

Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

Name: William Yoo

Date: April 11, 2014

American Missionaries, Korean Protestants, and the Making of a New Religion

By
William Yoo
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Division of Religion
Historical Studies in Theology and Religion

E. Brooks Holifield, Ph.D
Advisor

Arun W. Jones, Ph.D
Committee Member

Russell E. Richey, Ph.D
Committee Member

Jonathan Strom, Ph.D
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

American Missionaries, Korean Protestants, and the Making of a New Religion

By

William Yoo

B.S.E., University of Pennsylvania, 2000
M.Div., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2004
Th.M., Emory University, 2008

Advisor: E. Brooks Holifield, Ph.D

Charles Howard Candler Professor of American Church History, Emeritus
Candler School of Theology

An abstract of

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
the Graduate Division of Religion
Historical Studies in Theology and Religion
2014

Abstract

American Missionaries, Korean Protestants, and the Making of a New Religion By William Yoo

The dissertation examines the transnational encounter between American and Korean Protestants from the late nineteenth century to the aftermath of the Korean War. I analyze American and Korean source materials to trace the partnerships and power struggles between American missionaries and Korean converts in both nations. In addition to delineating American Protestant interpretations of East Asian geopolitics, Korean culture, and Asian religions over seven decades of colonialism and conflict, I illumine how Korean Protestants determined their own course by creatively adapting the religion, combining their cultural and colonial experience with Western elements brought by the missionaries. The missionaries and their converts together shaped Korean Protestantism through a complex cross-cultural process of religious transmission charged with constant negotiations, oppositions, tangled reciprocities, and unexpected reversals. American and Korean Protestants cultivated deep bonds with one another, but they also clashed over ecclesial authority, cultural difference, geopolitics, and women's leadership. The missionaries often misunderstood Korean desires, and they also carried racial biases, which led, in turn, to Korean resistance to some of the American forms of Christian traditions. As Korean churches developed and expanded in the twentieth century, Korean ministers and migrants ultimately reversed American religious expectations and increasingly saw it as their mission to revitalize and reform Christian churches and denominations in the United States.

American Missionaries, Korean Protestants, and the Making of a New Religion

By

William Yoo

B.S.E., University of Pennsylvania, 2000

M.Div., Westminster Theological Seminary, 2004

Th.M., Emory University, 2008

Advisor: E. Brooks Holifield, Ph.D

Charles Howard Candler Professor of American Church History, Emeritus

Candler School of Theology

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
the Graduate Division of Religion
Historical Studies in Theology and Religion
2014

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. American Protestant Missionaries and the Making of a Korean Mission Field	
Introduction	13
American Missionaries and the Korean Religious Tabula Rasa	16
To Evangelize or to Civilize: Mission Debates	24
Experiencing Success in the Midst of Social and Political Upheaval	32
American Missionaries as Migrants in Korea and the Problem of Difference	36
Missionaries Respond to Criticisms of their Luxurious American Homes	41
An Independent Canadian Missionary Sets His Own Course	55
Fenwick Embraces the Free Korean Religious Marketplace	63
Conclusion	72
2. Yun Ch'ihŏ and the Making of a Korean Protestant in Dixie	
Introduction	74
Encountering Racial Boundaries in Dixie	77
An Ambivalent Religious Journey in America	85
Negotiating Racial Boundaries and Religious Passions	88
Geopolitical Awareness and the Limits of American Missionary Perspectives	96
An Ambiguous Position and an Uncertain Future	103
Navigating Racial and Religious Boundaries from Chicago to Shanghai	108
Life on the Margins of an American Missionary Community in Shanghai	115
Contesting the Attitudes and Perspectives of American Missionaries	118
Conclusion	128
3. The American Missionary Experiment and the Making of Korean Christianity	
Introduction	130

The Missionary Blueprint for Korean Christianity: A Steadfast Commitment to Evangelization	133
The First Element in the Korean Religious Experiment: Genuine Conversions	137
The Second Element in Korean Religious Experiment: Gospel Simplicity	141
The Third Element in Korean Religious Experiment: Denominational Unity	148
Revival Movements Expand and Confound the Korean Religious Experiment	153
Missionary Racism and Korean Piety	158
The Making of a Religious Antidote to Theological Liberalism	166
Conclusion	172
4. Syngman Rhee and the Making of the Korean Christian Church	
Introduction	174
Conversion to Christianity: Beholding the Spirit of God and the Spirit of National Independence	175
The Student Years: Religious Partnerships and Political Training in America	179
Promoting Korean Liberation and Protesting Missionary Indifference in Hawaii	185
Diplomatic Appeals and Disagreements over the March First Movement	190
Rise and Fall in the Korean Provisional Government: Noble Intentions and Political Rivalries	197
Cultivating Education and Religion among Koreans in Hawaii	205
Political Reemergence and the Promise of Liberation during the Second World War	217
Conclusion	222
5. American Missionaries, Korean Protestants, and the Contested Making of the Indigenous Christian Woman	
Introduction	226
The First Impression: The Missionary Making of the Korean Christian Woman	227
The Second Act: Korean Christian Women Make Their Own Choices	239

The Third Space: Agnes Davis and the Making of a Bi-Racial Christian Marriage in Korea	258
Conclusion	267
6. Liberation, War, and the Making of Transnational Friendships between American and Korean Protestants	
Introduction	271
A Mission Field Turns into a Battlefield: American Missionaries Stand by their Korean Friends	272
Kyung-Chik Han: Mighty Pastor and Noble Friend	276
A Methodist Minister's Wife Befriends Two South Korean Women in North Georgia	289
The Deepening of Transnational Friendships	294
Conclusion	299
Conclusion	
The Reversal	303
The Historical Legacy	307
Bibliography	317

Introduction

In 1925, a group of sixty American missionaries and Korean church leaders met in the city of Seoul for a conference with John R. Mott. As chairman of the International Missionary Council, Mott was visiting the country to learn more about the progress of the Korean Church. During the meeting, Mott asked the group to talk about their challenges. His question prompted varying responses from the participants. They discussed the economic depression, growing Korean interest in socialism, and the threat of theological modernism.¹ But one veteran Korean pastor, Han Sok-chin, expressed the view that the greatest danger to indigenous Christian growth was the missionary. Instead of transferring their work to Korean leaders, the missionaries ruled over the churches and schools with a “sense of superiority” that ran contrary to the “true spirit of the gospel.”² He then turned to his dearest missionary friend, Samuel Austin Moffett, who was sitting nearby, and said, “Reverend Moffett, even you, if you do not leave soon, you will do more harm than good.”³

Samuel Austin Moffett had no intention of leaving. Despite their close relationship—Han was one of Moffett’s first students—the two pastors simply disagreed about the demands of Korean Christians for a greater measure of control over their churches, schools, and hospitals. Moffett still had plans for the mission station in P’yongyang that he had founded three decades ago. Until he retired in 1934, he directed

¹ Alfred W. Wasson, Church Growth in Korea (Concord, N.H.: Rumford Press, 1934), 125-126.

² Ch’ae P’il-Gun, Han’guk kidokkyo ui kaech’okcha Han Sok’chun (Seoul, Korea: Korean Literature Society, 1971), in Sung-Deuk Oak, Sources of Korean Christianity (Seoul, Korea: Institute for Korean Church History, 2004), 446.

³ Oak, 447.

operations on a 120-acre Presbyterian campus with a modern hospital, a college, a seminary, industrial shops, several Korean churches and schools, a separate foreign school for missionary children, and numerous Western-style houses for missionaries to live comfortably.⁴ He had no interest in suddenly, or even slowly, turning this vast investment of time and energy (and money) over to the Koreans who, as Moffett saw it, benefited immensely from the efficient organization that knowledgeable American missionaries were able to provide. To have followed Han Sok-chin's advice would have been to accept a reversal in the authority and control of the Korean Church that Moffett could barely even imagine.

This dissertation examines the encounter between American and Korean Protestants in both Korea and America from the late nineteenth century to the aftermath of the Korean War. The discord between Moffett and Han was one example of the complicated patterns that marked relations between American missionaries and Korean Protestants. Although Americans and Koreans cultivated deep bonds with one another, they did not always share the same religious perspectives. When missionaries first arrived to Korea in 1884, Koreans viewed them suspiciously and branded Christianity a foreign religion. But as Koreans began converting to Christianity, they adapted the religion to their own context and formed their own beliefs and practices both in concert with and apart from missionary activities.

⁴ "A Bird's Eye View of the Presbyterian Mission Station at Pyeng Yang," *The Korea Mission Field*, March 1932, no page number, and Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience, 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 123-125.

The thesis of this dissertation is that American missionaries and Korean converts together shaped the development of Korean Protestantism. The two parties participated in a complex cross-cultural process of religious transmission charged with constant negotiations, oppositions, tangled reciprocities, and unexpected reversals. This thesis has two interconnected strands. The first strand is that American missionaries contributed to the making of Korean Protestantism. They established the first Protestant churches, the first modern hospitals, and the first Western schools in Korea. Missionaries instructed many Korean converts, including a majority of the early Korean church leaders, on matters of religion, politics, and culture. The second strand is that Korean Protestants remade Christianity in their own image by combining their cultural and colonial experience with Western elements that the missionaries initially imported to Korea. Koreans engaged in this cross-cultural process of religious transmission on their own terms. They accepted some features of the missionaries' Christianity; they rejected other features; they altered many features to fit their context.

These two interconnected strands of American and Korean participation are the preconditions for the constant negotiations, oppositions, tangled reciprocities, and unexpected reversals that occurred in the making of Korean Protestantism. The American Protestant mission to Korea underwent reversals in three different forms. The mission experienced a reversal of expectation when Americans discovered that Korean converts reinterpreted their religious teachings in surprising and disappointing ways. A different form of reversal—what one might call a reversal of position—came when, from the perspective of many of the missionaries, Koreans like Han Sok-chin insisted too soon on controlling the churches, hospitals, and schools that the missionaries had helped to build.

As Koreans increasingly assumed authority to lead these institutions, they eventually felt authorized to teach Americans about church growth. And some Americans were eager to learn from successful Korean pastors. Although this last form of reversal—a real reversal of authority—did not become fully visible until the 1980s, the story that I tell delineates the preconditions for it.

American missionaries held an ambivalent view of Korea. On the one hand, their accounts resembled reports by American diplomats, visitors, and journalists: Korea was underdeveloped, impoverished, and caught in an intricate web of geopolitical struggle in East Asia, with Japan, China, and Russia all seeking hegemony over the peninsular nation until Japan formally annexed Korea as its colony in 1910. However, as the missionaries enjoyed unparalleled success in evangelizing the Koreans, they also depicted Korea as an indigenous laboratory to create a purified Christianity that would serve as a religious antidote to theological liberalism and secularism. By the early twentieth century, Americans treasured Korea as one of their most promising foreign mission fields. In 1923, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. devoted more missionaries and more money to Korea than any other foreign nation.⁵ Methodist recruitment materials boasted that the “lure of Korea” was the promise of teaching pious Koreans who obeyed the Christian Scriptures and prayed fervently.⁶ But although Americans now saw Koreans not as

⁵ The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had 151 missionaries in Korea. Only one other country had more than a hundred; thirteen nations had over fifty and the remaining eleven nations had less than fifty missionaries. The denomination also spent \$271,982.48 in Korea. They spent over \$200,000 in only three other nations. See G.S. McCune, “Fifty Years of Promotion by the Home Board and Home Church,” in The Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Korean Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., June 30-July 3, 1934 (Seoul, 1934), 35.

⁶ See Jennie Fowler-Willing and Mrs. George Heber Jones, The Lure of Korea (Boston: Methodist Episcopal Church Woman's Foreign Missionary Society Publishing Office, 1910).

primitive heathens but rather as fellow believers, they could not entirely escape prevailing racial ideologies. Koreans remained a “people of color,” inferior to whites. If non-Christian, they were uncivilized and uncouth; if Christian, they were admirable people of indefatigable spirit. Yet too often Americans also saw them as simple-minded children who required protection from secular and liberal influences.

But from its beginnings, Korean Protestantism was not a facsimile of American missionary forms. The early missionaries saw themselves simply as heralds of the gospel, but the Koreans saw the missionaries as conduits of Western knowledge, and they wanted to learn American political and economic ideas from them, not simply true religion. They attended mission schools in hopes of acquiring both religious and technological knowledge with which they would both expand their churches and elevate their economy. The early missionaries insisted on the most rigorous political neutrality to preserve the spiritual purity of the Korean Church, but Koreans integrated biblical teaching and resistance to Japanese imperialism in ways that strengthened their Christian and anti-colonial resolve. Korean converts at home and abroad threw themselves into the independence movement. Although Christians comprised little more than 1 percent of the population in 1919, sixteen of the thirty-three signers of the Declaration of Independence and 17 percent of the arrested protesters during the March First uprisings were Christian. Of the 471 women arrested, more than 65 percent were Christian.⁷

Throughout my dissertation, I seek to illustrate how both Americans and Koreans participated in the evolution of Korean Protestantism by devoting equal attention to

⁷ Timothy S. Lee, Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), 43.

American missionaries and Korean converts. Although mission records can be “frustratingly silent” about the thoughts and desires of indigenous converts, historians have crafted innovative strategies to analyze these one-sided accounts.⁸ Derek Chang treats missionary documents as “points of departure” for understanding how converts received and resisted the cultural, religious, and racial discourses.⁹ Arun Jones seeks “revelatory cracks” in missionary literature by investigating a wider array of primary historical data, such as private letters and colonial government documents, to catch glimpses of indigenous thought and activity.¹⁰ In addition to using these interpretive tactics, I also analyze English-language Korean sources—books, diaries, essays, letters, and sermons—to present a more complete view of the relationships between Americans and Koreans.¹¹ Historians have observed that what most Americans know about Korea has been told from the point of view of the U.S. military, or a Christian missionary.

⁸ Derek Chang, Citizens of a Christian Nation: Evangelical Missions and the Problem of Race in the Nineteenth Century (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 11.

⁹ Chang, 12.

¹⁰ Arun W. Jones, Christian Missions in the American Empire: Episcopalians in Northern Luzon, the Philippines, 1902-1946 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003), 20-22.

¹¹ In this endeavor, I am indebted to the work of Korean scholars over the last several years. They have published a bevy of historical documents from various American missionaries and Korean religious and political leaders to grant researchers in the West access to a diverse range of previously hard to find materials. For example, the Institute for Modern Korean Studies at Yonsei University published a ten-volume set of Syngman Rhee’s private correspondence in 2009. In 2010, the Kyung-Chik Han Foundation in South Korea published a ten-volume set of the illustrious Presbyterian pastor’s sermons, interviews, and writings translated into English. The same year, Pai Chai University Press in South Korea published a two-volume set of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller and Henry Dodge Appenzeller’s sermons, prayers, and memoirs. In 2013, Hyaeweol Choi translated and compiled a diverse array of Korean women’s writings from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. See The Syngman Rhee English Correspondence, Volumes 1-10, edited with an introduction by Young Ick Lew in collaboration with Yeong Sub Oh, Steve G. Jenks, and Andrew D. Calhoun (Seoul, Korea: Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, 2009), Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Volumes 1-10, edited by Eun-Seop Kim (Seoul, Korea: Kyung-Chik Han Foundation, 2010), The Appenzellers: How they Preached and Guided Korea into Modernization, Volumes 1-2 (Daejeon, Korea: Pai Chai University Press, 2010), and New Women in Colonial Korea: A Sourcebook, compiled and translated with an introduction by Hyaeweol Choi (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

Soldiers and missionaries often depicted Korea as an Eastern nation of “prostitutes, beggars, and orphans, many of them mixed race children, never speaking but always spoken for and about, souls being saved by the civilizing missions of neocolonialism and evangelism.”¹² By recovering the voices of Korean Protestants, I demonstrate how they determined their own course by creatively adapting the religion, retaining their own cultural traditions at the same time that they gladly learned from the American forms of Christian traditions.

Every chapter of my dissertation reflects the transnational currents that flowed through the highly diverse relationships between Americans and Koreans.¹³ Thomas Tweed defines religions as “confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries.”¹⁴ American missionaries and Korean Protestants often found in religion a means to cross boundaries in unfamiliar lands, but the religious ambitions of both parties sometimes seemed to sink beneath the cultural flows between the two nations. American missionaries brought their religion and culture to Korea. They endeavored to learn the Koreans’ language and understand their culture so that they could

¹² Elaine H. Kim, “Myth, Memory, and Desire: Homeland and History in Contemporary Korean American Writing and Visual Art,” in Holding Their Own: Perspectives on the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States, edited by Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Heike Raphael-Hernandez (Tubingen: Stauffenburg-Verlag, 2000), 80.

¹³ I intentionally use the term “transnational” rather than “international” to explain the relationships between Americans and Koreans based on Ian Tyrrell’s definitions of “transnational” and “international.” Tyrrell delineates how “international” refers to the formal, political interactions of nation-state institutions whereas “transnational” includes the broader field of non-governmental social, cultural, and economic activities, which includes the movement of peoples, goods, and ideas across national boundaries. See Ian R. Tyrrell, Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 6-7.

¹⁴ Tweed, Thomas A., Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 54.

convince the Koreans that Jesus was a universal savior. But they also separated themselves from Koreans in their well-built American-style houses, which revealed the vast economic discrepancies between the two groups. Even the wealthiest Koreans marveled at the missionary residences.

In addition, a number of influential Korean Protestant leaders traveled to the United States as foreign students or political exiles. Some of them experienced a form of racial discrimination that propelled them into disenchantment with the broken promises of a missionary religion that reduced Koreans to inferior human beings on account of their yellow skin. Others deplored the limits of American Protestant support for their national interests and criticized Americans for obscuring the harsh realities of daily Korean life under Japanese rule in order to promote their religious mission. One Korean observed that missionaries on furlough dressed in Korean clothes in order to raise funds “for Koreans,” but they never actually consulted with Koreans to discern what they really wanted and needed.¹⁵

Cross-cultural conflicts strained even the closest partnerships between Americans and Koreans. American and Korean women worked together to improve female education and public health in Korea, but the two groups also disagreed about how Korean women should live each day. Female missionaries trained their Korean students to remain in the home as virtuous wives and mothers, but Korean women wanted to break free from patriarchal forms of Confucianism and evangelical Christianity and rise up as leaders in the church and society. After the Korean War, Americans and Koreans worked

¹⁵ “Declaration of Yusin Hoi, by Sa Ilhwan,” in Korea General Collection, Burke Theological Library Archives, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, NY.

together to relieve suffering and overcome hatreds throughout the world. But these transnational alliances ran up against the same tensions that marked the inception of the Protestant mission. Earlier generations of missionaries failed to mold the Koreans in their own image, but Americans persisted in trying to direct the Korean Church according to their Western prescriptions.

The two groups differed, they argued, they fought. But Korean Protestants remain an enigma if we try to pretend that the missionaries were nothing but interlopers devoid of any influence on the Korean Church. Recognizing the agency of Americans does not require any discounting of Korean agency. Koreans regarded the missionaries with ambivalence – they were simultaneously allies and rivals. Americans often blocked Koreans from being everything that they could be, casting the gospel into their own idioms, and leading their own institutions. Resistance to the missionaries was more subtle, more hidden and soft-spoken, than the overt hostility that Korean Christians exhibited toward Japanese imperialists or Communists. There were occasions when Koreans confronted the missionaries, like the Mott Conference in 1925, but the discontent surfaced more often in private diaries and letters. At the same time, however, measured critiques also began appearing in periodicals like *The Korea Mission Field* and *Korean Student Bulletin*. In 1927, *The Korea Mission Field* devoted a monthly issue to Korean authors, who seized the opportunity to articulate their opposition to the missionaries' paternalism, overemphasis on evangelism, and reluctance to designate Korean leaders.¹⁶ Before then, Yun Ch'ihō, an important voice in the Korean Church, translated an essay written by Yi Kwang Su, a Korean intellectual and non-Christian,

¹⁶ See *The Korea Mission Field*, February 1927, 23-41.

which condemned the missionaries for treating Koreans like primitive savages by insisting they adhere to a simplistic form of biblical interpretation that had more in common with Christianity in Africa or China than in Japan or America.¹⁷ Although Yun was no proponent of liberal theology, he thought that missionaries should stop viewing Koreans as spiritual toddlers unable to deal with sophisticated ideas. In the *Korean Student Bulletin*, L. George Paik voiced another grievance when he argued that Horace Underwood's book on the history of modern education in Korea wrote as if American initiatives should be the sole object of the reader's attention. Underwood was not only biased in his history; he was simply inaccurate.¹⁸

Some of the missionaries recognized what they were doing, repented, and tried to change. They assimilated to Korean ways and pursued more equal relations with Koreans. Annie Baird recounted that one of the most rewarding moments in her life was when a Korean friend told her that she was "just like a loving-hearted old Korean woman": "Years of expatriation, and effort to project myself into the language, customs and feeling of another people, were richly repaid by that sentence."¹⁹ In 1915, the cancer-stricken missionary defied her doctor's orders in America to set sail for Korea so she could be buried there. When Baird arrived to P'yongyang several months later, she wrote letters to her family in the United States to tell them she had made it back home to where

¹⁷ Yi Kwang Su, "Defects of the Korean Church," *The Korea Mission Field*, December 1918, 255-256.

¹⁸ L. George Paik, "Book Review: Modern Education in Korea," *Korean Student Bulletin*, October 1926 (4:4), 7-8. In 1927, Paik completed his Ph.D at Yale University and returned to Korea to join Underwood as a faculty member at a Korean Christian college.

¹⁹ Annie L.A. Baird, *Inside Views of Mission Life* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1913), 129.

she belonged.²⁰ After she died, one of her Korean students, Kim Tai Yun, mourned her loss as if he had lost one of his own parents. In his eulogy, he praised Baird's love for Korea: "In life or in death the thought of her soul was ever directed toward this people, and ever will be. She lived for us. She died for us. Oh, woe is me! In the land of eternal blessing she will peacefully rest."²¹

Scholars have amply documented the American Protestant mission in Korea, the expansion of Korean Protestantism at home and abroad, and Korean-American foreign relations. We still know too little, however, about the evolving interplay between American and Korean Protestants from their first encounters to the end of the Korean War.²² Sharing the same religion, the two groups crossed national and racial boundaries to develop deep friendships and new partnerships. But the religious loyalties that bound them together often divided them. To look anew at the relationships between American and Korean Protestants is to see how the transmission of Christian faith could both

²⁰ S.S. Estey, "In Memoriam: Mrs. Anna Adams Baird, June 25, 1916," in RG172 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

²¹ Kim Tai Yun, "A Korean Appreciation for Mrs. W.M. Baird," in RG172 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

²² See Gregg Brazinsky, Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), Robert Buswell and Timothy S. Lee (eds.), Christianity in Korea (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), Hyaewool Choi, Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), Donald N. Clark, Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience, 1900-1950 (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), Bruce Cumings, Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997) and The Korean War: A History (New York: Modern Library, 2010), Timothy S. Lee, Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), Sung-Deuk Oak, The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876-1915 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), Kil-sop Song, American Protestant Missionary Perceptions of the Korean Independence Movement in 1919 and its Effects upon the Churches of Korea, ThD diss., Boston University, 1976, Elizabeth Underwood, Challenged Identities: North American Missionaries in Korea, 1884-1934 (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 2003), David K. Yoo, Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1910-1945 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), and Theodore Jun Yoo, The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

confound and connect, how complicated “agency” could be, and how the mission produced a series of reversals, often unintended, that ultimately turned the original missionary dream upside down.²³

²³ I have benefited greatly from my academic mentors, E. Brooks Holifield, Arun W. Jones, Russell E. Richey, and Jonathan Strom of the Graduate Division of Religion at Emory University. I cannot express sufficient gratitude for their wise and insightful counsel during my dissertation writing. I also wish to acknowledge grant support from the Louisville Institute. Finally, I thank my spouse, Sarah, and our children, Madeline and Caleb, for their unfailing support and inspiration.

Chapter 1: American Protestant Missionaries and the Making of a Korean Mission Field

Introduction

On April 5, 1885, Horace Grant Underwood, Henry Gerhard Appenzeller, and Ella Dodge Appenzeller arrived in Incheon, an open port city on the western coast of Korea. The three Americans were among the earliest missionaries to set foot in the peninsular nation. Underwood was the second Presbyterian and the Appenzellers the first Methodists. Incheon was the site of a pivotal battle in the Korean War. On this cold and rainy April evening in 1885, the three Americans landed with little fanfare. Three miles from the port, they boarded a sampan (a small boat propelled by oars) to get ashore. As they stepped upon the bare rocks of the Korean shore, a horde of men rushed their sampan to earn some money by carrying their luggage. Despite their uncertainties about Korea, the missionaries were eager to begin their work. For centuries, Korea largely remained secluded from the rest of the world. Western merchants and missionaries had entered other Asian countries from the sixteenth century, but Korea maintained her isolationist policy until signing her first foreign treaty with Japan in 1876 and Western powers in the 1880s. Thus, Korea was called “the hermit nation” and “the forbidden land.”¹ As Henry Appenzeller breathed the cool night air and gazed upon Incheon, he believed that he had “landed upon terra firma as yet untouched and unimproved by the hand of man.”²

¹ William Griffis, *Corea, the Hermit Nation* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1882) and Ernst Oppert, *A Forbidden Land: Voyages to Corea* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1880).

² Henry G. Appenzeller, “Correspondence from Methodist Episcopal Missions: Our Mission in Korea, April 9, 1885,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, July 1885, 328.

American Protestant missionaries imagined Korea as a religious *tabula rasa* for their making. They saw Korea's weak geopolitical position and recent opening to foreigners as a unique opportunity for them to introduce their religion to a vulnerable indigenous population looking for new systems of meaning. Unlike other Asians, Koreans did not adhere to one or two dominant non-Christian religious traditions. To the missionaries, the Korean religious landscape represented a blank canvas for them to inscribe their religious visions. Appenzeller noted the date of his arrival: "We came here on Easter," he wrote, "May He who on that day burst asunder under the bands of death break the bands that bind this people, and bring them to the light and liberty of God's children."³

In *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Charles Taylor traces the development of a new moral order in Western modernity by highlighting three social forms: the market economy, the public sphere, and self-governance. According to Taylor, each of these three social forms embodies a distinctive Western social imaginary centered on the fundamental notion of mutual benefit for equal participants. Taylor defines "social imaginary" as "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations."⁴ As missionaries learned the Korean language, built new homes, evangelized to Koreans, and established modern schools and hospitals, they constructed a cross-cultural social imaginary that delineated their social existence in Korea, how they

³ Ibid.

⁴ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.

fit together with one another and Koreans, their religious expectations, and the normative notions and images that undergirded these expectations.

In contrast to the language of social theory, which Taylor observes is usually the possession of a small minority and sometimes limited to disengaged intellectual analysis of social reality, he proposes that the term *imaginary* captures the way ordinary people imagine their social surroundings and embodies a collective understanding that makes “common practices” and a “widely shared sense of legitimacy” possible in any given society.⁵ As an example, Taylor demonstrates how the modern practice of voting, in which all citizens decide on their governing officials by each choosing individually from among the same alternatives, reflects the Western social imaginary.⁶ In Korea, American missionaries found themselves in an entirely different culture, with its own religions, traditions, and ways of life. They themselves came from diverse geographical backgrounds and religious denominations. Methodists, Presbyterians, and non-denominational Protestant men and women from cities and rural areas across America migrated to Korea, a nation roughly the size of the U.S. state of Kansas. The American Protestant social imaginary in Korea entailed fierce contestation as missionaries argued over “common practices” such as evangelism, lodging, and teaching. During their first twenty years in Korea, missionaries agreed upon a normative image of Korea as a religious *tabula rasa*, ripe for Protestant inscription, but they disagreed about how to accomplish their task.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Taylor, 24.

American Missionaries and the Korean Religious Tabula Rasa

The earliest missionaries were not drawn to Korea for its political or cultural prestige in Western eyes. On June 21, 1880, in one of its first substantive articles on Korea, the *New York Times* reported that “the only forbidden land on the surface of the globe is the kingdom of Corea.”⁷ Curious readers of the *Times* learned that day how Korean people wished to be free of foreign influences and visitors, desiring to remain “shut up from the rest of the population of the globe as hermetically as if it were one of the subdivisions of the moon’s surface.” Debunking any notion that Korea was a long-lost lavish paradise or a “land flowing with milk and honey, teeming with riches of all kinds, and filled with gorgeous palaces and cloud-capped towers, the like of which we have not seen since the days of Kublai Khan and his Oriental splendor,” the *Times* reported that Koreans were in fact “primitive in dress, manners, and mode of life” and living in impoverished houses “utterly destitute of any attempt at luxury.”⁸ In 1885, George William Knox, a Presbyterian missionary in Japan who had lobbied his denomination to send missionaries to Korea, conceded that Korea was not nearly as attractive a mission field as Japan, because Korea was “not a great empire with a great history,” but a rather “weak people” in comparison to her stronger neighbors, Japan and China.⁹

⁷ *New York Times*, June 21, 1880. In the late nineteenth-century, the spellings of “Corea” and “Korea” were both employed in the English language.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ “The Country and People of Corea,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, January 1885, 8.

On October 1, 1884, Horace Newton Allen, the first American Protestant missionary in Korea, wrote about his impressions of the country. Having spent two weeks there, Allen found the nation's scenery to be pleasant, with luscious mountains, deep valleys, and rich fields of rice and barley, but he saw the Koreans as "exceedingly lazy and dirty," commenting how the middle and upper classes spent their days "strutting leisurely around in their white (outside) robes and tall open-work hats."¹⁰ The only attractive building he saw belonged to the Japanese Consulate. The Korean workers hired by foreigners, such as the Japanese, Chinese, and a few Europeans, did not complete their tasks and instead got drunk on rice liquor and foreign alcohol, which found its "way into the country in great quantities, notwithstanding the customs duty of 20 per cent."¹¹ Allen noted that the Korean government did not welcome foreign missionaries but he was permitted to remain as physician to the American legation, which was established in 1883, one year after the United States became the first Western power to conclude a treaty with Korea. The Korean-American Treaty of 1882 acknowledged that Korea was a fully sovereign kingdom and that therefore the United States was bound to treat Korea as an independent country.¹²

Although the Korean-American Treaty of 1882 included the "most favored nation clause," which fixed rates of tariff and permitted American citizens the right to trade

¹⁰ Horace N. Allen, "Our First Letter from Korea," *The Foreign Missionary, containing particular accounts of the work of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian church and selected articles and facts from the missionary publications of other Protestant societies*, December 1884, 303.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Yur-Bok Lee, "Korean-American Diplomatic Relations, 1882-1905," in One Hundred Years of Korean-American Relations, 1882-1982, edited by Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1986), 16.

freely, it did not mention religious toleration or secure the rights of missionaries. In 1883, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, the U.S. Secretary of State, wrote to Lucius H. Foote, the American Minister in Korea, about the absence of any mention of religion in the treaty. Frelinghuysen contended that “the general propaganda of foreign faiths is not deemed a proper subject for inclusion in any treaty,” but he urged Foote to counsel the Koreans toward an open policy toward missionaries because “the toleration of faiths is the true policy of all enlightened powers.”¹³ In 1885, the Korean government allowed American missionaries to enter into their nation but prohibited direct proselytism. Thus, Allen, Appenzeller, Underwood, and other missionaries engaged chiefly in medical and educational work during their first several years.

Although Korea was not as civilized as her Asian neighbors, missionaries determined that Korean people were not physically or mentally inferior to either the Japanese or the Chinese. In 1885, a Presbyterian writer reported that Koreans were “a fine stalwart and robust class of men” with physique “infinitely superior to that of either the Chinese or the Japanese.”¹⁴ The Japanese, he added, looked like “a nation of pigmies” in comparison.¹⁵ In 1889, a Methodist magazine, *The Gospel in All Lands*, confirmed the fine physical stature of Koreans, describing them as tall and well-built. Koreans also possessed intelligence, but the lower classes neither displayed the rational clarity of the Japanese nor the business acuity of the Chinese. But the report did not attribute these

¹³ “Letter from Frederick T. Frelinghuysen to Lucius H. Foote, October 23, 1883,” in Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume I: The Initial Period, 1883-1886, edited by George M. McCune and John A. Harrison (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 35.

¹⁴ J.R. Wolfe, “A Visit to Korea,” *The Foreign Missionary*, September 1885, 162.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

mental deficiencies to the innate Korean mind, but instead deplored Korea's protracted isolation from the modern world, which left the nation in a stagnant civilization.¹⁶

Despite their uncivilized environs and the unsophisticated thinking of the lower classes, missionaries concluded that Koreans were not only able-bodied but also mentally competent to comprehend Christian doctrines.

Although missionaries decried Korea's squalor and unsanitary living conditions, they thought the nation's primitiveness was charming. It was like they had traveled back in time to an enchanted land fixed in an ancient age. In Seoul, they were captivated by the sights of white-robed men traveling on donkeys and fully cloaked women carrying jars of water from the public well to their rice-straw huts. "It is therefore not so strange that the Bible student finds much in Korea to remind him of the manner of life that prevailed in the land of Bible story," wrote one Presbyterian missionary in 1889, "even though thousands of miles and thousands of years have come between."¹⁷ Yet, missionaries also recognized that Korea was changing as outside forces from China, England, France, Japan, Russia, and the United States sent diplomats, merchants, missionaries, and speculators to introduce new economies, new trade agreements, new philosophies, and new religions. And as the missionaries witnessed Korea awakening from her ancient slumber, they wanted their influence to rank foremost among the many foreigners.

In comparing Korea and her Asian neighbors, missionaries determined that the Korean religious landscape was wholly unlike that in Japan and China. Because of deeply entrenched traditional Asian religious systems in Japan and China, such as Shinto-

¹⁶ Frank Carpenter, "The Koreans at Home," *The Gospel in All Lands*, October 1889, 436.

¹⁷ Daniel L. Gifford, "Korea and Bible Times," *The Church at Home and Abroad*, November 1889, 419.

Buddhism in Japan and Confucianism in China, missionaries in these countries experienced strong indigenous resistance to their religious message. But missionaries in Korea rejoiced at the absence of a single dominating and unifying national religion. In 1885, one Presbyterian declared that the lack of a national Korean religion made evangelization possible: “It is remarkable providence that Christianity should be entering Korea, as it entered the old Roman world, just at the time when all the ancient faiths are in a state of decay.”¹⁸ The Korean government had suppressed Buddhism from the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth. High-ranking Confucian scholars viewed Buddhism as a rival religion that would diminish Confucian influence. In 1659, the government forbade any novice from taking monastic orders. The following year, it destroyed two Buddhist academies. In 1749, an edict reinforced a ban on Buddhist clerics from entering Seoul.¹⁹ Korean Buddhists were prevalent in the countryside and mountain villages, but missionaries gladly reported that Buddhism was “enfeebled and plainly doomed” within the ruling class as “the reigning dynasty long since decreed its disestablishment.”²⁰ As Koreans experienced the upheaval of opening their nation to foreigners, missionaries rejoiced that Koreans appeared to be searching for new religions.

In 1885, the Presbyterian Board of Publication published William Elliot Griffis’s *Corea, Without and Within*, in which the author reprinted and annotated the journal of Hendrick Hamel, a Dutch bookkeeper for the Dutch East India Company who was accidentally shipwrecked in Korea en route to Nagasaki, Japan in 1653. Hamel had

¹⁸ “The Hour for Korea,” *The Foreign Missionary*, September 1885, 153.

