women from far beyond the limits of our territory, who come to prepare themselves by a two weeks' course of training to teach country Bible classes during the year. One woman in attendance in one recent class walked a distance of three hundred and thirty-three miles over rough mountain roads, the journey consuming twenty days. She said she 'had teaching to do and wanted to learn how.'"¹³ This woman understood that literacy brought power: the power to help herself and the power to help others. The diffusion of education among the masses—for example, Underwood recorded that Presbyterian missionaries in Pyongyang taught over 10,000 Koreans in 191 classes in 1907, alone—changed Koreans, who then changed Korean society.¹⁴ Theirs is one of Western modernizations' greatest success stories—and one of the greatest success stories of progressive Presbyterians in Korea.

Capitalism

Along with promoting modernization along Western lines through the power-sharing of literacy, progressive Presbyterian missionaries encouraged the growth of capitalism in Korea. Korean exposure to capitalism had increased rapidly following the 1876 Treaty of Kanghwa, which created diplomatic and trade relationships with modernizing Meiji Japan. As Ch'oe, Lee, and de Bary explain, "Impressed by Japan's modernization, ... Koreans wanted to learn and adopt Western ideas and technologies."¹⁵ Japan's

growing capitalist ventures inspired progressive Koreans to develop along similar lines, and the Kabo Reforms, according to historian Carter J. Eckert, established "an important role for state capitalism in the development of modern industries and transportation networks under government auspices, while private capitalist ventures were facilitated by removing existing legal restrictions on the activities of merchants and artisans," as well as the creation of modern monetary, banking, and weights/measures systems.¹⁶ Such was the economic milieu when Presbyterians made inroads into Korea at the end of the nineteenth century.

When progressives like Allen, Baird, and Underwood entered the Land of the Morning Calm, they inadvertently strengthened the capitalist development of Korea. The U.S. government, especially during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt (September 1901-March 1909), did not encourage missionaries to be ambassadors for capitalism. In fact, Roosevelt believed that the nation had limited interests in East Asia (aside from the Philippines) and refused commitments in Korea; however, many of the gospel principles taught by the missionaries seemed to support capitalism.¹⁷ As Ryu asserts, "The missionaries' emphasis on diligence, frugality, and hard work, as well as their teachings that praised honest worldly gains, gave a clear message especially to ambitious and motivated Koreans," who "were learning the capitalist spirit."¹⁸ American missionaries came to Korea from a "world drenched with the capitalist spirit," a Western society that often conflated riches with righteousness and poverty with sin.¹⁹

Missionary anecdotes demonstrate the "capitalist spirit" of their modern Christian worldview. For example, in 1908, Allen told a story about a woman in Korea that illustrated the "refrain of a recently popular song," which promised that "if ye work all day ye'll have sugar in yer tay [tea]." He shared that this woman's industry and frugality enabled her to provide "tea every day," sometimes even with sugar, for herself and her small children and that her "cheerful tale" of success in "earning a living for herself" represented the compensation that results from "hard labor and pinching economy."²⁰ In 1913, Baird recounted that Koreans associated the Christian way with great temporal riches, including the goods of a capitalist market. As she remarked, missionaries "present to their eyes a picture of unimagined wealth.

209.

16. Eckert et al., *Korea Old and New*, 226.

17. George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 377.

18. Dae Young Ryu, "Understanding Early American Missionaries in Korea (1884-1910): Capitalist Middle-Class Values and the Weber Thesis," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 113, no. 1 (January-March 2001), 17-18, <http://journals.openedition.org/assr/20190>.

19. *Ibid.*, 15.

20. Allen, *Things Korean*, 23.

11. Kim and Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 87.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life*, 76-77.

14. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 111.

15. Ch'oe, Lee, and de Bary, *Sources of Korean Tradition*,

The mere possession of such everyday articles as chairs, tables, rugs, and a sewing machine puts us far off into the region of unattainable riches, and the plainest missionary home is still a palace in the eyes of the native."²¹ Modernizing Koreans believed that the hard work and frugality of Allen's Christianity would lead to the prosperity of Baird's. Though unintentional, the message was clear: American Protestants preached the way to wealth, and the way to wealth was capitalism. As Ryu summarizes, "Few can doubt that the missionaries' capitalist gospel inspired many ambitious Koreans to join the church and led them to worldly success. This explains why middle-class Koreans, or the most motivated and pragmatic among the Koreans, became the mainstay of the Korean churches."²²

Opportunities for Women

Together with the inadvertently encouraging development of Western capitalism in modernizing Korea, Presbyterian missionaries brought progressive opportunities to women in the Land of the Morning Calm. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, as opportunities for women (especially suffrage²³) were debated at home, missionaries like Allen, Baird, and Underwood provided an empowered space for women abroad. As historian Donald N. Clark explains, though women were ineligible to become ordained ministers, they could become missionaries, Sunday School teachers, Bible class leaders, service group leaders, etc., which offered a "special opportunity to function as a fully franchised professional" in the evangelism and education of "Korean girls and women at homes, in schools, and in churches throughout the country" – an indispensable service because, according to Korean custom, males "were barred from contact with respectable Korean women."²⁴ In 1913, theologian Walter Rauschenbusch explained that these expanded opportunities for women were a major part of the "social movement" of progressive Protestantism: "In our age of social

transformations what other social process is of equal import? ... In our American Protestant churches women, who have been mute and passive in the church for ages, have found a voice and have freely uttered their religious ideas and sentiments, molding the vital and working religion of the country."²⁵ The same year, Baird noted that Christianity had had a similar effect on Korean women when she said that "until the introduction of Christianity the one reason in Korean minds for the existence of women was the exercise of the maternal function. To be a mother was their one claim to consideration."²⁶ Protestant Christianity honored motherhood but also encouraged women to see themselves as having value – independent of any role – as beings whom God created in His image, beings who could be born again through Christ to become His spiritual children. Humans – male and female – mattered so much to God that, out of love and mercy, He sent His Only Begotten Son to spill His precious blood for them, to save them from sin and death. As Underwood explained in 1908, the "introduction of the Bible" into Korean society had taught women these astonishing truths, which demonstrated that they deserved "increased respect and consideration."²⁷ Perhaps this progressive view of women was one reason why a Korean official told Underwood that "the spread of Christianity is the hope of my country. ... If the people of my country become Christians, my country, too, will advance."²⁸

The most common opportunity that progressive Protestants provided for Korean women to act on their newfound Christian dignity was that of the role of a Biblewoman. As Clark explains, "Biblewomen were workers paid by the mission to act as assistants to missionary women doing evangelistic work. ... The foreign women depended on them and respected them both for their dedication as Christians and their strength as women."²⁹ Moving beyond traditional Korean gender norms, Biblewomen gained autonomy and exercised power in their local communities as they earned incomes through being language teachers and cultural interpreters for foreign missionaries; conducting classes that taught reading, theology, leadership skills, and maternal and child health to Korean women; recruiting audiences for the missionaries; and providing interpretation at meetings.³⁰ As Underwood summarized in 1908, the many uses of Biblewomen made them "almost indispensable" to the work of American Presbyterian missionaries in Korea.³¹

21. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life*, 25.

22. Ryu, "Understanding Early American Missionaries in Korea (1884-1910)," 18.

23. For example, twenty-eight of the twenty-nine U.S. states that passed full, primary, or presidential suffrage prior to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (passed in June 1919; ratified in August 1920), which secured the franchise for American women, passed those forms of suffrage for women during the Progressive Era (c. 1890-1920). The only one that did not was Wyoming, which had granted full suffrage for women in 1869. Utah granted it in 1870, it was rescinded, and then the territory granted it again in 1895. Washington granted it in 1883, it was rescinded, and then the state granted it again in 1910. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin granted full, primary, or presidential suffrage to women. See Holly J. McCammon et al., "How Movements Win: Gendered Opportunity Structures and U.S. Women's Suffrage Movements, 1866-1919," *American Sociological Review* 66, no. 1 (February 2001), 52, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2657393>.

24. Donald N. Clark, "Mothers, Daughters, Biblewomen, and Sisters: An Account of 'Women's Work' in the Korea Mission Field," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 168.

25. Walter Rauschenbusch, "Some Moral Aspects of the 'Woman Movement,'" *The Biblical World* 42, no. 4 (October 1913), 195, 196, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3142396>.

26. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life*, 18.

27. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 117.

28. *Ibid.*, 39, 40.

29. Clark, "Mothers, Daughters, Biblewomen, and Sisters," 170.

30. *Ibid.*, 170-171.

31. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 116.

In 1913, Baird provided a telling look at the impact that Biblewomen had when she told the story of “old Sin Ssi.” (old Miss Sin) Sin Ssi fulfilled her role as a Biblewoman with power and conviction as a teacher alongside Baird at Wednesday Bible classes. Baird explained that, at one of these classes, Sin Ssi took an “opportunity ... for testimony” to tell a story about two families who lived in a small mountain village. In her story, a carpenter visited the area and told the village about God’s Son, who “should himself receive the punishment due to us, so that we, taking advantage of his atonement, could find our way to God.” Lives changed as the two families found Christ, and the community became more giving. “Her lips had hardly closed over the story,” Baird recounted, “when contributions of clothes and money began to pour in. In a very few moments the sum total of contributions, in addition to some things which had already been given, amounted to fifteen yang (about one dollar), besides a promised heap of half-worn garments.” Many members of the Bible class, inspired by Sin Ssi’s words, then took the donations to a small mountain village (Sam Do Kan), where “they stayed for a month, teaching and preaching as they could find or make opportunity.”³² Sin Ssi is but one example of the many Korean Biblewomen who exercised great influence in their progressive roles as female teachers and leaders. Their newfound Protestant Christianity provided social spaces within which they were agents who exercised authority and power as paid ministerial assistants, thus bucking traditional Korean gender roles.

PROTEST AGAINST JAPANESE COLONIALISM

Alongside with promoting modernization through Western lines by encouraging the Nevius System, literacy, capitalism, and opportunities for women, progressive Presbyterian missionaries like Allen, Baird, and Underwood promoted protest against Japanese colonialism. Following two decades (c. 1890-1910) in which Japan and Russia had meddled in Korean affairs, with each foreign power vying for supreme influence on the peninsula, Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and gained imperial hegemony over the Land of the Morning Calm. Progressive President Theodore Roosevelt inserted himself into the negotiations between the two imperial powers during the Treaty of Portsmouth (New Hampshire, 1905), for which he would receive a dubious Nobel Peace Prize. As Cumings astutely asserts, “Diplomatic notes exchanged between Roosevelt and the Japanese (the Taft-Katsura agreement) acknowledged a trade-off between the Philippines and Korea: Japan would not question American rights in its colony, and the United States would not challenge Japan’s new protectorate. ... Japan had a ‘free hand’ in Korea after 1905” — all the way until it annexed the peninsula by force of arms

32. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life*, 121-127.

in 1910.³³ Cumings calls 29 August 1910, the date that Sunjong, the Joseon dynasty’s last ruler and Kojong’s intellectually disabled son, abdicated the throne under Japanese pressure, leaving the once-proud nation as a colony, “the darkest day of any subsequent year for Koreans.”³⁴

During the ensuing thirty-five years of Japanese imperialism in Korea (1910-1945), the American response to colonialism in the Land of the Morning Calm was mixed. Cumings notes that, initially, “almost every Westerner supported Japan’s ‘modernizing role’ in Korea, from callous diplomat to earnest scholar to Christian missionary. ... The ‘progressives’ of the time were no better — or maybe worse,” as they praised the “‘rising star of human self-control and enlightenment [Japan]’” for the “‘benevolent bureaucracy of the future socialist state.’”³⁵ Japanese imperialism was “for Korea’s own good,” so it was acceptable, even laudable.

As Koreans protested the forceful taking of their independence, however, the Japanese responded with a decade of ruthless violence to bring their new colony into submission, which drew criticism from progressives who liked the end (modernization) but not the means (dictatorship and suppression). Ch’oe, Lee, and de Bary explain Japan’s response to Korea’s angry reaction to annexation by stating, “The Japanese governor-general was a virtual dictator in Korea as he ruled without a legislature, and all the nine governor-generals who served in Korea were army generals except for one navy admiral. The first decade of Japanese rule was particularly harsh as Japan tried to subdue Korea with brutal force.”³⁶ Japanese aggressions against colonial Korea during the first decade peaked in 1919 in response to the March First Movement when “virtually the entire Korean population rose up in peaceful demonstrations for Korean independence,” only to be “crushed by the Japanese.” The movement marked a shift in the progressive response to Japanese imperialism in Korea, a shift that progressive President Woodrow Wilson catalyzed with the calls for national “self-determination” that he made in his “Fourteen Points” speech from 8 January 1918. Though Japan’s treatment of its Korean colony over the next quarter century would pass through phases of conciliation (e.g., 1919-1927) and repression (e.g., 1936-1942), progressives rarely returned to their initial praise of the annexation of Korea following the March First Movement.³⁷ The following declaration from the progressive First Korean Congress in Philadelphia in 1919, comprised

33. Cumings, *Korea’s Place in the Sun*, 141-142.

34. *Ibid.*, 145. Japan had forced Kojong to renounce rule in July 1907. In January 1919, he died suddenly at the age of 66. Many Koreans suspected that he had been poisoned by Japanese imperialists, and his putative murder ignited the firestorm of protests known as the March First Movement. See Eckert et al., *Korea Old and New*, 277-78.

35. *Ibid.*, 142-143.