¹⁹ James Huntley Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 172-173.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

recorded the absence of a national religion. “As for religion, the Coreans have scarce any,” Hamel observed.²¹ They paid little respect to idols and disregarded Buddhist monks. Koreans only believed in the basic religious notion that “he who lives well shall be rewarded, and he who lives ill shall be punished.”²² Griffis confirmed Hamel’s observations by noting the steep decline of Korean Buddhism in the nineteenth century: “The mind of the Corean peasant resembles a peat-bog in its mixture of decay. The faiths which influence him once had each a distinctive life and form. Their frame and substance now gone, he propitiates all gods and professes all superstitions.”²³ In 1888, Griffis added in *The Gospel in All Lands* that “the Koreans offer the spectacle of a nation without a religion and waiting for one.”²⁴ In 1889, the Presbyterian foreign mission secretaries described the potential: “Since Buddhism was put under bans, sevenfold superstitions have entered to fill in the void, yet they are not religions. Wanted, a religion for Korea. What shall it be?”²⁵ In 1890, a Methodist writer for the *Heathen Children’s Friend* told its young readers: “I cannot find that the Koreans have much religion of any kind. They have idols, and temples, but are not devout worshipers like the Chinese.”²⁶ The missionaries believed that Korea’s geopolitical fragility created an open mission field,

²¹ William Elliot Griffis, Corea, Without and Within: Chapters on Corean History, Manners and Religion with Hendrick Hamel’s Narrative of Captivity and Travels in Corea, Annotated (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1884), 130.

²² Griffis, 131.

²³ Griffis, 170.

²⁴ William Elliot Griffis, “Korea and its Needs,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, August 1888, 371.

²⁵ “Foreign Mission Notes by the Secretaries,” *The Church at Home and Abroad*, August 1889, 117.

²⁶ “A Glimpse of Korea,” *Heathen Children’s Friend*, June 1890, 2.

noting that Korean religions constituted “no such barrier to Christianity as the subtle and plausible philosophy of India, or the proud and fiery fanaticism of Moslem lands.”²⁷

As missionaries witnessed popular Korean religious rituals, such as ancestor nature, and spirit worship, they determined that Koreans were not religious but superstitious. Whereas Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Islam were rival religions to Christianity, popular Korean superstitions were deemed less threatening. The religious obstacles to the Protestant mission amounted to “innumerable superstitions,” “half fetichism,” “half spiritualism,” and “a medley of goblins and genii,” all of which would diminish after Koreans encountered “the science of a schoolboy, to say nothing of the whole apparatus of Western learning and the revelations of Christianity.”²⁸ In 1891, Methodist missionary George Heber Jones wrote that “the Superstitions’ comprise a vast number of gods, demons, demi-gods, [and] the legacy of centuries of nature worship.”²⁹ He detailed a ritual in which Koreans gathered beneath a tree to sacrifice rice and choice food on a pile of stones to a local deity; the deity ate the spiritual essence of the food while the physical substance remained. Jones observed that “while the deity feasts on the essence or spiritual element of the food, lighted paper is kept burning beneath the branches and prayer offered for the desired blessing.”³⁰ Jones noted that this dualism in Korean thought displayed a “well-defined distinction between the gross, material subjects thus sanctified and a supposed inner spiritual presence which the Korean claims is the

²⁷ “The Hour for Korea,” *The Foreign Missionary*, September 1885, 154.

²⁸ “The Hour for Korea,” 153-154.

²⁹ George Heber Jones, “The Religious Development of Korea,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, September 1891, 415.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

object of worship.”³¹ Yet Jones maintained that Korea was without a national religion. Despite the ubiquity of popular Korean religions, Jones claimed the “the Korean’s soul has remained untouched by the exercises in which he engages.” Christian conversion would result in “his first taste of religion.”³²

Jones described Korea as heathen. Without defining the term, he simply assumed that Koreans were “heathens” because they were non-Christians. But the lack of a national religion made Korea’s heathenism less severe in comparison to other nations. Jones quoted another well-traveled missionary, who told him that “heathenism in India is vile, in China defiant, in Japan desperate, in Korea indifferent, in Africa triumphant.”³³ Yet, in the very next paragraph Jones decried the heathen conditions of Korean social and domestic life. Heathenism in Korea was “indifferent” religiously, but culturally it was entrenched in Korean habits, customs, laws, and traditions. Koreans were heathens not simply because of their non-Christian beliefs, but because they were uncivilized and uncouth foreigners.

During his first year in Korea, Henry Appenzeller wrestled with the meaning of “heathen”: “I suspect some of us at home think of the heathen as being a different being than ourselves...we think them a very queer folk and congratulate ourselves that the Lord did not use the same dust in creating them as us,” Appenzeller reflected.³⁴ He denounced the racist attitudes of the American Protestants who considered Koreans as lesser human

³¹ Jones, 416.

³² Jones, 417.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Henry G. Appenzeller, “July 10, 1885,” as cited in Everett N. Hunt, Protestant Pioneers in Korea (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1980), 90.

beings and classified them as “heathens” because of their physical appearance. In his private sermon notes, he asked “What is a heathen?” and answered the question exclusively in religious terms: “Nearly everything gone but the idea of a supreme being...Heathenism must go because of its inability to cope with sin and its failure to satisfy these natural longings.”³⁵ Korea was for him still a heathen nation.

To Evangelize or to Civilize: Mission Debates

Though granted permission to teach English, Appenzeller was eager to pursue direct evangelism; so also was Underwood. Both men did not come to Korea to work in schools and hospitals, but rather to evangelize a nation. Allen, their predecessor, had advocated a cautious approach to evangelistic work. Though the Korean government tolerated foreign missionaries, Allen wished to build trust between the two parties by adhering to the king’s proscriptions of proselytism. Moreover, as a physician, Allen wanted to establish a modern hospital in partnership with the Korean government. Allen also believed that Korea was ripe for Protestant inscription, but he promoted social uplift and public health as the right tools. He rebuffed other missionaries who sought to evangelize Korean patients and worked to defeat rumors that “no person would be treated unless promising to believe in Christ.”³⁶ But Underwood began to preach to Koreans, distribute Bible pamphlets, and plan itinerating trips with Appenzeller. Disagreement over civilizing and evangelizing approaches was not unique to the Korean mission field. Missionaries debated over the two strategies throughout the nineteenth century. After

³⁵ Henry G. Appenzeller, “Sermon notes, n.d.,” Henry Gerhard Appenzeller Papers, Burke Theological Library Archives, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, NY.

³⁶ H.N. Allen, “Medical Work in Korea,” *The Foreign Missionary*, July 1885, 74.

inspecting overseas mission work in 1854 and 1855, Rufus Anderson, senior secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), shut down English-language mission schools in various countries, such as India and Sri Lanka, because they detracted from evangelistic work. Incensed ABCFM missionaries operating these schools protested Anderson's decision.³⁷ In Korea, Allen and Underwood came into conflict over the two approaches. Each threatened to resign from the Presbyterian mission because of the other. Underwood thought Allen was too concerned about his hospital and his profile as a medical doctor. In a letter to the Presbyterian foreign mission board dated September 17, 1886, Underwood charged that Allen entertained foreign visitors at his Korean home with alcohol, cigarettes, and card-playing.³⁸ Allen thought Underwood was turning a blind eye to the real needs of the Korean people. As missionaries in Korea, Allen believed they were bearing Christian witness by providing educational and medical facilities. He also compared the many hours he spent in hospital administration and patient care to the other missionaries' more lax schedules, which seemed to supply ample time for language training, religious study, and leisure. On October 10, 1886, Allen wrote in his diary: "I am of opinion that mission work is a farce. I am kept busy by various outside duties... Underwood has as much leisure. So have Methodists. I think it is a nutty soft thing."³⁹ The strife reflected both religious differences and personal animosities.

³⁷ William R. Hutchison, Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 84-86.

³⁸ Horace G. Underwood, "To the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church of America, September 17, 1886," in In-su Kim and Horace Grant Underwood, Ondoudu Moksa ui son'gyo p'yonji: 1885-1916, (Seoul, Korea: Changnohoe Sinhak Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2002), 649.

³⁹ Horace N. Allen, "Diary entry on October 10, 1886," in In-su Kim and Horace Newton Allen, Allen Uisa ui son'gyo, oegyo p'yonji, 1884-1905 (Seoul: K'umnan Ch'ulp'ansa, 2007), 510.

George C. Foulk, the highest ranking American diplomat in Korea in 1885, agreed with Allen. Prior to his appointment as charge d'affairs of the American legation, Foulk graduated from the United States Naval Academy, served as a naval officer in East Asia, and learned to speak Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. His language abilities and his knowledge of East Asian cultures impressed his colleagues and superiors. Foulk was a Protestant, but he was tolerant of other religions and disagreed with missionary strategies that marked Asian religions as false and evil. A month before arriving to Korea, Foulk was in India and observed foreign missionaries in that country, noting how their work was "not now so much toward making downright converts out of the patrons of an idolatrous religion," but was "first to elevate the people in a body by education and by introducing ideas of the comforts enjoyed by people of Christian countries."⁴⁰ Foulk did believe that that Protestantism represented the highest form of moral enlightenment and wished for missionaries to introduce their religion through Western education and medicine. After providing modern civilization, they could convert the Koreans to Christianity in due time.⁴¹

But as soon as missionaries arrived in 1885, Foulk complained about their presence. In private letters to his family, Foulk criticized them for coming to Korea with little understanding of the culture and no language skills. He expressed disappointment in their missionary work and did not hesitate to call them "the greenest, most useless

⁴⁰ George C. Foulk, "Letter on April 13, 1884," as cited in George Clayton Foulk, America's Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887, edited by Samuel Hawley (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 17.

⁴¹ Foulk, 17.

people” he had ever seen.⁴² “Heretofore I have wrangled always against talk about them,” Foulk confessed, “Now I have much to do with missionaries and I find that the amount of miserable, petty jealousy among them is very great. I help a Presbyterian, at once the Methodists get glum and object.”⁴³ On September 15, 1885, Foulk wrote that his chief trouble in Korea was on account of the missionaries.⁴⁴ In addition to constantly bickering within and across their denominational missions, they incessantly called upon the legation for help because they did not know anything about Korean life, even entreating the diplomat to find wet nurses for their infants. They had tried to hire indigenous wet nurses themselves, as American missionaries in Japan had done, but discovered that Korean women were reluctant to work alone in foreign homes. Foulk wrote: “They are helpless and every day I am besought to help: to help get servants, talk to their servants, settle quarrels, and now to get wet nurses.” Foulk’s parents at home supported American missions, but now their son complained to them about the “stupendous stupidity” of the mission boards in America, who had sent “ignoramuses” to Korea. Foulk exclaimed: “They do no good, can speak no Oriental language, are gawky, ignorant of the world at large, and have come saddled down with babies to a land where any night the people might rise and end them and their babies!”⁴⁵ For the next two years, Foulk maintained his criticism that the missionaries were “ignorant of Oriental ways,” but he praised them for their educational and medical work. He reported to his family that Allen’s hospital was

⁴² Foulk, “Letter on August 18, 1885,” in America’s Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887, 123.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Foulk, “Letter on September 15, 1885,” in America’s Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887, 126.

⁴⁵ Foulk, 126-127.

flourishing. He also expressed a favorable opinion of mission school teachers and described his efforts in helping the Presbyterian missionaries obtain permission from the Korean government to establish an orphan school in Seoul.⁴⁶

During the first seven years of the Protestant mission in Korea, Foulk and subsequent American diplomats lauded the missionaries for their educational and medical gains. But the legation always wanted to halt their evangelism. Unlike the French legation, which had pressed the Korean government to remove all religious restrictions against their Catholic missionaries, the Americans were more cautious. In the nineteenth century, before the opening of Korea in 1876, French Catholic missionaries furtively entered Korea through Chinese and Manchurian borders and hid amongst the Korean people dressed in Korean garb. These missionaries, along with Korean Catholic converts, were charged with sedition and violently persecuted by the Korean government. In 1839, the regime executed three French missionaries and other Catholics. In 1865, there were more than 20,000 Catholics in Korea. From 1866 to 1873, approximately 8,000 of them were killed for their religious activities.⁴⁷ In 1866, France responded to the execution of nine missionaries with military force against Korea. French forces successfully invaded Kanghwa Island, but were repelled by Korean forces before reaching Seoul.⁴⁸ Thus, France was insistent on securing religious freedom for their missionaries during negotiations for the French-Korean Treaty in 1886.

⁴⁶ Foulk, "Letter on February 12, 1886," "Letter on June 6, 1887," and "Letter on July 10, 1887," in America's Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887, 146, 203, and 208-210.

⁴⁷ Timothy S. Lee, Born Again: Evangelism in Korea (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), 5.

⁴⁸ Ki-baek Lee, A New History of Korea, translated by Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Schulz (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1984), 264.

In 1885, Underwood reluctantly hired a Korean Catholic to be his language teacher because he was the best instructor that the missionary could find.⁴⁹ In 1886, Underwood reported that French Catholic missionaries, well-versed in Korean, were actively evangelizing in Seoul and had sent fifteen to twenty Koreans to their theological seminary in Nagasaki, Japan. If he and his fellow missionaries did not act fast, Underwood feared, the Korean religious *tabula rasa* would be heavily marked by Roman Catholicism. “I fear that if the Protestants do not do their duty,” asserted Underwood, “we will have a Romish instead of a heathen people to convert.”⁵⁰ On February 5, 1887, W. W. Rockhill, the charge d’affaires of the American legation after Foulk, appealed to T.F. Bayard, the U.S. Secretary of State, for guidance in relation to missionary activities. Although he supported the mission schools, hospital, and orphanage in Seoul, Rockhill disapproved of evangelistic efforts. “But while doing so much good work,” expressed Rockhill, “the missionaries have had always in view the main object of their coming to Korea, the evangelization of the natives.”⁵¹ American missionaries complained about their religious restrictions in comparison to the French Catholics. Yet unlike the French Catholics, who lived among the Koreans, recognized Korean laws, and submitted to the Korean justice system, the American missionaries expected the legation to protect their rights and those of Korean Protestant converts from any potential Korean oppression. Rockhill opined to Bayard that the missionaries must not yet evangelize because

⁴⁹ Horace Underwood, “Securing a Romanist as Teacher,” *The Foreign Missionary*, November 1885, 272.

⁵⁰ Horace Underwood, “Romanists Wide Awake,” *The Foreign Missionary*, May 1886, 567.

⁵¹ Rockhill, W.W., “Letter to Secretary of State on February 5, 1887,” Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume II: The Period of Growing Influence: 1887-1895, edited and with an introduction by Spencer J. Palmer (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), 205.

influential parties within the Korean government were opposed to Christianity:

“Although no persecutions of Christians have occurred of late years, still their enmity cannot be lost sight of...our countrymen should restrain their ardour and wait the day when religious freedom is granted the Koreans.”⁵²

In 1890, the Korean government eased its restrictions on religious propaganda. The next year, the U.S. State Department informed the legation in Korea to extend the most favored nation clause to the missionaries, which gave them the right to travel freely throughout the country.⁵³ Despite their newfound freedoms, they did not have great initial success in evangelizing. Samuel Austin Moffett, a Presbyterian missionary who arrived to Korea in January 1890, discovered in his first months in Seoul that their mission still struggled to sustain their myriad educational, evangelistic, and medical endeavors.⁵⁴ Though Koreans appeared to be growing more receptive to their religious overtures, Moffett reported that missionaries remained fiercely divided between civilizing and evangelizing approaches. After ten months in Seoul, Moffett asked Frank Field Ellinwood, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, for permission to establish a new mission station in P’yongyang. In a recent visit to P’yongyang, he had met Koreans there who welcomed foreign missionaries. Additionally, he wished to leave the missionary community in Seoul and begin afresh in northern Korea, without the

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Alvey A. Ade, “Letter to Augustine Heard on May 19, 1891,” in Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume II: The Period of Growing Influence: 1887-1895, 231.

⁵⁴ Samuel A. Moffett, “Letter to Dr. Ellinwood on March 18, 1890,” in Samuel A. Moffett: First Letters from Korea, 1890-1891 (Seoul, Korea: Hyesun Press, 1975), 9.

discord about strategy. Unhappy with the mission in Seoul, Moffett sought his own mission field—a new, unmarked religious *tabula rasa*—to inscribe his religious vision for Korea. Unlike Allen, Moffett prioritized evangelism over education and medicine. He believed that missionaries in Seoul had erred by establishing schools and hospitals “without the preliminary years of evangelistic work which they had in China and Japan.”⁵⁵

In December 1892, a British Anglican missionary reported that Koreans in Incheon flocked to their medical doctors and dispensaries but gave little heed to their preaching.⁵⁶ In 1893, another American Presbyterian, William Martyn Baird, also had little success on two itinerating trips. From April 17 to May 20, Baird traveled approximately 400 miles in southern Korea. In his diary, he complained of his “very few opportunities to preach” as Koreans deliberately avoided him.⁵⁷ Though Baird engaged in several religious conversations and sold Bible pamphlets, he surmised that the Koreans he had encountered were “dull of hearing” with “no vision beyond this earth.”⁵⁸ One Korean Catholic warmly approached Baird and prostrated himself before the missionary, but he immediately dismissed Baird upon learning he was not a Catholic priest.⁵⁹ On his second itinerating journey in the autumn months, in which Baird traveled 200 miles from

⁵⁵ Moffett, “Letter to Dr. Ellinwood on October 20, 1890,” in Samuel A. Moffett: First Letters from Korea, 1890-1891, 31.

⁵⁶ C.J. Corfe, “The Bishop’s Letter from Chemulpo, December 1892,” *The Morning Calm*, April 1893, 45-47.

⁵⁷ William M. Baird, “Diary entry on April 20, 1893,” in William M. Baird of Korea: A Profile (Oakland: Richard H. Baird, 1968), 31.

⁵⁸ Baird, “Diary entry on April 26, 1893,” in William M. Baird of Korea: A Profile, 33.

⁵⁹ Baird, “Diary entry on May 8, 1893,” in William M. Baird of Korea: A Profile, 35.

Busan to Seoul, he was disappointed because some Koreans were purchasing missionary literature to paper the walls in their homes.⁶⁰ From 1889 to 1893, the number of Korean communicants within the Presbyterian mission fluctuated between 100 and 150 annually.⁶¹ In the United States, the Korean mission field received scant attention in comparison to Japan and China. James Shepard Dennis delivered a series of lectures on foreign missions before the faculty and students at Princeton Theological Seminary in the spring of 1893. Dennis devoted four pages to the brief history of the Protestant mission in Korea between ten pages detailing the progress and promise within the more storied Japanese and Chinese mission fields.⁶²

Experiencing Success in the Midst of Social and Political Upheaval

Between 1895 and 1905, American missionaries had greater success in Korea with increased numbers of indigenous conversions. By 1900, the two Methodist missions (MEC and MECS) reported 4,512 Korean members and probationers.⁶³ In the same year, the Presbyterian mission station in P'yongyang alone counted 10,055 Korean adherents.⁶⁴ Baird attributed Protestant growth in P'yongyang to: (1) Moffett's singular focus on evangelism over educational and medical work, (2) the Holy Spirit, which had done "a thorough work of grace," and (3) the presence of Korean Protestants in P'yongyang

⁶⁰ Baird, "Diary entry on October 7, 1893," in William M. Baird of Korea: A Profile, 42.

⁶¹ Roy E. Shearer, Wildfire: Church Growth in Korea (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1966), 47.

⁶² James S. Dennis, Foreign Missions after a Century: Students' Lectures on Missions, Princeton Theological Seminary (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1893), 63-85.

⁶³ Alfred W. Wasson, Church Growth in Korea (New York: International Missionary Council, 1934), 166.

⁶⁴ Korea Presbyterian Mission, Report for 1899-1900 of the Pyeng Yang Station, Presented to the Annual Meeting held at Pyeng Yang, September 1900, no page number.

before American missionaries had arrived there.⁶⁵ Moffett reported in 1891 that twenty to thirty Korean Protestants preceded him in P'yongyang, "many of them at work and freely talking of the gospel."⁶⁶ Because of P'yongyang's close proximity to Chinese and Manchurian borders, a number of Koreans in the city had already heard of Protestant work in those neighboring countries. The Korean Protestant cadre in P'yongyang had traveled to Manchuria and learned about Christianity from John Ross, a Scotch Presbyterian missionary stationed there. Moffett met one Korean who had assisted Ross in translating the New Testament into the Korean.⁶⁷ In 1882, two years before the first American Protestant missionary set foot on Korean soil, Ross, with the help of three Korean converts, published and distributed his translation of the Korean New Testament.⁶⁸ During Baird's trip to P'yongyang in 1897, he wrote to his brother that "the best thing of all" was encountering Koreans "who had never seen a missionary," but self-identified as Protestants. Baird was also pleased that these Korean converts gladly received his instruction, readily submitted to his supervision, and "talked a language that could only have been taught them by the Holy Spirit."⁶⁹

Another reason for Protestant expanse in Korea from 1895 to 1905 was the social and political upheaval caused by the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). As Korea established foreign relations with other countries, beginning in 1876, the Korean

⁶⁵ Baird, 64-65.

⁶⁶ Moffett, "Letter to Dr. Ellinwood on March 25, 1891," in Samuel A. Moffett: First Letters from Korea, 1890-1891, 42.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ L. George Paik, The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910, 4th ed. (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1987), 57-58.

⁶⁹ Baird, 65.

government increased taxes in order to pay for their entry into a global economy. Korean peasants suffered the heaviest burden. Chinese and Japanese merchants also penetrated the countryside, agitating peasants “in a society neither used to outsiders nor experienced in a modern commercial economy.”⁷⁰ From 1892 to 1894, peasant unrest resulted in numerous revolts around the country, which were led by a group of Koreans following the *Tonghak* (Eastern Learning) religious movement. In 1860, Ch’oe Che-u fused traditional Korean folk religions with Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist teachings to create *Tonghak*, a new religion designed to counter Roman Catholicism (Western Learning) and promote a more egalitarian social order.⁷¹ In response to these peasant uprisings, known as the Tonghak Rebellion, the anxious Korean government on June 4, 1894, requested Chinese military assistance. Five days later, Japan sent its own troops to Korea in order to deter Chinese influence and exert imperial might. Japanese forces thoroughly routed Chinese troops, forcing China to recognize Korea as an independent state and cede Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan at the Treaty of Shimonoseki on April 17, 1895.⁷² During the Sino-Japanese War, Koreans suffered at the hands of both foreign military forces. The war severely damaged cities like Incheon and P’yongyang and thousands of Koreans fled from their homes. After winning the war, Japan established geopolitical primacy in East Asia and a strong grip over the Korean government.

American missionaries grieved at the terrible price Korea had incurred during the Sino-Japanese War but also conceived that the war’s devastating aftermath created an

⁷⁰ Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 23.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Seth, 24-25.

opportunity for evangelization. James Scarth Gale, a Canadian Presbyterian missionary who first came to Korea with the Y.M.C.A. in 1888 and then joined the American Presbyterian mission in 1891, deplored how the war “passed like a cyclone” over northern Korea, “leaving the country despoiled of its population, its ancestral groves and tablets.”⁷³ But Gale observed that Japan’s victory effectively eradicated China’s sway in Korea, which potentially diminished any Confucian strongholds. P’yongyang was not only in physical ruins after the Sino-Japanese war, but also Gale found that the Koreans who had returned to their shattered homes no longer viewed China as supremely powerful. After centuries of paying tribute to China as “elder brother,” Korea was no longer beholden to Chinese direction.⁷⁴ Gale declared that the decisive Battle of P’yongyang in mid-September 1894 was the site where “Korea’s worship of China” had ended.⁷⁵ The battle also turned Koreans away from Confucianism, a religious import from China, and began a search for new religions: “Confucianism binds a man to one piece of ground, separate him from that particular place and you have separated him from his gods...the population that came back after the war, came back to a certain degree without their deities and shrines.”⁷⁶ Robert E. Speer, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, visited Korea two years after the Sino-Japanese War and found that Protestant mission work had advanced “leaps and bounds.” In 1894 the Presbyterian

⁷³ James Scarth Gale, Korean Sketches (Chicago and New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1898), 209.

⁷⁴ In 1887, Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yun-sik told an American diplomat that his nation was a “truly independent kingdom and China is only our elder brother and because we are weak and a small country we ask China to advise and assist us.” See Yur-Bok Lee, 19.

⁷⁵ James Scarth Gale, The Vanguard: A Tale of Korea (Chicago and New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904), 101.

⁷⁶ Gale, Korean Sketches, 209.

mission had 141 Korean communicants. “Then came the furrowing, renovating influence of the war, and now, after the most prosperous year yet known, there are 932 communicants, 2,344 catechumens, 101 meeting places, and 38 church buildings,” Speer wrote in August 1897.⁷⁷ Gale and other missionaries seized upon the Sino-Japanese War as an opportune time to evangelize Koreans.⁷⁸

American Missionaries as Migrants in Korea and the Problem of Difference

By 1900, one American diplomat estimated that 150 of the 250 Americans in Korea were missionaries.⁷⁹ In 1901, the country had 74 American Presbyterian and 45 American Methodist missionaries, who accounted for 119 of the 170 Protestant foreign missionaries in the country.⁸⁰ As they built new homes in Korea, missionaries sought to recreate their Western lifestyles as migrants in the East. As evangelists, the lure of Korea was the new receptivity to their religious message. As migrants, the same missionaries rejoiced in the relative ease by which they were able to erect Western-style homes with familiar comforts from home. They were initially repulsed by Korea and complained about filthy streets and unsanitary living conditions. Because missionaries first traveled to

⁷⁷ Robert E. Speer, *Report on the Mission in Korea of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 1897*, edited and with an introduction by Seung-Tae Kim, *Korea Institute for Advanced Theological Studies Theological Journal*, Volume 2:2 (Fall 2006), 419.

⁷⁸ Gale, 209-210.

⁷⁹ Scott S. Burnett, “Introduction,” in *Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume III: The Period of Diminishing Influence: 1896-1905*, edited and with an introduction by Scott S. Burnett (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 11.

⁸⁰ In addition to the 74 American Presbyterians and 45 American Methodists, there were 31 British Protestants, 10 Canadians, 9 Australians, and 1 American missionary from the YMCA. See “Appendix 5: Protestant Missionaries in Korea in 1901,” in Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea: North American Missionaries’ Attitudes Towards Korean Religions, 1884-1910*, ThD diss., Boston University, 2002, 484.

Japan en route to Korea, they compared the modernization of Japanese life with its luxurious Western hotels, modern railroads, and pristine streets, to what they saw as the woebegone conditions in a primitive Korea. Upon arriving in Seoul after two months in Japan, Methodist missionary William B. Scranton was surprised to find that the capital city was not at all attractive. In a letter to his executive mission secretary on June 1, 1885, Scranton wrote that the city's rampant pollution and ignorance of the outside world were "the causes most apparent for its failure to please our Western ways." Describing the city's residents, Scranton added: "From prince to pauper, they are all dirty in their homes."⁸¹ By and large, the missionaries liked how the primitive conditions resembled biblical times, but they did not wish to imitate the Korean way of life. To perform ministry like a first century apostle was exhilarating, but to live in first century conditions was repugnant.

Although the living conditions in Korea paled in comparison to Japan and China, the missionaries found the Korean people more hospitable to foreigners. After her first three weeks in Seoul, Mattie Wilcox Noble wrote in her journal: "The foreigners here are highly respected in contrary to the custom in China where they are called the foreign devil. We are here called 'the great man' or 'the great lady.'"⁸² Noble was pleased that Korean crowds made clear paths for the missionaries when they traveled on crowded city streets. In August 1898, the Presbyterian women's missionary magazine, *Woman's Work for Woman*, sought to recruit additional female missionaries for Korea. In addition to

⁸¹ William B. Scranton, "Letter to John M. Reid, June 1, 1885," in Letters of William B. Scranton (Korea: William Scranton Foundation, 2010), 21.

⁸² Mattie Wilcox Noble, "November 14, 1892," The Journals of Mattie Wilcox Noble, 1892-1934 (Seoul, Korea: Hanguk Kidokkyo Yoksa Yonguso, 1993), 22.

sharing stories about the multitudes of Korean women in cities like P'yongyang and Wonsan eager to learn about Christianity, the magazine included excerpts from Robert E. Speer's 1897 report that highlighted the warm regard and respect.⁸³ Readers learned that missionaries "gained a position of supreme dignity and influence" and that female missionaries, like the men, could travel throughout the country as they pleased. Speer described a missionary's departure from Seoul for her furlough: "When Mrs. Gifford left Seoul for her furlough last year, the Christians insisted on carrying her chair for her and all her baggage...A great crowd, with presents accompanied her, and as her steamer sailed off they sat on a hill, with banners, singing Christian songs."⁸⁴ The following year, Annie Laurie Baird wrote from P'yongyang, stating that the city's residents were "lovable Koreans" who extended their assistance when a missionary was in need: "Sometimes people who leave the beaten tracks of travel and visit our remote little country ask us if we really can learn to love these poor, hard-featured, not overclean folks. Some of us are very ungrateful if we do not love them, for we owe them much."⁸⁵

Because of these compliant characteristics, American missionaries found the Korean people capable servants. Presbyterian Eugene Bell arrived in 1895. Born in Kentucky in 1868, Bell graduated from Central University of Kentucky in 1891 and Louisville Theological Seminary three years later. Upon graduating, he married Lottie Charlotte Witherspoon and after being ordained in the Louisville Presbytery worked as a

⁸³ Annie Laurie Baird, "A Korea Chapter from Pyeng Yang," Swallen, W.L., "Some New Christians in Gensan Field, Korea," and "How Missionaries Are Treated In Korea," *Woman's Work for Woman* (New York: Women's Foreign Mission Societies of the Presbyterian Church), August 1898, 201, 203, and 210.

⁸⁴ "How Missionaries Are Treated In Korea," *Woman's Work for Woman*, August 1898, 210.

⁸⁵ Annie Laurie Baird, "Lovable Koreans," *Woman's Work for Woman*, August 1899, 219.

supply preacher in northern Kentucky. But after a year, Bell set his sights toward wider horizons. Throughout their first several years in Korea, Eugene and Lottie Bell composed weekly letters, sometimes writing two to three letters in a week, to relatives in Kentucky. Unlike official mission reports or correspondence to the mission board secretary, these letters provide a vista into the private thoughts and lived experiences of a missionary couple in Korea. In a number of their early letters they wrote about their Korean servants. During her first month in Seoul, Lottie Bell wrote to her mother: “I suppose you are anxious to know how I am getting along with my housekeeping,” and then proceeded to describe the fine work of her three servants, including how they cooked, cleaned, and set the table for every meal. Bell had taught her Korean cook how to make American cuisine, such as biscuits and steak, and was delighted that the cook was able to prepare nearly anything Bell asked for without her help. Bell added that the other two servants were also learning how to perform household tasks: “My boy also is quite capable. And I do thoroughly enjoy having my table nicely set for every meal without my having any trouble, and everything daintily served.” Bell happily told her mother that she had effectively recreated her genteel Kentucky lifestyle in Korea at little financial cost. She favorably compared her Korean servants to her servants at home: “I had never hoped to keep house so entirely after my own notions of how it should be done—certainly I could have never done it at home, with the servants one usually has—and to think I can get it all for \$14.00 silver - three servants!”⁸⁶ In letters to his parents, Eugene Bell similarly praised one of his servants for his work ethic and willingness to please: “He is a splendid

⁸⁶ Lottie Bell, “Letter to her mother on April 21, 1895,” RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

gardener and doesn't seem to have a lazy bone in his body and seems to take a delight in doing what I want and in the way I want it."⁸⁷ Bell also wrote of how he spent several difficult hours each day in a classroom learning Korean. After two months, Bell noted that he was far from ready to engage in direct evangelistic work among Koreans, but that he had acquired enough of the language to be able to command his servants.⁸⁸

Another Presbyterian missionary couple in Korea, John Fairman and Annie Shannon Preston, arrived in Korea in 1903. They had wed earlier the same year. The son of a Presbyterian minister, John Preston was ordained in the Enoree Presbytery (in South Carolina) in 1903 after receiving degrees from Furman University (B.A. in 1898), Princeton University (M.A. in 1902), and Princeton Theological Seminary (B.D. in 1902). In a letter to her mother-in-law, Annie Preston also wrote favorably about her Korean servants. Like Lottie Bell, Preston praised her servants for their ability to perform household tasks exactly as she wished. "We certainly started to housekeeping under the most favorable conditions, with two well-trained servants and another teachable one," wrote Preston. As she was preparing to hire two additional Korean servants for the hot summer months, she confessed that the act of employing five servants was hardly in tune with the "missionary simplicity" reported in domestic missionary literature. But Preston contended that she was not at an "awfully extravagant daughter-in-law" who would ruin her son less than a year into their marriage, but simply following the example of other

⁸⁷ Eugene Bell, "Letter to his mother on June 4, 1895," RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

⁸⁸ Eugene Bell, "Letter to his father on May 17, 1895" and "Letter to his mother on June 4, 1895," RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

missionaries.⁸⁹ Preston, like Bell, also drew comparisons between her Korean servants and servants back home in the American South, but added a racial association between Koreans and African Americans in her observations. Though her Korean servants required constant supervision and occasional reprimand, Preston wrote, “I think, on the whole, that Korean servants must be more satisfactory than negroes, unless you find one of the ‘befo de wah’ [before the American Civil War] variety. The Koreans can learn to do anything very well after being told a few times, and seem to take a good deal of pains.”⁹⁰ Just as white southern Presbyterians commonly employed black servants for their housekeeping in the United States, Preston was able to recreate a commensurate lifestyle with Korean servants.

Missionaries Respond to Criticisms of their Luxurious American Homes

Angus Hamilton, a foreign correspondent in East Asia for the *London Times*, published a book based on his travel through Korea. Hamilton accused the foreign missionaries for creating conflict and violence in Korea. With their wanton zeal for proselytism and ostentatious imperial lifestyles, Hamilton believed, American missionaries threatened to foment anti-foreign and anti-Christian feelings among Koreans. Unlike Japan or China, with their long experience with European Catholic and Protestant missionaries, Korea was unique, Hamilton conceded, for the preeminence of American Protestant missionaries, who had made Korea “their peculiar field.” In Seoul,

⁸⁹ Annie Shannon Preston, “Letter to her mother-in-law on May 21, 1904,” RG441 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

⁹⁰ Annie Shannon Preston, “Letter to her mother-in-law on Jan. 26, 1905,” RG441 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Hamilton observed the ubiquity of missionaries “who prattle of Christianity in a marked American accent.” But instead of devoting their days to helping Koreans within “their mission to the heathen,” the missionaries wanted to maintain their homes. As they occupied the most “attractive and commodious houses in the foreign settlements,” the American missionaries, Hamilton charged, exploited Korean workers by hiring multiple servants at low wages. “As a class,” he added, “American missionaries have large families, who live in comparative idleness and luxury.”⁹¹

As Hamilton’s critique began circulating throughout East Asia and the United States, Presbyterian clergyman and mission secretary Arthur Judson Brown defended the missionaries in a pamphlet about “Truth and Falsehood about Korea Missionaries.” From the onset, Brown marked his intent to debunk Hamilton, writing: “Anyone who has visited Korea or is acquainted with even the ABCs of the situation there will read with curious interest Mr. Hamilton’s book, ‘Korea.’ The reader notes that the author criticizes pretty nearly everybody and everything.”⁹² Brown accepted Hamilton’s right to express his opinions, no matter how tactless or tasteless, but he sought to correct Hamilton’s statements on three fronts: missionary salaries, houses, and idleness. He disclosed that the annual salary of a Presbyterian missionary in Korea was approximately \$600 a year, with free rent and an allowance of \$100 for a child. A missionary couple received \$1,200, because both spouses were given \$600. Brown conceded that at first glance missionary salaries appeared high. According to the 1900 U.S. Census, the average annual salary for

⁹¹ Angus Hamilton, Korea (London: W. Heinemann, 1904), 266.

⁹² Arthur J. Brown, The Truth and Falsehood about Korea Missionaries (New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1904), 1.

a male carpet mill worker was \$468 (female carpet mill workers averaged \$268).⁹³ The average salary for a Protestant minister in 1890 was \$574.⁹⁴ But because Korea did not produce “the kinds of food and clothing that an American has to use,” missionaries had to pay expensive freight fees for goods purchased in America. Additionally, Brown compared the rising salary of clergymen with each year of service in contract to the unchanging salary of foreign missionaries. “I admit that the salary of the missionary is adequate to his support,” Brown wrote, “but it is designed to cover only his reasonable needs, and while ministers in this country may look forward to an increase, sometimes to large figures, the most eminent foreign missionary receives the same modest stipend to the day of his death.”⁹⁵ Brown also observed that experienced missionaries like Horace Underwood, Samuel Moffett, and James S. Gale had forfeited the opportunity to earn greater salaries from large churches in American cities. Missionaries and ministers averaged nearly equal annual salaries, but some clergymen in large urban churches received \$3,000 in 1890.⁹⁶

Like Hamilton, Brown had visited Korea in 1901. In his survey of missionary estates, he conceded that two or three houses were markedly luxurious because they were built by wealthy relatives of particular missionaries. One Presbyterian missionary, Horace Underwood, used financial support from his family’s lucrative typewriter sales in the United States to build a magnificent modern home equipped with a steam-heater, hot and

⁹³ Twelfth Census of the United States (1900), “Special Reports-Employees and Wages,” xxxi.

⁹⁴ E. Brooks Holifield, *God’s Ambassadors: A History of the Christian Clergy in America* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 179.

⁹⁵ Brown, 8-9.

⁹⁶ Holifield, 179.

cold water, and grand fireplaces in three bedrooms, which earned him the derisive moniker, “millionaire missionary,” from other foreigners in Korea. In 1903, the Korean emperor, in search of a safe palace site, eyed and purchased Underwood’s house.⁹⁷ But the majority of the missionary houses were modest and comparable to “the home of a country clergyman or school teacher in the United States.”⁹⁸ True, even an ordinary American house far exceeded typical Korean standards. During Mattie Wilcox Noble’s visits to Korean homes throughout P’yongyang in 1897, she lamented the cramped conditions. In her journal, she wrote that a Korean home barely had sufficient space for an American double bed. “How thankful I feel that I have rooms like an American,” Noble reflected, “Just one of our rooms, small though they are, would make four living rooms for four Korean families, for they seldom have but one room.”⁹⁹ In 1903, Noble recalled an incident in which several Korean women followed her home to obtain a glimpse of the missionary’s house. After Noble invited them in, she observed that the Korean women were “surprised and delighted,” marveling that the missionary’s house was “beautiful, like heaven.” Then the Korean Protestant woman accompanying Noble said, “Do our people live like this? No, but the lady serves God and He allows them to live in a pretty home in a foreign country.”¹⁰⁰ In a letter to his family in 1897, Eugene

⁹⁷ Lillias H. Underwood, Underwood of Korea: being an intimate record of the life and work of the Rev. H.G. Underwood, D.D., LL.D., for thirty one years a missionary of the Presbyterian board in Korea (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1918), 208-210, and Harrington, Fred Harvey, God, Mammon, and the Japanese: Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American Relations, 1884-1905 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944), 96, 110-111.

⁹⁸ Brown, 11.

⁹⁹ Noble, “August 28, 1897,” 66.

¹⁰⁰ Noble, “October 28, 1903,” 112.

Bell sketched a picture of his new home in Korea, which included twelve rooms serving various purposes (study, pantry, dining room, kitchen, sitting room, bedroom, drug room, and bathroom) and ranging in size from 8 by 8 square feet to 24 by 18 square feet.¹⁰¹ The architectural blueprints of a Methodist Episcopal Church, South, missionary residence in Songdo from 1913 illustrates a multi-storied home with a basement consisting of four rooms (furnace room, vegetable room, laundry room, work room), the first floor consisting of a kitchen (11 x 12 square feet), a study (also 11x12), a dining room (12x15), and a sitting room (12x15), a second floor consisting of a bathroom, closet, and 3 bedrooms (2 12x15 bedrooms and 1 12x11 bedroom), and an attic.¹⁰² Brown was not unaware of the material discrepancies between the American missionaries and the Koreans they came to serve. He did not deny that missionary houses appeared “palatial in comparison with the wretched hovels in which the natives herd like rabbits in a warren,” but insisted that mission residences were constructed to sustain physical health in unfamiliar and unsanitary Korean environs. And because the typical Protestant missionary couple consists of a “man of education and refinement” and a “woman of cultivation and good taste,” they naturally fashioned for themselves an attractive home in sharp contrast to the “miserable habitations of a heathen city.”¹⁰³ Instead of accusing the missionaries for lavish spending, as Hamilton had done, Brown believed that missionary houses in Korea evinced the missionaries’ resourcefulness and commitment. With scarce

¹⁰¹ Eugene Bell, “Letter to his sister on January 2, 1897,” RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁰² “Missionary Residence, Songdo, Korea, February 24, 1913, Methodist Episcopal Church, South,” General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ.

¹⁰³ Brown, 11-12.

supplies and modest income, the missionaries had cultivated a “home for life” in the Korean mission field.¹⁰⁴

Finally, Brown refuted Hamilton’s charge of missionary idleness by detailing the work of his mission. Seventy missionaries were in charge of 323 congregations, 79 schools, 5 hospitals, and about 35,000 communicants and adherents. Missionaries were hardly idle but rather overworked and undermanned in their efforts to found churches, schools, and hospitals, and “create in a heathen land some of the conditions of decent society.”¹⁰⁵ According to Brown, each missionary was doing the labor of several workers in America, because no competent Korean assistants could aid them. Thus, every missionary adopted several occupations: “Each one of them is a preacher, pastor, Sunday-school superintendent, architect, builder and bishop combined, with a diocese a hundred miles.”¹⁰⁶ And the missionaries had to travel in harsh conditions without modern transportation. Brown had traveled with them and he knew intimately of the arduous journey “through heat and cold and dust and mud, burned by the midday sun, drenched by the sudden storms, eating unaccustomed food, sleeping on the floor in vermin-invested huts – enduring every privation incident to travel in an uncivilized land.”¹⁰⁷ Several times each year, the male missionary left his family and went on a long itinerating journey to visit all the churches in his assigned district. Though Eugene Bell enjoyed preaching to and baptizing Korean Christians in remote regions, some of whom he thought possessed

¹⁰⁴ Brown, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Brown, 16.

¹⁰⁶ Brown, 17.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

the most sincere and childlike faith, he also complained about his lodging. “If you could look into a little dirty Korean inn,” he told his mother in 1897, “in a small room with mud floor, mud walls and paper doors and windows, you could see me as I am sitting on a Korean chair, that is the floor, writing on a box.”¹⁰⁸ In the same year, Bell confessed to his sister that he despised leaving Seoul and was unhappy in the “wilds of southern Korea.”¹⁰⁹ A few months later in December, Bell lamented to his mother about his temporary accommodations – a small room with a low ceiling and smoke-covered paper walls: “I am sure you never saw a negro cabin any dirtier.”¹¹⁰

As male missionaries itinerated, their spouses stayed at home caring for their children. Some wives grew lonely; others were envious and longed to be out ministering to Koreans rather than ensconced at home. In many ways, the married female missionaries had more responsibilities than their husbands. In addition to housekeeping and rearing children, all without their husbands for months at a time, female missionaries like Annie Baird were also evangelists who taught Bible classes for Korean women. In a letter to a friend, Baird described herself in 1891 as a “temporary widow” whenever her husband William itinerated. But in the same letter, she conveyed joy in her evangelizing work alongside the other Presbyterian women, recounting the conversion of a fourteen year-old Korean girl, “Chongee,” whose appearance had been transformed after adopting Christianity. “Looking at her now,” Baird wrote, “it is hard for me to realize that she was

¹⁰⁸ Eugene Bell, “Letter to his mother on March 18, 1897,” RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁰⁹ Eugene Bell, “Letter to his sister on September 5, 1897,” RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹¹⁰ Eugene Bell, “Letter to his mother on December 2, 1897,” RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

the miserable little bundle of rags and dirt when she came that they say she was.”¹¹¹

Baird wrote that though she had adjusted nicely to life in Korea, she longed to see more conversions: “We have everything we need out here to make us comfortable and happy, except the one thing that we want most of all, and that is, more direct results of our life and labor here...to see this poor people illuminated with the love of Christ.”¹¹² In her correspondence, Baird described her missionary life as wife, mother, and evangelist. She was sensitive about the negative views of other foreigners in Korea against American missionaries and their large families, numerous servants, and luxurious houses. She confessed to McCoy that she and her husband were deliberating about whether to petition the government for a land grant in order to become farmers. They could pursue more direct evangelism by living within an indigenous community and they could be self-supporting by selling their own crops. According to Baird, her denominational mission board wrote constantly about “the difficulty of raising money for missions at home” and of “the adverse criticisms of passing travelers upon the style in which missionaries live.” Baird wrote that she and her husband “would like to relieve the church as much as possible of our support, and to put ourselves outside the range of such criticisms, however unjust they may be.”¹¹³ But Baird remained in the Presbyterian mission, receiving full salary, until her death in 1916.

¹¹¹ Annie Baird, “Letter to Augusta McCoy on March 6, 1891,” RG172 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹¹² Annie Baird, “Letter to Augusta McCoy on April 12, 1894,” RG172 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹¹³ Ibid.

In October 1895, Baird and Ella Dodge Appenzeller delivered addresses about the vocation of the missionary wife at the decennial anniversary of Christian Missions in Seoul. Both of them tackled the question of whether missionary wives were a help or hindrance. Baird acknowledged that many missionary wives experienced frustration with feeling trapped at home with their children. Baird shared how missionary wives had envisioned enthralling experiences of evangelizing to Koreans alongside their husbands, “but as one little head after another bobs up around the family table, we find that our time and strength are almost entirely taken up with the ordering of our household and the care of our children.”¹¹⁴ But Baird encouraged the women to embrace their no less significant duties of raising children and maintaining a clean home. Additionally, she added that they had abundant opportunities within the mission compound to learn the language, attend indigenous services, and teach religious classes to female servants. Though Baird presented married female missionaries as mainly wives and mothers, she also carved out a small space for teaching the gospel.

Appenzeller was more abrasive and accusatory. She said that missionary wives depended too much on their husbands for help maintaining their homes. They must accept their roles as wife and mother by learning to be self-reliant at home, training competent servants, and nurturing healthy and godly children. To illustrate her point, she rebuked women who asked their husbands to help lay the new carpet in their homes when servants could do it: “How pleasant it is to have one’s husband always at one’s beck and

¹¹⁴ Annie L. Baird, “The Relation of the Wives of Missionaries to Mission Work,” *The Korean Repository*, November 1895, 417.

call, but that is not what he was sent for.”¹¹⁵ The perpetually needy wife, beseeching her husband’s assistance for every little chore at home, was a hindrance to his work. Appenzeller also reprimanded women who were leaving their children in the care of servants in order to accompany their husbands on evangelizing trips. Jane Hunter contends that the “women’s missionary enterprise celebrated Christian domesticity for the benighted existence of women around the world.”¹¹⁶ Married female missionaries assigned priority to the domestic sphere and sought to imbue their Victorian notions of wifehood and motherhood upon indigenous women through teaching and example. Appenzeller feared that married female missionaries in Korea were abdicating their responsibilities as supportive wives and nurturing mothers in order to take on their husbands’ roles. Unlike their husbands, they were in fact inadequate to evangelize in regions beyond the mission compound. The women did not even know whether the Koreans they were praying with were “exalting Buddha or Jesus.”¹¹⁷ “May it be part conceit to want to go out and do something which will show or read well in a report?”¹¹⁸ Unlike Baird, who noted evangelistic opportunities for women in mission compounds, Appenzeller instructed wives to observe their spousal and parental duties. This was their true religious vocation in Korea.

¹¹⁵ Ella Dodge Appenzeller, “Mrs. Appenzeller’s Address,” *The Korean Repository*, November 1895, 421.

¹¹⁶ Jane Hunter, “The Home and the World: The Missionary Message of U.S. Domesticity,” in Women’s Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia, edited by Leslie A. Fleming (Boulder, San Francisco, and London: Westview Press, 1989), 160.

¹¹⁷ Appenzeller, 422.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

The cultivation of comfortable homes created a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, the wives were pleased that they had recreated Western lifestyles in a remote nation. Not unlike any other migrant community, American missionaries were migrants building new homes and raising young children. But they sensed that their lifestyles could detract from their mission. Unlike other immigrant communities in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America, who were creating religious centers like Jewish synagogues and Roman Catholic parishes for fellow ethnic migrants, American missionaries had set out to chiefly to convert Koreans and plant indigenous churches. Yet, they established physical boundaries. In 1902, one Presbyterian missionary visiting northern Korea marveled at his colleagues' houses, impressively built and standing beautifully on a high bluff overlooking the harbor. But he expressed some concern that these houses were "very much removed from the Koreans," not only different from but also superior to Korean residences, even those belonging to Korean gentry.¹¹⁹ These economic inequalities provoked hostility and produced the phenomenon that the missionaries feared most, scores of Koreans who expressed interest in Christianity solely for material gain.

In her address, Baird tackled this paradox by noting how married female missionaries largely determined the style of living for their families. A beautiful home did not merely display a woman's prudent resourcefulness, but also reflected her religious faithfulness. Nevertheless, the same very home left her open to harsh criticism from other foreigners and Koreans. She recalled a conversation with a Western traveler

¹¹⁹ Charles F. Bernheisel, in "Charles F. Bernheisel Diary, October 31, 1902," 09 0917 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

visiting her home: “Something was said about the lives of the natives in the interior and he looked about our little parlor which seemed plain enough to me and said, ‘Why, this is palatial, simply palatial.’”¹²⁰ A married female missionary who had recently entered into Korea also questioned Baird about their way of life: “We came out expecting to find such missionary simplicity but, oh, it was all so different from the start from what we thought it would be.”¹²¹ Instead of preaching remote villages, the new couple attended “stylish little teas” in homes with “such nice Brussels carpets and things.”¹²² Baird acknowledged the disparity: “Compared with the Vanderbilts we live in a humble, not to say, mean way...compared with the people whom we have come to serve and to save, we live like princes and millionaires.”¹²³ But she defended the missionaries; they were frugal, concerned about health rather than display, and likely to purchase their Brussels carpets second-hand at low prices from foreign vendors en route to Korea, which would prove cheaper than replacing several carpets over time. Tea parties meant not merely recreation but friendship and the alleviation of stress. Women’s tea parties and men’s tennis games strengthened bonds and reinvigorated commitments.

As a physician, Lillias Underwood also cited health reasons in defense of a seemingly lavish way of life. Upon entering Seoul for the first time in 1888, Underwood noticed the stark contrast between the filthy streets and low mud houses in the city and the Presbyterian mission property. “We left behind us these dirty streets and saw around

¹²⁰ Baird, 418.

¹²¹ Baird, 419.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Baird, 418.

us a lovely lawn, flower beds, bushes and trees, and a pretty picturesque mission home,” Underwood wrote, “It was like magic.”¹²⁴ She later argued that the missionary residences were not extravagant but essential for physical and mental welfare. The sanitation system in Seoul, in which all sewage flowed out into ditches on either side of the street, rendered it impossible for missionaries to live among the Korean people without exposure to infectious diseases.

Underwood referred to the death of a Canadian Presbyterian missionary, William John McKenzie, who committed suicide in 1895. McKenzie eschewed the safety of the mission compound in order to live among the Koreans.¹²⁵ But after several months of Korean-style dwelling and eating, McKenzie became physically ill, suffering from feverish spells and frequent vomiting. In the summer of 1895, McKenzie’s physical condition worsened. McKenzie entered his symptoms in his last diary entry, then concluded, “Hope it is not death, for the sake of Korea and the many who will say it was my manner of living like Koreans. It was imprudence, on part of myself, traveling under hot sun and sitting out at night till cold.”¹²⁶ The next day, he asked the Korean Christians in his town to distribute his money among the poor and to bury him beside the church if he died. As the Koreans participated in the worship service, McKenzie departed into the wilderness and shot himself in the head with his gun.¹²⁷ The missionary community in

¹²⁴ Lillias H. Underwood, Fifteen Years Among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea, 2nd Edition (Boston: American Tract Society, 1908), 5.

¹²⁵ Elizabeth A. McCully, A Corn of Wheat or the Life of Rev. W.J. McKenzie of Korea (Toronto: The Westminster Co. Limited, 1903), 221.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Martha Huntley, Caring, Growing, Changing: A History of the Protestant Mission in Korea (New York: Friendship Press, 1984), 116-117.

Korea was shaken by his suicide. In a letter to Henry Appenzeller, George Heber Jones wrote, "I am shocked. I am grieved. I cannot collect my thoughts at the news of Bro. McKenzie's death. Such a man...Such an end! Alone, sick, insane, a suicide! Oh! God, there is some mystery here."¹²⁸ Despite McKenzie's last wishes, Underwood attributed McKenzie's death precisely to his decision to live among the Koreans, which, she thought, accounted for his debilitating physical health and mental insanity. In her diagnosis, McKenzie succumbed to a solitary life that eroded his mental acuity and the physiological realities "that a body which has reached maturity, fed on plenty of nutritious food, cannot suddenly be shifted to a meager, unaccustomed and distasteful diet of foreign concoction, and retain its power to resist disease."¹²⁹ Underwood presented McKenzie's suicide as a cautionary tale for missionaries who left the hermetic cocoon of mission compounds.

Another missionary, George W. Gilmore, argued in 1892 that their superior residence was a constructive force for evangelism. He did not deny the criticism that missionary houses were comparatively lavish by Korean standards. Instead, Gilmore insisted that their property ought to be employed as an apologetic for the positive benefits of Christianity over against Buddhism and Confucianism. Gilmore proudly noted that Koreans, even those in the highest positions, had visited missionary residences and expressed awe at their material splendor. Rather than instigating Korean resentment, as other foreigners and even some missionaries supposed, Korean wonderment at

¹²⁸ George Heber Jones, "Letter to Henry G. Appenzeller, n.d.," Henry Gerhard Appenzeller Papers, Burke Theological Library Archives, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, NY.

¹²⁹ Underwood, 125.

missionary luxuries fostered further curiosity about Christianity. He witnessed firsthand how Korean visitors “admire the comforts” and then “go home to ponder on the religion which takes hold of the present life of man and makes it more enjoyable.”¹³⁰ Therefore, missionaries need not feel shame or apologize for living comfortably, because their homes demonstrated “the advantages of a distinctively Christian civilization” in primitive Korea.¹³¹ Gilmore found the accusation that Koreans inquired about Christianity only to receive material handouts from the missionaries was too simplistic. The cheerful and civilized missionary community served as tangible evidence for Christian potential to transform Korean society.

An Independent Canadian Missionary Sets His Own Course

In 1889, Malcolm C. Fenwick, a twenty-six year-old from the outskirts of Toronto, Canada, devoted his life to becoming a missionary to Korea. He first learned about Korea from reading a newspaper story about an American Presbyterian missionary there who was imprisoned and faced execution by hanging for openly proselytizing. Although the Korean government prohibited proselytism, the story was untrue. Like all of the other members in his Canadian church, however, Fenwick knew little about Korea. The ignorance manifested itself when the minister in Fenwick’s church instructed the Lord about the country: “You know, Lord, Corea is an island in the Pacific Ocean.” Confusing Korea for Corsica, Fenwick also initially believed that Korea was an island in the Mediterranean Sea. And he knew as little about mission work as he did about East

¹³⁰ George W. Gilmore, Korea from its Capital: With a Chapter on Missions (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1892), 316.

¹³¹ Ibid.

Asian geography. Fenwick had heard of David Livingstone's mission work in Africa and seen pictures from missionaries on furlough, but possessed scant knowledge of actual mission work. He imagined an austere preacher standing before a crowd of natives with a Bible in his hand while another native held a peculiar-shaped umbrella over his head. When his friend decided to go to Korea as a missionary, Fenwick offered to accompany him and hold the umbrella while he preached.¹³³

Despite knowing little about mission work and Korean culture, Fenwick was drawn to Korea for several reasons in addition to his desire to preach the gospel to unbelievers in a foreign land. Fenwick was an enterprising businessman, utilizing his experience working on the family farm and in various emerging industries along the Canadian Pacific Railway to become a manager of a wholesale hardware business with forty employees. Because Korea was a new and undeveloped mission field, Fenwick believed that his years in the northwestern Canadian frontier would prove useful in the unknown Korean wild. The newspaper stories he read about Korean laws against direct proselytism and the perils of imprisonment appealed to Fenwick's sense of adventure. Like other missionaries, Fenwick envisioned Korea as a religious *tabula rasa* and leapt at the opportunity to be a pioneer in the Korean mission field.¹³⁴ But when he arrived in

¹³³ Malcolm C. Fenwick, The Church of Christ in Corea (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1911), 10-11.

¹³⁴ Fenwick was the third Canadian missionary to Korea. In the 1880s and 1890s, Canadian Protestants, motivated by the fervor surrounding foreign missions in the United States and Britain, began to send out missionaries to Africa and Asia. In 1886, Canadian Congregationalist missionaries went to Angola to partner with American colleagues there. The first Canadian Anglican missionary, J. Cooper Robinson, went to Japan in 1888. In 1892, Canadian Methodists launched a mission to west China, which developed into one of the largest Protestant overseas mission outposts in the twentieth century. See John Webster Grant, The Church in the Canadian Era: The First Century of Confederation (Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson Limited, 1972), 55-56.

Korea, Fenwick disagreed with how the Americans lived, trained, and evangelized to Koreans.

Though Fenwick was officially sent to Korea under a newly established Toronto-based mission agency in 1888, the “Corean Union Mission,” he would largely be free from denominational strictures, able to work in Korea as an executive manager who made his own decisions.¹³⁵ Fenwick did not possess an academic degree, but he maintained that his practical business experience was equally valuable, if not more so, than the traditional theological training of other missionaries. About his preparedness for mission work, Fenwick wrote, “I believe [God] educated me. I believe it was [God] who kept me near the soil and taught me agriculture and horticulture and commerce; who then sent me to the Northwest where I learned frontier life...I was then put to managing men and systemizing my work.”¹³⁶

Fenwick spent his first ten months studying the same textbooks and language manuals as other North American missionaries. Struggling to retain all the various lessons about indicative, interrogative, and imperative forms of Korean tenses, he grew frustrated by the rigors of formal language training and decided that the best way to learn Korean was not through lexicons and grammar books but rather by mingling with Koreans in the city of Seoul. Whereas his fellow missionaries in Korea spent at least their

¹³⁵ Created by several Toronto-area Christian businessmen in 1888, the Corean Union Mission’s requirements for its missionaries were unlike other denominational mission boards. The Corean Union Mission did not require their missionary candidates to be ordained ministers or claim membership in a particular denomination. See Heui Yeol Ahn, The Influence of the Niagara Bible Conference and Adoniram Judson Gordon on Malcolm Fenwick and Korean Baptist Missions, PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002, 23.

¹³⁶ Fenwick, 15.

first three years studying the Korean language, with an exhaustive curriculum that included rigorous examinations covering multiple verbal forms, euphonic peculiarities, idioms, reading the first five books of the New Testament and memorizing the Lord's Prayer, Apostle's Creed, and Ten Commandments in Korean, and a vocabulary of at least 2,000 Korean words, Fenwick departed from Seoul to evangelize in the village of Sorae (160 miles away) without any formal language training.¹³⁷ In the same way that he had learned about agriculture and commerce in the Canadian frontier through practice, Fenwick sought to learn the Korean language through conversing with everyday Koreans he encountered in streets and villages.¹³⁸

Upon arriving in Sorae, Fenwick spent the following two months living among the Koreans there. Immediately, he was entranced by their bucolic way of life in the remote countryside. Not unlike other North American missionaries, Fenwick imagined that he had been wondrously transported back in time to an ancient, biblical time unscathed by modern civilization. As he gazed out into the fields, he saw strong, able-bodied Korean men reaping rice crops and pulling weeds while they sang folk tunes as dignified patricians smoking long pipes watched contentedly from their porches. Demure Korean women looked like "country belles," hiding their beauty under oversized hats.¹³⁹ Fenwick soon thereafter befriended a handful of Protestants in the village and quickly learned the Korean language through daily conversations and meals with them. Just as in

¹³⁷ "Course of Study for Candidates of the Korean Language," in Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Korean Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1896, 19-20.

¹³⁸ Fenwick, 16-18.

¹³⁹ Fenwick, 18.

the early days of the New Testament church, Fenwick found that his friends possessed bright-eyed enthusiasm about their faith, but did not yet have structured worship services, written Scriptures, or hymns. So Fenwick envisioned his role as similar to the Apostle Paul in the New Testament Book of Acts. Just as he read about Paul's journeys through ancient cities like Caesarea and Ephesus, Fenwick was a ground-breaking missionary teaching the essential foundations of Christianity to new converts in the Korean village.

One of Fenwick's first tasks was translating hymns into Korean. Despite his limited Korean vocabulary and lack of formal language training, Fenwick succeeded in translating simple hymns like "Jesus Loves Me" with little difficulty. Instead of relying upon dictionaries and committees of learned missionaries, he worked together in constant dialogue with a small band of Korean Protestants in the village. As he then attempted to translate William A. Ogden's "Look and Live" (1887), Fenwick stumbled upon the verse, "Life is offered unto you," because he could not find a Korean word for "offer" except for one used for a servant or subject offering something to a master or king.¹⁴⁰ According to Fenwick, his Korean co-translators objected to using this word for "offer" because the imagery debased God into the humiliating position of a menial servant. But Fenwick felt strongly that using this Korean word, "offer" poignantly displayed the humility and sacrifice embodied in the incarnate Christ's condescension to human form. Though Fenwick did not employ language textbooks in his translation work, he effectively employed the Chinese Bible in his makeshift committee of Korean believers. Sung-Deuk Oak attributes early Protestant growth to the proliferation of Chinese Protestant texts in

¹⁴⁰ The full verse of "Look and Live" is as follows: "Life is offered unto you, hallelujah!/Eternal love thy soul shall have/If you'll only look to Him, hallelujah!/Look to Jesus who alone can save.

Korea from 1880 to 1900. Throughout the history of Korea, the educated could read Chinese fluently. Foreign missionaries widely distributed popular Chinese Protestant texts as part of their evangelistic strategy. In addition to the Chinese Bible, more than forty Chinese Protestant books and tracts were distributed among educated Koreans by 1900.¹⁴¹ As Fenwick's committee debated the connotation of the word, "offer," Fenwick gave the Koreans his copy of the Chinese Bible and directed them toward specific passages like Philippians 2:5-11 in order to illustrate and ultimately advance his translation.¹⁴²

Fenwick returned to Seoul after two months in Sorae and marshaled his resources in order to reside permanently in the village 160 miles away from Seoul. Unlike other missionaries, who established physical boundaries from Koreans by erecting Western-style houses in gated compounds, Fenwick purchased and resided in a small Korean home in close proximity to his Korean neighbors in Sorae. He was persuaded that the most effective missionary strategy was full immersion into Korean life, which set him apart from the majority of missionaries who set out to recreate familiar Western homes in Korea to maintain their physical and mental health. For the next two years, Fenwick spent his days evangelizing and cultivating a vegetable garden. As he developed crops and

¹⁴¹ Sung-Deuk Oak, "Chinese Protestant Literature and Early Korean Protestantism," in Christianity in Korea, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 72-77.

¹⁴² Of this incident, Fenwick writes, "Opening the Chinese Bible at Philippians 2, I asked them to read verses 6-11 from the last words of verse 5, 'Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.'" He added, "I finally said, 'Gentlemen, the Scriptures declare that the son of God took upon Him the form of a servant and stands today stretching out two hands, as your servants do to their masters, 'offering' unto you eternal life as a free gift for your acceptance'" (Fenwick, 22-23).

worked alongside Korean farmers, Fenwick learned that his Western agricultural techniques were not necessarily superior to Korean ways. One missionary wrote about the inefficiency of such Korean labor practices as digging with three to five Korean men sharing one long wooden shovel. He thought that this demonstrated their indolence, lack of initiative, and inability to break from long-standing customary traditions.¹⁴³ Fenwick conceded that a number of Korean farming practices appeared primitive to Western eyes, including his own. But as an experienced family farmer from Ontario, Fenwick gleaned that Korean agricultural practices reflected not merely cultural tradition but also methods time-tested and proven over generations. In an article on Korean farming in a Methodist missionary magazine, Fenwick wrote: “Primitive their farming certainly is; but in this primitiveness we have customs that are worthy of note, if not of adoption.”¹⁴⁴ In particular, Fenwick appreciated the effective Korean fertilizing method of applying manure to seeds in order to yield a more bountiful crop: “It is only recently that agricultural scientists have found out the value of applying manure with the seed in an available form for the plants to assimilate it, while Koreans have presumably practiced this method for centuries.”¹⁴⁵ After reveling in the success of his first flourishing crop of vegetables, Fenwick sought to distribute the same Western seeds to his Korean neighbors. When they refused, Fenwick initially expressed disappointment and disgust with their obstinacy. But Fenwick later discovered that the Koreans refused only because they did not want to replace their valuable crop of soy beans with Fenwick’s foreign seeds. As

¹⁴³ Gale, Korean Sketches, 62-65.

¹⁴⁴ Malcolm C. Fenwick, “Korean Farming,” *The Korean Repository*, August 1898, 288.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Fenwick embedded himself among the Korean villagers, he learned that Korea had much to teach him about crossing cultural and racial boundaries.

Fenwick defined his social existence in Korea as a preacher and teacher from the civilized West, but his views evolved as he began to reflect upon and criticize Western notions of cultural dominance over the East. The Koreans were not a slow and slovenly people, as often depicted in popular and religious Western literature, but Fenwick adopted the position of “the stupid Westerner” receiving a Korean education.¹⁴⁶ “The Koreans taught me in many ways that we of the West do not know everything,” noted Fenwick, “and the Easterner usually has a good practical reason for what he does, generally well adapted to his circumstances and always economical.”¹⁴⁷ But though Fenwick’s views on Korean cultural and racial characteristics were evolving, he grew increasingly frustrated by what he perceived as the pernicious grip of traditional Korean religious practices, which stunted Christian transmission in the village. Unlike his thriving vegetable garden, the lack of progress in what he called his “spiritual garden” dismayed him.¹⁴⁸ A number of villagers attended Fenwick’s worship services, but few were renouncing their religious rituals, such as ancestor worship, in order to convert to Christianity. Fenwick felt that traditional Korean religious practices were the weeds blocking the seeds he was planting in his evangelizing ministry. Korean farming practices were primitive yet resourceful, but Korean religious practices were evil and irredeemable. Unlike Fenwick’s sophisticated and elaborate interpretation of Korean farming, he

¹⁴⁶ Fenwick, The Church of Christ in Korea, 28.

¹⁴⁷ Fenwick, 35.

¹⁴⁸ Fenwick, 33.

summarized traditional Korean religion in Sorae with the following observation: “Satan befools a great many people by making them religious, and so lures them on to destruction.”¹⁴⁹

Fenwick Embraces the Free Korean Religious Marketplace

In 1893, Fenwick returned home for three years to attend the Boston Missionary Training School. Adironam Judson Gordon, Baptist minister of Clarendon Street Baptist Church in Boston, founded the missionary training school in 1889 to equip laypersons in evangelistic methods for urban and overseas work.¹⁵⁰ As Fenwick studied in Boston, he established his own mission agency to Korea, the Corean Itinerant Mission, and sought to recruit other missionaries. Like the Methodist and Presbyterian mission organizations in Korea, Fenwick instilled a policy that prohibited employment of Korean converts as pastors, for fear they would preach false doctrine.¹⁵¹ In 1897, Speer reported that Presbyterian missionaries had planted ten or more churches in their first thirteen years of mission work but did not ordain Korean ministers and elders in the churches because the missionaries wanted the native Christians sufficiently trained to administer properly the ineffable and holy sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.¹⁵²

Though Fenwick enjoyed his freedom from denominational mission boards, he was often lonely. Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries attended English-language

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ahn, 115-116, 129.

¹⁵¹ Fenwick, 57.

¹⁵² Robert E. Speer, Report on the Mission in Korea of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 426-428.

worship services, shared meals, and played tennis together in their mission compounds, but Fenwick did not have access to such a cohesive network of Westerners. But living outside a Western community, Fenwick could learn more about the Korean people. In his frequent association with all types of Koreans, not just Protestant converts, Fenwick felt their wariness toward Westerners acutely. Although other missionaries had ably studied Korean cultural, racial, and religious characteristics, Fenwick thought they had not sufficiently considered how Koreans perceived the Western missionary: “But it is not so much a study of the natural ability of the Oriental which is difficult; the difficult thing is to acquire a working knowledge of his process of thinking; to learn, unmistakably, his opinion of the barbarian from the West, who dares to teach a mighty yellow man.”¹⁵³ Though missionaries frequently heralded the warm greetings they received from Koreans, Fenwick noted the underlying hostility that belied outward appearances. Koreans welcomed the white missionary courteously, even bowing respectfully during the encounter, but Fenwick contended that their inner attitude was one of disgust and loathing toward the foreigner: “The white man is rude; he is arrogant; he does not know how to efface himself; he smells of soap.”¹⁵⁴ Just as Americans frequently complained about the foul stench rising from Korean cities and villages, Fenwick noted that Koreans grumbled about the offensive odor of missionaries in equal measure.

After returning to Korea in 1896, Fenwick altered his mission philosophy completely. Despite his newly acquired training from the United States, Fenwick was still struggling to convert Koreans. As he continued preaching, he realized that his listeners

¹⁵³ Fenwick, 50.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

viewed him strictly as a foreigner teaching his strange religion. Just as Fenwick had experienced difficulty crossing cultural boundaries as a “stupid Westerner” in Korea, he felt that his Korean audiences could not look past his foreign appearance to hear his religious message. Fenwick envisioned a mighty river with the white missionary on one side and Koreans on the other. From his reading of 1 Corinthians, Fenwick believed the only way for the missionary to get across the river was through preaching. But preaching in fluent Korean, a skill which Fenwick had adroitly acquired, proved insufficient. “I shall never forget how hard I tried to cross,” wrote Fenwick, as he recalled testifying with tears about the Christian gospel “Sunday after Sunday, month after month” to no avail.¹⁵⁵ When pleading with the Koreans to convert, Fenwick perceived that his listeners did not want to do so because the message came from a crude white savage. Fenwick had inverted the missionary discourse that cast white Christians as superior to lowly, benighted Koreans: “And if this Jesus I talked so much about was likely to make them into a being as this white barbarian before them, the best thing they could do was to have nothing whatever to do with Jesus.”¹⁵⁶ Fenwick called for a reversal. Korean converts, not white missionaries, would be the most effective preachers in Korea.