36. Ch’oe, Lee, and de Bary, *Sources of Korean Tradition*, 210.

37. *Ibid.*

of about seventy Korean expatriates living in the United States, Hawaii, and Mexico, is representative of the critical response that more progressives adopted following the March First Movement:

*The Korean people patiently suffered under the iron heel of Japan for the last decade or more, but now they have reached the point where they are no longer able to endure it. On 1 March of this year some three million men, mostly of the educated class and composed of Christians, Heaven Worshipers, Confucians, Buddhists, students of mission schools, under the leadership of the pastors of the native Christian churches, declared their independence from Japan and formed a provisional government on the border of Manchuria. Through the news dispatches and through private telegrams we are informed that so far thirty-two thousand Korean revolutionists have been thrown into dungeons by the Japanese, and over one hundred thousand men, women, and children have been killed or wounded. The Koreans have no weapons with which to fight, as the Japanese had taken everything away from them since the annexation, even pistols and fowling pieces. What resistance they are offering now against the Japanese soldiers and gendarmerie is with pitchforks and sickles. In spite of this disadvantage and the horrible casualties among the Koreans, these people are keeping up their resistance, and this demonstration is now nationwide, including nearly all provinces. Japan has declared martial law in Korea and is butchering these unfortunate but patriotic people by the thousands every day.*³⁸

By the time that progressive Koreans like the members of the First Korean Congress denounced Japanese atrocities in colonial Korea, progressive Protestant Christianity had become a catalyst for social protest in the Land of the Morning Calm. As Eckert explains, "The remarkable appeal of Protestantism in Korea was partly due to a psychological factor: the feeling of many Koreans that conversion to Christianity was an act of penance for the failings of their traditional society that had led to the loss of Korea's nationhood."³⁹ In an interesting reversal of regular roles, in Korea, Christianity was not a tool for Christian imperialists to use in the assimilation of non-Christian native populations (as in European colonialism in North America, South America, Africa, etc.); it was a tool for the Christian native population to use in resisting non-Christian imperialists. "By spreading Western liberal ideas," Eckert argues, "missionaries ... played an important role in arousing a national consciousness among the Korean people. The political activities of Korean converts ... were both inspired and informed by their Christian beliefs."⁴⁰

The "Million Souls for Christ This Year" Campaign, 1910

38. First Korean Congress, "An Appeal to America" (Philadelphia, 1919), in *Sources of Korean Tradition*, ed. Ch'oe, Lee, and de Bary, 342.

39. Eckert et al., *Korea Old and New*, 250.

40. *Ibid.*, 249.

One example of Protestant Christianity arousing national consciousness during the first decade of Japanese colonialism in Korea is the "Million Souls for Christ This Year" campaign, which focused on non-Christian Koreans whose hearts were "broken" — shattered by sadness, in one sense, and prepared for the planting of God's Word, in another — by the "moment of 'supreme national hopelessness.'"⁴¹ As Baird explained in 1913, "When we first reach heathendom and find ourselves confronted by millions of people without God and without hope in the world, few or no Christian schools, little or no Christian literature, practicing filthy and barbarous methods of medicine, and with the only hope, humanly speaking, for the amelioration of these conditions resting with a handful of missionaries, we may be tempted to forget that 'he who believeth doth not make haste.'"⁴² The 1910 campaign, which printed one million copies of the Gospel of Mark in Korean with the goal of disseminating them to one million despairing Koreans, may have been an example of missionaries forgetting injunction, but sowed seeds of hope, seeds that grew into a flowering of resurgent nationalism and resistance to Japanese imperialism.

Protestant missionaries in Korea, working ecumenically under the direction of the General Council of Evangelical Missions in Korea, organized the nation's two hundred thousand Christians, who provided, by year's end, over one hundred thousand days of service spent in revival meetings, street contacting, and house-to-house visits. These activities taught Koreans hymns like "Onward, Christian Soldiers," which sounded to colonized Koreans more like an anthem and reason for militant resistance than a worship tune. Moreover, Bible stories like Moses leading Israel out of bondage, little David defeating big Goliath, and Daniel's prophecies about the Kingdom of God breaking up and overthrowing the kingdoms of the world gave oppressed Koreans motivation, moral authority, and even encouragement to throw off the shackles of Japanese imperialism.⁴³ As Kim and Kim assert, "Not surprisingly, these activities antagonized the Japanese authorities, who were suspicious that this was some kind of revolutionary movement, and they intimidated those involved. Uniformed military police, along with spies, attended the special church services [for the "Million Souls for Christ This Year" campaign], and pastors were required to report to the police the names of converts, who were sometimes threatened and harassed."⁴⁴ Though Protestant missionaries in colonial Korea did not promote nationalism directly — their primary purpose was to preach salvation through Christ — the Bible they disseminated was filled with stories that encouraged oppressed persons to seek freedom, both spiritual and physical, in the message of the Christian

41. Kim and Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 107.

42. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life*, 30-31.

43. Kim and Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 107-108.

44. *Ibid.*

gospel.

Missionary Attitudes Toward Imperial Japan

Though progressive Protestant missionaries like Allen, Baird, and Underwood did not promote Korean nationalism directly, their negative attitudes toward Japanese colonialism likely encouraged the distaste for bondage inherent in their message. As Underwood explained in 1908, even before annexation when Korea was a protectorate of Japan, “Matters are no better than before, in many places worse,” due to the “rapacity of both [Japanese] officials and colonists.” He then clarified his position by stating, “The conditions are certainly worse than they were, and it is earnestly to be hoped that the controlling power will make good her loud promises to the world and see that common justice is done in Korea.”⁴⁵ In the same year, Allen’s negative assessment of Japanese rule in Korea matched Underwood’s. As the missionary and doctor asserted, “This time Japan is taking no chances in Korea. The country is to be hers to exploit for herself. ... After her brilliant war with Russia [the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905], Japan is in no mood to accept any marked interference.”⁴⁶ Did negative missionary attitudes towards the Japanese influence Korean converts? In 1913, Baird provided a pregnant answer when she wrote, “Sometimes it takes years for us to comprehend what living epistles we are to our adopted people. Every look, word and action was noted, commented on, repeated to others, and often, perhaps, misconstrued.”⁴⁷

As “living epistles,” progressive Presbyterian missionaries gave Koreans several compelling reasons to resist Japanese imperialism. Kim and Kim explain that though “the Presbyterian Church of Korea ... opted for ‘loyal recognition’ of Japanese rule, ... mainstream Protestant Christianity (Presbyterian and Methodist) continued to pose a threat to the Japanese project in Korea for several reasons.”⁴⁸ As they summarize, “First, because most Christians resisted Japanization. ... Second, the churches represented a different source of authority. ... Third, the churches constituted the largest organized Korean community. ... Fourth, the churches continued to invite foreign missionaries who ... had links with the world church and influence with foreign governments.”⁴⁹ For these reasons and to colonized Koreans, Protestant missionaries like Allen, Baird, and Underwood represented a message that was compatible with, and catalytic for, self-determination, nationalism, anti-colonialism, alternative governmental forms, safe spaces to organize and plan resistance, philosophies of liberty and freedom that were in opposition to imperialism, and hope in the possibilities of international assistance and, ultimately, Christ’s

deliverance from even political bondage (through His Second Coming).⁵⁰ For example, as Kim and Kim state, leading progressive Presbyterians “preached especially in this period on the story of the Exodus from Egypt and frequently compared the Korean people to Israel suffering under the pharaoh and expecting their delivery. These parallels naturally led to messianism and the expectation that God would deliver the Korean people into the promised land not metaphorically but literally. ... Despite the dire political situation, Christians continued to hold out hope of national salvation.”⁵¹

Christian Participation in the March First Movement (1919)

The March First Movement provides the most cogent example of the effects of progressive Christianity on Korean nationalism during Japanese imperialism’s first decade in the Land of the Morning Calm. The largest demonstration in modern Korean history, in which millions of Koreans took to the streets in 211 out of 218 counties to shout “Daehan dongnip mansei!” (“May an independent Korea live for ten thousand years!”)⁵² and protest Japan’s presence, began with a declaration of independence from colonial rule. As the Japanese imperial police prepared to strike, progressive Korean students defiantly read the declaration aloud at Seoul’s Pagoda Park on 1 March 1919, thus giving the movement its name.⁵³ The declaration, which was largely the work of twenty-nine-year-old scholar Ch’oe Namseon, begins,

*We hereby declare that Korea is an independent state and that Koreans are a self-governing people. We proclaim it to the nations of the world in affirmation of the principle of the equality of all nations, and we proclaim it to our posterity, preserving in perpetuity the right of national survival. ... We claim independence in the interest of the eternal and free development of our people and in accordance with the great movement for world reform based upon the awakening conscience of mankind. This is the clear command of heaven.*⁵⁴

Thirty-three men signed the declaration, and sixteen of them were Christians, including the progressive Presbyterian minister Kil Seonju. In explaining the role of Korean Christians in the March First Movement, theologian Wi Jo Kang asserts that they “were active participants in this independence movement. ... Many Christian churches became gathering places for demonstrators and to hear the declaration of independence read. The [Japanese] government placed primary blame for the protests on the Christians and retaliated against them. ... Practically every Christian

45. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 39.

46. Allen, *Things Korean*, 249-250.

47. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life*, 20-21.

48. Kim and Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 110.

49. *Ibid.*, 110-111.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*, 113.

52. Eckert et al., *Korea Old and New*, 278.

53. Ch’oe, Lee, and de Bary, *Sources of Korean Tradition*, 335.

54. “Declaration of Independence” (1 March 1919), in *Sources of Korean Tradition*, ed. Ch’oe, Lee, and de Bary, 337.

pastor in Seoul was arrested and jailed. ... In some localities the police arrested all church officers."⁵⁵

For the part that progressive Korean Christians had played in the March First Movement, Japanese imperialists exacted brutal retribution. Over the course of the next seven months, Japanese forces arrested 3,804 Presbyterians (including 134 senior leaders), murdered forty-seven more, and destroyed twelve Presbyterian churches. Other Christian denominations faced similar atrocities.⁵⁶ Why did the Japanese target Christians, especially Protestants? Kim and Kim answer the question by explaining, "Christians were among the main instigators. ... National Christian networks played an important part in the [March First Movement's] spread. ... Numerically, Christian participation in the movement was disproportionately strong. ... The [movement] was very important for Korean Protestantism because it further re-established the link between the churches and nationalism."⁵⁷ For these reasons, they continue, the Japanese "regarded Christians as the main instigators" and "deliberately targeted Christians for arrest: of the 489 clergies, half were Protestant ministers [while only 0.3 percent were Catholic; Catholic Koreans were often pro-Japanese]. Virtually every pastor in Seoul and Pyongyang were imprisoned, and so were many other church workers. In some areas of the provinces it was reported that people were stopped, beaten, and rounded up simply because they were Christians."⁵⁸ The most horrific crime committed against Korean Christians during this period occurred in the village of Cheam-ri, near Suwon, on 15 April 1919, when Japanese soldiers ordered all male Christians into a Methodist church, shot up the building once the group of about thirty was inside, finished off the wounded with cold steel, and then torched the church for being a symbol of resistance in what one farmer called "a Christian village."⁵⁹ There were no survivors.

Primary sources from the oral histories of Protestant Koreans who lived through the horrors of the Japanese response to the March First Movement add even more depth and richness to the story. Reacting to President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" speech of January 1918, which promised that a "general association of nations" (the League of Nations, a precursor to the interventionist, global governance of the United Nations) would work for self-determination for colonized countries like Korea,⁶⁰ progressive Korean Protestants like Kang Byung Ju protested against the Japanese imperialism with vigor. As Kang remembered, "We each had a Korean flag in

our hand—everyone had flags. We waved our flags and people impulsively jumped up to the podium and shouted speeches about the sorrow and anger at losing our country. ... We all shouted independence slogans until our voices cracked."⁶¹ Lee Ha Jun explained that his patriotism came from secret Bible study meetings with his friends, who attended his private Protestant school. As he stated, "We met at my house on the pretext of learning the Bible—Mr. Ham [a Korean nationalist who attended their meetings] was a Bible authority, but in addition, he explained the predicaments that we Koreans were in at the present time, and said we had to be wide awake, and alert, to push things through for the good of Korea. His words impelled us to action, and it was all in the form of a Bible study."⁶² Kim T. also attended a private Protestant school, founded by the activist Cho Man Sik, and received a similar dose of nationalism mixed with Christianity. Of the nexus between progressive Protestantism and anti-imperialism, he asserted, "While [at my school] I became aware of discrimination. ... They heightened our awareness of and pride in being Korean and fostered a sense of active resistance to the Japanese. Mr. Cho [Man Sik] himself came once a week and gave us an inspirational talk. He could not come out and say that the Japanese were our unwelcome masters and we should resist, but in the form of a sermon from the Bible, he said those things. We did not mistake his message."⁶³ With these recollections in mind, it is not surprising to note that many Christians felt like Sin Kwang Seong, who remembered that "my only dealings with the police were because we were members of the Christian church. There was no other reason for them to bother me."⁶⁴ To their colonizers, Christians, especially Protestant Christians, had become synonymous with progressive causes like Wilsonian self-determination, which made them easy targets.

CONCLUSION

Events from the first thirty-five years of Protestant missionary work in Korea (1884-1919) demonstrate the global reach of Western progressivism. Presbyterian missionaries in the Land of the Morning Calm during the first two decades of the twentieth century, especially, brought with them the philosophies and practices of progressive reform, a social gospel aimed at improving life for all people. This study of the memoirs of three of these Presbyterian missionaries—Horace N. Allen, Annie L. A. Baird, and Horace G. Underwood—places them in the context of the progressive winds that powered preaching of Christ in Korea. As a product of the times in which they lived, their progressive Protestantism promoted (1) modernization along Western lines and (2) protest

55. Wi Jo Kang, "Church and State Relations in the Japanese Colonial Period," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 102.

56. *Ibid.*

57. Kim and Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 119, 121, 123, 124.

58. *Ibid.*, 124.

59. Kang, "Church and State Relations in the Japanese Colonial Period," 103.

60. Kim and Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 119.

61. Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 50.

62. *Ibid.*, 89.

63. *Ibid.*, 46.

64. *Ibid.*, 102.

against Japanese colonialism, along with religious conversion. By employing the Nevius System, encouraging literacy and capitalism, and providing expanded opportunities for women, they disseminated a Christianity that helped to modernize Korea in the Western image. By engaging in the “Million Souls for Christ This Year” Campaign of 1910, sharing negative attitudes toward imperial Japan, and, especially, catalyzing the March First Movement of 1919 through a message that inspired Wilsonian self-determination, they formed the backbone of the protests against colonial Japan. Progressive Protestantism during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and first two decades of the twentieth century did far more than lay the groundwork for a nation (South Korea) whose population is more than a quarter Christian today.⁶⁵ The Protestantism of the Progressive Era, as it was preached by Presbyterian missionaries like Allen, Baird, and Underwood, helped to fashion a modern Korea, especially in the South, that looks more like the America of Roosevelt and Wilson, with its progressive, interventionist ideas about individuals, government, and society, than the traditional, isolationist Joseon Kingdom from which it sprang.

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⁶⁵. Grayson, “A Quarter-Millennium of Christianity in Korea,” 22.

Journeying in Asia: Incarnational Living with Hope

Lawrence Ko

INTRODUCTION: Human Nature and Human Destiny

As early as 3000 years ago, the Chinese sought to grapple with changes in life and embraced the Book of Changes (*Yijing*) as a guide to understand change generated by a dynamic which appears to be evolutionary, mysterious and yet discernible. Understanding the mystery of life compels a reverence for the unknown and unknowable, the force behind life itself, whether divine or otherwise. The quest for understanding change remains unabated but the ability to change with the times and to adapt to changes may be more challenging.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused great changes and indeed a great disruption to the world. The rapid responses during the pandemic and drastic measures underlined the reality of the global village with human and information flows made possible by transport and communications technology. The world has changed after the pandemic. Greater disruption is yet to come especially as cities bore the brunt of disruption. The migrant labour and the urban poor were spotlighted as their plight of entrapment in the cities, without jobs, without roof and resources were revealed. The rapid urbanisation in Asia and around the world has made us all neighbours now, especially in the cities. Have we been neighbours to the poor and needy?

It is an opportunity to pause for reflection on history and human civilisations. The Axial Age was said to be the first awakening of human civilisation, when humans had the courage to search and ...to see. According to Karl Jasper, human civilisations developed a sense of philosophical reflection during the Axial Age, circa 800-200 BCE. It was an interesting interregnum resulting from an agrarian revolution, in between great empires and warring states. It was a time of self-transcendence, when humans awakened to their existence beyond material culture, to ponder about the meaning of life and the nature of humanity. It was a season to pause and a time to ask questions about life, about life amidst rapid changes, and especially about human nature and human destiny.

The Church in the aftermath of the pandemic has been reflective, as we shared the pain of locked downs and losses in various contexts. New movements have begun in response to the challenges of the times in the present times. The reflection and responses to changes must continue. The writing has been seen on the wall amidst the winds of change. New wineskins are needed for the new wine of Christian mission which God is doing. Yet the tendency is to

return to normalcy after asserting that there is a “new normalcy”.

CHRISTIANITY IN ASIAN CITIES

Over the past two decades, there is a self-congratulatory note in celebrating the rise of the Church in the Majority World. Perhaps the “Unexpected Christian Century” is not so much as the rise of Christian adherents in Asia, Africa and Latin America as much as it is the decline of the faith in the West. Even as we see the growth of the Church in the non-Western world, we need to assess if that is because Christianity has been successfully commoditised. Has the faith been branded as part of a “McDonaldisation” process and successfully packaged and exported by operationally astute marketeers in the same way hamburger restaurant managers did as Ray Bakke had prophetically warned us 40 years ago¹? Will that which has killed the soul in the West inadvertently impact the modernising societies of Asia in the same way?

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Since 1990, Singapore has also seen a rise in Christian adherents rising from 10% to 18% in 2020. However, the Church membership was perceived to

1. Raymond Bakke, *The Urban Christian*. pp.46-48. Alistair McGrath, *Future of Christianity* pp. 46-57

comprise mainly of the Westernised and the wealthy, which appear to be apathetic to the social concerns in society. This was perhaps because most of the believers were disciplined with good work ethic and made good in society. However, most of the church's resources were spent within the Christian community (especially on religious events for evangelism and mission and also the expensive church-building projects). The evangelicals would need to participate more in social concerns without seeing such as mere baits for converting others and expanding the religion.

With the historical baggage of Western colonisation and imperialism in Asia, the Church was seen as a foreign and Western religion, attractive for those seeking westernisation on the road to modernisation. However those with strong cultural roots and historical minds have strong impressions of believers as allies of western powers and antagonistic to local traditions and values. Inadvertently, the growth of the Church was perceived as a threat to Chinese culture in a Chinese-majority society. It became politicised in the 1997 general election.²

With the 9/11 event sparking religious tensions especially within the geopolitics of Southeast Asia, and the subsequent radicalisation of the youths around the world, churches were targeted as symbols of western powers. Local governments were concerned about religious demographics and the social implications. How can the Church respond to changes in both the local and global environment? Can an active engagement in civil society to contribute to community development and to contextualise the faith help to change the perception of the Church while revealing the hope of the Kingdom in Christ?

N. T. Wright states that the Church needs to find localised faith expressions which "are obedient to the larger *missio Dei*... (and) generate a communal life which becomes like a place in real history where God promises to be truly present and where humans can come to know him as whole persons. The community thus formed, as the Spirit-enabled body of the risen Messiah energised by the outpoured love of God becomes a place where new creation, glimpses of the dawn, can be discerned. History then has a vital role to play as a source and resource for that mission."³

JOURNEYING IN ASIA

In view of the contexts at the turn of the century, Asian Journeys Ltd (AJ) was founded as a social enterprise to help reach out to the *heartlanders* of Singapore especially in the social cultural arena. Developing global-ready youths with rooted cosmopolitanism was needed to help the next generation understand the past in order to face the rapidly changing future.

2. See Choong Chee Pang, "Religious Composition of the Chinese in Singapore: Some Comments on the Census 2000" in Leo Suryadinata ed., *Ethnic Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia: A Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity*, Singapore: Times Academic Press, 2002. pp. 325-336.

3. N. T. Wright, *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology*. p.277

Training youths to be altruistic in giving through serving others while they are young is imperative for them to understand the values of benefaction and become benefactors to seek the welfare of the city⁴ in time to come. This is not only Christian but also Asian.

Understanding the challenge of developing local expressions of the faith and for a representation of the gospel which is truly Christian (without the syncretistic Western cultural expression of church), the journey to work the cultural ground of Asian philosophical and religious worldviews continue. Disciples of Christ need to be rooted in the cultural soil of Asia in order for the faith to be truly Asian, with shoots and fruits that can sprout and multiply for a truly Asian harvest. With a desire to unearth ancient wisdom of the Asian civilisation for contemporary life, as well as developing a contextual faith expression for Christians in Singapore, AJ would focus on discovering and recovering Asian cultural resources for community living, with a particular emphasis on Chinese culture and civilisation.

AJ's programme scope comprises the 3 categories of Cultural Journeys, Learning Journeys and Spiritual Journeys. This was based on Soren Kierkegaard's model of stages on life's way viz., aesthetics, ethics and religions.⁵ This model correlates with the Chinese framework in self-cultivation and moral formation in the Quest for Beauty, Good and Truth.

CULTURAL JOURNEYS (Self-Creation)

Asian Journeys Ltd is positioned as a non-religious organisation and a social enterprise, seeking to partner with local museums and libraries to serve in outreach to the community. Through organising talks and workshops, AJ was able to bring like-minded people together to reflect on Chinese literature, ranging from Laozi's *Daodejing* to Laoshe's plays, from Luxun's short stories to Qian Zhongshu's novels, which provided analyses and commentaries on the social and political changes in Chinese history.

In 2003, we worked with churches to organise Chinese drama "Heshibi" (based on a tale of angst and despair by Hanfeizi, a sage in the Axial Age!) staged not in churches but in the national theatre. This surprised some of the Chinese community leaders as they realised that Christians were interested in Chinese culture and had the passion and expertise to stage a play.

There were also programmes organised on cultural appreciation of Beijing's imperial architecture as well as Chinese calligraphy. By teaching and speaking at local churches, AJ helped to promote better understanding of Chinese culture and religion, along with other religious festival cultures. AJ unearthed

4. Bruce Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*. Pp. 19-40

5. See Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, eds. *Soren Kierkegaard: Stages on Life's Way*. Kierkegaard was acclaimed as the father of Existentialism who provided a Christian vision to engage with the questions of anxiety and despair, and proposed aesthetics, ethics and religions as the pathway for a searching soul towards meaning and selfhood.

and invited Chinese writers and cultural experts as speakers and helped them realise this was a way they could contribute vocationally in missions.

In 2019, AJ Chinese Calligraphy Club was launched on 19 January. The aim was to engage the Chinese intellectuals in the city and encouraging Christian participation in these cultural events. The Chinese adage to “Review the Past to Understand the New” (wenguzhixin) still holds true especially for a historically-oriented nation with a long civilisational history.

We hope that through cultural participation, and cultural self-creation, Christians can begin to engage and reflect with the local community on the human condition and our common human destiny. This would be a vital first step towards using these works of art and cultural resources to point to divine hope and reveal the presence of transcendence in and through Christ.

LEARNING JOURNEYS (Self-Integration)

AJ has plugged into the local government’s National Youth Council programmes since its inception in 2002. We were thus able to mobilise nearly a thousand youth volunteers for international volunteerism funded partially by the government’s grant for the Youth Expedition Projects. They would learn the spirit of volunteerism from the volunteer par excellence, viz., the Good Samaritan.

Working with teams of 20-40 students from the universities and polytechnics, we would spend 6 months interacting and equipping these youths to help them self-discover, build teams, and develop skills to live and work cross-culturally in the countries in Southeast Asia as well as China on overseas community development projects. The overseas stints would last 2-3 weeks long preceded and followed by local projects, giving us ample time for relationship building and mentoring.

Since 2002, our projects were focused on urban and environmental issues. The Green Desert Project in Inner Mongolia was our signature project until it was disrupted by the pandemic. Working with the local governments and local host communities, we exposed our youth volunteers to the macro and micro issues in urbanisation challenges and the impacts of climate crises on the local communities. The teams were able to apply learning and mobilise resources to collaborate with the local beneficiaries in combating pollution and mitigating climate change.

Such immersive learning experiences especially with the attitude of servanthood and washing feet, were helpful in building deep relationships and understanding with the local residents. They helped stretched the vista of youths and exposed them to visions and possibilities of social transformation. The Singapore youth volunteers, mostly non-believers and a good mix of Chinese, Malay and Indians, learned to live in community and mediate differences and

conflicts faced along the way. We organised annual Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) forums where the tertiary students reached out to the school students, bringing their academic and industrial knowledge along with performance arts and artistic expressions to raise awareness for climate change and creation care.

They learned the Asian way of establishing harmonious relations not only with humans per se, but also with the other creatures in the environment and also the relationship with the divine. As the church in China has understand it, it was living harmoniously with God, with nature and with one another.

As we share life journeys, sitting around the campfires in the cold grassland of Inner Mongolia or mountains of Chiang Mai, or sit in the longhouses of the Ibans in Sarawak, we appreciated our interdependence with nature and with one another which is grounded in God. We discover commonality despite our ethnic and faith differences. We extended hospitality to one another and built friendships. For many of my youths, my team leaders and facilitators could have been the first Christian friends they have met.

I remember the surprise which one youth expressed on learning that I was the director of Asian Journeys and was yet working and living among them for the entire 2 weeks. He gasped, “This is like the president coming to live with us”. By bringing leaders from army colonels to captains of industry to interact with youths as friends, we hope these servants of God who took extended time to be with the community at the street level had created an experience of the kenosis and Incarnation of Christ for these youths.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS (Self-Transcendence)

The Chinese have emphasised humanism as the basis of Chinese civilisation. Harvard professor Tu Weiming explained that spirituality is an integral part of human selfhood which needs cultivation in both our need for rootedness and self-transcendence. Paul Tillich however elaborated that spirituality is grounded in not only self-affirmation and self-transcendence but also in self-surrender to the Other (human as well as divine). In other words, the pursuit of selfhood is necessarily the ability of the person to relate with one’s own self, and with the other (including other humans, creatures and the Creator God).⁶ It affirms the Chinese quest for unity between heaven and humanity (tianrenheyi).

Asian Journeys provided training programmes for schools in youth development, from self-awareness courses (like personality-profiling, team roles and sharpening personal skills) to communications (especially public speaking which builds self-

⁶. See Lawrence Ko, “The Religious life as the Highest Stage of Selfhood: An analysis of Kierkegaard’s Three Stages”. (unpublished MDiv dissertation submitted to Trinity Theological College, 1995)

confidence) and leadership development. The key emphasis is on coaching towards the future, towards hope, where they discover the questions of human nature and destiny, personalised for themselves.

The act of self-discovery when we invite the youths to reflect and share stories of their 18-20 years of life journeys can hopefully provide a deeper sense of appreciation of life. We help them realise that life is not genetically or historically determined per se, and that one has the power to act in the present for the sake of the future, the past notwithstanding. That is the sense of self-transcendence and existential awareness of choices in being and becoming. Hopefully, these urban youths in their quest for aesthetics, ethics and religions, will be led through existential angst and despair to make the leap of faith into hope in the Kingdom of God.

During the pandemic, AJ was active to help raise prayers and needed resources for the cities of Asia through the network of relations developed with various local host communities. Prayer emphasis will need to continue as it represents a divine gift of seeing, a transcendent vision of hope. Prayer gives us eyes to see the presence of the divine and appreciate life with all its mystery. It strengthens us to participate in history with hope. As Symond Kock once said, "Prayer is the action before the action". Prayer precedes action which enables Christian participation in social impact and transformation in history. Jacques Ellul says, prayer can make and shape history.⁷

CONCLUSION: Incarnational Living in the 21st Century

History is the arena where God acts and "the new creational eschatology has come to birth within history".⁸ His Church, as the called out ones, need to be sent out missionally to live out the gospel of Christ at street level, not merely to proclaim the gospel but to engage and serve the community as our witness to the gospel. This can be done when we engage vocationally in the city as the urban challenges are great in the 21st Century but the opportunities immense.