Fenwick was not the only missionary in Korea who believed in the importance of indigenous preaching. Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries identified and cultivated the most promising Korean converts in their churches to be evangelists. But Fenwick differed from the other missionaries about training methods for prospective Korean preachers. Methodist missionaries established a four-year course of study for Korean

¹⁵⁵ Fenwick, 54.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

preachers with a curriculum that included memorizing multiple catechisms, studying nearly every book of the Bible, reading John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Sheffield's *Universal History*, Ernst Faber's *Civilization: East and West*, and writing sermons on the atonement, baptism, and filial piety.¹⁵⁷ Even after Korean preachers had completing their training, Methodist missionaries provided rigorous supervision and listened to their sermons to ensure the promulgation of correct doctrine. In contrast, Fenwick's training consisted of sending out Korean converts to preach while he led them in Bible study, with no need for other religious books. In one case, Fenwick commissioned a Korean convert to preach almost immediately after witnessing the man's conversion.¹⁵⁸

Fenwick's strategy of employing Korean preachers achieved mixed results. Instead of modeling his evangelistic methods, Fenwick's assistant teacher used the business skills that he had learned from the missionary to engage in emerging Korean industries. Two of Fenwick's earliest students converted to Seventh Day Adventism and accepted employment from an Adventist missionary; a different student left Fenwick to find an educator who would exclusively teach English; and another student eventually dismissed Christianity altogether.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, Fenwick found encouragement in the work of one of his disciples, "Pastor Sen," whom Fenwick had appointed to Kongju, a district three hundred miles away from his home in Wonsan.¹⁶⁰ Like Fenwick, Pastor Sen did not receive formal theological training or constant missionary supervision, but he

¹⁵⁷ "Course of Study for Korean Local Preachers," Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Korean Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1896, 18-19.

¹⁵⁸ Fenwick, 58-67.

¹⁵⁹ Fenwick, 68-69.

¹⁶⁰ L. George Paik, 194-195.

successfully established churches and trained preachers in his district. Fenwick acknowledged that Pastor Sen's students preached better than his own. To Fenwick, Pastor Sen was more than a faithful minister but also vindication of his iconoclastic methods and ultimately evidence that the Christian God "is no respecter of persons."¹⁶¹ Fenwick reversed course, deemphasizing the recruitment of additional white missionaries from North America in favor of training and sending Korean preachers throughout remote and unreached districts in the peninsular nation. In his interpretation of a well-trodden biblical passage on foreign missions in Matthew 9:35-38, with the command that prayerful Christians are to ask God, "the Lord of the harvest," to send more workers, Fenwick noted that the scriptural injunction never specified nationality. "We did not dictate what nationality they should be," explained Fenwick about how his mission selected itinerating evangelists, "and it pleased [God] to send all Koreans, whom the world has been educated to believe are poor, worthless, helpless beings."¹⁶²

As Fenwick began employing Korean preachers, he recognized the economic benefits of his methods. In addition to evangelizing more effectively than foreign missionaries, Korean evangelists did not require nearly as much money. Because Fenwick's training for mission work was largely as an entrepreneurial businessman and not as an ordained minister, Fenwick accentuated cost-effectiveness alongside religious results. Unlike foreign missionaries, who received approximately six hundred U.S. dollars in annual salary, Fenwick's Korean preachers received sixty U.S. dollars a year. Fenwick calculated that investing in his mission's Korean workers only cost domestic

¹⁶¹ Fenwick, 72.

¹⁶² Fenwick, 110-111.

contributors sixteen and a half cents a day in American currency, producing much better value than financially supporting white missionaries at a cost of up to five dollars per day.¹⁶³

Furthermore, the travel expenses for Korean evangelists were exceedingly less than those of new foreign missionaries. Fenwick recalled sending out nine Korean evangelists from Wonsan to the distant Tumen River district more than seven hundred miles away in the far northern reaches of Korea, bordering China and Russia, giving each worker the equivalent of five U.S. dollars for the journey. In contrast, Fenwick estimated that “it would have cost nine white missionaries three thousand dollars to reach the Tuman [sic] from New York or London.” Unlike white missionaries, Fenwick wrote, Korean evangelists traveled simply with “had no elaborate outfit, no Pullman car to travel in, no expensive voyaging to pay for,” and they carried little more than clothing and Bibles for luggage. Fenwick also estimated that the cost of educating a white missionary to cross what he described as the “three great mountains” of the Korean mission field—learning the language, the customs, and the people—was approximately five thousand U.S. dollars. So, Fenwick’s Korean evangelists to the Tumen River district not only cost less to send but they also cost far less to train. The nine Korean evangelists had already crossed these three great mountains “without one cent of cost to the home churches.” Overall, not including annual salaries, domestic supporters saved 47,940 U.S. dollars by investing in Fenwick’s nine Korean evangelists rather than nine white missionaries. Refuting critics who questioned the productivity of Korean evangelists, Fenwick noted

¹⁶³ Fenwick, 111.

that the work of white missionaries in the Tumen River district would not necessarily reap religious success. Citing the region's harsh physical conditions and cross-cultural obstacles, Fenwick predicted that white missionaries "would have been more of a hindrance than a help, and only a few of them, at best, would have made useful servants; as some would die, others break down, and still others turn out misfits."¹⁶⁴ In Fenwick's financial accounting of mission work in Korea, indigenous preachers proved the superior investment.

Fenwick was invigorated by the opportunities to evangelize in previously unreached areas. Unlike the other nations in Asia, such as China, Japan, or India, foreign Protestant mission work in Korea did not begin in the 1790s or early 1800s, but only five years before Fenwick's arrival in 1889. In 1890, the Korean government eased its strict regulations on direct evangelization, which created unlimited avenues for mission work beyond existing medical centers and schools. Fenwick approached the religious *tabula rasa* in Korea as a free religious marketplace primed for exploration and development. He viewed Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries, the two largest missionary groups in Korea, as competitors. Fenwick opposed the comity agreements between Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries to create equal territorial divisions for their work. In March 1888, Henry Appenzeller delivered an address in Seoul on comity agreements that called for Methodist and Presbyterian missions to demarcate specific regions throughout Korea for each mission's work. In large cities, each denominational mission would work parallel with one another. But only one denominational mission would be permitted in

¹⁶⁴ Fenwick, 107-108.

smaller areas with populations of less than 5,000 Koreans, and existing Korean Protestants in these smaller areas were to become members of the approved denominational mission.

Consequently, the comity agreement would have Korean Presbyterians transfer to Methodism and vice versa. Although missionaries questioned the notion of coercing Korean Protestants to switch denominations, they ultimately decided that the benefits of comity outweighed the agency of Korean converts. Appenzeller defended the proposal: “What right have I to force a man into the Methodist Church? But if in dividing the field we can so manage as to get our peculiar doctrines and forms of governments in the centers, we shall be doing permanent good.”¹⁶⁵ Missionaries from the Methodist Episcopal Church and Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. met together in Korea to sign a comity agreement on February 3, 1893.¹⁶⁶ But Fenwick saw the comity agreement as a cartel that went against the working of the Holy Spirit in the free Korean religious market. He deeply regretted that he had once left a group of Korean Christians in a new church out of respect for these denominational boundaries during his early years of

¹⁶⁵ Henry G. Appenzeller, “Mission Cooperation Address in Seoul Korea, March 1888,” in The Appenzellers: How they Preached and Guided Korea into Modernization Volume 1 (Daejeon, Korea: Pai Chai University Press, 2010), 36.

¹⁶⁶ “The Rules of Comity of Co-operation in their revised Form, Recommended by the Joint Committee at their Meeting, Feb. 3, 1893,” in The Appenzellers: How they Preached and Guided Korea into Modernization Volume 1, 40-41. Leading Methodist bishop R.S. Foster, wishing to maintain Methodist distinctiveness in foreign mission work, disapproved of the comity agreement and prevented it from becoming official mission policy, but missionaries in Korea essentially abided by the policies. See In Soo Kim, History of Christianity in Korea (Seoul, Korea: Qumran Publishing House, 2011), 168.

mission work, upset that he had betrayed God's call for the sake of "heeding conventionalities."¹⁶⁷

Fenwick's competitive spirit led him to slander other missionaries for exaggerating their successes in Korea and performing hasty baptisms of unconverted Koreans.¹⁶⁸ In response, other missionaries criticized Fenwick for impairing mission work in both North America and Korea. They charged Fenwick with damaging the image of the Korean mission field in North America by divulging disharmonious relationships among missionaries.¹⁶⁹ In Korea, Fenwick was accused of sending out arrogant Korean preachers who brazenly regarded themselves more highly than converts in the missionary-led Methodist and Presbyterian churches.¹⁷⁰ Gale had an ambivalent view of the independent missionary. He respected Fenwick's orthodox faith, kind heart, and practical skills, but deemed him reckless and feared his intemperate zeal and impatient methods threatened all Protestant mission work in Korea.¹⁷¹ Nonetheless, Fenwick continued to train indigenous converts and establish mission districts. As an independent missionary, he need not submit to denominational authorities. As an entrepreneurial businessman, possessing what he viewed as managerial skills unique among all missionaries in Korea, Fenwick set out to unleash Korean preachers into the marketplace,

¹⁶⁷ Fenwick, 46.

¹⁶⁸ "Editorial Department – A Letter from Mr. M.C. Fenwick," *The Missionary Review of the World*, August 1894, 618-619.

¹⁶⁹ Lillias H. Underwood, Underwood of Korea (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1918), 127.

¹⁷⁰ Fenwick, 67.

¹⁷¹ Gale, The Vanguard: A Tale of Korea, 213-214.

because they were untapped resources with the potential to become the best religious communicators and most cost-effective workers.

Despite Fenwick's many disagreements with other missionaries, his religious ambitions were no different than theirs. He also saw Korea as a fertile mission field and endeavored to convert Koreans through his own methods. The independent missionary resisted calls to conform to Methodist and Presbyterian designs for two reasons. Not only did he possess the same freedoms as other foreigners to capitalize on Korea's recent opening to the West, but Fenwick was also certain that his mission approach would produce more indigenous Christians. Even though Fenwick sought to enlist Korean evangelists more quickly and more expansively than the Methodists or the Presbyterians, he too regarded Korea as a religious *tabula rasa* for his making. In Fenwick's praise of Korean preachers, he expressed his own changing cultural and racial perceptions of Koreans. But he also pointed to the effectiveness of Koreans in order to revel in his own religious success. North American missionaries attributed Christian expansion in Korea to divine favor and indigenous initiatives, but they mostly explained how their own methods generated the religious growth.

Conclusion

Despite their high religious expectations, the number of Korean Protestants in 1904 was 31,905 across all denominations, which was a miniscule figure when compared to the total Korean population of 12 million.¹⁷⁵ But a few missionaries, such as Horace and Lillias Underwood, gained political influence with the Korean royals, and another

¹⁷⁵ "Statistics of Missions in Korea," *The Missionary Review of the World*, February 1904, 161.

missionary, Horace Allen, resigned from mission work to accept a diplomatic position in Korea. A number of Korean elites also converted to Protestantism and sought to reform their nation in accordance with Christian principles. Some of them came to the United States as foreign students or political exiles. They would find themselves ambivalent about the forms of Christianity that they encountered in America. The ambition and reach of the U.S. Protestant foreign mission enterprise inspired these Koreans; but they also came to deplore the paternalism and racism of white American Protestants.

In 1907, a wave of revivals throughout Korea increased the numbers of converts and shaped Korean Protestant beliefs and practices. But just as North American Protestants clashed with one another in Korea, they would also find themselves at odds with Korean Protestants over common religious beliefs and practices, relationships between missionaries and converts, and the direction of the Korean Church. Korean Protestant expansion confirmed that the Americans were right to identify Korea as a promising mission field. But some of the ways that Korean converts at home and abroad reinterpreted the religion surprised and disappointed the missionaries.

Chapter 2: Yun Ch'ihō and the Making of a Korean Protestant in Dixie

Introduction

On December 3, 1888, a twenty-three year-old Korean exile, Yun Ch'ihō, wrote a letter from Nashville, Tennessee, reporting his experiences as a foreign student in the Theological Department at Vanderbilt University. The letter was addressed to his professor, Young John Allen, at Anglo-Chinese College in Shanghai, China, where Yun had studied from 1885 to 1888. As a scion of the prestigious and powerful Haep'yong clan, Yun was a member of the Korean aristocracy and enjoyed all of the privileges of the royal Court, which included wealth, education, and the opportunity to work closely with Lucius Foote, the first American Minister of Korea. Yun's father, Yun Ung'yol, was a military officer who was commissioned to Japan in 1880 to learn Japanese military techniques in order to train Korean troops. The following year, the Korean government sent Yun to Japan to study the country's modern reforms under Meiji rule. In 1883, Yun was recalled to Korea in order to serve as Foote's interpreter. From their government positions, both Yun and his father advocated civil and military reform in Korea, which placed their family directly in the maelstrom of fiery political clashes between conservatives, who wished to maintain traditional ways, and progressives, who called for modernizing changes. In addition to intra-national strife, Yun's family was also involved in international affairs, as China, England, France, Japan, Russia, and the United States signed treaties with Korea during the 1870s and 1880s.¹

¹ Kenneth M. Wells, New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 48-50.

When Yun was wrongly implicated in the abortive Korean reform coup d'état of 1884, he fled to Japan. Once in Japan, Yun initially wished to go to the United States, in order to breathe what he called “the pure, healthful and civilized air of the New World,” but he was dissuaded by high living expenses in America and instead decided to go to Shanghai.² Upon his arrival in Shanghai, he approached the American legation with a letter of endorsement from Foote. The consul general in Shanghai, Julius Stahl, paved the way for the Korean exile to enroll at Anglo-Chinese College.³ Allen, a missionary with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (MECS) and founder of Anglo-Chinese College, served not only as Yun’s academic professor but also as a religious mentor. While a student, Yun converted to Christianity, received baptism, and became the first Korean member of the MECS.⁴ By the fall of 1888, Yun had completed his study, which included courses in Chemistry, Physics, Zoology, Physiology, Botany, History, Literature, English, and Chinese.⁵ Sensing Yun’s academic and ministerial potential, Allen encouraged him to study theology at Vanderbilt, promising to make all the necessary arrangements. Upon graduating from Vanderbilt in 1891, Yun went to Allen’s

² Yun Ch’iho, “Letter on June 5, 1885,” in Hyung-Chan Kim, Letters in Exile: The Life and Times of Yun Ch’iho (Covington: Rhodes Printing Company, 1980), 78.

³ Yun, “Letter on June 5, 1885,” in Kim, 83, and Kim, 11.

⁴ Yun Ch’iho, “Thirty Years Ago,” in Southern Methodism in Korea (Seoul, Korea: Board of Missions, Korea Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1926), ed. by J.S. Ryang, 98.

⁵ In spite of his busy schedule, Yun took time to read novels such as Gulliver’s Travels, Robinson Crusoe, and The Arabian Nights for enjoyment. John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, Walter Scott’s Kenilworth, and selected works of Ralph Waldo Emerson were among some of his more serious readings. See Kim, 11.

alma mater, Emory College, in Oxford, Georgia, for further study in topics beyond theology.⁶

Judging from his encounters with American diplomats and missionaries in Asia and his reading of American literature, Yun believed that America was a promised land representing the peak of modern civilization and Christian influence.⁷ After spending three days in San Francisco, he boarded a transcontinental train to Nashville and had his first experience of racial discrimination. Hotels in Kansas City refused him lodging and forced him to sleep at the railroad station.⁸ He encountered the racial realities of nineteenth-century America. The white hotel managers in Kansas City did not receive Yun as a government official or mission school graduate but saw him as an anonymous Korean, to be treated as other persons of color. Yun learned what it meant to be thrust into a foreign world. As he better understood the social scripts embedded in American culture, Yun received an education in racial inequality, white privilege, and sexual boundaries. Poised between the cultural traditions of his homeland and his American education, Yun used this interstitial space to observe other resistance histories, political approaches, racial ideologies, and Western theologies as he developed his own Protestant

⁶ During Allen's years at Emory in the 1850s, he had been a religious leader who led revival meetings on campus. As a senior, Allen had gathered his fellow students for prayer meetings around an old log in the woods near the college buildings. Less than two years after his college graduation, Allen had set out for China as a missionary in December 1859. In 1881, he became superintendent of MECS mission work in China. In 1885, he founded Anglo-Chinese College in Shanghai, and served as its president until 1895. See Henry Morton Bullock, *A History of Emory University* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1936), 98 and Warren A. Candler, "Young John Allen's Love for 'Dear Emory,'" *Emory Alumnus*, January 1931, 11.

⁷ In 1885, Yun described America as "that most kind and generous nation." See Yun, "Letter on June 5, 1885," in Kim, 78.

⁸ Kim, 12.

beliefs.⁹ He supported the American Protestant mission to Korea, but he also came to oppose the missionaries' paternalism and strict emphasis on evangelism. After studying abroad, Yun was convinced that Koreans needed to apply Christian moral teachings to enact educational and social reforms that would remake their nation into a modern civilization.

Encountering Racial Boundaries in Dixie

Although he was more warmly received at Vanderbilt and Emory than in Kansas City, Yun continued to struggle with racism as a foreign student in the American South. During his years at Vanderbilt and Emory, Yun determined to write his lifelong diary in English (previous entries were in Korean and Chinese) in order to improve his knowledge of the language.¹⁰ As a Korean Protestant, Yun experienced “double-consciousness” in America as both religious partner and racial other. He was invited to preach in white Protestant churches across Tennessee and Georgia, but he also felt ostracized as a Korean in an American Protestant culture that demarcated racial boundaries between whites and non-whites. Like the African Americans who lived, according to W.E.B. DuBois, with a “double-consciousness,” both African and American, which entailed a “sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity,” Yun collided with the color line.¹¹

⁹ For an exploration of how colonial elites like Mahatma Gandhi and Sol Plaatje were shaped by their transnational experiences, see Elleke Boehmer, “Networks of Resistance,” in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 113-115, and *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890-1920: Resistance in Interaction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁰ “Diary of Yun Ch’iho, December 7, 1889,” in Yun Ch’iho Papers, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

¹¹ W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903), 3.

Like American Jews, who struggled with ambivalence and anxiety through the Second World War, Yun had to find a place in a culture intensely conscious of ethnic identities. Yun wrestled with his racial identity at several different levels. As a Korean, Yun did not fit the American black-white dichotomy because he was neither black nor white. But unlike acculturated American Jews, who could define themselves as whites, Yun included in his diary no recognition whatsoever of “insider” status in the racialized American South.¹²

When Yun began his studies at Anglo-Chinese College in 1885, he had no interest in Christianity. Rather, the Korean sought to acquire a Western education from his American teachers. But as he progressed in his academic work, Yun began reading the Bible alongside his other schoolbooks. In 1887, Yun converted to Christianity and submitted his declaration of faith to one of his professors in Shanghai. Young John Allen kept Yun’s conversion narrative, dated March 23, 1887, entitled “Synopsis of What I Was and What I Am,” and signed by Yun. He began his conversion narrative by noting that he had not heard of God before he came to Shanghai, because “(1) I was born in a heathen land, (2) I was brought up in heathen society, and (3) I was taught in heathen literature.”¹³ For three reasons, Yun “continued in sin” even after being informed of Christianity: “(1) sensual gratification, (2) I reasoned that human life being short, one

¹² Eric L. Goldstein, The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 51.

¹³ Yun Ch’iho, “Synopsis of What I Was and What I Am,” 1, Young J. Allen Papers, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA. Yun’s conversion narrative was later reprinted in several MECS books, pamphlets, and periodicals. See Warren A. Candler, T.H. Yun, of Korea and the school at Songdo (Nashville: Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, n.d.), 8-10. Although the pamphlet is not dated, it was published shortly after Candler’s visit to Korea in 1906.

must be allowed to enjoy as much pleasure as he is able, and (3) I thought that a whole man does not need a physician.”¹⁴ But for three reasons, he found himself walking in a different path: “(1) I became conscious of my wickedness and of the necessity of preparing [a] purer soul for the future, (2) Confucian proverbs cannot satisfy the demands of the soul, and (3) I attempted to shake off many evil practices and in some measure succeeded in doing away with some of the leading sins which I love like honey.”¹⁵ Yun credited religious lectures from professors and his reading of the Bible as helpful guides. At the time of Yun’s conversion in March 1887, he was one of the first Koreans to become a Protestant and the first Korean convert of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The first Presbyterian baptism in Seoul took place in July 1886, and the first Korean Protestant Church was established in September 1887. Even when Yun returned to Korea in 1895, the country had probably no more than 400 Protestants, almost all from the lower classes. “It has been chiefly among the poorest classes that we have done our work, often even among outcasts,” reported Henry G. Appenzeller in 1886.¹⁶ Koreans seemed interested only in the study of English, because they saw “a little knowledge of the new tongue...as a stepping stone to something higher.”¹⁷

Yun’s conversion narrative demonstrates a rational progression to the Christian faith, not a burst of emotion. As an exiled nobleman, had no need for medical services—a

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Yun Ch’iho, “Synopsis of What I Was and What I Am,” 2.

¹⁶ Henry G. Appenzeller, “Henry Appenzeller Begins Mission in Korea,” in The Methodist Experience in America: A Sourcebook, edited by Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt (Nashville: Abindgon Press, 2000), 422-424.

¹⁷ Ibid.

frequent reason for Korean-American relationships in Korea, and no need to learn English. He was already fluent in four languages (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and English). Yun feared a precipitous decline in his social status due to his conversion, writing that the obstacles to his conversion were “the fear of persecution and mockery” and “the liability of making adversaries of former friends.” Yet Yun desired to be baptized, and he ended his narrative with a profession of belief: “I believe that God is love, Christ is the Saviour,” and “if the prophecies concerning this physical world have been so almost literally fulfilled then [those] concerning [the] future world must be as true.”¹⁸

American missionaries defended immigrant rights and articulated relatively egalitarian racial ideologies to combat the scientific racism common in public debate. They defined difference as religious, not racial. The boundaries between “Christian” and “heathen,” though connoting superiority and inferiority, could be transcended through religious conversion, which demonstrated that Asian immigrants could enjoy social assimilation into American life.¹⁹ In his conversion narrative, Yun observed his “heathen” past. After converting to Christianity, he ostensibly crossed the religious boundaries from “heathen” to “Christian.” But during his years in the United States, Yun despaired that whites often called him a “heathen,” demonstrating that they defined difference in both religious and racial categories. On February 6, 1890, his theology professor at Vanderbilt, Wilber Fisk Tillet, published Yun’s *Systematic Theology*

¹⁸ Yun Ch’iho, “Synopsis of What I Was and What I Am,” 2.

¹⁹ Jennifer C. Snow, Protestant Missionaries, Asian Immigrants, and Ideologies of Race in America, 1850-1924 (New York: Routledge, 2007), 2-3.

examination in a local newspaper with his own commentary. Tillet wrote that such fine theological work answered the question, “Is a heathen worth educating?” In his diary, Yun displayed ambivalent feelings. He welcomed praise for his work, but he felt deeply insulted by Tillet’s comments about the value of educating foreign converts. He saw Tillet’s remarks as condescending to all foreign converts, and he felt that his professor had marked him as a converted heathen rather than a fellow student on equal footing with white students.²⁰

Yun’s reaction to Tillet’s comments reflected his larger ambivalence toward American Protestantism. For North American Protestant missionaries in Korea, the lure of Korea was the opportunity to evangelize in a nation bereft of dominant indigenous religious traditions and to erect Western-style homes cheaply with little resistance from local populations. For Yun, the promise of America was the prospect of witnessing American civilization firsthand and cultivating relationships with American Protestants. As a Korean Protestant, Yun believed that he would be able to promote closer transnational relations between the two nations.

A group of Korean officials traveled to America with Horace Allen in December 1887 to represent Korean interests and meet President Grover Cleveland. But Allen observed that these Koreans, dressed in their native garb, engendered amusement rather than respect from the Americans they encountered. Unaccustomed to Western life, the Koreans made a poor impression with their smoking habits and unfamiliarity with

²⁰ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, February 6, 1890.

modern technology like the elevators in their hotels.²¹ Unlike this earlier assembly of Koreans in America, Yun had more frequent contact with Westerners in Asia and was well-schooled in American culture. He not only wore Western dress to match American appearances, but he was also a Protestant who could connect with the religious ethos in the United States.

But Yun soon discovered at Vanderbilt that racial identity trumped religious confession in American life. Within his first year of study in Nashville, Yun learned the veracity of DuBois' assertion that in America "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line."²² In December 1889, Yun wrote in his diary how "prejudice against the colored race is very strong in the South" and that "a southerner does not believe in educating this inferior race," wishing to discourage any aspiration to social equality. He also heard a theology student say that he "would sooner mill down his church than to admit a colored member to its congregation." Yun questioned whether white racism toward blacks was compatible with the virtues of American Protestantism.²³ Five days later, after reading articles on Korea in missionary reports at the Vanderbilt library, Yun was dismayed that the missionaries had nothing bright to say about his homeland. Yun describes the picture of Korea in the late nineteenth-century American Protestant imagination: "The government bad, people poor, housed, wretched, streets

²¹ Horace N. Allen, "Diary entry on December 26, 1887," in Kim, 529-532, and Harrington, 238-239.

²² DuBois, 5.

²³ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, December 9, 1889.

filthy... Another [missionary] says he would rather be hanged than to be a minister to Korea (!!!) Of course I do not blame them.”²⁴

One month later, Yun complained of being friendless on account of his race. Another foreign student told Yun to avoid female students, because “they don’t treat foreigners like men.”²⁵ At the end of the semester, a white student told Yun that he might have to eat with the Chinese laundrymen in the outskirts of the city because the mess hall would be closed for the summer. The white student referred to the Chinese laundrymen as Yun’s “town bretheren.” Although he kept silent, Yun felt shame and indignation for this “undisguised insult.”²⁶ As a Korean, Yun lamented the poor white Southern opinion of Chinese immigrants and yearned to prove that he was not a “beastly Chinaman.”²⁷ Postbellum white Southern planters viewed Chinese immigrants as potential replacements for African slaves. Though these planters distinguished between the paid labor of Chinese “coolies” and the African slave trade, they regarded the Chinese as colored laborers, inferior to whites. But unlike African Americans, the Chinese were incapable of obtaining citizenship.²⁸ In his advocacy of Chinese immigrants, Frederick Douglass asserted that white Southerners sought “laborers who will work for nothing”

²⁴ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, December 14, 1889. An article in the Methodist missionary journal, *Heathen Woman’s Friend*, reported that “most of the Korean people are very poor...they do not like to work very well, and they do everything the very hardest way” (“Korean Boys, Birds, Ponies, and People,” April 1887, 275).

²⁵ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, January 3, 1890 and January 30, 1890.

²⁶ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, May 4, 1890.

²⁷ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, June 24, 1891.

²⁸ Gary Y. Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1994), 44-52.

and “they hope [the Chinese] will work for next to nothing.”²⁹ When Yun traveled away from the confines of Vanderbilt and Emory, people shouted racial epithets—“Chinaman” and “Chinamen eat rats”—as he strolled through Southern towns and cities. In 1892, after nearly four years in America, Yun bemoaned: “I hate being called a Chinaman from the core of my heart. Not that I am better than the Chinese, but that the sense in which the word ‘Chinaman’ is used here is simply abominable.”³⁰

Upon spending a spring day in Nashville, Yun wrote about his experience on public transportation. On the bus ride back to his campus, a black woman entered the crowded bus and Yun was surprised that nobody gave her a seat. Yun waited for the male passengers to exhibit the chivalry of Southern gentlemen, which he had heard students boasting about at Vanderbilt, but found that no white man would arise until he finally vacated his seat for the black passenger. Yun discovered “that it is color and not woman, race and not right, that the Americans respect.”³¹ In his reflection on the 1882 Exclusion Act, which barred the Chinese entry into the United States, Yun displayed his growing disenchantment with America because of the gap between America’s egalitarian ideals and racist practices, which included “the persecution of the Chinese in the West, the treatment of the Negro in the South, and the dealing with the Indian by the whole nation.” He gathered that the promise of inalienable rights in America was restricted by racial boundaries that privileged whites above persons of color:

²⁹ Frederick Douglass, “Our Composite Nationality,” in The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, Volume 4: 1864-80, edited by John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 248.

³⁰ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, June 19, 1892.

³¹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, April 19, 1891.

Nothing seems to me more absurd and foolish for anyone than to be deceived by the boastful pretensions of the Americans to 'the inalienable right' or 'liberty of man.' Their orators, preachers, poets, and statesmen talk much about the equality, liberty and fraternity of men. But in practice the Americans have shown that their doctrine of equality is only skin deep. That is if you want to enjoy the so-called inalienable right of man in the 'Land of Freedom' you must be white.

Despite his conversion to Methodism, Yun perceived that he remained a "heathen" in many white American eyes and acknowledged his Korean race precluded him from equal standing in America.

An Ambivalent Religious Journey in America

Although he felt ostracized as a racial other in the United States, Yun was a religious partner with white American Protestants raising money for foreign missions. He often received invitations to preach in white Protestant churches throughout Tennessee and Georgia, often in tandem with white ministers and missionaries. Yun recited the content of his speeches in his diary. Unlike earlier observers like Alexis de Tocqueville, who spent ten months traveling in antebellum America and emphasized America's voluntary religious associations, Yun understood more deeply the revivalism that often restricted itself to individualistic salvation and ignored flaws like racial oppression, ethnic hatred, and systematic discrimination against foreigners.

In an address Yun delivered to a missionary society in 1890 at Humphrey Street Methodist Church in Davidson County, Tennessee, he implored his audience to enlist in the cause of world missions, employing biblical examples alongside his own conversion narrative. Although he despised the word, "heathen," he used the term in his public addresses, declaring that his own experience "refutes the argument that the heathen need

no Gospel because he has a religion as old and as good as Christianity.”³² As the American Protestant foreign missionary enterprise expanded, Americans abroad not only reported the increasing numbers of foreign converts but also provided Americans at home with new information about world religions. And some Protestants at home discovered important religious truths embedded in world religions.³³ Yun, however, spoke the language of conservative Protestantism; no religion was “as good as Christianity.”

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a Unitarian minister from New England, wanted to treat all faiths on equal terms.³⁴ The Hindu Swami Saradananda traveled across America in the 1890s teaching that “all religions are true, they have the same goal.”³⁵ The Japanese Buddhist, D.T. Suzuki, taught about the vitality of Asian religious traditions. But Yun encouraged Americans to help make the whole world Christian: one billion heathens “should no more frighten 134 million Protestants than 120 million Roman and Greek pagans discouraged 1 apostle – St. Paul.”³⁶

He did, however, begin subtly to resist American patronizing of foreigners. Yun spoke briefly in 1891 during the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance in Nashville after addresses by missionaries in Japan, Korea, and China. The Presbyterian Horace Underwood spoke on Korea. So did Yun. One student delegate from Union Theological

³² Diary of Yun Ch’iho, January 5, 1890.

³³ Leigh Eric Schmidt, Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 7.

³⁴ Schmidt, 109.

³⁵ Schmidt, 137.

³⁶ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, January 5, 1890.

Seminary in Virginia, who would later become a missionary to Korea, remarked that the crowd felt deeply impressed by the words of both men.³⁷ But Yun privately disagreed with H.P. Beach, a missionary to China, who said that he was disgusted by the dirty Koreans he had encountered during his short stay in the country. Yun wrote that Beach's comments on Koreans were misinformed because Beach had likely only seen lower class Korean workers in the docks. He felt angry that Beach had created an embarrassing scene: "Necessary or unnecessary, just or unjust this remark instantly focalized all eyes on my involuntarily crimsoned face. O, the exquisite torture my whole soul then experienced!"³⁸

The day after the Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance, Yun was invited to address a voluntary Methodist society, the McKendree Epworth League in Nashville. Following the main speakers, Underwood and Robert E. Speer, Yun shared remarks about his homeland and seized the opportunity to challenge condescending statements about Korea. He refuted an earlier statement about "12 *perishing* millions in Corea" who desperately hunger and thirst for Christianity by emphasizing "that Corea has 12 *living* millions." Koreans did not simply comprise a mass of hopeless degenerates, but should be characterized as "living" because they possessed the requisite mental and spiritual faculties to become genuine Christians. Yun added that he disliked the phrase, "Come over and help us," which was derived from Paul's Macedonian call in the Book of Acts and frequently employed by American Protestant missionaries to depict foreign nations

³⁷ Lillias H. Underwood, Underwood of Korea, 109.

³⁸ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, October 23, 1891.

like Korea as hapless and helpless. Instead, Yun appealed to the universal love of Jesus Christ as the “common Savior” for all nations:

I don’t believe in a missionary of human persuasion. I don’t therefore ask or persuade anybody. If however, you are convinced that Corea is embraced in our common Savior’s order...if you realize the fact that your light will shine brighter in Corea because of the heathen darkness; that your work which may be a brick in the temple of God here will be a cornerstone of the Church of Christ in Corea; if you prefer the most useful and Christlike life to the enjoyment of comforts for a season; if the Spirit of God tells you to go there because of the great need and few laborers—if those are appeals, if those are calls, let them appeal to you and let them call you to the field.³⁹

In Yun’s concluding remarks, he noted that his heart and prayers were with those who heeded the call to Korea and that he desired to join them “in the common cause of winning Corea for our Lord.” In a dramatic altar call after Yun’s speech, Speer asked the audience to volunteer for overseas mission work. Two persons stood to become missionaries to Korea, two others volunteered for Japan, three for China, and two for Chile.⁴⁰

Negotiating Racial Boundaries and Religious Passions

During his five-year sojourn in America, Yun changed religiously. His religious persuasions evolved from rational assent to experiential piety. In chapel services at Vanderbilt, open-air revival meetings in Nashville, and the writing of sermons for his preaching classes, Yun began to stir with strong religious affections. In September 1890, Yun wrote that he felt “a personal love to Christ” for the first time and exclaimed that the experience was sweet. Two months later, Yun was preparing a sermon on Revelation

³⁹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, October 25, 1891.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

3:20, in which the angel of the church of Laodicea beckons individuals to repent and enter into union with Christ. Yun observed that he had a powerful experience of God's love in his soul: "My soul, all this day, has really enjoyed religion. True religion is simply this—to have God in our hearts."⁴¹ He wrote a prayer to God: "Give me this experience of thy love of thy presence and I am satisfied. My soul which had for the few days past been tossed about on the gloomy sea of doubts...found today rest and conscious joy never-before-known."⁴² Yun's religious journey was radically transformed by his experiences of divine grace in 1890.