The world after the pandemic is never the same. The changes are not necessarily spiralling upwards towards progress. The masses of humanity continue to cry for help and hope. The Church can learn to be responsive, and to seize the kairoic moments in history to serve God's agenda and purpose. Believers can use the resources God has placed at our disposal to serve the poor and become benefactors in the city. The Church in Asia needs to be rooted in our own cultural soil and sprout shoots and bear fruits that can multiply in the Asian milieu. As Jurgen Moltmann says, the Church as an eschatological community can act in history with the end in mind. This will be incarnational living as we look forward to the hope that reveals the vision of the eternal which is now here

7. Jacques Ellul, *Prayer and the Modern Man*. p. 175

8. Wright, *History*. p.227

in time.⁹

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9. Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* p.26-27



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Igniting Intergenerational Mission in a Japanese Context

Micaela Braithwaite

INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational mission has gained popularity in mission strategy, as leaders in mission increasingly recognise the value of younger generations serving alongside older, more experienced leaders. Not only does intergenerational leadership create the opportunity for integrating younger generations into existing leadership teams, and facilitate healthy leadership structures in this way, but it also strengthens the decision making process and shapes all leaders involved. Furthermore, it is a principle embedded in the Holy Scriptures that creates healthy interdependence across the church body and allows members of all ages to utilise their spiritual gifting for leadership. The principles of intergenerational mission are worth integrating into any leadership team, but are especially critical in populations with uneven age distributions such as that of Japan's rapidly ageing population.

DEFINING 'INTERGENERATIONAL'

In a Christian context, 'intergenerational' describes two or more age groups of people in community together engaging in parallel learning, mutual edification and contribution through interactive sharing.¹ Allan Harkness says that 'intentional intergenerational strategies are those in which an integral part of the process of faith communities encourages interpersonal interactions across generational boundaries, and in which a sense of mutuality and equality is encouraged between participants.'² 'Intergenerational' is the intentional bringing together of generations for the mutual benefit of those involved and for the mission at hand.

Bambang Budijanto draws a distinction between the terms multi-generational and intergenerational in a Christian context observing that many organisations, churches and teams are multi-generational in that they may have youth, young adults, middle-aged, and seniors, however intergenerational is unique in that it requires intentional engagement between the generations.³

Intergenerational leadership involves different generations in the leadership team making decisions together. This is not just assigning tasks to each member of the team, rather together they engage

one another in the decision-making process. This both shapes and grows the leadership team, and encourages the leadership to include different perspectives when making decisions.

INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION IN AGEING POPULATIONS

The motivation for intergenerational mission is especially critical in ageing populations such as that of Japan. Japan has the highest worldwide percentage of its population aged 65 and above, with more than 10 percent of the population aged 80 or older, according to the latest available data.

Furthermore, less than one percent of the population is Christian, making the country one of the largest unreached nations in the world. The ageing population also affects the church with the average age of pastors around 72 years old, and only 200-300 pastors under age 40.

Japanese Christianity is statistically in a dangerous position. Up to half of existing churches may close in a few decades due to ageing churches and lack of younger leaders. This means that an intergenerational approach to mission and local church ministry in Japan is particularly essential in ensuring that younger leaders are raised up and the church remains relevant in reaching all generations.

JAPANESE CASE STUDY

It was against this backdrop that Kohei Takeda, Pastor of Faith Bible Church, together with a steering team, began to plan a 'younger leaders' mission conference, called Japan YLG 2024. Japan YLG is a local expression of the Lausanne Movement, who hosted an intergenerational conversation in 2023 for leaders in mission comprised of participants from five generations and all seven continents to engage in dialogue regarding intergenerational mission and leadership.

The goal that motivated the team was to initiate a transformation in Japanese leadership 'culture', by connecting diverse younger leaders who are serving in mission in Japan, mutually seeking humility in Christ, and building genuine friendships that will lay a foundation for mission collaboration.

Kohei Takeda and the planning team wanted the conference to be an opportunity for leaders across generations to come together, connect, encourage each other, and collaborate. He noticed a lack of collaboration between churches in Japan, when there is a need for resource sharing, building community,

1. Allen, Holly and Ross, Christine. (2012). *Intergenerational Christian Formation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

2. Ibid.

3. Budijanto, Bambang. (2021, February 28). *Intergenerational Leadership* [Webinar]. Asia Evangelical Alliance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9UM2FmqhNs>

and being unified in their call to make disciples, 'We wanted to build up the community of leaders so that we can accelerate mission in Japan,' shared Takeda.

A lot of gatherings focus on 'doing mission' but the Japan YLG team wanted to focus on character-building and developing Christlike leaders. They wanted to facilitate a space where intergenerational friendships could develop and grow and foster a leadership culture of humility through mutual sharing and listening to each other.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO FOSTER INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION?

Planning for Japan YLG 2024 began some years prior when it was initially organised to be hosted in 2019 but was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This delay, while discouraging at the time, attracted a significant number of participants to form an online community of around 250 people. The online community facilitated deeper engagement through small groups meeting regularly online and laid the groundwork for building relationships that could lead to collaboration. It offered younger leaders the opportunity to hear from more senior leaders who opened up about their past failures, something which was countercultural to Japanese culture. This opened the door to engage in dialogue around mission and form new paradigms around leadership in the church. It also allowed the planning team to further refine the structure of the conference, positioning it as a launchpad for a movement of mission in Japan, and less a stand alone event.

One way the planning team sought to foster intergenerational mission was through inviting whole families to attend. Over the four days of the conference they had around 370 participants attend, including 70 children. This meant that both parents had the opportunity to be a part of the activities which was one of the main successes of the event—no one needed to be excluded.

While the conference was diverse age-wise, with children, teenagers, young adults, working professionals, and senior mentors participating, it was also diverse vocationally and denominationally, with over 30 denominations represented. Some senior leaders each represented a few hundred churches, placing the gathering in a strategic position to influence the wider Japanese church.

CHANGING THE CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP

To create a paradigm shift in the culture there needs to be a process or journey that people go on that shifts not only their thinking and attitudes, but also their actions. Japan YLG aims to implement what happened at the event by forming diverse, intergenerational small groups within the network, where participants will meet regularly to share experiences, discuss mission practices, and pray together. The small

groups will be led by both younger and senior leaders and will emphasise the importance of fostering relationships and provide support to those who attended the conference. They also hope to extend participation beyond the initial group of participants to create a broader impact.

One of the largest groups to be formed as a result of Japan YLG 2024 is a group tailored to mothers and another towards female leaders. This is viewed as a huge success by the Japan YLG group, who recognise mothers as primary disciplers of the next generation.

The team plans to host more events in the future that can draw more people in and begin a movement of Christlike leaders, rooted in the gospel as they seek to work together for the sake of God's kingdom and the future of the church in Japan.

CULTIVATING HUMILITY IN DIVERSITY

Kohei Takeda says that their focus for the conference was not intergenerational as an end in itself, but on character development. As they focused on character they saw a strong need in pursuing humility. Humility is the posture with which we listen to others, hear different opinions and perspectives, and admit our own blind spots. That is where genuine collaboration happens across generations and diverse backgrounds. It cannot be artificially manufactured.

The church needs to return to the basics of nurturing Christlike leaders, and this includes fostering intergenerational connections and focusing on character development and 'being the church' rather than just 'doing church' on a Sunday.

He points out that the mission of God is not one generation's call, but a call to the global body of Christ to reach the whole world. We are called to God's mission as a global body—some the hands and some the feet, but each with a unique and complementary role to play. This does not make sense in the business world, because many times it is less effective and means a slow and complex process, but when we trace the biblical narrative it is how God expands the gospel. Some plant, others water, but it is God who brings the growth, and when we are not careful to include all members of the body of Christ we are 'cutting off our nose to spite our own face'.

When we begin to see God reflected in diverse people coming together united by a biblical calling and vision, it is a beautiful thing and God's glory is revealed. New things are birthed and we cannot expect to remain comfortable as God shapes us in the process.

A HOPEFUL FUTURE FOR THE JAPANESE CHURCH

There is concern that half of the churches in Japan might close within the next 20 years due to an ageing population and the lack of young people coming to faith. This dire situation presents a significant challenge, yet the gospel remains powerful to bring change to those statistics as the Japanese church remains steadfast in the gospel, focusing not just on receiving but also on spreading and living out its teachings. The church needs to return to the basics of nurturing Christlike leaders, and this includes fostering intergenerational connections and focusing on character development and 'being the church' rather than just 'doing church' on a Sunday.

Kohei sums up the heart of their vision, 'first, your heart needs to be transformed and your character needs to be built upon your faith and commitment to Christ. And then your actions, your decisions, your relationship with others will be transformed as well.' This is essential, not just in a Japanese context, but in the church across Asia and the same is for the global church too. Effective teams are formed when leaders across generations embrace this vision and acknowledge gaps in their leadership and show a willingness to grow. The Japan YLG 2024 gathering demonstrated God's glory through the willingness of different generations to work together and mutually support each other in mission, a reminder that God does his work when we are not trying to build our

own kingdom.

It is only when we cultivate hearts of humility in our leadership that we will be able to see beyond building our own kingdoms, listen to others, and truly discern where we can learn and grow. This approach allows us to begin building the kind of Christian community that God calls us to, achieving true kingdom impact in every sphere of society.



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The Holy Spirit and Missio Dei

Humphrey Iheukwumere Okerefor & Timothy U. U. Oguzie

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the symbiotic relationship between the Holy Spirit and Missio Dei, particularly within the framework of Pentecostal manifestations, historically and in contemporary contexts, with a specific focus on Nigeria. It offers an overview of Pentecostal manifestations, drawing from biblical foundations to contemporary practices. It highlights Nigeria's landscape and explores how Pentecostalism catalyses church planting and exponential growth. Central to this discussion is the significance of acquiring and harnessing the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly for missions. It emphasises the importance of thirst and hunger for these gifts, and the paper explores strategies for exploiting and utilising them effectively in service. Believers can significantly impact evangelism, discipleship, and community development initiatives by integrating spiritual gifts into missions. Ultimately, this paper illuminates pathways for believers to engage in missions' endeavours empowered by the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit, offering insights into the intersection of Pentecostal manifestations and Missio Dei in Nigeria. Insights to this paper are drawn historically, missiologically, and from personal observations, relevant literature, and scriptural injunctions.

INTRODUCTION

World population update suggests that there are approximately 8 billion people on earth. About 2.56 billion Christians are 1/3 of the world's population. It indicates that the command to "preach the Gospel to every part of the world" is still crucial and beckoning. The challenge to Christian believers is the salvation of the other 2/3 people. The concern of this paper is the Holy Spirit's role in missions. The book of Genesis account of creation, projects the Holy Spirit as the working power of God through the term "the Spirit of God" (Gen. 1:2). The Holy Spirit is the power of God in Missio Dei, which is redemptive, reconciling lost human beings to Himself. Therefore, the Church cannot adequately do missions without being endowed with power by the Holy Spirit, hence the instruction "...wait for the gift my Father promised..." (Acts 1:4, NIV). This paper considers the person of the Holy Spirit and His role in the mission of God, illustrating how Christians, through His power, could do missions successfully. Insights to this paper are drawn from personal observations, works by previous authors, and scriptural injunctions. The paper argues

that those who desire to partner with God in His Mission through the Holy Spirit should have genuine salvation experience, been disciplined, and have a daily thirst/hunger for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are also to wait eagerly for the endowment of the Holy Spirit. They must accept Him, be willing for His manifestation and avoid exploiting His gifts.

Prior to the ascension of Jesus Christ, He commanded His disciples not to leave Jerusalem. He told them to wait for the Gift His Father promised (Acts 1:4-5). According to Christopher Donlon, "Upon the opening of the Acts narrative, Jesus tells his disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit which would make them become His witnesses in 'Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"¹ While the disciples gathered together and waited in obedience in the upstairs room on the day of Pentecost, they experienced the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Four apparent things of their experience that day were: 1) sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, 2) flames or tongues of fire rested on each one's head, 3) infilling of the Holy Spirit, and 4) speaking in other languages (tongues). The manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power that day led to the conversion of three thousand people as they preached (Acts 2).

Some church ministers and members today are to demonstrate this power and its manifestation to utilise it for missions. When this manifestation is evident among ministers and believers in the Church, there will be a radical, intentional and responsible engagement in witnessing, soul-winning and church planting, and the Church will also grow. This paper investigates the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit in the past (Bible time) and contemporary times. It examines how Pentecostal Manifestation was utilised to catalyse church planting and growth. This paper aims to invoke and awaken ministers of the gospel and churches, especially stagnating ones, to seek power and the gift of the Holy Spirit and utilise the power thereof for church planting and growth.

OVERVIEW OF PENTECOSTAL MANIFESTATION

The manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit shall be reviewed from the biblical and contemporary perspectives. A few of the persons

1. Christopher Donlon, "Luke's Pneumatological Eschatology: Theological motifs in luke-acts." A Directed Research Submitted to Dr. Peter Althouse in Fulfillment of the Course Special Topics in Theological Issues, College Of Christian Ministries And Religion, (Lakeland, Florida, December 2012).

who were key players and events shall be considered in this paper. The arrangement is for the writers' convenience and does not suggest any superiority of one over the other.

BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Several events in the Bible portray the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit. God released His power and gift in the lives of different individuals and groups who utilised it for "mission advancement" at different times.

OLD TESTAMENT

The manifestation of supernatural power and the gift of the Holy Spirit has been a reality since the Old Testament times. God, the "energiser", poured out His Spirit upon the lives of some individuals of old, through whom He used to accomplish His purpose at different times. The following people are examples:

Moses: He was an ordinary man, a shepherd in the land of Median. His supernatural encounter at Mount Horeb, where God released His Spirit through the "flames of fire from within the bush," emboldened him to confront Pharaoh. He received the supernatural power and the gift to do miracles and afterwards embarked on the mission to deliver (save) God's people. He manifested the power and gift of the Spirit in Egypt such that the Pharaoh feared God (Exod.3).