Like many American theology students in the late nineteenth century, Yun also wrestled with how to reconcile his academic training with his personal faith. As the Korean student learned about theological debates over higher criticism and the plenary inspiration of Scripture, he was initially overwhelmed. In one of his early letters to Allen, Yun reported in 1889 that he was "now in the heart of theology, busy in learning what regeneration, justification, sanctification, and other big words mean."⁴³ But by the time he was near graduation from Vanderbilt in 1891, Yun became more familiar with Western theology and philosophy. Two months before graduating, he concluded that "the devotional and doctrinal portions" of the Bible were supernaturally inspired whereas the historical contents were composed by human beings, and some events, such as Balaam's speaking donkey in Numbers 22, did not necessarily occur as written. But Yun espoused

⁴¹ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, November 19, 1890.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Yun Ch'ihō, "Letter on November 13, 1889," in Letters in Exile: The Life and Times of Yun Ch'ihō, 93.

his belief in miracles and especially the veracity of Christ's bodily resurrection.⁴⁴ He read Unitarian literature, which challenged his Trinitarian beliefs. But he took refuge in his study of church history, noting how the doctrine of the Trinity had been confirmed by Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Bacon, and Newton.⁴⁵ In any case, the Unitarians were not active in foreign missions.⁴⁶

But Yun's greatest religious struggles resulted from race relations. As a Korean Protestant, Yun's double-consciousness colored his travails as a religious partner and racial other. He relished his theological studies and earned high marks in his classes: marks of 92, 95, and 90 in Systematic Theology and 100, 93, 94, and 95 in Homiletics during his first year at Vanderbilt.⁴⁷ Tillet remarked that Yun possessed the keenest mind of any student who sat in his classes over forty years of teaching.⁴⁸ But he was disappointed that his white classmates did not treat him as an equal and lamented that he made almost no genuine friendships in America. After he returned to Asia, Yun exchanged letters with professors and missionaries he had met in America, but none with his fellow students.

Yun's experience in America differed from experiences of most Asian immigrants in the late nineteenth century. Unlike most Chinese and Japanese immigrants, who

⁴⁴ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, March 8, 1891.

⁴⁵ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, March 22, 1891.

⁴⁶ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, March 17, 1891.

⁴⁷ Kim, 13.

⁴⁸ J. Earnest Fisher, "Yun: Statesmen, Scholar," in *Korea Times* (Seoul), August 27, 1972, as cited in Vipin Chandra, Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 91.

endured harsh labor conditions in their menial jobs as railroad workers, cooks, or laundrymen, Yun matriculated as a foreign student at academic institutions. But Yun's experience was also unique because he was the only Korean to reside in the American South from 1888 to 1893. The first Korean immigrant community did not arrive in the current United States until January 13, 1903, when 102 Korean immigrants arrived by ship to the port of Honolulu with the intention of working on sugar plantations in Hawaii.⁴⁹ Yun was profoundly and utterly alone.

As more of Yun's classmates were getting engaged and married, he grew forlorn and longed for female companionship. In Korea, Yun was fourteen years of age when he married a young Korean woman in 1877. But his wife died in 1886, when Yun was in Shanghai.⁵⁰ On a cold and rainy spring day at Vanderbilt in March 1891, Yun wrote that his loneliness made him feel "so weak that moving up and down the stairs [is] a great and trying task." His heart panted for a "kind and sympathizing lady friend" to whom he could confide his hopes, fears, sorrows, and joys.⁵¹ Several months later at Emory, a phrenologist came to campus and examined the heads of several students. Yun was told that his head indicated that he was a thoughtful, ambitious, and stubborn man who might consider a career in either law or literature. The phrenologist also predicted that Yun would "marry a woman of slender form, auburn hair, blue eyes and of fair complexion." Though Yun admired the striking beauty of several white women he met in Tennessee

⁴⁹ Wayne Patterson, *The Ilse: First-Generation Korean Immigrants to Hawai'i, 1903-1973* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 1.

⁵⁰ Kim, 4.

⁵¹ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, March 25, 1891. A reader of Yun's diary knows it was a cold and rainy day on March 25, 1891, because he began every entry with a brief description of the weather.

and Georgia—and wished to marry one—he dismissed the phrenologist’s forecast and wrote that his chances to marry a woman befitting the phrenologist’s description were no more likely than the odds of his “becoming a Vanderbilt.”⁵² Yun suffered through a stint of depression after a conversation with his professor’s wife, Sarah Antoinette Candler, in which she teased and mocked him for cherishing a picture of a young white woman, which he had received from the woman during his brief stay in Griffin, Georgia. As Yun was telling the story of how he had befriended a lovely Southern belle named “Lucy,” Candler cut him short and said, “You didn’t stay long enough, as if, had you stayed long, you could have gotten one.” Candler’s words wounded him deeply and hauntingly echoed in his soul: “Even if you stayed long, who would have you for a sweetheart – you are a Corean!”⁵³

From the first large-scale appearance of Chinese immigrants to America in the 1850s and through the rise of Japanese immigration in early twentieth century, the white American public expressed fear and abhorrence toward Asian immigrants.⁵⁴ Though a few capitalists and missionaries welcomed Asian immigrants as inexpensive laborers or potential converts, anti-Asian activists largely succeeded in propagating a fear of “yellow peril” and an “Asiatic invasion” that would take jobs from Americans and endanger American civilization. Moreover, anti-Asian activists became preoccupied with the sexual relations of Asian men and white women. “No matter how enraged or emotional

⁵² Diary of Yun Ch’iho, November 28, 1891.

⁵³ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, March 15, 1892.

⁵⁴ Henry Yu, “Mixing Bodies and Cultures: The Meaning of America’s Fascination with Sex between ‘Orientals’ and ‘Whites,’” in *Sex, Love, and Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, edited by Martha Rhodes (New York and London: New York University Press, 1999), 446.

West Coast anti-Asian activists became over the issue of ‘Oriental’ immigration in general, they became even more enraged with the subject of interracial sex – the idea of ‘mongrelization’ and ‘dirty Orientals’ lewdly fondling ‘white’ women.”⁵⁵

In November 1892, his professor, Warren A. Candler, asked Yun if he would marry before leaving the United States. After Yun had replied, “No sir,” Candler responded by asking “Why not?” and Yun answered, “Because nobody would have me.”⁵⁶ In his diary, Yun wrote that his decision was not determined by his own volition but rather because “no American girl of social standing, of education and of beauty would condescend to marry me.”⁵⁷ In 1893, Yun developed a romantic relationship with a white Protestant woman, “Tommie,” in Georgia. He wrote of being enamored with her as they enjoyed long walks, intimate conversations, and holding hands. In spite of his affection for the young woman, he dismissed the relationship as a “hopeless passion” because of the “impassable gulf from our racial differences.”⁵⁸ Despite his credentials as an exceptional student who had earned high grades, a talented polyglot fluent in several languages, and an ardent Methodist who preached in white American churches, the notion of interracial marriage raised a racial boundary that Yun believed he could not cross.

In the absence of a Korean church, Yun visited several black churches in Tennessee and Georgia. After worshipping at one black Baptist church, he was astounded

⁵⁵ Yu, 449.

⁵⁶ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, November 5, 1892.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, May 2, 1893.

by the preaching of Dr. Joseph Charles Price. Yun felt Price earned his moniker as a “Black Demosthenes,” who provided Yun with “a living argument against the opinion that the Negro, unless mixed, has no mental powers.”⁵⁹ After visiting another black Baptist church, Yun gave special attention to what DuBois characterized as “the preacher, the music, and the frenzy” of black religion.⁶⁰ Yun was surprised that the preaching contained “no text, no logic, no rhetoric, no grammar,” recording that the sermon was “a string of inarticulate sound and articulate nonsense seasoned with Scripture quotations or allusions.” But he was impressed by the music, describing the songs as “melancholy and mournful” and “well suited to touch and arouse the emotion of [an] emotional people smarting under wrong, contempt, and prejudice.” The tune even reminded him of the harvest songs from the southern villages in Korea. And Yun observed that the congregation was more physically active in comparison to the white churches he had attended, emphasizing the dancing, fainting, embracing, shrieking, and kissing that took place during the worship service.⁶¹

Yun also recorded his encounters with African Americans outside of churches. After a black cobbler fixed his shoes, Yun noted that he did not hear a word of profanity during the hour he spent at the shop with “many negroes of lower grade.”⁶² During his third year in America, Yun first shook hands with a black woman and observed that she

⁵⁹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, January 16, 1891.

⁶⁰ DuBois, 126.

⁶¹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, May 10, 1891.

⁶² Diary of Yun Ch’iho, April 10, 1891.

had handsome features, but he maintained that white women were more beautiful.⁶³ He noted that Sarah Candler told him that she did not know how to pull off her shoes or socks as a young girl because African American servants did it for her.⁶⁴ After visiting a black college, he found the students there were quieter and less confident than his white classmates.⁶⁵ He was fascinated by Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, believing the book illumined the problem of racial relations between blacks and whites, but he could not find a copy of Stowe's oeuvre in the South. He asked nearly every white pastor he met if they owned the book, but none did.⁶⁶ In 1891, Yun attended a children's prayer meeting at a local white Methodist church in Nashville with one of his university professors. Yun thought his professor gave an insightful and instructive talk, which was followed by an invitation for those children who wanted to accept Jesus Christ to kneel down. Yun wrote of how "the beautiful sight of pretty little boys and girls kneeling touched my emotion, roused my prayers, [and] moved my tears." But he then added: "Here I like to ask myself whether I would have been so moved by the sight if the boys and girls were Negro children. I don't think I would."⁶⁷ Yun's experiences in white-dominated churches and schools shaped his own opinion of blacks as a lesser race to whites and Asians. Yun despised white racism toward Asian immigrants, but he concluded that the Asian race was superior to the African one.

⁶³ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, May 2, 1891.

⁶⁴ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, January 7, 1893.

⁶⁵ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, March 11, 1891.

⁶⁶ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, May 21, 1892, and June 24, 1892.

⁶⁷ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, March 14, 1891.

Yun also reflected on the plight of Native Americans. In one entry, he asked why Christians should preach to Native Americans. His understanding of American history identified Native Americans as an inferior race being pushed out by a superior race, and thus he wondered if evangelizing efforts to Native Americans were worthwhile. He came to the conclusion that preaching to Native Americans was both good and necessary: “We preach the gospel to individuals to whom death is certain to come one day or other. Nay, those who are nearest to death need the Gospel most. Doesn’t the same logic apply to dying races?”⁶⁸ Throughout Yun’s ruminations on race, he grappled with how white Americans viewed his own Korean ethnicity. Although Yun was disheartened by American Protestant missionary accounts, he took heart when missionaries described Koreans as intelligent with “good memory” and “abilities that can be highly educated.”⁶⁹ In a speech Yun delivered at Vanderbilt, he addressed a classmate who had called him ugly on account of his Korean appearance by remarking: “My ugliness needs no comments. I am my own epistle written in gold and black to be seen and read of all men...No one can more truthfully than myself say, ‘I am wonderfully and fearfully made!’” He continued by appealing to his comparable academic skills and gentlemanly behavior, identifying himself as “the pride of Asia and wonder of America” and challenging his classmates to see him as an equal.⁷⁰

Geopolitical Awareness and the Limits of American Missionary Perspectives

⁶⁸ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, November 27, 1891.

⁶⁹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, December 14, 1889.

⁷⁰ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, May 27, 1891.

Yun not only struggled with his racial identity as a Korean in America, but he also wrestled with the fragile geopolitical position of his country. As a government official in Korea, Yun feared foreign intrusion into his country and believed that embracing modernization was the only way to ensure national independence and avoid colonization. Like many Korean progressives, he marveled at Japanese reforms in the nineteenth century. Before coming to America, Yun read Western newspapers, primarily from Britain and the United States, because he believed they provided the most complete information about daily events throughout the world. When Western papers were unavailable, Yun sought out Japanese ones, which contained many translations from foreign periodicals. In a letter from Shanghai in 1885, Yun wrote that Japan was the “best civilized nation” in Asia.⁷¹ After visiting Japan in 1883, Yun was jarred by the contrasts between Korea and Japan.

Yun’s experiences in America revealed to him the even greater gap between Korea and the West.⁷² Living in America, Yun’s knowledge of Western perspectives on East Asia grew beyond American newspapers as he witnessed anti-Asian racism toward Japanese and Chinese immigrants firsthand. Yun saw that the Japanese in America, despite coming from the “best civilized nation” in Asia, were regarded as inferior to whites. If Americans had such little regard for Japan, the most modernized nation in East Asia, and China, the largest nation in the region, Yun was aghast at Korea’s feeble standing in world politics, creating what he called “the consciousness of my national

⁷¹ “Letter on June 5, 1885,” in Kim, 77.

⁷² Chandra, 93.

disgrace and shame.”⁷³ Although Yun was persuaded that Protestantism was the superior world religion, he was dismayed that Koreans were inferior to the West in every regard, including public health, fair governance, and modern technology. In a letter to Allen in 1891, Yun surmised that there were five alternatives for Korea as the nation became further entangled in the age of imperialism in East Asia: (1) peaceful self-reformation, (2) internal revolution, (3) continuance in the present condition, (4) Chinese yoke, and (5) English or Russian rule. Of the five options, Yun believed that foreign imperial rule over Korea was probable and preferred English or Russian rule over the Chinese, because these nations would more likely introduce modern reforms to Korea.⁷⁴

In Yun’s conversion narrative, he noted that “Confucian proverbs cannot satisfy the demands of the soul.”⁷⁵ In America, Yun elaborated on why he believed Christianity, and not Confucianism, was the religion of hope and liberation for Korea. Because of its emphasis on filial piety, Yun found in Confucianism a philosophy centered on self-interest that constricted moral boundaries in the ways it demanded obedience to family above all else. Though Yun acknowledged that Confucian maxims brilliantly represented the traditions of ancient Asian civilization, he deemed Confucianism as powerless in the modern age of nation-state formation because its foundation was no higher than filial piety, which promoted absolute submission to kings and perfunctory subservience to tradition.⁷⁶ For Yun, this Confucian emphasis on filial piety lacked the requisite moral

⁷³ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, February 2, 1891.

⁷⁴ Yun Ch’iho, “Letter on January 24, 1891,” in Kim, 101.

⁷⁵ “Synopsis of What I Was and What I Am,” 2.

⁷⁶ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, December 12, 1893.

vision needed to empower, unite, and uplift all citizens in Korean society. Rather, he believed that the Protestant principles of civic morality and communal solidarity would be stronger foundations for Korea's transformation into a modern nation-state.

Yun therefore pinned his hopes for Korea on Christianity because of its moral emphasis on individual responsibility for the mutual benefit of the entire community. Yun was attracted to the Protestant vision of stewardship because it entailed a social emphasis on civic morality, which emphasized the responsibility of individual citizens to create a moral and upright society.⁷⁷ Believing that Confucian notions of filial piety had corrupted and enslaved Korea for several hundred years, Yun saw that the urgent need in his homeland was to teach morality and cultivate patriotism through Christianity: "There is no other instrument able to educate and renew the people's character outside the Church of Christ."⁷⁸ On a Sunday in November 1892, Yun recorded in his diary a prayer that he had offered up to God during a worship service in Oxford. In contrast to Confucianism, Christianity taught him the ethics of equality, freedom, stewardship, and a unified moral community:

As I knelt to pray this morning in the church the following thought presented itself: Here I am. I am enjoying the blessings that millions of my countrymen know nothing of. I am in the light of pure religion; intellectual freedom; political liberty. They are groping in the darkness of superstition; ignorance; political slavery. Heaven grant me the way to spread my measure of light among them! God forbid that I should use the moral and intellectual advantages I have received for my selfish ends and not for the good of my fellow men in darkness!⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Wells, 52-53.

⁷⁸ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, March 3, 1889, as cited in Wells, 46.

⁷⁹ Diary of Yun Chi Ho, November 6, 1892.

But Yun's racialized experiences in America and his reflections on international relations tempered his embrace of Christianity. He read books on Western history and politics, such as Thomas Macaulay's *History of England* and Thomas Carlyle's essays, and grew dismayed by the sheer volume of violent acts and vicious crimes that civilized nations committed against their own people and other countries. Yun displayed a critical eye toward contemporary nineteenth-century England, identifying "the opium trade with China, the unjust treatment of Indians and the Chinese, the slave and rum trade with the Africans, the conquest of India, [and] the partition of Poland" as wicked deeds in sharp contrast to the country's imperial declarations as a conduit of philanthropy, morality, and religion throughout the world. Precisely because Western nations had been both enlightened and Christianized, he believed they deserved severe censure for their injustices. He also confessed that "these international sins have lately disturbed my faith in a merciful God."⁸⁰

As Yun considered all the world religions, he professed that Christianity was superior to all others. But he also had religious doubts because of the regnant racial ideologies of the late nineteenth century, particularly social Darwinism. In 1892, he wrote that the greatest obstacle to his faith was the prevailing notion of "the inferiority of one race to another," as Western intellectuals applied Darwin's biological concepts to racial groups.⁸¹ In the nineteenth century, the concept of evolution shaped scientific arguments for ranking racial groups. Ernst Haeckel, a leading German zoologist, argued that

⁸⁰ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, December 23, 1889.

⁸¹ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, October 14, 1892.

“ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny” to explain how human development from infancy to adulthood entailed passing through a series of stages representing adult ancestral forms.⁸² This theory of recapitulation detailed how modern white children, as members of a superior racial group, bore traits of primitive adult ancestors from inferior racial groups. A number of American school boards prescribed Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *The Song of Hiawatha*, a poem featuring Native American folkloric traditions, to primary-school children because the poem’s themes would resonate with pupils passing through the savage stage of their ancestral past.⁸³ In 1895, the English sociologist Herbert Spencer summed up his notion of social Darwinism: “The intellectual traits of the uncivilized...are traits recurring in the children of the civilized.”⁸⁴ In 1900, Protestant minister Josiah Strong contended that American imperial rule over the Philippines should not be motivated by geopolitical ambition or commercial interest. Rather, Strong stressed America’s moral obligation to train and uplift the primitive Filipinos, a weaker race incapable of self-government.⁸⁵

Yun wondered why God did not “give equal chance to all the races, Caucasians no superior to Mongolians and Africans no worse than either in physical and mental powers.” As he sought to reconcile the cruel realities of social Darwinism with Protestant doctrines detailing God’s omnipotence and love, he found himself trapped in a paradox as

⁸² Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man, Revised and Expanded* (New York and London, W.W Norton & Company, 1996), 143.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, 3rd ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895), 89-90, as cited in Gould, 146.

⁸⁵ Josiah Strong, *Expansion under New-World Conditions* (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1900), 290-291.

he searched for theological reasons to explain the creation of superior and inferior races. If social Darwinism betrayed God's intention, Yun questioned God's omnipotence. But if social Darwinism was indeed part of God's plan, Yun doubted God's perfect love. Yun was most disturbed by the thought that Korea might not be among the fittest. Ultimately, Yun resolved to acknowledge his finitude and not indulge in thoughts about God's design and social Darwinism, which were so paralyzing to his faith, and to instead commit himself to making Korea a strong nation: "All we poor mortals can do is to do our best in our respective spheres and the leave the Why's and What-will-be's to God."⁸⁶

Yun's double-consciousness appeared also in his ambivalence toward the American Protestant foreign missionary enterprise. As a religious partner, he clearly supported it in his public remarks in America. But Yun also detested the racism of some of the American missionaries he had met. Just as Yun believed Western nations, with their longer history of Christian influence, deserved more censure than non-Western nations for committing international injustices, Yun denounced missionary racism as more appalling than general racist attitudes in American public life. Because American missionaries accepted a higher calling to be human ambassadors of divine grace and universal justice, Yun contended that they must not propagate racist attitudes that demeaned the people they sought to convert. At the beginning of 1893, Yun was disgusted with a missionary to China who preached on the themes of humility and lowliness by calling upon white Protestants to willfully descend from their high standing in order to uplift the downtrodden likes of Africans and Asians. Though Yun did not

⁸⁶ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, October 14, 1892.

publicly refute the missionary, he protested by refusing to partake in the Lord's Supper after the sermon: "What he said about the people here not even thinking of Chinamen and Japs as their equals kept me from the Lord's table. For if the people are too proud to regard us as equals, then I am too proud to claim that equality by taking the Supper with them."⁸⁷

An Ambiguous Position and an Uncertain Future

After nearly five years in America, Yun's own racism surfaced in this incident, as he criticized the missionary for classifying Asians on the same level as African Americans, which he thought was "very unfair and unjust."⁸⁸ Yun also disliked how some missionaries debated how best to train indigenous ministers by discussing the promise and peril of giving them a Western education. Yun was told that some missionaries did not advocate educating indigenous converts in America because their faith would be shaken with exposure to liberal theologies, secular learning, and nominal American Christians. Although Yun faced these very challenges in America, he disliked missionary descriptions of indigenous adult converts as if they were no better or wiser than susceptible children.⁸⁹

Despite his critique of missionary racism, Yun determined that American missionaries did more good than harm and considered becoming a missionary to Korea himself. But unlike American Protestant missionaries in Korea, who debated between

⁸⁷ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, January 1, 1893.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, June 7, 1891, and April 8, 1893.

evangelizing and civilizing approaches, Yun did not separate the two methods. Some American missionaries placed priority on modern hospitals and schools over evangelism in order to gain the trust of the Korean government and to create the foundation of a modern society that would pave the way for future conversions. Others wished to focus primarily on evangelism because they did not want Koreans to convert for material benefits like modern medicine and foreign education. From his Korean viewpoint, Yun believed that the missionaries had little reason to become entangled in such acrimony over the two approaches. He contended that Koreans needed churches, schools, and hospitals simultaneously, and he thought that the debates distracted Christians from their work and sapped the religion of its potency. In his reflection on Edward Gibbon's history of the theological controversies that tore apart the early church, Yun believed that Christians in early centuries allowed disagreements over intricate doctrines like monophysitism to hamper their witness to the wider Greco-Roman world. Yun was wary of disputes that overtook the living moral force of Christianity.⁹⁰

Yet Yun internally debated about whether to become a minister or educator if permitted to return to Korea. In numerous letters to Allen, Yun wrote of his desire to establish a system of Christian education in Korea to prepare younger generations for new patterns of modern life. He also privately disparaged the notion of becoming a minister in his homeland because his abilities were too high and social standing too elite for the vocation:

⁹⁰ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, September 10, 1890.

How shall I work? Shall I be contended with 5 or 7 dollars per month in a small mission, thinking that I have done a great work when I shall have preached 2 or 3 sermons in a week and baptized one or two infants in a year? This is, no doubt, very contemptible. But, should Providence put me into this kind of work and I be faithful to my duties in the sight of God and of men, then the meanest sphere of life and labor shall be made great.⁹¹

Yun was convinced that Protestant advance in Korea would promote equality among all social classes, but his antipathy toward becoming a lowly minister revealed his reluctance to abdicate his own high position in Korean society. In 1893, Yun happily reported to Allen that he had raised two hundred dollars for his Christian school in Korea by taking up collections throughout churches in Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina.⁹² But the Korean nobleman privately confessed that he loathed having to ask for money. In addition to feeling humiliated, Yun believed his fundraising pleas further lowered his social status among white American Protestants.⁹³

The subtle differences between what Yun wrote in letters to Allen and in his private records reveal the complexities surrounding his situation as a Korean Protestant thrown into a new social existence in America. In Korea, Yun garnered respect as an influential government official who worked as the translator for the American legation. Yet in America he understood that he was little more than a strange foreign convert on display to illustrate white Protestant accomplishments in world missions. Yun sensed that white Protestants came to hear him speak primarily because they wished to see what a peculiar Korean looked and sounded like. In a letter to Allen, Yun wrote about his

⁹¹ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, November 29, 1890.

⁹² Yun Ch'ihō, "Letter on March 16, 1893," in Kim, 110.

⁹³ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, December 25, 1891.

speaking opportunities: “I know they want to hear me more from curiosity than perhaps any other cause, but so far as I am concerned, I am willing to avail myself of every opportunity to increase, if possible, missionary interest in the people here.”⁹⁴ After his talks, Yun answered demeaning questions about his homeland, such as whether Koreans knew how light and darkness were generated.⁹⁵ Yun criticized American Protestant culture, which he viewed as racist, but he used his position to raise financial support for his future endeavors.

In the absence of true friends, Yun sought refuge in his diary writing. Diary writing had long been an American religious practice, especially among women but also among clergy and pious laymen. As they wrote in their diaries, women like Sarah Osborn in eighteenth-century New England engaged in “a form of prayer” and “a deeply meaningful discipline” that brought them “into union with the Divine.”⁹⁶ Likewise, Yun turned inward to diary writing as a religious practice in order to express his private thoughts and make sense of his life in America. On January 6, 1892, Yun changed his writing style, resolving to compose his diary in letter-form to real or fictitious correspondents.⁹⁷ Over the following weeks, Yun addressed his professors and their spouses in his diary, expressing opinions he dare not reveal publicly, such as scathing

⁹⁴ Yun Ch’iho, “Letter on April 8, 1889,” in Kim, 87.

⁹⁵ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, February 17, 1892.

⁹⁶ Catherine A. Brekus, “Writing as a Protestant Practice: Devotional Diaries in Early New England,” in Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America, 1630-1965 edited by Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Leigh E. Schmidt, and Mark Valeri (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 19.

⁹⁷ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, January 6, 1892.

critiques of white privilege and missionary paternalism.⁹⁸ He also composed prayers to God and wrote to his future-self about his ambitions, plans, and pains. As a Methodist, Yun held to Wesleyan notions of free grace and divine love for all humankind. In his diary, he expressed joy on account of his religious conversion and yearned for Protestant expansion in Korea. He also disclosed feelings of pride and embarrassment because of his Korean identity: “I wish I belonged to a nationality which I may think of without shuddering with disgust and blushing with shame. Poor Corea! Beautiful Corea!”⁹⁹

In December 1892, Yun met Allen and his family in Atlanta during their furlough. Upon meeting Allen’s son, Edgar P. Allen, for the first time, Yun noted that they were approximately the same age but shared little else in common. Unlike Yun, Allen’s son belonged to “a nationality that entitles him to the very best treatment wherever he may go in the civilized world.” Comparing himself to Allen’s son, Yun wrote: “He is honored. I am despised. He is comparatively rich. I am poor. He is self-confident. I am shrinking. I wonder what kind of history time and changes will write for each of us-starting, as we do, under so different circumstances.”¹⁰⁰ Yun’s American education and exposure to Protestantism influenced his own notions of divine providence, human stewardship, and religious reforms for Korea.¹⁰¹ But Yun also experienced the broken promises of American Protestantism, which allowed him to be a religious partner but defined him as the racial other. In America, Yun both experienced the affective power of American

⁹⁸ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, January 10, 1892, January 16, 1892, January 31, 1892, February 7, 1892, and February 17, 1892.

⁹⁹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, September 13, 1892.

¹⁰⁰ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, December 30, 1892.

¹⁰¹ See Wells, 50-53, and Chandra, 90-94.

revivalism and suffered the emotional pain engendered by American racism. He was invited to preach at local churches, but he also experienced life as a racial “inferior,” ostracized as a stranger and objectified as a “Chinaman.” As he prepared to depart America for Asia in 1893, he possessed new visions for how Protestantism could transform Korea, but he also anticipated how Western racial attitudes could hamper Korea’s development into a modern nation-state.

Navigating Racial and Religious Boundaries from Chicago to Shanghai

After graduating from Emory in 1893, Yun left America to become a teacher at Anglo-Chinese College in Shanghai before returning to Korea in 1895. As Yun traveled by rail from Georgia to Vancouver in order to board a ship to China, he stopped in Chicago to attend the World’s Fair and World’s Parliament of Religions in September 1893. With representatives from a myriad of religious traditions, the two-week Parliament marked a significant religious encounter between the East and the West. Followers of Brahma, Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed from Asia and the Middle East shared the stage with American Christians and Jews in “the most elaborate display of religious cosmopolitanism yet seen on the continent.”¹⁰² Asian speakers, such as the Chinese Confucian scholar Pung Kwang Yu, the Indian Hindu philosopher Manilia Dvivendi, and the Sinhalese Buddhist teacher Anagarika Dharmapala, challenged Western notions of Judeo-Christian triumphalism with charismatic and persuasive presentations of the intellectual and spiritual vitality of their religions and cultures. Elegantly dressed in traditional garb, the Asian scholars dazzled thousands of participants

¹⁰² Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion, Volume 1: The Irony of it All, 1893-1919* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 17.

with their ability “to effectively communicate with the American public by connecting the relatively unknown mythological universes of the East to more familiar Western ideas.”¹⁰³

White speakers also propagated the ideals of religious tolerance and mutual understanding between East and West. American philosopher Paul Carus called for a “Broad Christianity” to replace the exclusive and narrow tenets of so-called orthodox Christianity.¹⁰⁴ But as Yun watched events unfold at the Parliament, he disagreed with its cosmopolitan ethos and religious themes. After two days in attendance, Yun wrote that he grew tired of hearing terms like “liberal-mindedness,” “broadness,” “universal faith,” “fraternity,” “brotherhood of men,” and “fatherhood of God,” words employed as shallow mantras with little meaning. Instead of substantive dialogue covering the differences between world religions, Yun believed the Parliament only superficially addressed religious content and that Eastern and Western participants masked their genuine beliefs in order to support a thinly conceived pluralism. The Korean Protestant preferred to be “narrow and earnest” rather than “broad and indifferent.”¹⁰⁵

Two years after the Parliament, George S. Goodspeed, professor of comparative religion and ancient history at the University of Chicago, touted its importance as a consequential meeting invoking an ongoing spirit of many faiths joined together in common purpose: “When the Parliament was past, it really only then began to live... In

¹⁰³ Richard Hughes Seager, The World’s Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 104.

¹⁰⁴ Marty, 20.

¹⁰⁵ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, September 24, 1893.

fact, the farther we are removed from the Parliament, the more extraordinary and significant its character becomes.”¹⁰⁶ But many American Protestants were displeased by the Parliament for propagating a message that betrayed the central tenets of their religion. Arthur Tappan Pierson lashed out against the Parliament and one of its founders, fellow Presbyterian clergyman John Henry Barrows, for promoting the impression that Christianity “may not be the only Divine religion.”¹⁰⁷ Famed evangelist Billy Sunday announced that the Parliament was one of the most scurrilous events in American history.¹⁰⁸ Yun also thought the Parliament was a failed experiment on two levels. On one level, Yun confirmed Pierson’s fears as he reported that scores of white American Protestants, especially women, were enchanted by the Asian speakers and their “beautiful teachings” on Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and other Asian religions. He determined that “the presentations which different religions have made will no doubt shake the faith of many Christians.”¹⁰⁹ On another level, Yun believed the Parliament’s hope to usher the world into an era of religious pluralism was false prophecy. “The war between Christianity and other creeds has just begun,” Yun wrote from Chicago, “In spite of all the sentimental talks I have heard in the past few days about universal faith...the

¹⁰⁶ George S. Goodspeed, “Introduction,” The World’s Parliament of Religions: Its Christian Spirit, Historic Greatness and Manifold Results: A Brief Summary of Testimonies Gathered from Many Lands, Indicating what the World has Said of this Memorable Congress of the Creeds, of its Organizer and Chairman, John Henry Barrows, and of the Official Literature of the Parliament, edited by George S. Goodspeed (Chicago: Hill and Shuman, 1895), 5, as cited in A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions, edited by Eric J. Ziolkowski (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 2.

¹⁰⁷ Marty, 22.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, September 24, 1893.

war between Christianity and other creeds will go on.”¹¹⁰ As Yun reflected on his conversion from Confucianism to Christianity and what he regarded as the impassable differences between Confucian ethics of filial piety and Christian moral teachings emphasizing communal solidarity, he predicted that increased knowledge of world religions would create more intense clashes between Eastern religions and Christianity.

Yun also commented on Hirai Kinzo’s address, which garnered acclaim from many participants and local newspapers. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported that Hirai electrified the audience with his “fiery eloquence” and “forceful presentation of the truth as he believed it.”¹¹¹ A Japanese Buddhist layman, Hirai accused Western Christians of racist practices in America and abroad that contradicted their biblical teachings. He surmised that Western Christians treated the Japanese unequally because of their status as “idolaters and heathen,” but then countered: “Admitting for the sake of argument that we are idolaters and heathen, is it Christian morality to trample upon the rights and advantages of a non-Christian nation, coloring all their natural happiness with the dark stain of injustice?”¹¹² Hirai’s paper was considered so inflammatory that Barrows attempted to prevent him from delivering it before the assembly.¹¹³ Yun had a mixed reaction. He agreed with Hirai’s appraisal of American Protestant racism but also criticized the Japanese Buddhist’s proposed “Synthetic Religion” based on an “a priori

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 23, 1893.

¹¹² Kinzo Riuge M. Hirai, “The Real Position of Japan Toward Christianity,” in *The World's Parliament of Religions: an illustrated and popular story of the World's First Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in connection with the Columbian Exposition of 1893, Volume I*, edited by John Henry Barrows (Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893), 448.

¹¹³ Seager, 75.

belief in an unknown entity.”¹¹⁴ Yun opposed Hirai’s denial of an infinite Creator and Sustainer of all life, writing how Hirai’s belief that “the creator of conditioned and finite beings could not be infinite and unconditioned” was as foolish as saying “the maker of unintelligent dolls can’t be intelligent.”¹¹⁵

Hirai also contended that morality was more important than distinctive religious identities. “Whether Buddhism is called Christianity or Christianity is named Buddhism, whether we are called Confucianists or Shintoists, we are not particular,” declared Hirai, “but we are very particular about the truth taught and its consistent application.”¹¹⁶

Although Yun was attracted to Christianity because of its moral teachings, he disavowed Hirai’s emphasis on morality at the expense of religious dogma as hollow relativism. After hearing a Protestant minister declare the universal harmony of all world religions, Yun accused the minister of preaching nonsense: “If bigotry can see but one phase of truth, extreme broadness can’t see anything save the surface of the whole.”¹¹⁷ Despite Yun’s disagreements with Hirai and the Parliament’s religious message, he noted that one good effect of the Parliament was that the American public could see that Asians like Hirai were intelligent persons who could reason, think, and write as well as Westerners. Yun’s aspirations for the Parliament’s long-term effects were for racial and not religious unity. After hearing articulate addresses from a number of Asian speakers representing several different countries, Americans might begin to treat all Asians more respectfully.

¹¹⁴ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, September 26, 1893.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Hirai, 449.

¹¹⁷ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, September 25, 1893.

After his stay in Chicago, Yun left for Vancouver to board the *S.S. Empress of India*. Yun purchased a second-class ticket and roomed with three Japanese men. Continuing his study of race relations, Yun counted twenty-eight Japanese and nearly four hundred Chinese passengers. He noted that of the Japanese passengers, four had first-class tickets, four had second-class tickets, and the rest were in steerage, whereas none of the Chinese purchased first- or second-class accommodations. Throughout his five years in America, Yun condemned the pervasiveness of anti-Asian prejudice, particularly white racist attitudes toward Chinese immigrants. On the *Empress*, Yun observed how white passengers sneered at the overcrowded Chinese passengers in Asiatic steerage. But Yun aimed his scorn at the Chinese rather than the whites, complaining about the “detestable smell” of the Chinese passengers, who reeked of tobacco and opium. Yun, who made certain to act, appear, and speak as a refined Westerner, especially among Westerners, despised the Chinese on board for chatting loudly in their native tongue “with a supreme indifference to the looks and treatment of contempt showered upon them by [the] Americans and English” and for “looking more like a herd of dirty pigs than a crowd of human beings.”¹¹⁸

Although Yun did not achieve “insider” status among whites in the Jim Crow South, he adopted white American eyes to see lower-class Chinese passengers just as whites did. At the same time, he lamented Korea’s fragile geopolitical position in East Asia and understood more clearly that both the Japanese and Chinese regarded Koreans as an inferior race. “The misery is that Japanese and Chinese get maltreated by

¹¹⁸ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, October 16, 1893.