Elijah: Another significant person who received and manifested the power of God was Elijah. He prophesied that there would be no rain in the land of Israel; it happened the same way (1Kings 17:1). He confronted Ahab and Jezebel and the prophets of Baal, and the Spirit and Power of God were made manifest after which Ahab, the King, and the people proclaimed the God of Elijah to be the true God (1Kings 18:39). In the Power and Spirit of God, Elijah multiplied food for the Zarephath widow and also resurrected her dead son (1Kings 17:17-24). He also prophesied the destruction of Ahab and Jezebel, etc.

Elisha: On the other hand, Elisha sought and received the power and gift of the Spirit of God and performed several miracles during his time. Some of the miracles he performed were: 1) dividing the Jordan River (2 Kings 2:14), 2) healing the bad water and unproductive land, 3) floating the borrowed axe-head on the water, and 4) praying for the Shunammite woman and her barrenness was broken and when her child died, he prayed, and the child was brought back to life (2 Kings 4:11-36).

Throughout the Old Testament, God's people manifested God's Spirit and Power at different times, which also pulled individuals, kingdoms and nations toward God. Toward the end of the Old Testament

and before the New Testament time, God, through the Prophet Joel, sent prophecies about "the day of the Lord." Among those prophecies was the promise of pouring out His "Spirit on all people," including servants of God, men and women (Joel 2: 28). This prophecy began its fulfilment in the New Testament to the present day.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus is the model for the Pentecostal manifestation. Before the Pentecost day, the Spirit and Power of God had been made manifest on several occasions and throughout the ministry of Christ. He was the one who gave assurance of the supernatural manifestation and its abilities before His ascension. Instances can be drawn in the light of Matthew 3:16 and Luke 3:22: the Spirit of the Lord descended like a dove, followed by the voice of a witness attesting to and empowering Jesus for ministry. Jesus manifested or demonstrated supernatural power through preaching, healing, delivering the demon-possessed, walking on the sea, calming the storm, etc.

On the day of Pentecost, there was a change in the status quo; what used to be a Jewish festival turned into a Pentecostal manifestation. The Holy Spirit descended in power whirlwind and harmless fire, which empowered the apostles to speak in different tongues. From that day onward, the apostles ministered in that power, preaching, healing, conducting deliverance, signs, and wonders and doing other miracles in many villages, towns, cities and nations.

The manifestation of the gift and power of God (the Spirit) did not end with either Jesus or the apostles; instead, it was a continuous experience. Christians across the world, at one point or the other, testify of this experience, predominantly the power and ideology that ignited and drove the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Africa and Nigeria, in particular, are still experiencing the impact as more churches are emerging today compared to the nineteenth century. Michael Ogunewu affirms that these miraculous manifestations continued in the Church till the contemporary time.² He further stated that the manifestation of Power and Gifts of the Holy Spirit is a fact that cannot be denied either within the Christian fold or by other nationals. However, he noted that despite the widespread of this Pentecostal manifestation, the emphasis seems stronger among some church denominations than others.

PENTECOSTAL MANIFESTATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY TIME

Pentecostal manifestations have continued for over a century. It has become a paradigm and is believed

2. Michael A. Ogunewu, *Travails and Triumphs of Aladura Christianity in Nigeria 1920-2010*. (Lagos: The Amen Mission Inc., 2015), 62-63

to be a catalyst for church planting and growth. Meanwhile, critics observe some excesses or extremes therein. David Perry affirms that “other evangelicals have also offered critiques of Pentecostal Spirit baptism from an exegetical standpoint.”³ Nevertheless, this paper focuses on harnessing (utilising) the Manifestation of Power and the Gift of the Holy Spirit for church planting and growth. Ogunewu maintains that leaders of some churches are tenacious with their belief in the presence and manifestation of supernatural power even nowadays.⁴ By manifesting this gift and power, they have gained numerous congregants and planted many churches.

Donlon opines that there are three-fold⁵ purposes of the Spirit in the believers’ life: for a prophetic witness, to reconfirm those baptised in the Spirit as part of the people of God, and to empower the Church for the eschatological mission. All these were visible in the Azusa Street Revival Movement. Contemporary church historians and missiologists have referenced the “Azusa Street Revival” and how it expanded the Christian mission to many parts of the world. In a background study of the Azusa Street Revival Movement, Gbenga Adebayo mentioned the Welsh Revival, which broke out in 1904 with about one hundred thousand people from Wales, as perhaps the foremost movement of such.⁶ However, Veli-Matti Karkkainen argues that the Pentecostal Movement had had a humble beginning “in the outpouring of the Spirit among students at the Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas (1901).”⁷ Adebayo continues on William Joseph Seymour that “despite the challenges faced by this son of an enslaved Black person, this young man of about 35 years, with one eye whose parents were Catholics, stood firm in his desire to seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit from God.”⁸

Seymour was not deterred by the rejection and humiliation of church elders in Ninth and Santa Fe, Los Angeles (a church he pastored for a while), who ejected him from their Church because he preached about the gift of speaking in tongues. They accused him of preaching about what he had not experienced or practised. Nevertheless, Seymour’s conviction, faith, tenacity, and consistency in seeking God’s face were greatly rewarded by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Supernatural manifestation. Adebayo further asserts that between April 9 and 12, 1906,⁹

during the ten-day fast by Seymour and his small new group, God released the power of the Holy Spirit on them.

Roberts Liardon affirms that on the evening of April 9, 1906, eight of them were endued as they received the gift and began speaking in tongues. The news of this experience became widespread throughout the community, and there was an upsurge in the crowd. The amazing event captivated people from different strata of society, and they ran to 214 Bonnie Brae Street, including Julia Hutchins, a church founded in Los Angeles. Caucasians from the Wesleyan Holiness Movement were searching for their baptism in the Spirit. Mexicans were relatively new to the area, and an assortment of Russians, Armenians, Chinese, Japanese, and Native Americans joined the movement.¹⁰ Hence, there was a massive harvest.

Due to the sudden massive turnout (from 300 to 1,500 people), their meeting place could no longer contain them (an exceeding church growth); hence, they needed a more spacious place. Gary McGee noted that from September 1904 to June 1905, one hundred thousand (100,000) people were converted to Christ.¹¹ Different miracles reportedly took place in their meetings; for instance, blindness was cured, other bodily infirmities were healed, and people instantly spoke in various languages. Adebayo believes the Azusa Street revival was “one of the focal points of the emerging Pentecostal Movement.” Meanwhile, one will hardly believe that this location would birth a movement destined to change the face of Christianity globally¹² (perhaps it was divinely orchestrated). Afterwards, thirteen missionaries were sent out from Azusa Street, expanding the movement to different parts of the world.

PENTECOSTAL MANIFESTATION, CHURCH PLANTING AND GROWTH IN NIGERIA

According to the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, the experience of Pentecostal Manifestation did not die with the Apostles. Still, it has continued to be a strength for centuries in the general church and until contemporary times.¹³ As the influence of this great experience traverses the world, Nigeria is not left out in the scheme of things. A few selected Nigerian churches that seem to have shown exponential church planting and growth are highlighted below.

THE REDEEMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD

History shows that this Church was started by

3. David Perry, “Pentecostal Spirit Baptism: An Analysis of Meaning and Function,” a Doctoral Thesis submitted to the School of Theology, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, August 8, 2014, 24.

4. Ogunewu, 63.

5. Donlon, 28.

6. Gbenga Adebayo, “Lessons from the Azusa Street Revival for the Nigerian Church.” in *Crying for Spiritual Awakening, Ministry Enrichment Series*, Vol. 9, Emiola Nihinloa & Oloyede Folashade eds., (Ogbomosho: Kingdom Impact Publishing and Media Ltd., 2022), 182.

7. Veli-Matti Karkkaine, “Pentecostal Missiology in Ecumenical Perspective: Contributions, Challenges, Controversies.” Retrieved from <http://www.academia.edu/1122950>. (Accessed on 02/10/2023).

8. Adebayo, 182

9. Ibid, 183.

10. Roberts Liardon, *The Azusa Street Revival: When the Fire Feel*. (Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers, 2006), 97 – 99.

11. Gary B. McGee, *William J. Seymour and The Azusa Street Revival*. (Boonville Ave Springfield: The General Council of the Assemblies Of God, 1999), 3. Retrieved from <https://ag.org/Privacy>. (Accessed on 3/10/2023).

12. Adebayo 184.

13. Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel, “History of Catholic Charismatic Renewal,” Diocese of Lafayette. Retrieved from <https://diolaf.org/news>. (Accessed on 04/10/2023).

Rev. Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi, with about nine members, through a divine persuasion¹⁴ as a house fellowship group. But as he received the power and gift of the Holy Spirit, which enabled him to perform miracles, the population increased amazingly. As of the time in review, The Redeemed Christian Church of God has planted about 2000 parishes in Nigeria and other parishes in about 21 different countries of the world. One of the prominent programmes of this Church is the all-night miracle service tagged "Holy Ghost Service." It is held every first Friday monthly at the Redemption Camp, Km. 46, Lagos-Ibadan expressway. The headcount of attendance for this programme is an average of 500,000 people, and currently, this programme is held in many other parts of the world.¹⁵ It attests to how far the manifestation or demonstration of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit has taken this Church in the Kingdom's advancement.

LIVING FAITH CHURCH (WINNERS CHAPEL)

Winner Chapel, like some others, has its theological position on Pentecostalism.¹⁶ The founder was said to have had an 18-hour-long supernatural encounter in a vision where God spoke to him. Afterwards, he began a teaching ministry called "Faith Liberation Hour" in 1981 and was fully established as a church with four members in December 1983. Among her core emphasis are signs and wonders (manifestations of power and gifts of the Holy Spirit), which have attracted many people to the Church. The Vanguard News states, "Winners Chapel has six million members spread across 147 countries."¹⁷ The Church is also estimated to have 21,000 churches across Nigeria and many others across six major continents worldwide.¹⁸ The growth of this Church has been propelled by its emphasis on signs and wonders alongside faith and prosperity.

MOUNTAIN OF FIRE & MIRACLES MINISTRIES

Dr Daniel Kolawole Olukoya founded this Church through a prayer meeting programme in 1989 with 24 other people. The Church attendance increased based on the manifestation of the power of God through "verifiable miracles" which happened in the lives of the attending members.¹⁹ The record shows that the power of God evangelised the prayer meetings to the

14. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, "Our History." Retrieved from <https://www.rccg.org/our-history/>. (Accessed on 04/10/2023).

15. RCCG, Our Origin – RCCG Lord's Temple. <https://rccglordstemple.org/our-origin/>. (Accessed on 3/10/2023).

16. Christian Events, "Winners Chapel Worldwide – Updated Information About The Living Faith Church Int'l" Retrieved from <https://www.christianevents.com.ng/>. (Accessed on 04/10/2023).

17. Vanguard News, December 27, 2014, "Winners Chapel has Six Million Members ..." Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/12/winners-chapel-has-six-million-members-spread-across-147-countries-oyedepo/> (Accessed on 16/10/2023).

18. Christian Events

19. Mountain of Fire & Miracles Ministries, "History of MFM." Retrieved from <https://www.mountainoffire.org/about>. (Accessed 16/10/2023).

point that they had a spiritual explosion, and people started coming from far and wide to seek the face of God. People who heard and saw the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit happening in the prayer meetings came to receive theirs. Despite their relocation due to space, "believers and those seeking for help kept coming, leading to a very large congregation." The founder, at this point, under Divine direction, "evolved a strategy of a network of branches in every state capital, local government headquarters, senatorial district and locality."²⁰ Recent records show that Mountain of Fire & Miracles Ministries is counted among the fastest-growing churches of this generation worldwide. Its significant growth is evident in the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit.

The above mentioned are examples of some founders and churches in Nigeria that emphasise and promote Pentecostalism or Pentecostal manifestations and have greatly thrived. Their presence in most parts of Nigeria is noticeable.

ACQUIRING AND HARNESSING THE POWER AND GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Pentecostal Manifestation, which consists of prophecy, signs, wonders, healing, miracles and more, is a potent tool for church planting and growth. On "Spirit Baptism",²¹ David Perry said that the Pentecostals believe that the baptism of the Spirit is an endowment of power for witnessing and service, which feasibly propel church planting. The critical factor observed for the growth and expansion of the churches listed above, even during the time of the apostles, is the manifestation of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Also, Jesus' ministry was known for signs, wonders, miracles, etc. and that attracted a multitude to Him. Therefore, while the significance of Pentecostal Manifestation to church planting and growth is now apparent, it is essential to discuss how to acquire and utilise them concurrently for missions.

ACQUIRING THE POWER AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR MISSIONS

Undoubtedly, opinions might vary regarding terminologies on how or in which the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit may be acquired. One may also notice variations in the Old and New Testaments on how these gifts were received and utilised. Two specific ways are seen in the Bible: 1) God's election, e.g. Moses, Elijah, and Apostle Paul; 2) by seeking and waiting: Moses (Ex. 33:18), Elisha, the Apostles in Acts. However, the under-listed points are based on Jesus' instruction:

20. "History of MFM"

21. David Perry, "Pentecostal Spirit Baptism: An Analysis of Meaning and Function," a Doctoral Thesis submitted to the School of Theology, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, August 8, 2014, 105.

SALVATION EXPERIENCE

The first step to acquiring power and gifts of the Holy Spirit is to be saved. In Acts of the Apostles, the disciples of Jesus, who were already saved, received it. Jeran Ferguson gave an analogy with an electric bulb and light, saying that one cannot “receive the manifestation of light without a light bulb.” In the same way, the manifestation of God’s power cannot be received without one receiving God (salvation).²² Don DeWelt, interpreting Acts 2:28, patently states that the gift of the Holy Spirit comes upon repentance and baptism.²³ Discussing the “requirements”²⁴ to receive the Holy Spirit, the above is corroborated here, as accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour is paramount to acquiring the Holy Spirit. Even though the three thoughts above might come from different contexts, they all emphasise that salvation happens first before receiving the gifts. Their emphasis agrees with the case of Jesus Christ’s disciples, who first accepted Him as their Lord and Saviour and stayed in tune with His ways and teachings before they were empowered.

DISCIPLESHIP

A few instances could be drawn in the Bible of how discipleship played a vital role in receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. One such case is about Elisha, who was discipled by Elijah and later was filled with the Spirit/Power of God (1 Kings 19:19-21). Another is that of the disciples of Jesus who learned under their Master till they became mature enough to receive the power.

THIRST/HUNGER FOR THE GIFTS

There is a crucial significance in thirsting or being hungry for something that matters a lot. The hunger propels a high level of sacrifice, intentional pursuit, extreme commitment, tenacity, etc. Writing “How to Receive the Holy Spirit”,²⁵ Don Krow underscores that in the New Testament, every time the Holy Spirit falls on an individual, a gift from Him manifests, and there will be evidence that such person has received the infilling of the Holy Spirit. He further shared that he once became curious about the gifts of the Holy Spirit as people have spoken much about it; then, he knelt one evening and passionately asked God for it. As he vehemently prayed and made his reasons known to God, he had a sudden encounter; the Holy Spirit gave

22. Jeran Ferguson, “The Biblical Foundation: 4 Simple Steps to Receive/Activate the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.” Retrieved from <https://thebiblicalfoundation.com/4-simple-steps-to-receive-the-gifts-of-the-holy-spirit/>, 9-10. (Accessed 10/17/23).

23. Don DeWelt, *The Power of The Holy Spirit* Vol 1 (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1991) Retrieved from <https://fliphtml5.com/hecd/zqhz/basic#>. (Accessed 18/10/2023).

24. “7 Steps To Receive the Holy Spirit” Retrieved from <https://www.printfriendly.com/p/g/5pN6td> 3. (Accessed 18/10/2023).

25. Don Krow, *How to Receive the Holy Spirit* (USA: Don Krow Ministries 10065 Sun Ridge Circle Rogers), 62. Retrieved from https://delessons.org/tools/de_program_condensed/Level_1/15_.pdf. (Accessed on 18/10/2023).

him “a language, an utterance” he had not known before.

Therefore, it is suggested that it would be much more beneficial when believers and ministers of the gospel, particularly hunger for this infilling of the power and gift, than to think that God only gives it to those He prefers. Michael Denk states, “Just realise that on this Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, that we celebrate today that God has manifested Himself to every individual.”²⁶ This suggests that it was not for a selected few but all believers.

WAITING EAGERLY FOR THE ENDUEMENT

Jesus instructed His disciples, “...stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven” (Luke 24:49, NLT). The ability to eagerly, obediently, and patiently wait for a promise or answer to a request is an essential or indispensable virtue that pays. For instance, each time a pregnant woman waits till full-term and the baby in the utero is delivered, the joy and relief it brings are relatively tremendous. Elisha waited relentlessly under Elijah for the power and gift of the Spirit, and in the long run, he got it and utilised it in doing exploits (2Kgs. 2:1-14).

Similarly, Jesus’s disciples obediently waited until they were endued with the power (Acts 1:4, 14, 2:1). In another instance, Mookgo Kgatla emphasises that the leader of Azusa Street Revival “assured followers that if they prayed for weeks with sufficient earnestness, God was ready to send a new Pentecost. Like the miraculous event described in Acts, this latter-day outpouring of the Spirit would be demonstrated with tongues of flame, healing, speaking in tongues, and other signs and wonders.”²⁷ Within days, what he said happened. Therefore, “believers” who desire “Pentecostal manifestation” must wait obediently, patiently and painstakingly. They must stay in prayer with every sense of commitment, devotion and passion. To avoid distractions, such waiting periods or moments are advised to be in isolated places, whether privately or corporately.

ACCEPTANCE/WILLINGNESS FOR MANIFESTATION

The need to accept this gift and the willingness to manifest it (them) is crucial; this is an area of concern regarding the issue of “election or preferment.” For instance, Moses, who was elected, had difficulty accepting the opportunity when he was called, and it took God’s patience to convince him. But the disciples willingly waited in obedience, and as they received it,

26. Michael Denk, “Pentecost Manifestation” <https://www.theprodigalfather.org/pentecost-manifestation/>. (Accessed 29/09/2023).

27. Mookgo Solomon Kgatla, “The influence of Azusa Street Revival in the early developments of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.” In *Missionalia* (Online) vol.44 no.3 Pretoria 2016. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/44-2-156>. (Accessed on 29/09/2023).

they went into action immediately. It is then, therefore, necessary that those who desire to acquire this power will also be willing to accept it with its responsibilities. This paper asserts the validity of acquiring the gift of the Holy Spirit. While steps to receive these gifts have been established, it is necessary to consider their utilisation.

EXPLOITING/UTILISING THE GIFTS FOR SERVICE

The power and gifts of the Holy Spirit are not for embellishment, entertainment or commercial purposes but for spiritual services. Anyone who receives or is given must utilise it for spiritual ministries, especially church planting and church growth. Acts 1:8 clarifies that the gift of the Holy Spirit is given for missions (“...ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”, KJV).²⁸ The witnessing of the apostles had much credence as they were seen to be accompanied by the manifestation of miracles, signs and wonders. Furthermore, the gift of the Holy Spirit is “the power to hear from God, to speak in tongues, prophesy, do signs, miracles, and wonders and more.”²⁹ So, the disciples harnessed it to gather new converts, planted churches, and conquered more lands for God.

Church planting is an indispensable task or responsibility of Christians, and when they plant churches, they see to its growth. The fisherman will always use a bait to trap fish into their hook or net, so it is with church planting and growth. Social ministry is a beautiful tool, as are education, free health care, etc.; no matter how sufficient these strategies may appear, this paper argues that Pentecostal Manifestation is the most powerful tool to do missions. Social ministry may fail, but the power and gift of the Holy Spirit are infallible in ministry advancement.

The Azusa Street Revival (1906-1915) is a typical example of how the gift of the Holy Spirit was harnessed for church growth and planting new ones. Arun John underscores that the Azusa Street

²⁸ Krow, 63.

²⁹ Spirit & Truth, “Walking in Power: The Manifestations Of Holy Spirit.” Retrieved from <https://spiritandtruthonline.org/walking-in-power-the-manifestations-of-holy-spirit/>. (Accessed on 20/09/2023).

revival’s effect traversed worldwide like wildfire, reaching almost all parts of the world.³⁰ Gustav Niebuhr corroborates that the Azusa Street Revival has gained credence as the central event in the birth of Pentecostalism, which has become a worldwide Christian movement.³¹ Adebayo underscores that before September 1906, many missionaries had been sent out as evangelists to the West Coast of the United States, and not less than thirteen were sent to Africa.³² One could see how that singular event took dominance and influence in the expansion of Christianity today.

As much as the benefit and purpose of these gifts are understood by those who received them, they will not be taken for granted. The understanding drives the individual or group’s temerity to witness, which results in church planting. Caution must be placed here that abuse of the power of the Holy Spirit should be avoided because there are instances of it in the contemporary church. The biblical antecedent of such abuse and its consequence should be enough warning – Acts 8: 9-24.

CONCLUSION

Church planting is an indispensable task or responsibility of Christians, and when they plant churches, they see to its growth. The fisherman will always use a bait to trap fish into their hook or net, so it is with church planting and growth. Social ministry is a beautiful tool, as are education, free health care, etc.; no matter how sufficient these strategies may appear, this paper argues that Pentecostal Manifestation is the most powerful tool to do missions. Social ministry may fail, but the power and gift of the Holy Spirit are infallible in ministry advancement.

Today, many churches invest a lot in building edifices and decorating them with expensive ornaments to attract members. Some hold multiple programmes occasionally; some even hold crusades at different parts of their enclave, all in the bit to multiply members or plant new churches. Irrespective of how good all these may appear if they are not accompanied by Pentecostal manifestation, the results might be superficial. Healing power, signs, wonders, miracles, etc., are highly recognised and sought after in some churches, which is why many churches have found it a powerful strategy for church planting and growth.

It is observed that every year, pastors graduate in their numbers at the different theological institutions, with a good number not having a place of service. Some spend years waiting for a call, some return to

³⁰ Arun P. John “Understanding of Divine Healing in the Classical Pentecostal Churches and Its Relation to the Church Growth in the Kerala Context.” Retrieved from <https://www.academia.edu/63401378/>. (Accessed on 18/10/2023).

³¹ Gustav Niebuhr, “Miracle on Azusa Street.” Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/11/20/books/miracle-on-azusa-street.html>. (Accessed on 18/10/2023).

³² Adebayo, 185

their former jobs, some start a new job, and some, out of desperation, constitute a nuisance in their local churches, etc. All these happen, though; there are lands to conquer for God: places where churches need to be planted, poor churches that need the services of a trained minister, and so on. Some of such people want to go to an "already made church"; some are unwilling to go to the village, and some are afraid to pioneer a new church. There is no doubt that their lacuna is that they do not possess Pentecostal power: the power for healing, signs, wonders, miracles, etc. Jesus pulled the crowd, and the apostles won numerous souls and planted churches even in remote areas; all these were possible through the manifestation of the power and gift of the Holy Spirit that accompanied their teachings.

Having reviewed Pentecostal manifestation in the past and contemporary times, evaluated its effect on church planting and growth and how it can be acquired and utilised for church planting and growth; this paper, therefore, submits that if declining and plateaued churches and denominations whose presences have not been significantly felt should seek this power and prudently utilise it, they will experience incredible expansion. Hence, all believers, both laity and clergy, are encouraged to seek this power and gifts, correctly utilise them for church planting and growth, and see the tremendous expansion they will experience in the *Missio Dei*.

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Mission: Contextualizing Theology and the Gospel

Chester Jae Young Choi

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lankan theologian Pieris's explanation of why Christianity is not taking hold in Sri Lanka should interest missionaries. He uses the helicopter theory of religious expansion to explain why Christian missions are not taking hold in Sri Lanka.¹

First, metaphysical, supernatural religion is like a helicopter, while natural religion is a landing pad for supernatural religion to land on the ground. The meeting of the two does not result in a radical conversion from natural to supernatural religion. The "inculturation" that occurs when the two meet has no particular significance other than discovering natural points of contact that supernatural religions insert into natural religions. This theory explains why different religions spread throughout Asia.

Second, the principle of "first come, first served." Buddhism came to Sri Lanka before Christianity. Christianity came to the Philippines before any other metaphysical or supernatural religion. This theory is why Sri Lanka is a Buddhist country and the Philippines is a Christian country today. It is why it was not difficult for Islam to penetrate the Java island's culture in Indonesia, even though there was a natural religion, Tantric Hinduism.

Third, this is the only helicopter that can land in the same place once a helicopter has landed. This theory leads to the conclusion that the Philippines will not become a Buddhist country in the future; similarly, Sri Lanka will not become a Christian country. In other words, there will be no mass conversion from one metaphysical, supernatural religion to another metaphysical, supernatural religion. Only in areas where natural religion predominates can Christianity make a quantum leap forward. For example, Christianity significantly gained converts in some parts of Indonesia (North Sumatra, Ambonia, and Moluccas) because natural religions rather than Islam dominated those areas. However, other parts of Asia will not allow Christianity to sweep through the religious culture of Asia.

Fourth, we cannot rule out the possibility of coercive forces being used to force the grounded helicopter to leave the landing site. In this case, a metaphysical, supernatural religion could displace the existing metaphysical, supernatural religion by exerting sustained political or military pressure over a long period or through demographic change (colonial migration). This helicopter theory, built on

socio-historical observations, explains why colonial Christianity never took deep roots throughout Asia. The point is that Asian cultures, which have absorbed the great religions that make up more than 90 percent of Asia, have left no room for Christ.

Here are a few reasons to answer Pieris's question about why Christianity has not caught on in Asia:

1. Asia already had an established metaphysical and supernatural religion of the same caliber before Christianity arrived.
2. There is a historical sense of victimization in that Christianity was understood and experienced in Asian eyes as a religion as an adjunct to Western colonial power.
3. There is the Christological constraint that the Christ presented by Western Christianity was a European Christ, not an Asian Christ that Asians could accept.
4. The Christ created by Asian theologians was for a privileged few in the elite ruling class, not a Christ who spoke for the people.
5. It points to the failure of Christianity in Asia to understand the needs of the persecuted Asian people and to contextualize them as "our" God.

This Understanding of Pieris Exposes Some Essential Theological Issues.

First, it has a theological liberalism in which Christ is not the Christ of the Bible, but the people themselves, the community body. Second, it has a gnostic Christology, the fusion of subject and object. It eliminates the distinction between Christians and non-Christians and emphasizes the communal body, which is all of us. Christ becomes the body, not the head. The Christ of the Bible, the incarnate Christ with divinity and humanity, is rejected, leaving only the Gnostic Christ. Third, the mission concept with its traditional soteriology is thoroughly denied and rejected. Only healing and prophetic ministry is the true meaning of the mission, and the result of this missionary work is the liberation of the poor and the fulfillment of their aspirations. Fourth, the evangelical proclamation that salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone is an exclusive claim, a vestige of Western colonialism that must be rejected. Christ is to be interpreted as a Gnostic. Therefore the Spirit of Christ can be found in other religions, and dialogue is crucial to fulfilling healing and prophetic missionary work. Fifth, and most importantly, there is no belief that the Bible is the only authoritative word of God, but rather an understanding that the people's voice is the word of God. It paradoxically exposes the failure of Asian theology, as Pieris argues, to be a self-

1. Pieris, Aloysius. (1996). *Fire and Water: Basic Issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity. Faith Meets Faith*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, p. 66-67.

sustaining theology grounded in biblical orthodoxy based on the foundation of the apostolic creeds. Thus, the subjective role of the Sri Lankan people is crucial for establishing Christianity in Sri Lanka. We also discover the importance of having a contextualized praxis grounded in biblical tradition and the biblical tradition, in which the proper knowledge and interpretation of the Bible as the eternal Word of truth and Christ as revealed in the Bible is grounded in text and context.