Americans and Europeans,” Yun explained, “and then go and do likewise to the wretched and slavish Coreans.”¹¹⁹ Yun’s reflections on the *Empress* reveal how racial realities tempered his religious and political hopes for Korea. In America, Yun further developed a religious consciousness that envisioned how Protestant advance in Korea would remake a new society directed by the ethics of divine grace, human stewardship, and communal solidarity. Yet his American experience also shaped a racial consciousness that challenged his religious faith, colored his views toward different races, and led to a growing disenchantment with American civilization.

In 1885, the recently exiled Korean described America in glowing terms as a kind and generous nation and longed to breathe the civilized air of the New World. In the same year, Josiah Strong published a book entitled *Our Country, Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, in which he championed Anglo-Saxon Protestants in the United States as the greatest representatives of Christian civilization. Combining racial and religious virtues, American Protestants, in Strong’s view, were divinely commissioned to lead the modern world into a brighter and more prosperous future.¹²⁰ In 1893, Strong confirmed his view by asserting that the United States was at the center of Anglo-Saxon power and Protestant influence: “Surely, to be a Christian and an Anglo-Saxon and an American in this generation is to stand on the very mountain-top of privilege.”¹²¹ Yun, after earning two academic degrees over five years at Vanderbilt and Emory, lambasted American

¹¹⁹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, October 29, 1893.

¹²⁰ Josiah Strong, *Our Country, Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1885), 209-227.

¹²¹ Josiah Strong, *The New Era or the Coming Kingdom* (New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1893), 354.

Protestants like Strong who proclaimed that they were “the last effort of the Almighty” and presumed that America stood at the peak of civilization for generations to come.¹²²

Yun retorted back: “Who knows but that one of those days the nations whom the American condescends to call barbarians and savages will put the cap on the world’s civilization?”¹²³

Life on the Margins of an American Missionary Community in Shanghai

Although Yun disputed the notion that Anglo-Saxon American Protestants would forever maintain their high position, he sometimes wished to be one. He was especially attracted to white American women. After returning to Shanghai, the twenty-nine year-old Korean desperately yearned for female companionship. In 1894, Yun confessed to being overcome by his emotional and sexual longings and wrote that the only remedy was a “pretty, sensible, pious, and loving wife.”¹²⁴ Allen arranged for Yun to wed a young Chinese Protestant woman, Mo Sien-tsung, a student at McTyeire Home and School for Girls, established by MECS missionaries in Shanghai. But Mo’s parents were reluctant to give their consent because of Yun’s foreign race and his refusal to participate in a traditional Chinese wedding ceremony with Chinese dress. Yun rejected Chinese Confucian traditional rites on racial and religious grounds. As a Korean, Yun asserted pride in his own national identity and resisted Chinese garb, which would symbolize his

¹²² Diary of Yun Ch’iho, April 15, 1893.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, January 23, 1894, and January 24, 1894.

acquiescence to Chinese rule. As a Protestant, he opposed Chinese rites as pagan ceremonies that went against his religious principles.¹²⁵

For two months, Yun engaged in debates with Mo's parents about wearing Chinese dress at the wedding ceremony. Laura Askew Haygood, founder of McTyeire Home and School for Girls and sibling of MECS bishop, Atticus Green Haygood, mediated the sartorial deliberations. In a letter to a friend back home, Haygood wrote: "I am arranging for another wedding before I go away – that of Mr. Yun, the young Korean who studied at Emory College for a time, and one of our best girls, a lovely young Chinese woman, Mo Sien-tsung, a pupil-teacher in McTyeire School."¹²⁶ Haywood described Yun and Mo as "earnest Christians" who would make a "happy pairing" but also complained about the tiresome negotiations between Yun and Mo's parents.¹²⁷ Three days prior to Haygood's letter, Yun relented to Mo's parents' demands, after Haygood had scolded him: "I am sorry that you ever wanted to marry a Chinese wife, not that you and she have not all the elements to make a happy match, but that the complications are too troublesome. Mrs. Mo will not yield on this point and if you persist on your position, you had better break the engagement."¹²⁸ As Yun weighed his marital options, he felt he had no choice but to marry Mo without any Korean women in Shanghai. Although single American female missionaries were present, Yun believed that no white American

¹²⁵ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, February 2, 1894.

¹²⁶ Laura Askew Haygood, "Letter to Mollie Stevens, February 15, 1894," in Life and Letters of Laura Askew Haygood, edited by Oswald Eugene Brown and Anna Muse Brown (Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, 1904), 320.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, February 12, 1894.

woman would consider marrying him on account of his race. During the two-month long deliberation between Yun, Haygood, and Mo's parents, Yun despaired over what he called his "heartsick, or rather lovesick" condition and his own ambiguous identity as an American-educated Korean Protestant exile in Shanghai: "If I were a heathen, I might find sinful pleasure in the society of loose women. If I were an American or European, I might find a purer consolation in the refined company of Western girls."¹²⁹ But Yun defined himself as "being neither the one nor the other," and just as he was in America, Yun was a stranger who lived on the margins in Shanghai.¹³⁰ Although he was a teacher at Anglo-Chinese College, worshipped with American missionaries, and conversed regularly with Allen and Haygood, Yun did not feel welcomed as an equal in the American missionary community.

After reconciling all the issues between Yun and Mo's parents, Yun married Mo on March 21, 1894 at McTyeire Home and School. Yun and Mo had exchanged letters with one another during their two-month engagement, but shared very little time with one another until the day of the wedding ceremony. Despite all Yun's misgivings, he was delighted to marry Mo and trusted God had answered his prayers for a faithful wife. The wedding in Shanghai was an international affair with American and Chinese guests, a Chinese bride, and a Korean groom (in Chinese dress), but Yun's description of the proceedings demonstrates how MECS missionaries orchestrated their marriage:

My 'Darling,' dressed in pink looked lovely indeed, and deserved all the praises she got. After refreshments the visitors went away one by one. Just before the

¹²⁹ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, February 22, 1894.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

carriage came for us, Miss Hughes told me in Miss Haygood's parlor with a deal of emotion, 'Mr. Yun, you must be good to my dear girl. I love her just as my sister. And now I love you as my brother.' About 8, the carriage came. Miss Haygood led Sientsung to her study where I was; and for the first time the bride and I looked full at each other's face. As the dear creature stood by Miss Haygood with one of her pretty hands in Miss Laura's, her sweet and childlike smile and confidence were in harmony with the almost parental love and pride with which the good missionary looked up on her pupil. . . . As Sientsung and I came out from the study side by side Miss Haygood, out of her great heart, said 'God bless you both!' Just outside of the door of the hall, the ladies of the Mission and the girls of the school stationed themselves on both sides and showered rice on us. When we got into [the] carriage, all I could do was to hold her willing hands, pressing them with mine as warmly as newly married love could. On our arrival at home, we found Prof. and Mrs. Bonnell waiting for us. The Rubico[n] is crossed.¹³¹

At every step of their wedding, from the ceremony to the marital bed, American missionaries counseled and directed Yun and Mo. But here Yun neither detected nor deplored any hint of the paternalism he so detested in American missionaries. On the contrary, Yun was grateful for how missionaries arranged and supported his marriage to Mo. A month after their wedding, Yun praised Haygood for providing him an affectionate, refined, and pious wife who was "as free from the superstitions of her people as a girl brought up in an American family."¹³²

Contesting the Attitudes and Perspectives of American Missionaries

As Yun readjusted to life in Shanghai, he identified several faults within the American missionary operation in Asia. In America, Yun criticized how missionaries presented foreigners in their speech and writing. In China, Yun more closely observed how the missionaries lived, and he debunked their notions of using domesticity as a means of religious witness. As in Korea, American missionaries in China established

¹³¹ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, March 21, 1894.

¹³² Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, April 20, 1894.

Western-style homes in Shanghai and hired indigenous servants. They believed that they were creating a tangible example of a faithful Christian home to both Christian and non-Christian families in Asia. Despite their good intentions, American women missionaries imposed imperialistic Western values in their transmission of the “Christian home” to indigenous women abroad.¹³³ In Korea, missionaries debated the proper role of wives on the mission field. As they erected Western-style houses and employed Korean servants for low wages, they wrestled with the material inequalities between their ways of life. Yun was not offended by the economic disparity between Western and indigenous homes. The Korean nobleman, who had traveled to Japan and the United States, appreciated refined Western lifestyles and did not fault missionaries for seeking to recreate their Western modes of living in Asia. But Yun was incredulous over the way missionaries employed the “Christian home” as an evangelizing and teaching strategy: “But the story that a missionary family is valuable as setting [a] good example to the non-Christian families is a pretty little fable—pretty indeed but only a fable.”¹³⁴ He thought the notion of domesticity as religious witness was patently false because of how the missionaries had intentionally separated themselves in compounds apart from indigenous populations. Because missionaries had created these physical boundaries, Yun believed there was no way for indigenous persons to learn from or even see missionary homes.¹³⁵

¹³³ Dana L. Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice, 1792-1992* (Mercer, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 412.

¹³⁴ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, December 1, 1893.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

He also noted that the few locals who entered into missionary homes were servants, many of whom were mistreated by their missionary employers. Yun found that the missionary home did not enhance but rather had more potential to impair Christian influence in Asia. And he felt that the missionaries knew these realities all too well and therefore only offered the idea of the “Christian home” as an evangelizing tool to validate their social existence abroad. Yun did not charge the missionaries with conceit for how they lived in Asia, but he accused them of deceit for hiding behind religion to justify their riches.

In Shanghai, Yun also contested missionary views on religion. Missionaries to China and Korea believed that Christianity stood superior to Asian religions like Buddhism, Confucianism, and Hinduism intellectual and theological grounds. In 1893, G.T. Candlin examined world religions in *The Chinese Recorder*, a Presbyterian missionary magazine published in Shanghai, and concluded that Christianity alone “furnishes spiritual objects which can give full development and perfect expression to the spiritual nature of all mankind.”¹³⁶ But Candlin conceded that foreign nations practicing other religions were better off than if they had no religion whatsoever: “India may be as bad as you please under the reign of Brahmanism; China, Thibet, and Corea as degraded as you choose under that of Buddhism and Confucianism; Arabia and Turkey as cruel and hurtful as you can imagine under Mohammedism...all would have been worse without these.”¹³⁷ In the United States, Yun likewise delivered religious addresses to rally support

¹³⁶ Candlin, G.T., “The Bearing of Religious Unity upon the Work of Missions,” *The Chinese Recorder*, December 1893, 563.

¹³⁷ Candlin, 562.

for foreign missions by trumpeting the superior doctrines of Christianity over other world religions. But as Yun conversed with Asian Buddhist and Confucian scholars in Shanghai, he began to believe that the power of Christianity resulted from its practical morality, not its rational theology. As he debated one Asian Buddhist scholar on creation, transmigration, and the treatment of animals, Yun refuted each of the Buddhist's points by advancing his Christian beliefs, recording the religious contest in his diary. He identified his counterpart with the initials, "C.O.Y.," and himself as "T.H.Y."

C.O.Y. "If you say that God created all things how can you reconcile His goodness with the cruel butchery of animals for your food? If you don't you believe in the existent soul of an animal, how can you count for the love of life and a dread of death an ox or a bird manifests?"

T.H.Y. "Let me state clearly my belief. I believe that God created the Universe as well as my soul; that everything in this world is for the use of man-and of me; that animals have no souls and were made for our benefit. Now call this wrong or right as you please. But don't you know it is no sin to me who [eats] animal food believing it was made for me while it is cruelty and sin for you to eat beef or fish, knowing, as you say you do, that an animal has a soul?"¹³⁸

But unlike Candlin, Yun did not appeal to Christian doctrine as the perfect expression of spiritual truths. Instead, his main argument for Christianity rested on its moral teachings and practical results. He tied Buddhism to current social conditions in China and Korea, charging the Buddhist scholar with practicing a religion that "enables some few intelligent and acute thinkers like you to indulge in the luxuries of speculation while tens of millions of common people live and die in moral and spiritual degradation."¹³⁹

Ultimately, Yun defended Christianity because its teachings emphasized individual moral

¹³⁸ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, December 17, 1893.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

responsibility for the larger community. “A subtle Buddhist or Confucianist or Taoist is easily a match, nay more than a match for any average Christian,” observed Yun, “but Christianity put in life is a power before which nothing can stand.”¹⁴⁰ As he continued to discuss religious matters with Asian scholars, Yun postulated that the practical results of Christianity, such as mission schools that educated children from the lower classes, were the best evidence to support Christianity in comparison to other world religions.

Although Yun supported American mission work in Korea, he disagreed with how missionaries to Korea characterized the Korean religious landscape as bare and empty, as if it were a *tabula rasa* ripe for Protestant inscription. Missionaries witnessed traditional Korean religious rituals but categorized them in the lesser category of “superstition” rather than religion. They indicated that Koreans had no national religion and were generally indifferent to religion.¹⁴¹ Yun thought these depictions of Korean religious thought were too simplistic. Indeed, Koreans, like non-Christians in other nations, needed to abandon their traditional religious practices in favor of Christianity. But Yun contended that the fact that Koreans zealously turned to idols, chants, and charms uncovered an active, not apathetic, national religious consciousness.¹⁴² In 1929, L. George Paik also refuted missionary conceptions of Korean religious indifference. Paik argued that missionaries to Korea had conceived of religion solely “in terms of dogma and ecclesiasticism” and therefore failed to properly comprehend Korean religious

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ George Heber Jones, “The Religious Development of Korea,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, September 1891, 417.

¹⁴² Diary of Yun Ch’iho, June 9, 1894.

attitudes.¹⁴³ He described the average Korean of that time as simultaneously participating in ancestor worship, reciting Confucian classics, sacrificing to animistic spirits, seeking out shamans for healing, and visiting the Buddhist temple for prayer, which demonstrated deep religious sensibilities.¹⁴⁴ Like Paik, Yun asserted that missionaries mistook Korean religious syncretism for indifference.

During the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, Yun searched for as many news reports as he could find in Shanghai. He was deeply concerned for his country and speculated on what the war's outcome would mean for Korea. American missionaries in Korea were ambivalent about the war in Korea. They grieved at the suffering of Korean civilians caught in the crossfire of Japanese and Chinese soldiers, but they also saw the war as an opportunity for increased evangelization to Koreans caught in political turmoil and religious doubt. Missionaries hoped for Japanese victory so that Chinese influence in Korea would diminish. This would lead in turn to Korean disenchantment with Confucianism, a religious import from China. But whereas missionaries viewed the war primarily in religious terms, Yun analyzed the political, social, and religious ramifications of the war on Korea. He also wished for Japan to triumph, but he was more concerned about national reform than religious evangelization. Yun admired how the Japanese government abolished feudalism and embraced modernization in the nineteenth century and believed Korea needed to follow suit in order to maintain its independence in the twentieth. In 1869, the Meiji government hired an English engineer to construct a telegraph line from Tokyo to Yokohama. In 1871, Japan established a postal system,

¹⁴³ Paik, 19.

¹⁴⁴ Paik, 26-27.

which had evolved by 1890 into a nationwide operation that delivered 225 million pieces of mail and 75 million money orders in over 5,000 post offices.¹⁴⁵ In addition to revamping their communication systems, the Meiji government also modernized their political, economic, and military infrastructures and began pushing Korea to do likewise in 1894. Although Yun agreed with Japan's proposals to Korea, he objected to their coercive approach and preferred "gentle, though resolute pressure" over a heavy hand.¹⁴⁶ Yun shared the same religion as the missionaries in Korea, but he disagreed with their prescriptions for his homeland. Yun also desired greater numbers of Korean Protestant converts but believed the most urgent needs in Korea were a well-trained army, a patriotic newspaper, and a new educational system that focused on modern industry.¹⁴⁷ He developed a more detailed ten-point reform plan in his diary, which also included establishing a postal system, streamlining the central government to reduce corruption, and revising the national revenue structure.¹⁴⁸

As the Sino-Japanese War raged on in Korea, Yun continued teaching at Anglo-Chinese College. Now in his second year of teaching, Yun grew more familiar with missionary operations in Shanghai. Because he was neither a white missionary nor a Chinese student, Yun realized that he had a unique perspective on Anglo-Chinese College. He appreciated the missionary teachers' commitment to teaching religion alongside other academic subjects, but he criticized how the missionaries regarded the

¹⁴⁵ James L. McClain, *Japan, a Modern History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 211.

¹⁴⁶ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, August 7, 1894.

¹⁴⁷ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, August 24, 1894.

¹⁴⁸ Diary of Yun Ch'ihō, September 28, 1894.

Chinese students as inferior human beings. After his experience as a college student in the United States, Yun perceived that the teacher-pupil relationship at Anglo-Chinese College was different because of race. Teachers maintained their authority over students at Vanderbilt and Emory, but Yun also sensed an ethos of mutual respect between the two parties that was missing in Shanghai. Although missionaries and students shared common physical space within the walls of Anglo-Chinese College, Yun found that missionaries had created distinct and unmistakable social boundaries that contradicted their religious teaching. He denigrated teachers who treated Chinese students disrespectfully, writing that some missionaries expressed little esteem for the Chinese and appeared to think that their only duty in China was to teach simplistic lessons about matters like heaven, hell, along with the ridiculous claim “that circus going and smoking are deadly sins.”¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, Yun alleged that the missionaries’ “long sermons in winning the hearts to Christ” would be far more effective in converting Chinese students if not accompanied by their supercilious paternalism.¹⁵⁰

As Yun spent more time with the missionaries, he learned of their disagreements with one another. Not unlike any other academic institution in Asia or the United States, teachers at Anglo-Chinese College disparaged one another in private and competed against one another for higher positions at the school. Yun also heard rumors of improper sexual relations among missionaries. He was especially appalled at missionaries who preached to Chinese Protestants that God was using Japan’s military triumphs in the Sino-Japanese War to punish China for not accepting Christianity. Yun was astounded at

¹⁴⁹ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, September 9, 1894.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

the gall of these missionaries on two levels. They not only attributed Asian events they hardly understood to God's direct invention, but they then propagated their mistaken presumptions to Chinese believers.¹⁵¹

Although Allen had not proclaimed these falsities about God's hand in the Sino-Japanese War, Yun was surprised at his mentor's ethnocentric arrogance in other matters, such as Allen's critiques of Asian scholarship and his negative comments about Chinese Protestants. Yun confessed in his diary that he was "amazed beyond expression" one day at how Allen, who was not an expert on Japan and could not read Japanese, lambasted Japanese Christian scholar Takahashi Goro's translations of Chinese Protestant literature.¹⁵² Although Allen did not have superior knowledge of Chinese and Japanese scholarship, Yun found that his mentor claimed the right to pronounce these criticisms due to his higher standing as an American missionary. On another occasion, Allen told Yun that "he had never seen a Chinaman with thorough and experimental conviction in Christianity."¹⁵³ Yun privately disagreed. Yun felt Allen too easily dismissed Chinese Protestant converts in villages and rural areas who had little interaction with foreign missionaries. These converts were not educated in mission schools like Anglo-Chinese College, but Yun contended that their religious conversion was no less sincere and complete: "But I am sure many of the humble Chinese Christians who can hardly read anything but their colloquial Bibles have as much genuine religion as those who can write

¹⁵¹ Diary of Yun Ch'ih, November 14, 1894.

¹⁵² Diary of Yun Ch'ih, November 24, 1894.

¹⁵³ Diary of Yun Ch'ih, November 27, 1894.

autobiographies, evidences of Christianity and even able religious essays.”¹⁵⁴ In his criticisms of missionaries, Yun was careful to include praise alongside rebuke. Despite all their shortcomings, Yun commended missionaries for their entrepreneurial efforts in establishing and maintaining churches, hospitals, and schools in foreign countries like China and Korea.

On December 27, 1894, Yun received word that changes in the Korean government created safe conditions for his return. During the Sino-Japanese War, a group of reform-minded Korean progressives had gained influential government positions and now called upon Yun’s services.¹⁵⁵ He tendered a letter of resignation to Anglo-Chinese College and prepared to return home. In a conversation with Timothy Richard, a Welsh Baptist missionary in China, Yun explained that his intentions in Korea were two-fold. He wished to connect with American missionaries and write Protestant literature for Korean commoners and take a position in the government as Minister of Education.¹⁵⁶ Richard, Allen, and other missionaries in Shanghai advised Yun to pursue a high government position rather than mission work because they believed Yun would garner more influence in Korea as a government official. On December 29, Yun attended a prayer meeting at McTyeire Home and School in which Allen announced Yun’s plans to return home to Korea. Yun was encouraged by the support of the missionary community in Shanghai. At the prayer meeting, he was touched by Allen’s public prayer on his behalf: “In his prayer Dr. Allen invoked the Divine blessings on me. I was much moved;

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Kim, 20.

¹⁵⁶ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, December 27, 1894.

the shadows and lights through which I have passed these ten years seem like a dream. How good God has been to me in giving me such friends as Dr. and Mrs. Allen, Prof. and Mrs. Bonnell, and others.”¹⁵⁷ Two days later, Yun’s wife gave birth to their first child, Laura (named after Laura Askew Haygood), in Soochow.

Conclusion

From 1884 to 1894, Yun both crossed and was confounded by national, racial, and religious boundaries as a Korean exile in China and the United States. In 1887, he converted to Christianity in Shanghai. From 1888 to 1893, he encountered the possibilities and limits that accompanied his Korean Protestant identity in the American South. In America, his hopes for Protestant expansion and political reform in Korea were tempered by racial theories and geopolitical conditions that weighed against his country. In 1894, he married a Chinese Protestant woman, Mo Sien-tsung, and they had their first child. As he lived among the American missionary community in China, he became disenchanted by their ethnocentrism and paternalism. Though he had witnessed more of their faults, Yun wished that the missionaries would remove the boundaries they had erected between themselves and indigenous converts.¹⁵⁸ Although missionaries told him that the boundaries prevented indigenous converts from seeing disharmony within the missionary community, Yun believed that missionaries precluded opportunities for genuine relationships and meaningful interactions to arise between American and Asian

¹⁵⁷ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, December 29, 1894.

¹⁵⁸ Diary of Yun Ch’iho, September 29, 1894.

Protestants. As long as the racial boundaries remained, there could be no sense of religious partnership and equality between American and Asian Protestants.

After Yun returned home to Korea in 1895, he would continue his quest for political and religious reform alongside both Korean converts and American missionaries. But his struggle against paternalism and racism would persist in Korea, as he and other Koreans constructed a religious identity that differed from missionary blueprints on the making of Korean Protestantism. At the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Yun delivered an address that prescribed a reversal of position between missionaries and Korean converts. He explained how Koreans deserved the “first place in the work of evangelization” because they better understood the needs and conditions of their own people.¹⁵⁹ Yun called for the missionaries to cede their religious authority to the Korean church leaders: “The Native Church, in short, must fight its own battles, learn its own lessons; feel its own weaknesses, discover its own strength and gather its own trophies.”¹⁶⁰ At one level, Yun and other Korean Protestants helped fulfill the ambitions of the first American Protestant missionaries to Korea; at another level, they subverted those ambitions in ways that the missionaries would have found puzzling in the extreme.

¹⁵⁹ Yun Ch’iho, “The Place of the Native Church in the Work of Evangelization,” *Korea Mission Field*, February 1911, 49.

¹⁶⁰ Yun, 50.

Chapter 3: The American Missionary Experiment and the Making of Korean Christianity

Introduction

In 1909, American Presbyterian missionaries celebrated twenty-five years of mission work in Korea. They met in P'yongyang to reminisce over fond memories, discuss their work, and plan for the future. As the first missionary in Korea, Horace Newton Allen delivered introductory remarks. He described how the failed coup d'état in 1884 opened a door for missionaries. In their attempt to overthrow the conservative Korean government, progressive revolutionaries assassinated several rival officials and gravely injured the queen's nephew, Prince Min Yong Ik. During three months of intensive care, Allen successfully treated the prince's severed arteries and sword wounds. The Korean royal family lavished expensive gifts on Allen in appreciation of his medical work. More importantly, Allen used his favorable standing with the Korean royals to establish a modern hospital and pave the way for additional American missionaries. He resigned from mission work in 1893, rose in 1897 to the highest position in the U.S. diplomatic corps, and served as the U.S. Minister until 1905. In letters to Secretary of State John Sherman, Allen explained how his closeness to the Korean royals gave him unique expertise on Korean culture and politics and afforded him "opportunities which others might wish to enjoy."¹

In 1905, the United States closed the legation in Korea in recognition of the Japanese Protectorate, which was established after Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War. The United States was the first Western nation to acknowledge both Korea's

¹ Horace Allen, "Letter to John Sherman, December 30, 1897," as cited in Burnett, 10.

independence in 1882 and Japanese rule in 1905. President Theodore Roosevelt supported Japan's takeover and believed that Japanese conquest would curb Russian power in Asia and benefit Koreans with civilizing reforms.² U.S. magazines, such as *North American Review*, *The Outlook*, and *World's Work*, also contrasted the modernizing Japanese to primitive Koreans.³ In 1905, an American correspondent in East Asia compared the two nations: "The first thing that strikes a traveler in going from Japan to Korea is the extraordinary contrast between the cleanness, good order, industry, and general prosperity of one country, and the filthiness, demoralization, laziness, and general rack and ruin of the other."⁴ Allen noted to his Presbyterian colleagues in P'yongyang that "poor old Korea has sunk in public esteem" and surmised that he was more respected in America for his work as a missionary despite serving as America's leading diplomat in Korea for eight years.⁵ Although the Western world regarded Korea as a lowly nation, he said, missionary advances in medicine, education, and evangelization over twenty-five years had "made Korea the banner country for missions" and the Protestant mission was the only remaining cause of Western interest in Korea.⁶ In the same year, another

² James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War* (New York, Boston, and London: Little, Brown and Company, 2009), 208-209.

³ Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 84.

⁴ George Kennan, "Korea: A Degenerative State," *The Outlook*, October 7, 1905, 307.

⁵ Horace N. Allen, "Greetings," in *Quatro Centennial. Papers Read Before the Korea Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at the Annual Meeting in Pyeng Yang, August 27, 1909*, 2.

⁶ Allen, 12.

missionary summarized the Western view: “Politically she is nil, but in the missionary circle she is a first-rate power.”⁷

When missionaries had arrived in 1884, they imagined that Korea was a religious *tabula rasa* for their making. They sought to create a purified Christianity unencumbered by the denominational strife and theological liberalism that marked American Protestantism. Now they no longer regarded Korea as a *tabula rasa* but saw it rather as a laboratory for an idealized form of Christianity. In 1905, George Heber Jones gave three reasons for “the marvelous success of Christian missions in Korea”: (1) The emphasis on financially self-supporting Korean preachers and churches, (2) the Koreans’ response to Christianity after generations of misgovernment and isolation, and (3) the spirit of cooperation among Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries.⁸ The missionaries were the sculptors of a purified Christianity, and Korean converts—with their simple-minded, earnest, and obedient faith—made for excellent clay. In 1901, Brown wrote that “a visit to Korea is a tonic to faith.”⁹ During his visit, Brown encountered Koreans who practiced their new faith with childlike simplicity and trust. After witnessing how converts in P’yongyang and Pusan prayed and listened attentively to missionary sermons, Brown wrote: “I felt that the old and oft described Gospel of love, atonement and forgiveness had lost nothing of its transforming powers,” and that one could find no greater illustration of “the preparation of the soil by the Holy Spirit, the inherent vitality of the

⁷ James S. Gale, Korea in Transition (New York: Young People’s Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada, 1909), xiii.

⁸ George Heber Jones, “The Korea Mission, 1903-1905,” in The Appenzellers, Volume 1, 110-112.

⁹ Arthur J. Brown, Report of a Visitation of the Korea Mission of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A (1901), 34.

truth, the joy of the believer in Christ, and the value of personal work for souls” than in Korea.¹⁰

American missionaries observed two simultaneous movements in Korea. They exulted in the Protestant expansion that was transforming the religious landscape. Between 1904 and 1909, the number of Korean Protestants rose from 31,905 to 161,468.¹¹ After a wave of revivals in 1907, missionaries became more convinced that they could achieve their religious ambitions. Yet they also acknowledged Korea’s political misfortune, which culminated in Japan’s outright annexation in 1910. In order to remain in the country, the missionaries maintained a position of political neutrality to appease the new Japanese rulers. But the ways that Korean Protestants were adapting the religion also threatened the missionaries. As Korean Protestants fused their religious persuasions and political interests to resist the Japanese, missionaries instructed Korean converts to focus on religious expansion instead of colonial resistance. The missionary blueprint for an idealized Korean Christianity was restricted to church planting, not nation building. Missionaries envisioned a strong indigenous church with Bible-believing Korean converts. They did not want Koreans to convert to Christianity for political reasons.

The Missionary Blueprint for Korean Christianity: A Steadfast Commitment to Evangelization

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gale, 258-259.

As early as 1896, missionaries predicted that either Japan or Russia would colonize the country.¹² In 1901, Appenzeller delivered an address before a group of preachers in Philadelphia in which he envisaged the Japanese conquest: “Japan is now working for commercial supremacy and having learned wisdom is moving with more caution. She needs Korea for her surplus population and food supplies. Japan cannot watch the advance of Russia in Manchuria without some concern. To her Korea is a necessity.”¹³ As the tension between Japan and Russia escalated in July 1903, Russian soldiers entered Korea to construct a fort at Yongnamp’o, and missionaries predicted and even welcomed war between the two nations. In November 1903, Charles F. Bernheisel observed in his diary that the “disturbed state of the country” had damaged mission work, which suffered from “the political and social unrest” created by the rumors of war between Japan and Russia.¹⁴ Six weeks later, he added that Koreans were not responding to the missionaries’ religious entreaties because they were more concerned about “their temporal safety and do not care to listen to the Gospel.”¹⁵ Bernheisel and other missionaries hoped that Japan and Russia would conduct a brief war in Korea in order to settle political matters there. Bernheisel predicted: “We believe that when the political skies clear up, we shall continue to reap such a harvest as we have been doing.”¹⁶

¹² Eugene Bell, “Letters on March 3, 18 and 20, 1896,” RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹³ Henry G. Appenzeller, “Korea: The Field, Our Work, and Opportunity, Philadelphia Preacher’s Meeting, 21 January 1901,” in *The Appenzellers*, 85.

¹⁴ Charles F. Bernheisel, “Charles F. Bernheisel Diary, November 17, 1903,” 09 0917 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁵ Charles F. Bernheisel, “Charles F. Bernheisel Diary, January 12, 1904, 09 0917 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Underwood also thought that only war between Japan and Russia would calm Korean political chaos. In November 1903, Underwood wrote to Arthur Judson Brown: “Korea is getting worse and worse politically. Something must happen and that right soon. I think most of the missionaries here, much as they would grieve to see bloodshed and all the evils that war entails, would welcome war.”¹⁷ Although Underwood deplored the effects of war, he believed that it would benefit Korea by providing geopolitical clarity. In February 1904, Underwood received his wish when Japanese forces attacked Russian naval facilities in Manchuria. Russian and Japanese forces fought in Manchuria and Korea until the Treaty of Portsmouth in September 1905. Even before the treaty, the United States acknowledged Japan’s impending victory and tacitly agreed to Japan’s right to rule Korea in exchange for Japanese recognition of America’s stake in the Philippines. In November 1905, Japan forced the Korean foreign minister, Pak Che-sun, to sign a treaty that established Japan as the Protectorate of Korea.¹⁸

American missionaries determined that imperial Japanese rule would not derail evangelization. Though Korea had lost national independence, missionaries believed that Protestantism would become the national religion. In 1906, one Methodist missionary, A.W. Wasson, wrote that the most significant fact in Korean affairs was not the political conditions, but rather “the almost unparalleled opportunity which this country presents for effective missionary work.”¹⁹ Wasson reported that Koreans were dismayed over the

¹⁷ Horace G. Underwood, “Letter to Arthur Judson Brown on November 28, 1903,” in Ondoudu Moksa ui son'gyo p'yonji: 1885-1916, 1029.

¹⁸ Seth, 32-33.

¹⁹ A.W. Wasson, “The Land of Opportunity,” *The Korea Mission Field*, February 1906, 68.

fragile state of their government and that some Korean officials were “despairing of their country even unto death,” but that the Koreans’ “unusual hospitality” toward the Gospel and responsiveness to missionary efforts reflected “a truer indication of the future of the country” than its political subordination.²⁰ Missionaries acknowledged, with some indifference, Korea’s diminishing geopolitical position, but they emphasized that Protestant expansion was the solution for a nation now subjected to Japanese imperialism.

One year after Roosevelt closed the American legation in Seoul, he had the word “Korea” deleted from the U.S. government’s Record of Foreign Relations and placed all Korean files under the heading “Japan.”²¹ Although Korea ceased to exist in U.S. government records, American missionary magazines increased their articles on the country after 1906. *The Missionary Review of the World*, a leading pan-denominational periodical edited by A.T. Pierson, devoted fifteen articles to Korea that year. In 1907, there were twenty-five articles on Korea; 1908, thirty eight; in 1909, thirty-four, and in 1910, forty-six, over triple the number in 1906.²² Missionaries in Korea and such American Protestant leaders as Pierson and William T. Ellis, a journalist with *The Philadelphia Press*, exuberantly praised the quantity and quality of Korean converts, whom they alleged to be devoted to Bible study, prayer, and financial giving, respectful of missionaries, and orthodox. Underwood believed that American and Korean

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Bradley, 313-314.

²² “Index,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, December 1906, 969, “Index,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, December 1907, 969-970, “Index,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, December 1908, 969, “Index,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, December 1909, 970, and “Index,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, December 1910, 970.

Protestants together might be able to win the entire nation for Christ.²³ In 1907, Susan Wilson traveled to Korea with her husband, MECS bishop Alpheus W. Wilson. She marveled at the number of Protestants in Songdo and praised their enthusiastic Christian worship and their respect for missionaries.²⁴ In 1908, John R. Mott predicted that Korea would be the first nation in the non-Christian world to become Christian. “I know of no mission field,” Mott declared, “where larger or more substantial results have been secured, in proportion to the expenditure, than in Korea.”²⁵

The First Element in the Korean Religious Experiment: Genuine Conversions

The first step to creating a pure Korean Christianity was to ensure that the conversions were genuine. In order to prevent conversion for material gain—Underwood spoke of “rice Christians and frauds”—missionaries gave inquirers who sought for baptism and church membership examinations that tested their knowledge of Christian doctrine and practice. In 1897, Eugene Bell described the examination procedure in Seoul: Each Korean inquirer in the Presbyterian mission underwent testing in the presence of the Session, which consisted of all available missionaries and two Korean deacons, and had to answer a long list of doctrinal and personal questions:

When did you hear the Gospel? From whom? What did you think of it then? How long have you believed? You say you “believe,” what do you believe? Explain how and why you expect to be saved by Christ? Are you a sinner? What about

²³ Horace G. Underwood, “The Growth of the Church in Korea,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, February 1908, 101.

²⁴ “Letters from Susan Wilson to Nina Wilson, June 24, July 1, and July 4, 1907,” in Alpheus W. Wilson Papers, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

²⁵ John R. Mott, *The Korea Mission Field*, May 1908, 67.

your sin, how have they been forgiven? What has Christ done for you? Do you sin now daily? When you sin now what do you do? How do you know that Christ forgives you when you pray to him? Have you the presence and witness of the Holy Spirit with you? What makes you believe you are a Christian? Are your actions different now from what they used to be? How often do you pray? What do you say when you pray? Have you spoken to the other members of your family about the gospel and tried to get them and your friends to believe? (This is a very important question) Do you keep the Sabbath day? How? What have you done with your household gods? Do you sacrifice to your ancestors? Have you a concubine, or if a woman, are you the first or second wife? What is the meaning of baptism? Why do you wish to be baptized? If you truly believe, could you be saved without baptism? What do you do for a living?²⁶

During one day of examinations, Bell reported that the examiners approved thirty of fifty Korean inquirers for baptism. They turned away applicants with questionable motives and assigned Bible classes for sincere applicants who gave inadequate answers.