KINGDOM OF GOD IDENTITY AND CHRISTIAN MISSION

Charles H. Kraft draws on his own experience to argue that the theological questions posed by Western missionaries are very different from those posed by people on the mission field in the non-Western world. It demonstrates a fundamental disconnect between how missionaries and people in the mission field think.

First, when choosing the Old Testament story of Joseph, the Western missionary emphasizes that Joseph remained loyal to God despite the circumstances that happened to him. In contrast, the African emphasizes that Joseph never forgot his family, no matter how far away they were. Both meanings are legitimate understandings of Joseph, but they show that differences in the cultural background lead to different interpretive emphases. It shows that when God speaks to different cultural groups through the same passage, the passage is interpreted from different angles, each with a focus that is relevant to their culture. Secondly, Western missionaries like the Book of Romans for its logic, while Africans like the books of stories and history in the Bible. The Hellenistic way of thinking influenced Western Christianity and culture, so they liked Romans for their Hellenistic style of argumentation. At the same time, Africans are more likely to hear the Gospel through the Old Testament because their culture is closer to the Hebrew way of thinking. Third, "evil spirits," a topic that was never an issue for Western missionaries and was not taught in seminaries, is emerging as an essential question for Africans.²

These points illustrate the need for a non-Western lens when communicating the Gospel and applying biblical principles to people in non-Western cultures. Just as conversion to Christ brings about a paradigm shift, a radically new interpretation and response to reality, so does it require a change of perspective in the case of the missionary. This change of perspective is not a conversion to Christ but a conversion to a new perception of the nature and work of Jesus Christ to which he was already committed.

While Charles Kraft's challenge for a paradigm

shift for missionaries is primarily directed at Western missionaries, the call for a paradigm shift is still relevant for Asian missionaries, which often imitate and replicate the same Western frame of reference. Implicit in the criticisms from Western mission organizations about not doing "Korean-style missions" is a warning not to do missions with a uniquely Asian framework but instead not to replicate missionary approaches that Western missions have already tried and concluded to be unsuccessful. Implicit in this critique is a call for Korean missions to create their framework and model of non-Western missions and a model of Asian missions.

CONTEXTUALIZING THEOLOGY IN SRI LANKA

What constitutes an appropriate contextual or indigenous approach relevant to developing and advancing Asian theology? Charles R. Taber identifies six conditions that make indigenous contextual theology possible.

(1) Indigenous contextual theology must be formed in the people's language. It is not just in terms of words or grammatical structures but in terms of conceptual categories and symbols that are culturally rooted. (2) The methodology and logic of indigenous contextual theology must be culturally relevant. (3) Indigenous contextual theology must address themes that are relevant to the context. (4) Indigenous contextual theology must use culturally appropriate literary forms and genres. (5) Indigenous contextual theology must arise from within indigenous Christian communities. (6) Indigenous contextual theology should be a "participatory theology" of life and mission that expects the full participation of Indigenous communities, i.e., a theology of involvement and commitment.³

On this basis, Hwa Yung defines the concept of contextualization as follows. "Contextualization is a holistic process in which reflection and action are combined with the indigenous church, in which the meaning of the Christian gospel is appropriately understood from within its own indigenous culture and socio-political and economic realities, and in which the new faith survives according to the cultural type of the local society, on the one hand, and transforms the society and individuals within it, meeting their needs and desires under the guidance of the Bible and the Holy Spirit, on the other hand."⁴ It requires that for theology in Asia to be an indigenous contextual theology, the Asian church must have a process of self-reliant theologizing that is based on the triadic principles of self-reliance, self-revolution, self-governance, and above all, on the church's initiative.

2. Kraft, Charles H. (2005). *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross Cultural Perspective*. Revised 25th anniversary ed. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, p. 9-10.

3. Taber, Charles R. (1978). "The Limits of Indigenization in Theology." *Missiology*. 6(1), p. 67.

4. Yung, Hwa. (2000). *Mangoes or Bananas?* Oxford: Regnum Books, p. 2-4.

1. Three premises for understanding contextualization in theology

In order to discuss theological contextualization, the following points must be made. First, contextualization is rooted in the incarnation. Andrew F. Walls calls contextualization rooted in the incarnation of the “indigenization” principle.⁵ One constant throughout the history of Christianity has been the desire to live as Christians and as members of the society to which they belong and to make the church “feel at home” or “indigenize. This desire to be indigenized is tied to the very essence of the Gospel, and indigenization follows the incarnation itself. When God became man, Christ took on flesh as a member of a particular family, a citizen of a particular nation. He followed the traditions of customs familiar to that nation. Wherever Christ is received by people, and at whatever point in time, he takes on that nationality, society, and culture and sanctifies all that his presence can. Therefore, no group of Christians has the right to impose on another group of Christians, in the name of Christ, a value system for a life determined in another time and space.

On this basis, Hwa Yung defines the concept of contextualization as follows. “Contextualization is a holistic process in which reflection and action are combined with the indigenous church, in which the meaning of the Christian gospel is appropriately understood from within its own indigenous culture and socio-political and economic realities, and in which the new faith survives according to the cultural type of the local society, on the one hand, and transforms the society and individuals within it, meeting their needs and desires under the guidance of the Bible and the Holy Spirit, on the other hand.”

However, the process of indigenization or contextualization has its challenges. Uncritical contextualization runs the risk of leading to relativism. We need to recognize that there is something that transcends the context because we can end up with mutually exclusive local theologies. As John R. Davis points out, “Third World syncretism may ultimately

5. Walls, Andrew F. (1982). “The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture.” *Missionalia*.10(3), p. 97.

be more oppressive than First World imperialism.”⁶ Second, it is essential to note that a “pilgrimage” principle is in tension with the “indigenization” principle. Both of these principles are part of the essence of the Gospel. Both reveal that God accepts us as we are and seeks to transform us into what God wants us to be. Therefore, Christians take the pilgrimage principle seriously along with the indigenization principle. The pilgrim principle tells us we have no city on earth to dwell in. It also warns us that to be loyal to Christ is to be detached from the society to which one belongs, for there is no society in this world, Western or Eastern, ancient or modern, that can bring the Word of Christ painlessly into its fabric.⁷ Thus, when we can strike a balanced tension between these two principles, we can hold together the particularity of our situation and the universality of the Gospel without losing either.

Third, it is crucial to clarify the epistemological basis for contextualization. Paul Hibbert has argued that the epistemological basis for the lack of interest in contextualization during the colonial period was the dominance of positivists or pure realists.⁸ During this period, most scientists believed they accurately described the world as it was.⁹ Many missionaries understood theology similarly, assuming that Western theology was adequately well-structured and the absolute truth. Therefore, even though other religions and cultures reflected partial views of truth, the missionary’s task was to transplant the same theology immutable in the mission field. However, many factors, including the development of modern physics and relativity, led to the realization that pure realism was inadequate as an adequate description of reality.

Paul Hibbert argued that an adequate epistemological basis for theology is to be found in ‘critical realism,’ as seen in the similarities with science.¹⁰ Critical realism recognizes the difference between reality and our knowledge of that reality. However, like pure realism, that knowledge can be actual. In critical realism, theories are not pictures of reality but maps and blueprints. Just as many plans are needed to understand a building, many theories are needed to understand reality. This epistemology sees all human knowledge as composed of objective and subjective elements and allows us to understand truth better, even if our perceptions are partial. “We see through dark glasses, but we see nonetheless.”¹¹

6. Davis, John R. (1987). *Poles Apart?* Bangkok: OMF Publication, p. 104.

7. Walls, Andrew F. (1982). “The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture.” *Missionalia*.10(3), p. 98-99.

8. Hiebert, Paul G., and Frances F. Hiebert. (1987). *Case Studies in Missions*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, p. 105.

9. Barbour, Ian G. (1974). *Myths, Models, and Paradigms; a Comparative Study in Science and Religion*. 1st ed. New York: Harper & Row, p. 34.

10. Hiebert, Paul G. (1985). *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, p. 7.

11. Hiebert, Paul G., and Frances F. Hiebert. (1987). *Case Studies in Missions*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, p. 109.

This view of theology raises the question of how to deal with pluralism within systematic theology. According to Paul Hibbert, pluralism is inevitable if we take history and culture seriously and accept that all theologies are human interpretations of a biblical revelation within particular contexts. However, since critical realism affirms truth in theology, differences in theology must be faced fairly. Sometimes differences in theology can be accepted as complementary because they are statements of different needs and circumstances. It is because they are statements about different needs and situations. However, theological positions contradicting each other cannot be accepted as if the differences were of no consequence.¹² Such epistemological grounding is required for a critical contextualization that holds indigenous and pilgrim principles in proper tension.

2. Contextualizing the Gospel in Sri Lanka

The contextualization of the Gospel is manifested in the mode of revelation by which God presents the Gospel to humans. The Gospel is the good news that God has revealed himself in a way humans can grasp. To fulfill this purpose, the Word, God within the realm of time and space, came into the world in the flesh. We can say that God contextualized himself in Jesus Christ. One of the primary purposes of the incarnation is to reveal God in a human context. It paradoxically implies that it is impossible to understand and communicate the Gospel outside of the local culture of the recipient. However, a fundamental error in the interpretation of the Gospel occurs when the reading of the Bible ignores the original historical context and interprets it only within the reader's context. The assumption that God's Word cannot be rightly understood outside of its original cultural and linguistic context calls for an exegetical task that uses historical methods to build bridges between the interpreter and the biblical authors. However, the conditions for understanding the Word of God are not solved merely by the historical-scientific method of interpretation but more fundamentally by the interpreter's attitude toward God, the interpreter's ecclesiological tradition, and the interpreter's culture.¹³

First, the interpreter's attitude toward God is crucial in understanding the Word. It is because biblical revelation contains historical events and interpretations of those events. Therefore, the study of revelation involves historical inquiry. Revelation also intends to convince people of their sins and God's grace. As a result, people are brought into a personal fellowship with God. In other words, to fully understand revelation, it is not enough for the interpreter to know the initial historical circumstances of the revelation; instead, the interpreter must apply the perspective of the biblical author, the same perspective that the author has in communion with

12. Hibbert, Paul G. (1985). *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, p. 16.

13. Wright, Christopher J. H. (2000). "Interpreting the Bible among the World Religions." *Themelios*. 25(3), 35-54.

God. Just as there is an initial *Sitz im Leben* (a life situation), there is also a situation of faith that the interpreter must take on fully. Religious knowledge thus consists of historical, metaphysical, ethical, and personal dimensions, i.e., objective truth and the subjectivity and emotion of personal engagement, which are also epistemological elements.

Second, the ecclesiological tradition of the interpreter is a crucial factor in understanding the Word. If the purpose of God's revelation is not the creation of a book (the Bible) but the formation of a people, the church, who are the recipients of the Word, then we cannot ignore the history of biblical interpretation, which is the history of how the church has understood the written Word through the centuries. Often, however, tradition assumes the function of an exegetical control that guards the interpreter in hearing the message of Scripture. This attitude is the starting point of the doctrinal character that gives rise to many denominations.

The contextualization of the Gospel is manifested in the mode of revelation by which God presents the Gospel to humans. The Gospel is the good news that God has revealed himself in a way humans can grasp.

Third, the interpretive understanding of the Word is constrained by the culture of the interpreter. The interpreter does not live in a vacuum but in a concrete historical space, a culture that gives rise to the interpreter's language, patterns of thought and behavior, emotional responses, values, interests, and goals. Thus, the Word of God comes to him within the interpreter's cultural framework. Knowledge of God can only be understood when the Word is incarnated in the interpreter's context. It calls for a correction of the attitude of Western theology, which has a rationalistic mentality that tries to understand the Gospel only as a system of truth and to treat it only scientifically and objectively, divorced from the element of personal commitment. The concept of absolute objectivity is impossible. We must not ignore that there is a gap between the revealed Gospel and the interpretation of that Gospel because the interpreter is always in the position of interpreting as a fallen being. Every interpretation is influenced by the cultural context in which the interpreter is fundamentally constrained.

In summary, the knowledge of God based on the Bible is proper through exegesis, but it is not complete. Consequently, we must recognize that theology is not absolute, but we must also recognize that theology must be true. Just as no culture can fully fulfill God's purposes, the Gospel cannot be fully incarnated in any

culture. The Gospel always transcends culture, even though the Gospel has profoundly influenced culture.

3. The Gospel in Sri Lanka in the Non-Western World

To what extent has the expansion of the Gospel been accomplished through the incarnation of the Gospel? Can Christians state that the Gospel is a universal message with unrestricted relevance to the non-Western world? These questions are raised. It is commonly pointed out that the church in the non-Western world is a church without theology. However, there is inevitably theology wherever the Gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus is preached. If the Gospel is not theological, it is not the Gospel. Theology is not contemplative from an ivory tower but an expression of God's understanding of actual questions from the field. However, the way we bring God's understanding into our understanding is strictly from the Bible, God's only revelation. Outside of the Bible, we cannot rightly understand God's will for the practical questions of life, so theology cannot be thought of apart from the Bible as the only means of revealing God's will and revelation.

The question is whether our understanding of the Bible is clothed in a cultural garb that is acceptable to the context in which we live: the principle that God's Word is immutable and that God's Word is communicated in a way that makes its message relevant to the context of our lives. The non-Western world has unique questions, and relevant answers must come from the infallible Word of God. The confession of the absoluteness and uniqueness of God's Word presupposes that the Gospel in the non-Western world must be universal in understanding eternal truths that transcend time and culture. The Gospel in the non-Western world cannot be different from the Western world but must have a universal unity that stands on the foundation of apostolic confession. As the missionary Apostle Paul understood it, the basis for the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Christ and their access to God in the one Spirit is that they are "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2:20).

Where is the justification for the term gospel in the non-Western world? The justification arises from the need to build hermeneutical and homiletical bridges between the Word passed down from the foundation of the apostles and prophets and its relevance to us today. The Gospel, the Word of God, is the same eternal truth yesterday and today to Jews and Gentiles alike. However, the place of the hearer of this eternal truth is different in time, space, and life circumstances - yesterday and today, Jew and Gentile. The biblical writers recognized this distinction.

For example, in Acts 13:32, the apostle Paul points out that "David served God's purpose in his generation." 1 Chronicles 12:32 speaks of a leader who "understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (The man of Issachar understood the times

and knew what Israel should do). The importance of knowing the place and time in which the Gospel is witnessed is confirmed by Luther's words. "If you preach the Gospel in all aspects except the issues with deal specifically with your times -you are not preaching all the Gospel." In order to build a bridge that bridges the gap between then and now, we need to go through a four-step process: Exegesis (Observation and Interpretation), Implication, Contextualization, and Personalization. A diagram of the above discussion is shown below.

TABLE 1: Modern Applications Of Biblical Texts¹⁴

Bible Texts	Application	People's needs
The Word of God		World
Past Revelations	Changing lives	The current world
Then		Now
Interpretation	Implications	Personalization
Annotators		Communicators

The Message Bible points out that Jesus also "presented his message to them, fitting the stories to their experience and maturity (Mark 4:33)." So what the Gospel in the non-Western world requires is sufficient contextualization of the Gospel within the culture of the non-Western world. Without this contextualization, Christianity will always be constrained in Asia and Africa as a racial religion of the West. Without the contextualization of the Gospel in the soil of the non-Western world, Christianity does not take root in the reality of the people of the non-Western world deeply enough to generate creative thought; that is, the church skims the surface of the history of the non-Western world, but fails to generate a sense of uniqueness in the minds of the people of the non-Western world that is "mine" or "ours" and has a process of identification. Even though it has been 450 years since Christianity was introduced to Sri Lanka, it is still considered a Western religion in the minds of the Sri Lankan people and has failed to create a sense of belonging to us. In this respect, the decision of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 becomes a monumental event in contextualizing the Gospel that breaks the limits and perceptions of the Gospel as belonging to the Jews and provides a new framework of perception that the Gospel belongs to the Gentiles.

4. Contextualizing the Gospel in Culture

If the Gospel is not contextualized, God's Word becomes a message that only skims the surface of our lives. Therefore, the incarnation of the Gospel in culture becomes a critical missionary issue. Regarding the nature of culture, Aram points out three important facts.

First, culture is the self-expression of a group of people in time and space. Culture is an expression of life, a way of being oneself concerning others and nature. Culture is the total of language, traditions, beliefs, institutions, and customs that strongly bind a community. Culture is also a complex entity

14. Warren, Rick. (2001). *Purpose-Driven Preaching*. p. 6-7.

encompassing spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional qualities. A people's ethos, or self-identity, is expressed through their culture. Therefore, culture and religion have a strong internal cohesion. Most societies express their identity through culture and religion and find comfort in them. For example, in Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism, the founding culture is seen as a divine model for encountering ultimate reality - an absolute model culture. In Christianity, however, culture has only instrumental and transitional values. In Christianity, culture is a variable model.¹⁵

Andrew Walls makes three points about the impact of Christianity's attitude toward the variable value of culture on missionary history.¹⁶ First, it makes Christianity's progress in the world not continuous but recurrent. Areas that once came under Islamic influence have remained Islamic, while areas that were once the heartland of Christianity are no longer so. The Christian communities there have been weakened or extinguished. In the words of revelation, the candlestick has been moved. However, the weakening of Christianity in the heartland does not mean that the witness of Christianity in the world has weakened. The church in Jerusalem at the center scattered to the four winds, but the mission to the Hellenized world, initiated by the church in Antioch at the periphery, spread the Gospel farther afield. In other words, the decline of Christianity's center led to its growth at the periphery. Thus, Christianity has no permanent core holy place comparable to Islam's Mecca. No one country or culture can claim a monopoly on the Christian faith. There is no permanent Christian state and no single, exclusive form of Christian culture. At different times in history, the initiative of Christian missions in different parts of the world has been passed back and forth like a relay race.

Second, Christianity has existed across cultural boundaries. The survival and continued growth of the Christian faith are due to its ability to cross cultural boundaries. Christianity survived and grew because it crossed Jewish cultural boundaries into the Greek world, and when the Jerusalem church died out, new Greek-speaking churches were established that included Gentiles. Christianity survives by spreading across cultural and linguistic boundaries. With the process of mission across cultural and linguistic boundaries, Christianity would continue and thrive.

Third, Jesus Christ took on the culture of this world to build His church. The early church developed a thoroughly Jewish way of being and living as a Christian. However, church leaders at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 concluded that circumcision and obedience to legalistic teachings based on Jewish culture were unnecessary. As Greeks, those who

15. Aram, I. (1999). "The Incarnation of the Gospel in Cultures: A Missionary Event." *New Directions in Mission & Evangelization* 3. Orbis Books: Scherer, James A. & Bevens, Stephen B. ed., p.30.

16. Walls, Andrew F. (2001). "Rethinking Mission: New Directions for a New Century." A lecturing paper for the Centennial Memorial International Mission Conference at Chang Shin University, Korea.

accepted Jesus Christ and became Christians had to discover for themselves, under the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit, how to live out their Christian identity as Greeks. Living in a society with Hellenic characteristics differs from living with Jewish characteristics. When Ephesians was written, there were only two primary cultures within Christianity, two Christian ways of life, one Jewish and one Hellenic. However, now there is a much wider variety of Christian ways of life. Therefore, an essential part of missionary work is to help and encourage the development of different Christian lifestyles in different world cultures under the guidance and illumination of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, it is vital to help those who live different Christian lifestyles to recognize and coexist with each other as members of the same body of Christ.

Aram points out that the second characteristic of culture is that it is not a fixed, static thing but a dynamic force. The modern world is moving toward a single dominant culture. Today, the emergence of a new internationalized monoculture threatens humanity and everything in creation. The development of modern new science and market economy has led to a new internationalized culture built on profit, quantitative growth, and exploitation. Western culture is dominated by economic materialism based on cost and utility value. The culture of economic materialism is supported by growth-oriented values that ignore human dignity and the integrity of creation. These new values have excluded Christian values, spreading an antithetical ethic to the Gospel and perpetuating a sentiment that absolutizes anthropocentric values over theocratic ones. By refusing to accept human finitude and increasing awareness of self-fulfillment, the culture expresses a Tower of Babel mentality of forgetting dependence and trust in ultimate reality. The secularism, materialism, and technocracy of an anthropocentric culture are dehumanizing contradictions.

Third, Aram points out local indigenous cultures struggle to affirm their self-identity through their structures and value systems. The contact between local indigenous and internationalized cultures encourages attempts to find meaning through countercultural paradigms manifesting neo-fascism, religious fundamentalism, extremism, mysticism, and fanaticism. It also destroys socio-ethical foundations by embracing ethical relativism, leading society to non-integration and self-destruction.

The question posed by the crisis manifested in the above cultural characteristics is not about the relationship between the Gospel and culture but rather the presence of the Gospel itself above culture. How do we proclaim the Gospel amid a culture of fear, despair, violence, and death? How can the Gospel provide freedom, renewal, and transformation through life-giving action?

The Gospel is Jesus Christ, not a written book. The

Gospel is a living encounter between God and man. It is the beginning of a new man and a new world. However, the Gospel becomes relevant and gains credibility when communicated to people through their own culture. The Word was incarnated in the context of a given culture. Therefore, the Word must be re-incarnated within a particular culture, and each reincarnation within a culture must find an appropriate human response. Thus, the Gospel must be received, experienced, affirmed, and proclaimed through culture. Culture plays an essential role in the dialog between God and man. The claim that the Gospel must be incarnated in culture requires a presupposed understanding that the Gospel must be experienced and expressed in different ways at different times.

The incarnation of the Gospel does not preclude the Gospel from maintaining its universality in any time or place. However, its authenticity is recognized by the universality of the Gospel. When the universality of the Gospel and the distinctive particularities of a culture are not mutually exclusive but combined, the Gospel can fully communicate the true meaning of the incarnation. The Gospel makes its presence known in culture, but this does not make it subordinate to culture; rather, it transcends culture. The Gospel has a transcultural character that transforms culture. It means equating the Gospel with any culture on earth misrepresents its nature. Christ meets us in our cultural context, which is unique. Christ is proclaimed through particular cultural shapes and forms. In other words, the Gospel is affirmed through culture, not in culture. A culture is merely a tool, a framework, a context in which the Gospel is embodied. Historically, during the imperialist colonial period, missions focused on the text and ignored the context. In the post-colonial era, missions focused on the context and ignored the text. The mission field testifies that contextualization of the Gospel cannot fully occur when one extreme is emphasized, and the other is ignored. In gospel contextualization, there is a tension between emphasizing people and forgetting the Gospel and emphasizing the Gospel and losing people. At one extreme, an obsession with contextualizing the Gospel can lead to a loss of the Gospel, but there is also a tension that if the Gospel is not contextualized, people will not hear the Gospel. The source of this tension is that biblical revelation contains a mix of cultural and human elements and transcultural and divine elements. Orthodox theology emphasizes the transcultural divine elements in biblical revelation, seeking apostolic contextualization and taking a didactic approach to teaching truth. Liberalism emphasizes biblical revelation's cultural and human elements, resulting in a syncretistic contextualization, and takes a dialogical approach to seek the truth. Neo-orthodoxy and neo-liberalism take a dialectical approach to truth discovery, seeking prophetic contextualization by emphasizing the transcultural divine and cultural human elements.

In the tension between the transcultural nature of biblical revelation and cultural elements, Paul Hiebert emphasized the need to be critical of the process of contextualization. Critical contextualization is a consideration of context-sensitive appropriateness alongside a commitment to preserving the purity of the Gospel. The importance of critical contextualization is that it provides a safeguard against the dangers inherent in contextualization. Contextualization itself is an ongoing process. The world in which people live is constantly changing and raising new questions. Our understanding of the Gospel and its application to our lives is only partial, so we must continue to study and grow spiritually to arrive at a complete understanding of the truth. Critical contextualization takes the Bible seriously as the norm for faith and life, meaning contextualized practices must be grounded in Scripture. Every practice must measure its legitimacy against the standard of biblical revelation alone. Second, the revelation-based approach of critical contextualization recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers to lead them to God. Third, within critical contextualization, the church acts as a hermeneutical community, meaning that the communal nature of the church as a hermeneutical community not only extends to the church in every culture but also connects it to the church in every age.¹⁷

When critical contextualization is not fully achieved, two reactions occur. The first is a rejection of contextualization, where the Gospel is rejected from the outset as something foreign and not our own, or where old beliefs, rituals, and practices are allowed to operate within, creating syncretism. The second is uncritical contextualization, an uncritical acceptance of the old, immediately creating syncretism. In the face of these dangers, critical contextualization achieves contextualization by gathering information about the old beliefs, rituals, stories, songs, customs, art, and music, studying the biblical teaching about the event, evaluating the old in the light of the biblical teaching, and creating a new contextualized Christian practice. Proper contextualization requires a deep understanding of the historical and cultural context of the Christian message and the culture in which it is communicated. It involves knowledge of the external meaning of cultural forms and the implicit theological presuppositions of those cultural forms.¹⁸

Without a proper understanding of critical contextualization, a Korean missionary preaching the Gospel in South Asia risks conveying something unrelated and foreign that is Asian in appearance but completely different. The Asian missionary falls into the error of conveying Western theological questions and frameworks that are Asian in appearance but Western in content. When critical contextualization is

17. Hiebert, Paul G. (1994). *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*. Michigan: Baker books. P.91

18. Hiebert, Paul G. (1984). "Critical Contextualization in Missiology." *Missiology: An International Review*. X11(3).p.290-291.

lacking, the message homegrown Christians convey to their people falls into the same error of conveying an uncontextualized message. In other words, even if Christianity in Asia can be categorized into two groups, ecumenical and evangelical, the problem with these two groups is that the lack of a clear sense of a Christianity that is deeply rooted in Asian culture, a Kingdom identity in Christ, is a hindrance to the expansion of Christian mission.

CONCLUSION

Fruits common to the subtropical Asian region are the banana and the mango. The banana is a fruit of unknown origin, while the mango is an authentic Asian fruit. A ripe banana has a yellowish skin with a white center. Mangoes, on the other hand, are the same golden color on the outside and inside. Inherent in the contrast between bananas and mangoes is an analogy. Asian theology since World War II has been more like a banana than a mango: yellow on the outside, white on the inside. Today, however, the growth and meteoric rise of the church across Asia is a marvel to the West. The Christian world in the 21st century has shifted its center of gravity to the non-Western church. However, the problem is that Asian Christianity still does not have a clear sense of its identity. The unilateral dominance of Western culture in modern history has had a profound impact on the development of Christianity in the non-Western world. As a result, Asian Christians have lost confidence in their own culture and history and the absoluteness of the Gospel of Christ in a pluralistic world, partly by adopting Enlightenment norms that deny objective truth in religious belief. It is a severe problem in Sri Lanka's church and mission history.

The themes of the theology and mission of the Church in Sri Lanka for the future are apparent. The contextualization between Walls's "pilgrimage principle" and the "indigenous principle" calls for a double restoration of confidence: confidence in the Gospel and one's culture and history. Without this, Christianity will never be fully incarnated on Sri Lankan soil. Our theological and missional need is to be more mango and less banana. When this is done, the Church in Sri Lanka will be able to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed with greater pastoral relevance and missionary fruitfulness.

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