In the remote countryside, missionaries visited churches periodically to perform these examinations. Presbyterian missionary Daniel L. Gifford explained how missionaries held a training class during one visit to teach basic religious doctrine. Afterwards, they enrolled only sincere inquirers as catechumens and applicants for baptism. Following further instruction in the Bible, for at least six months, these catechumens received an examination for baptism and membership. Gifford and Bell described the examinations as unusually rigorous but necessary to ensure authentic converts. Gifford noted that the examinations were far more demanding than those in American churches and more comparable to “the ordeal through which the young minister passes when examined by his presbytery for the licensure to preach.”²⁷

²⁶ Eugene Bell, “Letter to his parents, January 31, 1897,” RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA. Underline and quotation marks in original.

²⁷ Daniel L. Gifford, Every-day Life in Korea: A Collection of Studies and Stories (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1898), 142.

Methodist missionaries were no less thorough. In 1889, Appenzeller surmised that the Methodist mission was in “no haste to baptize” Koreans unless they gave clear evidence of doctrinal assent and experimental piety.²⁸ Yet Appenzeller wondered if these demands were pharisaical and contrary to the Wesleyan notion of God’s free grace. He added that the converts were unlike Americans: “There is a primitive simplicity about their faith that is new to us in the West.” He worried that he had succumbed to the “temptation to make it hard for these people to come into the kingdom.”²⁹

Despite their rigor, the missionaries often failed to achieve their aims. In 1899, the Presbyterian mission in P’yongyang noted that it had excommunicated two Korean church members and suspended eight more “for purchasing lottery tickets after warning of the sinfulness of it had been given.”³⁰ In 1902, Presbyterian F.S. Miller reported that sixty Koreans affiliated with the Presbyterian mission asserted that they were no longer bound to obey the government and aggressively collected debts owed to them by other Koreans. Miller lamented that they were wielding Christianity as a tool of resistance against the ruling authorities. Although Miller told them that “Christianity had nothing to do with worldly power, deliverance from official oppression, or collection of debts,” the Korean group would not relent; even worse, they grew increasingly influential in neighboring villages.³¹ In 1897, Speer noted that Koreans associated Christianity with political power. He cited Underwood’s report that several Korean men professed to be

²⁸ Appenzeller, “Native Inquiries,” 347.

²⁹ Appenzeller, 349.

³⁰ “Report of Pyeng Yang Station, 1899-1900,” 5.

³¹ F.S. Miller, “Missionary Difficulties,” *The Korea Field*, February 1902, 23-24.

Christians, though no missionary had examined them, and they claimed civil authority to extort money, order arrests, and command magistrates to decide cases in their favor because of their religious conversions.³² Speer observed that even Protestants under missionary supervision connected religion and patriotism. As one missionary traveled through northern Korea, he pointed out to Speer how Protestant homes and churches displayed national flags on Sunday. Speer observed how this practice had “grown up among the Christians without missionary suggestion” and that a growing number of Christians were tying religious principles to political reform and independence.³³ It bothered some missionaries that Christian teachings seemed to intensify desires for free government and democratic institutions.³⁴

John Nevius, an American Presbyterian missionary in China, had drawn the blueprint for a purely spiritual Protestantism in the mission field. In 1869 he had formulated an evangelistic strategy based on Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson’s principles of self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating indigenous churches. Nevius stressed that the primary missionary task was to evangelize and “not to teach mechanics or civil engineering, or foreign languages or sciences; not to Christianize heathen nations by civilizing them, as some plainly assert; but to Christianize them, and leave them to develop their own form of civilization.”³⁵ Nevius also criticized the use of

³² Speer, 453.

³³ Speer, 450-451.

³⁴ Speer, 452-454.

³⁵ John Livingstone Nevius, China and the Chinese: A General Description of the Country and Its Inhabitants; Its Civilization and Form of Government; Its Religious and Social Institutions; Its Intercourse with Other Nations, and Its Present Condition and Prospects (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869), 336.

foreign funds to plant indigenous churches and instead endorsed the principle of self-support as the means to growth within indigenous communities. After Nevius visited Korea in 1890, Underwood wrote that missionaries there adopted his methods “after careful and prayerful consideration.”³⁶ They settled on four guiding principles: First, Korean Protestants were to “abide in the calling wherein he was found,” meaning that no convert was to be removed from their neighborhood or paid by missionaries. Each convert was to remain at home to evangelize friends and family members without missionary finances. Second, missionaries should develop indigenous churches with simple operations that Korean Protestants could readily understand and manage. Third, Korean churches could appoint and pay evangelists among their most qualified members as long as the pay came strictly from Korean giving. Fourth, missionaries must let converts erect church buildings in accordance with Korean architectural styles and financial resources.³⁷

The Second Element in Korean Religious Experiment: Gospel Simplicity

Despite their nod toward native autonomy, missionaries governed every sphere of Korean Protestant practice. During his furlough in 1892, Appenzeller told Methodist congregations in New York and Pennsylvania that missionaries in Korea preached only the most basic Protestant doctrines to Koreans.³⁸ Although one Korean inquirer asked

³⁶ Horace G. Underwood, The Call of Korea: Political-Social-Religious (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 109.

³⁷ Underwood, 109-110.

³⁸ Appenzeller, “Report of the Spies,” in The Appenzellers, Volume 1, 29. He preached this sermon to Methodist Episcopal Church congregations in New York and Pennsylvania on September 25, October 2, November 20, and December 11, 1892.

him about such doctrines as supererogation, Appenzeller judged that Koreans were not ready for advanced theological instruction or topics like higher criticism. In 1901, he recalled his first sermon in the Korean language on Christmas Day in 1887, in which he taught the simple promise of salvation through the name of Jesus from Matthew 1:21; he claimed that he and others enjoyed success because they never deviated from that biblical verse.³⁹ Even after witnessing remarkable Protestant expansion over seventeen years, Appenzeller insisted that missionaries preached only elementary doctrines—“the old gospel”—to their converts.⁴⁰

Missionaries saw that a native church required a native ministry. In 1896, Presbyterian W.D. Reynolds unveiled his plan for training preachers: “A self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating native Church demands the development of a native ministry, self-sacrificing, self-reliant, [and] self-respecting.”⁴¹ But Reynolds maintained that missionaries alone should choose and train native pastors, and that the Koreans should not travel to America for education, since it would make them arrogant. Instead, Reynolds asserted that missionaries should train Korean preachers to be pious and independent, studying the Bible while maintaining a daily vocation to earn an income rather than expecting a church salary. Missionary teachers should “inculcate right and true ideas of the dignity of labor” and “independence,” so that Korean preachers would avoid “the rottenness of character resulting from ‘sponging’ and living upon relatives or

³⁹ Appenzeller, “Korea: The Field, Our Work, and Opportunity, Philadelphia Preacher’s Meeting, 21 January 1901,” in The Appenzellers, Volume 1, 85.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ W.D. Reynolds, “The Native Ministry,” *The Korean Repository*, May 1896, 199.

friends.”⁴² Of course, none of the Presbyterian missionaries in Korea were self-supporting; all relied on their denomination for financial support. In the face of criticism at home, a few missionaries considered earning their income as farmers or traders, but they never did so.

In their educational work, missionaries debated whether or not to teach English in their schools. In 1898, Gifford wrote that Presbyterian mission schools had decided to teach strictly in Chinese and Korean.⁴³ Missionaries observed that Koreans were most interested in the mission schools in order to acquire Western education and learn English. Although some American teachers wished to teach English in order to civilize Koreans, others feared that English classes would detract from religious education. The building of a purified Christianity required that Koreans be interested in mission schools more for religion than English. In 1888, Scranton wrote that the Methodist mission school for girls in Korea was not training their eleven enrolled students to become more like Americans but rather better Koreans. He declared that the missionaries were not cultivating the Koreans over in their own image—“after our foreign ways of living, dress, and surroundings”—but took “pleasure in making Koreans better Koreans only.” He summarized, “We want Korea to be proud of Korean things, and more, that it is a perfect Korea through Christ and His teachings.”⁴⁴ In 1887, Appenzeller founded Pai Chai

⁴² Reynolds, 201.

⁴³ Gifford, 188.

⁴⁴ “Notes from Korea,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, August 1888, 373.

Academy after teaching English to students eager to learn the language.⁴⁵ At the time, the government prohibited evangelism, and Appenzeller taught English as a means to remain in the country. The king supported Appenzeller's school and provided the name, Pai Chai Academy, which meant "Hall for Rearing Men."⁴⁶ In 1903, missionary administrators at Pai Chai Academy removed English courses from the curriculum to accentuate their commitment to Christianity. One missionary teacher noted that the school's restriction appeared "absurd to the man who stands outside and looks on," but he maintained that "many of the missionaries have the feeling that instruction in English is not only a waste of time but positively injurious to the Koreans."⁴⁷ Inchoate Korean minds might adopt Western ways over Christian ones. After implementing their new policy, missionaries reported a decline in the number of students. They were also surprised that some students organized a strike against the school for changing the curriculum.⁴⁸ But the Principal chafed at student demands and insisted that the school was for religious education.⁴⁹

In 1906, after the Japanese began operating schools in Korea, Scranton confessed that the elimination of English was a mistake. The students needed to learn English because they lacked adequate textbooks in Korean and because English would promote modern civilization. With increasing Japanese encroachment into Korean affairs, which

⁴⁵ Henry G. Appenzeller, "Henry Appenzeller Begins Mission in Korea," in The Methodist Experience in America: A Sourcebook, edited by Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 422-424

⁴⁶ Paik, 128-129.

⁴⁷ C.G. Hounshell, "C.G. Hounshell's Report," Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Korean Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1903 (Seoul, Korea: Methodist Publishing House, 1903), 23.

⁴⁸ Paik, 310.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

included schools that taught exclusively in Japanese, Scranton believed that it was time for Koreans to learn English so that they might be led “out of ignorance to abreast with the rest of the world and out from every form of bondage into freedom and equality with the rest of humanity.”⁵⁰ He defended his position by referring to Methodism’s founder, John Wesley, who, Scranton claimed, had “said that our people are not more holy because they are not more knowing.”⁵¹ Although Scranton had reversed his position of nearly twenty years, he remained arbiter of what was best for Korean Protestants. He and other missionaries would make the correct adjustments to their experiment.

The missionaries sometimes overreached their authority and created conflict. In 1897, one Presbyterian missionary, C.C. Vinton, seized the tools of laborers because they were working on the Sabbath. The Koreans were working for the Russian legation, constructing a dividing wall between missionary residences and the legation grounds. The Russians were enraged because Vinton had confiscated Russian-owned tools and the American legation had to intervene. Allen, in his first year leading the U.S. legation, ordered Vinton to return the tools. Vinton initially refused unless the Koreans refrained from working on the Sabbath, but he eventually withdrew his demand and agreed not to interfere with the workers as long as they stayed off mission property.⁵² In 1900, Allen admonished another Presbyterian missionary who had destroyed Buddhist idols in a Korean temple and sent a letter calling upon the Emperor to repent of his sins. A British

⁵⁰ W.B. Scranton, Minutes of the Korean Mission Conference, June 1906, 32.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Horace N. Allen, “Diary on September 26, 1897,” in Allen Uisa ui son'gyo, oegyo p'yonji, 1884-1905, edited by In-su Kim (Seoul, Korea: Changnohoe Sinhak Taehakkyo Pusol Han'guk Kyohoesa Yon'guwon, 2007), 553-554, and Harrington, 104-105.

diplomat in Seoul urged Allen to punish the missionary, explaining that the British government did not permit interference to indigenous worship in India and that the U.S. legation should refrain from it in Korea. Allen threatened the disruptive missionary with imprisonment before the missionary apologized and promised not to create any more trouble.⁵³ In 1901, Allen wrote to the State Department, “Among a set of missionaries of particularly high class, the Korean mission has a few men who could well be spared.”⁵⁴

The mission experienced a reversal when missionaries witnessed how Korean converts adapted Christianity to their culture. They doubted the veracity of Koreans who claimed to be cured of demon possession. At first, missionaries believed that traditional beliefs in demons and evil spirits aided evangelization, because stories of Jesus driving out demons resonated with Korean listeners. But as the converts began testifying to their own experiences with demons, missionaries grew skeptical and feared that the Koreans had not renounced “heathenism.” In his diary, Bernheisel, who visited converts throughout the country between 1900 and 1907, recorded his worries about narratives of demon possession. In 1906, he met a Korean woman who encountered a demon in her dreams before his arrival. The demon had threatened “to kill her for not feeding him any longer,” and she woke up feeling the evil power of the demon inside of her.⁵⁵ The Christians in her village prayed and read the Scriptures for two days until “the demon

⁵³ Horace N. Allen, Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes, Missionary and Diplomatic (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 173-174, and Harrington, 105-106.

⁵⁴ Allen, “Letter to the Secretary of State, January 5, 1901,” as cited in Harrington, 104.

⁵⁵ Charles F. Bernheisel, “Charles F. Bernheisel Diary, April 16, 1906,” 09 0917 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

declared he would leave.”⁵⁶ Bernheisel examined the woman and admitted her for catechumen class but did not fully believe her testimony. He judged the woman as “mentally weak and ignorant” but also “most happy and faithful in all her religious duties.”⁵⁷ In this and other instances, Bernheisel felt conflicted by testimonies of demon possession. Although his narrators insisted that Jesus had answered their prayers and cast out demons, Bernheisel feared the indigenization of Christianity apart from missionary supervision.⁵⁸ Other missionaries also worried that Korean converts retained an attachment to older belief in spirit worship. The imperative for a purified Protestantism was “the abandonment of spirit-worship,” but missionaries confessed that it was difficult for Westerners to interpret Korean practices.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, optimism prevailed. In January 1905, *The Missionary Review of the World* reported that the Russo-Japanese War was not disrupting mission work in Korea. Rather, like the Sino-Japanese War a decade earlier, the upheaval led to increased Korean interest in Christianity.⁶⁰ In the same issue, editors added “four cheering items from Korea”: increasing numbers of converts, well-developed training classes, the evangelistic spirit of Koreans, and “loving, effective, *unpaid* evangelists.” “If there is a place on earth where the Gospel is given ‘without price,’ it is in Korea by Koreans. Only Uganda offers

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Bernheisel, Charles F., Charles F. Bernheisel Diary, February 12, 1902, 09 0917 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

⁵⁹ Gifford, 115-117.

⁶⁰ “Conditions in Korea,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, January 1905, 3-4.

as much or, perhaps more.”⁶¹ In July 1906, Methodist missionary William A. Noble compared the Korean church in P’yongyang to his home Conference (called the Wyoming Conference), which occupied parts of New York and Pennsylvania. Koreans in the P’yongyang church gave 1,915.43 yen over the past year, which equaled the amount raised by seventy percent of the churches in the Wyoming Conference. But Noble noted the difference between the P’yongyang church and the Pennsylvania and New York churches was that “a laborer’s wages in Pennsylvania and New York are two dollars a day, and in Korea twenty-five cents a day.” He slipped a criticism into his remarks. Americans boasted of their generous philanthropy as a mark of their superior civilization. Yet Korean Protestants gave as much as, if not more than, the Americans: “I stand ready with this and other facts to challenge any people, whether white, brown, yellow, or black to show a better record than the Koreans.”⁶²

The Third Element in Korean Religious Experiment: Denominational Unity

Koreans had self-supporting churches and they responded to political upheaval by turning to Christianity. A third sign of success in the missionary experiment was the spirit of cooperation between Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries. From the earliest stages of mission work, Methodists and Presbyterians established comity agreements that divided Korea into territories for each denomination’s missionaries. But some missionaries also desired a unified Korean Protestantism unencumbered by the denominational divisions of America, where Protestants argued over doctrinal matters

⁶¹ “Four Cheering Items from Korea,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, January 1905, 76. Italics in original.

⁶² W.A. Noble, “Korean Decadence,” *The Korea Mission Field*, July 1906, 176.

and competed for members. In 1905, Underwood envisioned that Korean Protestants under missionary direction would fulfill the Apostle Paul's promise of Christian unity and equality in Galatians 3:28 by forming "a united non-sectarian Church of Christ, where there are neither Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Jews nor Greeks, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, circumcised, nor uncircumcised, but CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL."⁶³ Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries met in 1905 and resolved that it was the right time for Korean Protestants to form a united Church. During the conference, missionaries addressed the practical issues of union. For example, they talked about teaching Calvinist doctrines like predestination. Scranton, a Methodist, asked if Presbyterians would permit Methodists to teach their view of Romans 9, which Presbyterians interpreted as a defense of predestination, to converts. The Presbyterians replied "that Romans—even the ninth chapter—could be taught to Presbyterian converts by Methodist missionaries without danger."⁶⁴ The Americans were not interested in teaching complicated theology that would upset simple-minded Korean believers. In 1904, one Presbyterian missionary explained that Gospel simplicity rather than theological complexity was the avenue to expansion.⁶⁵ The new church would have a Korean name, "Ta Han Jesu Kyo whoi," as well as a Korean hymn-book and religious newspaper.⁶⁶

⁶³ H.G. Underwood, "Twenty Years' Missionary Work in Korea," *The Missionary Review of the World*, May 1905, 376. Capital letters in original.

⁶⁴ S.F. Moore, "An Epoch-Making Conference in Korea: The Movement for a United Christian Church," *The Missionary Review of the World*, September 1905, 691.

⁶⁵ Gale, *The Vanguard*, 167-178.

⁶⁶ Moore, 691-692. "Ta Han Jesu Kyo whoi" is translated in English as "The Jesus Church of Korea."

They also entertained hopes for a united missionary magazine, *The Korea Mission Field*.⁶⁷ Presbyterians circulated their own magazine, *The Korea Field*, from 1901 to 1905, and Methodists created *The Korea Methodist* in 1904. *The Korea Field* had nearly 1,000 subscriptions in Korea and America for its biannual issues.⁶⁸ In 1911, *The Korea Mission Field* circulated 16,310 copies throughout the world, averaging nearly 1,360 monthly subscriptions.⁶⁹ A new General Council of Evangelical Missions in Korea would organize the union. It would have representatives from the American Methodist missions (MEC and MECS), the American Presbyterian missions (PCUSA and PCUS), the Canadian Presbyterian mission, and the Australian Presbyterian mission.⁷⁰ The hope was that the experiment in Korea would become an example to all nations. W.D. Reynolds, a southern Presbyterian missionary, confessed that he disavowed the notion of union, even with northern Presbyterians, when he first arrived in 1892. But thirteen years later, he wanted “real union of all evangelical denominations and organic union for the native Church.”⁷¹ “In this matter of union,” added a Methodist pastor, “I believe God wants to make Korea an object-lesson for the world.”⁷²

In the year that Japan coerced Korea to sign the Protectorate Treaty, missionaries still, on the whole, saw the nation as unfit for independence, but they also called Korea

⁶⁷ *The Korea Mission Field*, November 1905, 11.

⁶⁸ *The Korea Field*, November 1902, 1.

⁶⁹ See *The Annual Report of the Korean Religious Book and Tract Society, 1911-1919* (Seoul, Korea: The Society, 1917-1919).

⁷⁰ S.F. Moore, “Steps Toward Missionary Union in Korea,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, December 1905, 903.

⁷¹ Moore, 904.

⁷² Moore, 903.

“the Palestine of the Far East.”⁷³ In the biblical era, God’s message emerged from Palestine, a weak nation surrounded by larger ones. Similarly, Korea, small and feeble, had a mission to model a purified and unified Christianity. Such an ideal reflected an earlier vision of America as a “city upon a hill.”

Despite their enthusiasm for unity, missionaries privately expressed doubts about the formation of one national Protestant Church. As smaller denominations in Korea, Methodists fretted about ceding ground to the Presbyterians. In 1906, Scranton listed his reservations. Because Presbyterians outnumbered Methodists, he feared that uniting mission schools would make all the schools entirely Presbyterian in character and instruction. He opposed Presbyterian efforts to move forward with discussions of school union: “The truth is,” he wrote in a private letter, “we need a school which shall be just what we are, or ought to be, Methodist. With our difficulties on the field, and short force, we need to raise men in or school who shall represent our spirit and teaching, and not a compromise.”⁷⁴ Scranton criticized Presbyterians for aggressively imposing their will upon the Methodists; Presbyterianism was “a very ungenerous rival.” Union would mean the downfall of Methodism in Korea; Methodists would be absorbed by the Presbyterians and become “their slaves.”⁷⁵ Although the Methodist D.A. Bunker supported union, Scranton doubted Bunker’s qualifications and intentions, since he had been ordained as a Congregationalist minister, worked as a school teacher for the Korean government, and married a Presbyterian missionary before joining the Methodist mission. He was not “a

⁷³ “Korea, the Palestine of the Far East,” *The Korea Methodist*, September 1905, 151.

⁷⁴ W.B. Scranton, “Letter to A.B. Leonard, January 18, 1906,” 365.

⁷⁵ W.B. Scranton, “Letter to A.B. Leonard, April 12, 1906,” 372-373.

Methodist at heart or by training.”⁷⁶ Scranton did not want Presbyterians to perceive Methodists as weak.⁷⁷

Presbyterians in Korea were also privately ambivalent. In 1906, Underwood noted to Brown that several of them had grumbled over recent discussions on school union. They felt that union was unnecessary because their educational work had proceeded so well without Methodist support. Underwood conceded that Presbyterians should pursue union cautiously with “every step carefully considered before being taken,” but he still believed that a united Protestant Church in Korea would conserve missionary forces and produce more converts.⁷⁸ But some Korean Presbyterians themselves did not favor union. In March 1905, Bernheisel wrote that Korean Presbyterians in one village rejected attempts to unite them with Methodists. Although missionaries insisted that the two groups worship together, the Presbyterians refused, “saying they were Presbyterians.”⁷⁹ Methodist missionaries then brought the Methodists to the Presbyterians and “forced them to hold a union service and enrolled all their names,” but Bernheisel reported that the Presbyterians “would still not be persuaded” and that “neither party seems to be disposed to join the other.”⁸⁰ Korean Protestants were not as obedient and pliable as the missionaries had imagined.

⁷⁶ W.B. Scranton, “Letter to A.B. Leonard, April 12, 1906,” 373.

⁷⁷ W.B. Scranton, “Letter to A.B. Leonard, April 12, 1906,” 374.

⁷⁸ Horace G. Underwood, “Letter to Arthur Judson Brown on January 16, 1909,” in Kim, 1074-1075.

⁷⁹ Charles F. Bernheisel, “Charles F. Bernheisel Diary, March 20, 1905,” 09 0917 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Revival Movements Expand and Confound the Korean Religious Experiment

The General Council in 1905 also passed a resolution for a “simultaneous revival movement” that would commence during the Korean New Year (*Seol-nal*), which was a three-day holiday that started on the first day of the lunar calendar.⁸¹ They wanted a nationwide revival because of political conditions. Just as the Japanese began imposing their will, the Council’s highly publicized revival campaign served the missionaries’ interests. It reached unconverted Koreans while also preventing churches from becoming overtly political organizations.⁸² Before the Russo-Japanese War, Presbyterians had set upon 1907 as the date for the first Korean Presbytery—a date coinciding with the planned graduation ceremonies for the first class of young ministers at the theological seminary in P’yongyang.⁸³ The Presbytery would include one Korean elder from each organized church and have more Korean than missionary voting members. The missionary William Newton Blair noted that the Presbytery’s founding marked a truly independent Church in which Koreans would evangelize their own people. In accord with Nevius’s blueprint, Blair insisted that after the creation of the Presbytery Koreans would control their churches.⁸⁴

But missionaries worried that the churches would become hubs of nationalism. They did not fail to notice widespread Korean resistance to Japanese rule after the

⁸¹ “The Time Opportune,” *The Korea Mission Field*, December 1905, 29-30.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ William Newton Blair, *The Korea Pentecost and other Experiences on the Mission Field* (New York: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A, 1910), 38.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Protectorate Treaty. Blair observed: “In a day, what centuries of misrule of the part of her own rulers had failed to do, Japanese occupancy accomplished: patriotism was born in Korea. A wave of intense national feeling swept over the land.”⁸⁵ Shouts of “Korea for the Koreans” and “It is better to die than to be slaves” could be heard throughout the country, and some Koreans in the mountains were waging guerilla warfare against the Japanese.⁸⁶ Nationalists looked for support in the Protestant churches because the members were educated persons in a well-developed organization.⁸⁷ Missionaries, however, demanded a policy of political non-interference. Although Blair insisted that missionaries desired a Korean church for Koreans, he still wanted the churches to preserve “spiritual purity” by dissuading Koreans from joining churches for political purposes and avoiding the mistakes of the fourth century, when Constantine converted to Christianity and made it the state religion of the Roman Empire: “Had she departed even a little from the strict principle of non-interference in politics...we might have again witnessed the cross of Constantine leading a great army. I believe Korea, like the Roman Empire, would have adopted Christianity in a day, and I believe, too, we would have had another Roman Church.”⁸⁸

The General Council stated that the revival campaign was to be “a spiritual work within the church” – a sign of religion’s preeminence over politics.⁸⁹ Missionaries were

⁸⁵ Blair, 39.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Lee, Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea, 16-17.

⁸⁸ Blair, 39.

⁸⁹ “A Call to a Special Effort,” *The Korea Mission Field*, December 1905, 30. Italics in original.

to preach on topics that “teach the *heart* rather than the *head*” to ensure that Koreans would experience the assurance of salvation.⁹⁰ After the revivals in 1906, missionaries reported a wave of converts in several different parts of the country, but they did not achieve the wider national impact for which they had hoped.⁹¹ Later that year, Presbyterian missionaries in Seoul and P’yongyang welcomed Howard Agnew Johnston, the minister of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City and the special representative of the denomination’s mission in Asia. Johnston shared stories of religious revivals that recently occurred in India and Wales, stirring anew hopes for similar events in Korea.⁹² But after months of coordinated prayer campaigns, missionaries despaired in the meager results. Revival in Korea did not come close to the revivals reported in India and Wales.

In January 1907, the revival came. As they gathered for worship in P’yongyang Central Church, the two Presbyterian missionaries who led the meeting, William Blair and Graham Lee, called for the Korean Protestants to pray aloud and confess their sins to one another. With the public confession, Lee observed that “immediately the Spirit of God seemed to descend on that audience.”⁹³ For the next several days, numerous Koreans, including some of the most prominent members of the church, confessed their sins in worship services marked by weeping, shouting, and falling to the floor. Koreans confessed of stealing, adultery, and resentment, not only against one another but also

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Lee, 18.

⁹² Graham Lee, “How the Spirit Came to Pyeng Yang,” *The Korea Mission Field*, March 1907, 33.

⁹³ Lee, 34.

against the missionaries. Blair was stunned when one Korean elder confessed: “I have been guilty of fighting against God. An elder in the church, I have been guilty of hating not only Kang You-moon, but Pang Mok-sa.”⁹⁴ Blair explained that Kang You-moon was another Korean church member and Pang Mok-sa was Blair’s Korean name. The elder resented the missionary for treating him disrespectfully. “I never had a greater surprise in my life,” Blair remembered. “To think that this man, my associate in the Men’s Association[,] had been hating me without my knowing it.”⁹⁵

The events in P’yongyang initiated a surge of religious revivals. The reports elicited an initial skepticism from a few of the missionaries, who frowned on the spectacle of loud prayer and uncontrollable weeping, which “seemed like such a perversion of the proper decorum to be observed in church.”⁹⁶ But after witnessing communal audible prayer (*t’ongsong kido*) firsthand, one of the skeptics, Henry M. Bruen from Taegu, concluded that it did not subvert the principle of orderly worship. He explained how the practice—which persists in Korean Protestant worship today—did not mean that worshippers competed to lead the congregation in a “formal audible prayer in public service,” but consisted of exercises in which each person prayed “for himself but audibly because of the intense earnestness which made it impossible to keep quiet.”⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Blair, 46.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Henry M. Bruen, “Letter to Arthur J. Brown in March 1907,” in Clara Hedberg Bruen, *40 Years in Korea*, 131-132. Clara Hedberg Bruen compiled Henry M. Bruen’s writings from Korea into a self-published book, *40 Years in Korea*. There are thirteen copies of her book in U.S. libraries. I discovered the book at John Bulow Campbell Library, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

As the praying services spread through the country, the missionaries saw them as the result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

By February 1907, churches in most of the major cities, such as Seoul, Songdo, and Taegu, had hosted revivals that produced results like those in P'yongyang. By June 1907, every Protestant mission station recorded news of revivalistic fervor in the churches.⁹⁸ Missionaries across the nation celebrated the revivals as a step toward a purified Protestantism. They saw the revivals as producing “genuine” Korean converts who believed in the Bible, prayed earnestly, and refrained from using the Gospel to advance political agendas against Japanese occupation.⁹⁹ As one Methodist put it, the praying Christians were “not satisfied by mere intellectual belief, but press for evidences of a real spiritual experience.”¹⁰⁰ A Presbyterian, seeing the revival in the seminary in P'yongyang, felt reassurance that the first ordained Presbyterian ministers in the nation would be “Holy Spirit filled men,” able to testify to the experience of divine grace.¹⁰¹ This was what the missionaries had always wanted from native ministers: Gospel simplicity and experimental piety rather than theological complexity. In 1908, *The Missionary Review of the World* described the first seven ordained Korean Presbyterian

⁹⁸ Lee, 22.

⁹⁹ W.G. Cram, “A Genuine Change,” *The Korea Mission Field*, April 1907, 67-68.

¹⁰⁰ J.L. Gerdine, “The Colporters’ Share,” *The Korea Mission Field*, April 1907, 72.

¹⁰¹ W.L. Swallen, “God’s Work of Grace in Pyeng Yang Classes,” *The Korea Mission Field*, April 1907, 80.

ministers as honest and pious men who did not dabble in theological intricacies but rather preached the simple Gospel message with “power,” “force,” and “directness.”¹⁰²

Missionary Racism and Korean Piety

After the 1907 revivals, missionary perceptions changed. They saw the Koreans no longer as irreligious and superstitious but rather as religious geniuses with a special aptitude for Christianity. In 1891, Jones marked Koreans as spiritually indifferent, because they exhibited no strong interest in any religion. In 1908, he claimed that Koreans were naturally religious and born into a nation “rich in its religious phenomena.”¹⁰³ The religious traditions he had once described as signs of decrepit heathenism were now evidences of an innate Korean religious vitality that prepared Koreans to accept Protestantism. Korean traditional beliefs in spirits made it easy for them “to accept the doctrine of the spiritual nature of God,” and Confucianism, “with its age-long insistence on the fact that man is a moral being and must obey laws,” prepared them to take seriously the ethical commands in the Bible.¹⁰⁴ Even *The London Times* reported on the revivals, informing readers that Koreans were “accepting Christianity with an enthusiasm and earnestness which renders the success of missions in China and Japan as nothing by comparison.”¹⁰⁵ *The Missionary Review of the World* now marveled that Koreans had “a genius for Christianity” and grasped biblical teachings “with a

¹⁰² James S. Gale, “The First Presbytery in Korea,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, January 1908, 42-44.

¹⁰³ Jones, George Heber, “The Native Religions,” *The Korea Mission Field*, January 1908, 11.

¹⁰⁴ Jones, George Heber, “The Native Religions,” *The Korea Mission Field*, February 1908, 29.

¹⁰⁵ William Gascoyne-Cecil, William, “Mission Work in Korea,” *The London Times*, October 28, 1907, 4.

comprehension, and a comprehensiveness, that amazes the missionary.”¹⁰⁶ Missionaries praised converts as “born preachers” with instinctive homiletic gifts.¹⁰⁷ Underwood summarized the changed perceptions in 1908: “The results of mission work certainly seem to prove that they are pre-eminently a religious people, although, when we first arrived, their attitude toward their old systems had led us to believe they were lacking in religious sentiment.”¹⁰⁸

For some missionaries, the 1907 revivals brought a change in racial attitudes. J.Z. Moore confessed his low opinion of Koreans before the revivals: “Until this year I was more or less bound by that contemptible notion that the East is East and the West, West, and that there can be no real affinity between them. With others I had said the Koreans would never have a religious experience as the West has.”¹⁰⁹ He later made a deeper confession: “For two years I had been living among them, looking down upon them as something less than ‘white’ and as though made of a lower grade of clay than myself.”¹¹⁰ After the P’yongyang revivals, Moore realized that Koreans were not racially inferior to Americans. Despite cultural differences, he said, “the Korean is at heart, and in all fundamental things, at one with his brother in the West.”¹¹¹ More than one missionary had tied notions of racial equality to religious piety. They began to see Koreans as

¹⁰⁶ William T. Ellis, “Korea: The Unique Mission Field,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, February 1908, 96.

¹⁰⁷ Ellis, 98.

¹⁰⁸ Underwood, 99.

¹⁰⁹ J.Z. Moore, “The Great Revival Year,” *The Korea Mission Field*, August 1907, 118.

¹¹⁰ Moore, J.Z., “The Fullness of the Gospel,” *The Korea Mission Field*, December 1907, 179.

¹¹¹ Moore, “The Great Revival Year,” 118.

equals—or at least to feel that they did—after the converts demonstrated exceptional feats of piety during the 1907 revivals. And even then, some missionaries continued to lambast Koreans for their primitive ways and objectionable physical hygiene. Even if they saw their converts as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, they could not entirely escape prevailing Western racial ideologies. For most of them—maybe even for all—Koreans were still a “people of color,” inferior to whites. Unconverted Koreans remained uncivilized and uncouth; converted ones still possessed scant intellectual sophistication and little need for deep theological inquiry. As Underwood put it in 1910 in a letter to a British Protestant writer: “The Koreans really put Western Christians to shame by their simple, child-like faith in God.”¹¹² He was still the spiritual father of simple-minded children.

Racial perspectives were complex. The Americans saw themselves as racially superior, but they derided Western correspondents who depicted Koreans as racially inferior. American author and journalist Jack London came to the region as a foreign correspondent during the Russo-Japanese War. His reports praised the Japanese military as brave and orderly but denigrated Koreans as cowardly, inefficient, and weak. Whereas London described the Japanese as a “race who can produce real fighting men,” Koreans were “the most inefficient of human creatures,” “spiritless,” and “helpless.”¹¹³ The most apt metaphor, he wrote, was that of an impoverished man who had been “limping for

¹¹² George T.B. Davis, Korea for Christ: The Story of the Great Crusade to win one million souls from Heathenism to Christianity (London: Christian Workers’ Depot, 1910), 15.

¹¹³ Jack London and Daniel A. Metraux, The Asian Writings of Jack London: Essays, Letters, Newspaper Dispatches, and Short Fiction (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), 165, 199, and 202.

centuries and will continue to limp.”¹¹⁴ London recognized that some Koreans regarded the missionaries as powerful and honorable. He said that he gained the trust of strangers in one village by saying “Mah-mok-sah,” which was the Korean name of Samuel A. Moffett, an American Presbyterian missionary in P’yongyang. As a result, “infinite comprehension” dawned upon several Korean faces and “there flooded over it waves of happiness like unto that of angels.” After visiting Korean homes, London was astonished by Moffett’s high standing; his name was “a word to conjure with” in Korea.¹¹⁵

Missionaries who invited correspondents like London into their homes during war disparaged the journalists’ negative accounts of Korea.¹¹⁶ *The Korea Mission Field* called upon American readers to disregard Western accounts that described Koreans as “shiftless and lazy”; such stories came from foreign “Globe Trotters” who looked at Korea superficially with no firsthand experience of daily life.¹¹⁷ Underwood insisted that prevailing Western notions of Korea as “a nation of loafers” and “a moribund people” were crumbling as the West learned of missionary progress and the self-sacrificing energy of Korean Protestants.¹¹⁸ After all, sixty thousand Korean Presbyterian adherents in his mission, whose average daily wage was 15 to 25 cents in U.S. currency, had

¹¹⁴ London and Metraux, 202.

¹¹⁵ London and Metraux, 243-245. London wrote this article for the *San Francisco Examiner*, but it never reached the editor. A copy of London’s dispatch is among his papers at the Huntington Library in California (London and Metraux, 243).

¹¹⁶ In Bernheisel’s diary on April 15, 1904, he writes that Jack London gave a reading out of his book, *The Call of the Wild*, at fellow Presbyterian missionary William A. Baird’s home (Charles F. Bernheisel, “Charles F. Bernheisel Diary, April 15, 1904,” 09 0917 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA).

¹¹⁷ “Globe Trotters,” *The Korea Mission Field*, January 1908, 10.

¹¹⁸ H.G. Underwood, “Korea’s Crisis Hour,” *The Korea Mission Field*, August 1908, 130.

contributed the equivalent of \$40,594.87 in 1907.¹¹⁹ Koreans might be simple-minded children, but such financial sacrifices proved that these children had the potential to become faithful spiritual adults in a civilized society.

After the Russo-Japanese War, Japan's geopolitical stature grew in both Asia and the United States. Even before the war, Americans had praised the Japanese for their swift and steady adoption of Western ways. At the 1876 World's Fair in Philadelphia, the Japanese were presented as the "Yankees of the East" and "Honorary Aryans" in contrast to the dying races of American Indians and Chinese, who stubbornly refused to relinquish their antiquated traditions.¹²⁰ In 1905, Japanese victory over Russia marked the first time a non-white nation defeated a white nation in battle. Sidney L. Gulick, an American Congregationalist missionary in Japan, wrote that the war inaugurated "a readjustment of the balance of power among the nations" as the Japanese halted the territorial expansion of white nations and humbled Anglo-Saxon racial pride.¹²¹ W.E.B. DuBois also measured the significance of Japan's victory for racial relations across the globe: "For the first time in a thousand years a great white nation has measured arms with a colored nation and has been found wanting. The Russo-Japanese War has marked an epoch... The awakening of the yellow races is certain. Then the awakening of the brown and black races will follow in time, no unprejudiced student of history can doubt."¹²² But no widely known writer

¹¹⁹ Underwood, 131.

¹²⁰ Bradley, 183.

¹²¹ Sidney L. Gulick, The White Peril in the Far East (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1905), 5.

¹²² W.E.B. DuBois, "The Color Line Belts the World (1906)," in W.E.B. DuBois on Asia: Crossing the World Color Line, edited by Bill V. Mullen and Cathryn Watson (Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 2005), 34.

depicted an awakening of the Koreans. The Japanese might be “Honorary Aryans”; the Koreans were “Pacific Negroes.”¹²³ Like Filipinos, the Korean race could develop only through imperial benevolence. The United States would uplift the Filipinos; Japan would uplift the Koreans. Gulick believed that Japan knew best how to harmonize Eastern and Western thinking. In its “new role of teacher and leader of the Far East,” Japan would guide Korea to follow in its footsteps.¹²⁴

In 1907, George Trumbull Ladd, a professor of psychology at Yale University, traveled to Korea with Japanese Resident-General Ito Hirobumi, and published his account as *In Korea with Marquis Ito*.¹²⁵ He supported the Japanese occupation of Korea and contrasted the primitive and effete Korean race to the more enlightened and vigorous Japanese.¹²⁶ Unlike Japan, Korea stubbornly maintained an isolationist foreign policy and aggression toward foreigners into the nineteenth century. Ladd recalled Korean persecution of French Catholic missionaries and the killing of three Americans when their merchant schooner landed off the banks of the Taedong River near P’yongyang in 1866 as evidence of their provincial thinking.¹²⁷ He also refuted laudatory American Protestant mission reports about Korea by charging that the majority of Korean converts failed to comprehend even the most basic conceptions of God and Christian ethics. The so-called revivals revealed lurid confessions of lying, avarice, sexual impurity, and

¹²³ Bradley, 128-136.

¹²⁴ Gulick, 114.

¹²⁵ George Trumbull Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1908). As Japanese Resident-General, Ito Hirobumi ruled over Korea as the highest ranking Japanese official.

¹²⁶ Ladd, 162.

¹²⁷ Ladd, 194 and 401.

malice toward others, which demonstrated that Korean commoners, with their low intellectual and moral ideals, could not grasp “the genuine spirit and true practice of the religion of Christ” without at least three generations of missionary instruction.¹²⁸ In 1908, after two Koreans in California murdered Durham White Stevens, an American adviser to the Korean government who supported Japanese imperial interests, Ladd wrote in *The New York Times* that the Koreans were a “bloody race” with a long history of resorting to crude assassinations instead of civil discourse with political enemies.¹²⁹

Although American Protestants labored to refute popular Western notions of the lowly Korean race, they shared some of the same racial opinions. In his 1901 report on the Presbyterian mission in Korea, Brown inferred that one of the causes for Protestant growth in Korea was because Koreans were “undoubtedly a weaker race than the Japanese and Chinese,” which made it easier for missionaries to make an impression on them.¹³⁰ In 1909, Brown detailed the distinctions between Japan, China, and Korea in a printed report meant for private circulation.¹³¹ The Japanese moved as one unit “in politics, in war, in commerce, and in the activities of their daily lives,” and the defining characteristic of the Japanese was solidarity. The Chinese were, because of the “conspicuous absence of centralization, an individualistic race who engaged in continued popular uprisings against both Chinese ruling authorities and foreign inhabitants. Then

¹²⁸ Ladd, 391-393.

¹²⁹ George Trumbull Ladd, “Koreans A Bloody Race,” *New York Times*, March 26, 1908.

¹³⁰ Brown, 7.

¹³¹ Arthur Judson Brown, Report on a Second Visit to China, Japan, and Korea, 1909, with a Discussion of Some Problems of Mission Work (New York: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1909). On the cover page, the words “PRINTED BUT NOT PUBLISHED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY” are included.

came Korea: “The key idea of Korea is not so easily stated in one word. We might call it subjectivity. The people are less virile, less ambitious, less independent in spirit.”¹³² The Korean temperament was more emotional than the Japanese or Chinese, which made it “comparatively easy to reach [the Korean] heart and to arouse [Korean] sympathies.” This tendency toward sentimentality was “one reason why Christianity has made more rapid progress in Korea than in either China or Japan.”¹³³

In 1919, Brown published *The Mastery of the Far East: The Story of Korea's Transformation and Japan's Rise to Supremacy*, in which he again attributed the greater success of the Protestant mission in Korea to racial characteristics: “Korean temperament is quite distinct from that of China and Japan. Less stolid and materialistic than the Chinese, less alert and martial than the Japanese, the Korean is more susceptible and trustful than either.”¹³⁴ These weaker racial characteristics made the country a more fertile mission field than Japan because Korean converts did not deviate from missionary instruction: “The Japanese Christian subjects the teachings of the missionaries to his own independent scrutiny. The Korean Christian takes them without question. The former is a theological progressive; the latter a theological conservative.”¹³⁵ Brown compared Koreans to African Americans. Just as white American Protestants long marveled at the seemingly innate religiosity of African Americans, Brown celebrated the intrinsic religious virtues of Koreans, which endowed them with special gifts for preaching and

¹³² Brown, 12-14.

¹³³ Brown, 15.

¹³⁴ Arthur Judson Brown, *The Mastery of the Far East: The Story of Korea's Transformation and Japan's Rise to Supremacy* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1919), 539.

¹³⁵ Brown, 539-540.

prayer.¹³⁶ Yet, like African Americans, Koreans lacked the practical wisdom for autonomous rule. Until 1907, Presbyterian missionaries described Korean Protestant congregations as “groups” and not “churches” because they felt that Korean converts were not ready to assume the mantle of a full-fledged ecclesial organization.¹³⁷ In 1909, Brown described missionaries in Korea as parents who cared for children.¹³⁸ Although missionaries spoke publicly about self-governing indigenous churches, they remained privately hesitant, Brown wrote in 1919, about turning over ecclesial affairs to Koreans. He quoted one missionary: “The Koreans, by thousands of years of misrule, are like children. Spiritually, they are in advance of many Christian nations; but they lack balance, foresight, the essence of self-government; and it will require many years of discipline to form it in them.”¹³⁹

The Making of a Religious Antidote to Theological Liberalism

Brown surveyed the geopolitical situation in Korea after the Protectorate Treaty and compared the strained relations between the Japanese and Koreans to those of whites and blacks in America. Although Japan claimed that their benevolent rule would promote Korean interests, Brown wrote that it was “the type of kindness which characterizes a Georgia gentleman toward a Negro...the Georgian may be a friend and benefactor of the

¹³⁶ For a historical analysis of white American interpretations of African American religiosity, see Curtis J. Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹³⁷ Norman C. Whittemore, “The Growth of a Korean “Group” or Congregation,” *Woman’s Work for Women*, November 1905, 257-258.

¹³⁸ Brown, *Report on a Second Visit to China, Japan, and Korea, 1909, with a Discussion of Some Problems of Mission Work*, 94.

¹³⁹ Brown, 547.

negro, but he does not consider himself on the latter's level."¹⁴⁰ Brown did not disagree with Japanese assessments: Koreans were an inferior race in need of foreign guidance. Although he sympathized with Korean calls for independence, Brown believed that missionaries should cooperate with Japanese authorities. American Protestants could provide religious supervision; Japanese imperialists could implement modernizing reforms.

The missionaries did not disdain such a call for cooperation, but they found it more difficult to overlook Japanese misrule. In 1905, Scranton wrote his mission board in New York. He told his supervisors that the Japanese wantonly destroyed Korean property and threatened Koreans with physical harm: "As foreigners living in Korea... we are all nearly pro-Japanese to the extent of wishing well for Japan in Korea, if she will do well by Korea. We are Korean sympathizers first and look at Korea from the local standpoint."¹⁴¹ In 1906, Mattie Wilcox Noble complained in her diary of how Japanese soldiers seized homes and the most valuable tracts of land for military purposes without fairly compensating the owners. Japanese soldiers also tried to confiscate mission property until the missionaries threatened to go to higher Japanese imperial officers. Noble observed that "the poor Koreans suffer thus all the time" with no one to defend their cause.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Brown, 584.

¹⁴¹ W.B. Scranton, "Letter to Stephen Olin Benton on May 15, 1905," 355.

¹⁴² Mattie Wilcox Noble, "Diary entries on April 30, 1906, and August 6, 1906," 151-152.

Missionaries used religious and secular magazines to expose Japanese wrongdoing. After the Protectorate Treaty, Japanese authorities censored Korean and English publications from Korea, forbidding critical political comment. The Americans found a way to by-pass the censorship by writing in American magazines. In *Woman's Work for Women*, Presbyterians described both the positive and the deleterious results of the Japanese occupation. They credited the Japanese for improving Korean commerce with more efficient harvesting systems but criticized Japanese soldiers for trampling upon human rights.¹⁴³ In *Appleton's Magazine*, Homer B. Hulbert charged Japan with “looting” Korea and detailed numerous Japanese injustices, such as unfair judicial procedures that made it impossible for Koreans to win cases against Japanese offenders. He also criticized the United States for its uncritical support of Japanese imperialism: “We have been arming Japan with all the instruments of physical power without arming her with the moral qualities which will restrain her in the use of that power.”¹⁴⁴ Other missionaries condemned American policy in Asia. In a letter to his sister, Bell lamented reports of U.S. soldiers mistreating Filipinos. Because of his experiences in Korea, Bell believed that he had “a better view of the U.S. as a whole” and noted that American actions abroad contradicted the notion that America stood atop the peak of Protestant civilization. He confessed relief that the Korean Protestants in his mission did not know about the immoral actions of the American government and people. If they did, Bell predicted, most of his time would be spent “trying to explain to them why it is that the

¹⁴³ *Woman's Work for Women*, November 1907, 245-246.

¹⁴⁴ Homer B. Hulbert, *Appleton's Magazine*, October 1907, 473.

Christianity we are trying to teach them and get them to accept can produce no better results in a country where it has been taught and practiced for so long.”¹⁴⁵

Critical of Japanese and American imperialism, the missionaries also disparaged Korean nationalism. In fact, missionaries had little praise for Korea apart from its hospitality to Protestant expansion. In their eyes—as one of them wrote—Korea had made no important contribution to Asia over the nation’s three thousand year history. Japan seemed to be modernizing Asia through her commercial strength and China contributed a rich tradition of Oriental scholarship, with philosophers such as Confucius and Mencius, but Korea was “the slave child” of Asia with little impact on the region’s growth.¹⁴⁶ Only missionary success would give the nation a place in world history; it would give the one true religion, Protestant Christianity, to all of Asia: “Poor, despised, oppressed Korea, what is to be her part in the great East that is to be? Not commerce, not learning, but infinitely greater than these, she is to be God’s messenger bringing the true light of Christianity in the midnight darkness of the Eastern situation.”¹⁴⁷ In 1910, Hulbert wrote that Korea was a country without a national ideal—an underlying principle defining and guiding a nation’s progress. Though critical of Japanese atrocities, he had little respect for Korean civilization. It had little ability in politics, war, or commerce; it was “no longer politically independent,” “never developed the military spirit,” and did

¹⁴⁵ Eugene Bell, “Letter to Annie Bell on June 6, 1900,” RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁴⁶ J.Z. Moore, “The Vision and the Task,” *The Korea Mission Field*, April 1906, 108.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

not cultivate the land as resourcefully as either China or Japan.¹⁴⁸ Hulbert concluded that Korea's national ideal must be established by her religious spirit. The Koreans were at least capable of "adopting genuine Christianity."¹⁴⁹

While they criticized Japanese brutality, the missionaries remained politically neutral for the sake of their religious work. When one missionary inserted criticism of Japan in his annual report, the denomination publicly rebuked him for expressing an unauthorized political opinion.¹⁵⁰ In his 1909 report, Brown observed that "Japan is in Korea to stay, and we cannot aid the Koreans by cursing their rulers."¹⁵¹ The great Protestant experiment must not be sacrificed, especially after the great revivals in 1907. Westerners had come too far in their creation of a purified Protestantism to lose it all by supporting Korean independence. Secretly many professed sympathy for Koreans, but most missionaries did not believe resistance against Japan stood any chance of success. Instead, missionaries accepted the *realpolitik* of Japanese rule and endeavored to preserve their religious gains. Lillias Underwood believed that Korean political conditions after 1905 enhanced the importance of the religious progress, partly because it served as a rebuke to Protestant liberals in America. Underwood declared that God was "intending to use one of the weakest and most despised peoples to illustrate what the Gospel pure and

¹⁴⁸ Homer B. Hulbert, "The Needs of a National Ideal for Korea," *The Korea Mission Field*, January 1910, 23.

¹⁴⁹ Hulbert, 24.

¹⁵⁰ Homer B. Hulbert, "Japanese and Missionaries in Korea," *The Missionary Review of the World*, March 1908, 205.

¹⁵¹ Brown, 78.

simple can do to evangelize a whole nation.”¹⁵² Success would vindicate the “old time religion,” a conservative theological system that held to the inerrancy of Scripture and Christian doctrines like Jesus Christ’s bodily resurrection, against “Higher Critics” and “liberal New Theologians.”¹⁵³ In 1908, Yale professor Harlan P. Beach studied the American missionary enterprise throughout the world and ascertained that Korea had eclipsed Uganda to become the most productive foreign mission field.¹⁵⁴ A year later, Horace Underwood disclosed in a letter that California oilman and fundamentalist champion Lyman Stewart provided “the largest gift we have yet received” by donating \$78,000 to support the Presbyterian mission.¹⁵⁵ And the next year, the MEC Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society declared that the Korean mission field demonstrated the power of “the straight, plain, old gospel, enforced by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁵⁶ American missionaries had produced a religious antidote to theological liberalism in a nation the rest of the world overlooked as small and inconsequential.

Missionaries understood that Western Protestant esteem for Korea entailed high acclaim for both the converts and the missionaries.¹⁵⁷ In 1909, prominent American politicians lauded the missionaries for their extraordinary work. Democratic Party leader William Jennings Bryan praised them for making Korea into “one of the most important

¹⁵² Lillias H. Underwood, 333.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Harlan P. Beach, “Korea Outdoing Uganda,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, May 1908, 391.

¹⁵⁵ Horace G. Underwood, “Letter to Dwight H. Day on February 15, 1909,” 1085-1086.

¹⁵⁶ Jennie Fowler-Willing and Mrs. George Heber Jones, *The Lure of Korea* (Boston: Methodist Episcopal Church Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society Publishing Office, 1910), 38.

¹⁵⁷ “The Example of Korea Missionaries,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, May 1910, 380-381.

mission fields.”¹⁵⁹ Former Republican Senator and Vice-President Charles Warren Fairbanks admired them for their having transformed Koreans from the status of an oppressed people who “suffered the evils of misgovernment from time immemorial” into pious Christians.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion

After Japan colonized Korea with the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty on August 29, 1910, the *Missionary Review* reported that Japan’s action was inevitable—“doing away with the fiction of Korean independence”—and did not impair mission work.¹⁶¹ One MECS missionary in Asia wrote a letter to Warren Candler that compared the slow progress of their denominational mission efforts in Japan to prodigious results in Korea. He reported “a net gain of 33 per cent” in converts over the past year and vibrant churches springing up from every mission station; surely the mission provided substantive evidence in support of traditional Methodist approaches to evangelism over Social Gospel teachings: “I never felt the power of the gospel more in all my life than in this distressed land. Have we not here a new apologetic? When fools begin to talk of our holy religion as a spent force, lo! It breaks out with the energy of a volcano.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ William Jennings Bryan, “Korea, One of the Most Important Fields,” in Competent Witnesses on Korea as a Mission Field (New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1909), 5.

¹⁶⁰ Charles Warren Fairbanks, “Korea’s Redemption,” in Competent Witnesses on Korea as a Mission Field (New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1909), 7.

¹⁶¹ “The Absorption of Korea,” *The Missionary Review of the World*, October 1910, 726.

¹⁶² “Letter from E.E.H. to Warren A. Candler, September 30, 1910,” Warren A. Candler Papers, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

Missionaries did not consider the Japanese annexation as a threat to their holy experiment. Instead, annexation provided another opportunity for mission-directed purification. From 1905, missionaries called for Korean Protestants to disavow anti-Japanese sentiments in their religious practice and repent for their sin of hating the Japanese.¹⁶³ But despite their best efforts, patriotic agitators still sought church membership for political reasons. Some joined churches to petition missionaries for American assistance. In 1910, missionaries believed that annexation had eradicated misguided hopes that Protestants could convince America to intervene. *The Missionary Review of the World* wrote that every Western nation accepted Japan's annexation and that this should end "the days of ceaseless intrigue and hopes of foreign intervention and claims for extra-territorial privileges" in Korean churches.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, annexation could assist the great Protestant experiment. If Korean Protestantism—unfettered from politics—continued to grow, the churches would exemplify more and more the ideal model of Christianity. But Korean Protestants in America had different ideas about the future shape of their new religion in the age of Japanese imperialism. Just as they had discerned, by living in America, the hollowness of American pretensions to superior virtue, so also they recognized the futility of an experiment in mission that attempted to separate the Gospel from the political attitudes of the Korean people. They combined their religious beliefs and political interests to create a form of Korean Protestantism that diverged rather dramatically from the American missionary blueprint. The result, eventually, would be a clash of ideals.

¹⁶³ Blair, 42.

¹⁶⁴ "Annexation and Missions in Korea," *The Missionary Review of the World*, December 1910, 952.

Chapter 4: Syngman Rhee and the Making of the Korean Christian Church

Introduction

In 1885, a desperate Korean mother reluctantly turned to an American missionary physician to cure her ailing nine year-old son. From her village in the southern outskirts of Seoul, she viewed the missionaries in the heart of the city with suspicion. The devout Buddhist noblewoman believed the foreigners threatened traditional Korean norms. But now her son had contracted smallpox and suffered from blinding pain in his eyes. After trying every possible remedy to no avail, she had her son treated by the strange new doctor. The doctor examined the boy and prescribed medicine that restored him to full health in three days. After his recovery, the boy presented a straw bundle of ten eggs to the doctor as a token of gratitude. The doctor politely refused, telling the boy to keep the eggs and feed his own family.¹

The boy, Syngman Rhee, grew up to become a political and religious leader among Koreans in Hawaii and the United States for nearly forty years before his election as the Republic of Korea's first president in 1948. This was the first of Rhee's many relationships with American missionaries. They were happier when he was a young boy than when he later matured to become Korea's political leader. American missionaries and Korean converts transmitted Protestantism among Koreans at home and abroad, but their religious ideas clashed as much they converged during the Japanese occupation, and Rhee, as much as anyone, exemplified the sometimes subtle, sometimes overt conflict.

¹ Robert Tarbell Oliver, Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1954), 10-12.

Trying to construct a purified form of Christianity, missionaries warned the churches against political entanglements. But Korean Protestants like Rhee fused their religious beliefs and political interests and constructed religious practices and theological beliefs set in opposition to missionary intentions. Throughout his life in Korea and the United States, Rhee relied upon missionaries for help but also protested against their indifference to the Korean independence movement. Rhee's conversion and religious activism in Hawaii and the United States, which intensified but complicated his relationship with missionaries, demonstrate how Korean Protestants reinterpreted the religion according to their cultural context, colonial experience, and Western influence.

Conversion to Christianity: Beholding the Spirit of God and the Spirit of National Independence

Ten years after Rhee's initial encounter with a missionary, he enrolled at a Methodist mission school, Pai Chai Academy, to learn English. Although a Christian doctor had cured him of smallpox, Rhee and his family practiced Buddhism and Confucianism. His mother taught him the Chinese language so that he could read and memorize Confucian teachings from the *Analects* and regularly sent him to the Buddhist temple to offer prayers and sacrifices. After the Sino-Japanese War, Rhee found foreign affairs enthralling and used the mission school to acquire knowledge of Western culture and politics. But he resisted Christianity and viewed conversion as a betrayal of his Korean identity. Rhee agreed to submit to missionary instruction at Pai Chai Academy but told a classmate: "Let them change the order of heaven and earth, but I never shall

give up my mother's religion."² Over the next four years, Rhee mastered English at the mission school and worked as a Korean language tutor for newly arriving missionaries. But his heart guided him more toward Western literature and politics than toward religion classes. He tolerated them but leapt at the opportunity to read American magazines like *McClure's* and *The Outlook*.³ His insights into the United States, Western colonialism in Asia, and Japan's modernization fired his imagination about Korean society and politics.

As a reformer against the royal Korean government Rhee suffered imprisonment in 1899 for sedition. Before his arrest, he sought protection from Korean authorities in the Methodist mission compound, and during his imprisonment, missionaries unsuccessfully sought his release. They asked Horace Allen, who now had a powerful post in the U.S. legation, to appeal on Rhee's behalf because of his value as a translator for an American physician. But the interventions failed and Rhee languished in prison, bound by manacles on his hands and feet. In the midst of his anguish, he dimly remembered sermons from Pai Chai Academy and cried out, "O God, save my country, and save my soul."⁴ He then felt peace and converted to Christianity. Soon after, he began evangelizing to fellow inmates and prison guards. He eventually received release from the shackles and could read letters, books, and magazines sent by missionaries. In 1903, George Heber Jones encouraged him to remain faithful in prison and optimistic about his release: "I hope and pray that the Emperor will grant you a full pardon and you will come out to help us in

² Oliver, 14.

³ Oliver, 21.

⁴ Margaret E. Burton, *Comrades in Service* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1915), 171.

making Korea a Christian land.”⁵ Rhee read the Bible and other Western literature and taught Bible classes, established a library of more than five hundred books within the prison, started an English-Korean dictionary project, and wrote a book fittingly entitled *The Spirit of Independence*.⁶

Rhee’s book contended that Korea must open her doors to the West in order to learn modern technology and adopt Western methods. He divided the world into three groups of peoples: barbarian, semibarbarian, and civilized. Koreans were encamped within the second group and needed to learn from civilized nations like the United States in order to exploit their natural resources and maintain their independence. Inspired by the American Revolutionary and Civil Wars, Rhee depicted an America that had once been unenlightened but had risen to power by embracing democracy, modern industry, international trade, and equal rights. He found in the Revolutionary War a host of Americans “burning with patriotic fervor” and risking their lives for national independence: “The farmers came forward with hoes and sickles, while women and children took even pokers with them. If one fell, the position was quickly filled by another one coming forward.”⁷ He saw the Civil War as a crusade “for the sake of the rights of the barbarous black people who hardly look human in appearance” – a crusade

⁵ George Heber Jones, “Letter to Syngman Rhee, March 26, 1903, in The Syngman Rhee English Correspondence, Volume 2, edited with an introduction by Young Ick Lew in collaboration with Yeong Sub Oh, Steve G. Jenks, and Andrew D. Calhoun (Seoul, Korea: Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, 2009), 1.

⁶ Syngman Rhee, translated by Han-Kyo Kim, The Spirit of Independence: A Primer of Korean Modernization and Reform (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 2.

⁷ Rhee, 97.

that demonstrated the depths of America's morality.⁸ Rhee implored his people to discard their old ways and look to the example of America, "a civilized world that is like a paradise of all times and places."⁹ From his prison cell, Rhee's romanticized America reflected his reading and the stories he had heard from missionaries. After several years, America looked to him less and less like paradise.

Though Rhee prescribed for Korea large doses of American republicanism and democracy, the "real root of the matter" and impetus for change was Christianity, with its compassionate God who opened the way to salvation and civilization for all peoples through Jesus Christ.¹⁰ Although Christianity was no Western religion—Jesus lived and taught in the East—the Easterners rejected his teachings whereas Westerners, who accepted them, built a high civilization drawing on Christian wisdom to manage wisely the natural resources that God had given to every nation: "God's intent in creating the myriad things of the universe was to let none of them go to waste but be useful to all mankind."¹¹ But only conversion to Christianity elevated the nations beyond the unenlightened state that prevented their cultivation of nature to national ends. Christianity brought economic prosperity, equal rights, and democracy. In contrast to traditional Korean class distinctions, the "heavenly principles" of Christianity celebrated the commonality of "the so-called noble and highborn person" and "the weak and humble

⁸ Rhee, 106.

⁹ Rhee, 65.

¹⁰ Rhee, 280-282.

¹¹ Rhee, 63.

person,” teaching that every human being is the child of one God.¹² Koreans needed to relinquish their mistaken notions of Christianity as a foreign religion or an example of Western learning (*sohak*) and instead embrace its teachings for individual redemption and national development: “We must adopt this religion as the basis for everything. Everyone must forget about themselves and work for the benefit of others. We must do our best in supporting the nation to achieve the same level of civilization as that of Great Britain and the United States. Let us then meet again in the Kingdom of Heaven.”¹³ There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Rhee’s religious convictions, but one would not be amiss to see him as a convert who, above all, believed in the nation-building power of Christian faith and had an interest in converted individuals because he had a passion for building a new Korea. In one sense, the missionaries would have agreed with his hopes for a Christian Korea. But his blending of Christianity and Korean patriotism would have made some of them uneasy.

The Student Years: Religious Partnerships and Political Training in America

In 1904, the government freed Rhee from prison after a political realignment during the Russo-Japanese War. After the United States decided close the American legation and honor the Japanese Protectorate over Korea, the Korean government sent Rhee promptly to America. Rhee’s charge was to seek out U.S. officials in Washington and ask for American support of Korean independence at peace talks to end the Russo-Japanese War. He met with Secretary of State John Hay and also presented President

¹² Rhee, 67.

¹³ Rhee, 283.

Theodore Roosevelt with a memorial from the Korean government that honored the Korean-American Treaty of 1882 and recognized the shared “industrial, commercial, religious, and educational interests” between the two nations.¹⁴ But Roosevelt rebuffed Rhee’s memorial and informed him that his appeal must come through diplomatic channels.¹⁵ Disappointed, Rhee nonetheless remained in America and enrolled at George Washington University.

Rhee had come to America with endorsement letters from Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries, who encouraged him to present the letters to their friends. They vouched for Rhee’s conversion and asked friends to support his studies. Presbyterian missionary James S. Gale affirmed that Rhee was “a gentleman born a scholar and a Christian whom God has used” and urged his friends to help the Korean “find many good friends among his white brethren in the free land of America” and aid his academic endeavors so that he might return “to do a great work for his people.”¹⁶ Before leaving Korea, Rhee had approached Gale for advice and asked for baptism. Gale encouraged study in America, but refused baptism because Rhee had attended a Methodist mission school, which meant that “the Methodists had a rightful claim to him.”¹⁷ Rhee found this puzzling and saw little difference between Methodists and Presbyterians. Rhee was baptized in 1905 at a Presbyterian church in Washington, but he

¹⁴ “Plea for Help for Korea: Memorial to President Recites Alleged Wrongs at Japan’s Hands,” *The Washington Post*, August 18, 1905.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ James S. Gale, “Letter to Christian Friends in Washington D.C. on November 2, 1904,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 4*, 7.

¹⁷ Oliver, 95.

joined Methodist churches in Boston and Korea before accepting in 1913 a position with the Korean Methodist Mission in Hawaii. Largely indifferent to denominational labels, he would ally himself with any group of Christians committed to evangelizing, civilizing, and freeing Koreans from Japanese rule.

From 1905 to 1910, Rhee earned three academic degrees: a B.A. from George Washington University (1907), an M.A. from Harvard University (1908), and a Ph.D from Princeton University (1910). The pastor who baptized him also introduced him to Charles Needham, the president of George Washington University, who awarded Rhee a scholarship with the understanding that Rhee would work as a pastor in his homeland. But Rhee became more and more interested in Japanese colonialism in Korea than in theology. In 1907, Rhee protested when Methodist bishop and *The Christian Advocate* editor A.B. Leonard returned from Asia marveling at Japanese reforms in Korea and praying that Japan might rule Korea forever. Rhee wrote to Leonard, criticizing his indifference to Japanese imperialism and insisting that Koreans wanted to govern their own affairs. The *Asbury Park Press* printed Rhee's letter, but Leonard ignored it.¹⁸ After his graduation from George Washington University, the Methodist Mission Board wanted Rhee to return to Korea as a preacher. But Rhee believed he could best serve his country by learning more about politics, and he enrolled at Harvard to take courses in American history, international law, European colonialism, and diplomacy.

During his studies at George Washington and Harvard, Rhee earned extra money by delivering speeches about Korea, especially at Y.M.C.A events in cities throughout

¹⁸ Syngman Rhee, *Japan Inside Out: The Challenge of Today*, 2nd ed. (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1941), 180-181.

the East Coast. He illustrated his talks with eighty colored slides that accentuated the progress of missionaries, Korean initiatives to improve society, and Korean desire for independence.¹⁹ His eloquence made him popular, but his Y.M.C.A. sponsors urged him to refrain from talking about politics. In 1908, Y.M.C.A. general secretary C.C. Michener invited Rhee to speak at an annual national convention in Pittsburgh but instructed Rhee to talk only about Korea's Christian progress: "I think it would not be wise for you to talk on the treatment which Korea has received at the hands of Japan. I do not believe it would be worthwhile to spend much time on the political situation. The religious needs are the ones which should be emphasized at this gathering."²⁰ Americans wanted stability and trading partners in Asia; political agitators worried them. Hidden beneath the indifference to Korean desires one could sense the old condescension of the Americans toward Korean culture and promise.

Although Rhee acquiesced to Michener, he traveled to Denver later in the year to chair an international conference of thirty-six Koreans from Russia, China, England, Hawaii, and the U.S. They met for five days in July at Grace Methodist Church to organize politically and discuss national independence. On July 12, Rhee delivered the opening address on "Korea's Glorious Past," followed by Korean and American speakers who spoke about "Relations Between Korea and Japan," "Things Oriental," "America in the East," "Politics and Good Citizenship," "National Greatness," and the "Awakening of

¹⁹ "Korean Will Tell of Korea," *The Washington Post*, June 5, 1907, and "Will Lecture at the Y.M.C.A.: J.A. Dummett to Describe Mountain Climbing in West," *The Washington Post*, June 10, 1907. See also Oliver, 99-100.

²⁰ C.C. Michener, "Letter to Syngman Rhee on March 2, 1908," in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 2, 24.

Korea.”²¹ Rhee's closing address encouraged the delegates to remain hopeful. Although American newspapers reported that Japan was too strong for Korea to resist, Rhee proclaimed, in effect, that Korea could be too persistent for Japan to retain its colonial ambitions there.²²

After the conference, Rhee left Denver for New York City to enroll at Union Theological Seminary, where he wished to earn a doctorate, but not in religion or theology. In New York, Rhee visited the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board office and encountered Ernest F. Hall, a former missionary to Korea. Hall insisted that Rhee pursue his doctorate at Princeton instead of Union. Hall immediately made arrangements for Rhee to meet with the deans of Princeton Theological Seminary and the Princeton Graduate School, Charles Erdman and Andrew F. West. He soon entered graduate program of the University's Political Science Department; he lived in the Seminary dorms.²³ Just as missionaries supported Rhee in Korea, they opened doors for his educational ambitions in America.

At Princeton, Rhee studied international law and politics and became in 1910 the first Korean to earn an American doctorate. His dissertation on *Neutrality as Influenced by the United States* did not cover Korean-American relations, but it alluded to the Korean situation when it examined policies and practices of neutrality from the Roman

²¹ "Koreans Meet in Denver: Discuss Measures of Making Their Country Independent," *Colorado Spring Gazette*, July 13, 1908, and "Hope to Get independence: Koreans From All Over World to Meet in Denver Today," *The Idaho Daily Statesman*, July 13, 1908. One of the American speakers was Methodist bishop and co-founder of Iliff School of Theology Henry W. Warren.

²² Oliver, 108-109.

²³ Oliver, 109-110.

Empire to the nineteenth century. Rhee argued that the principle of neutral jurisdiction emerged in the eighteenth century during the Revolutionary War; previously, European maritime war codes mainly protected the cargo of neutral ships from seizure. But without strict regulations, different European nations administered their own policies; the Dutch, for example, introduced the liberal principle of *free ship, free goods* to avoid belligerent searches on the high seas whereas the French condemned neutral vessels that carried enemy goods. The U.S. Declaration of Independence shifted attention to the protection of free commerce and private property in wartime: “From the early days of its history the United States had earnestly endeavored to restrict the list of contraband articles to the narrowest possible limit, in opposition to the English tendency of expanding it.”²⁴ This American precedent, he thought, influenced European nations to expand freedom for neutral commerce. Rhee did not mention the conflict between Korea and Japan, but an alert reader might have seen its shadow when he contended that the formation of the United States not only marked “a new era on the laws of neutrality” but also inspired other European colonies in the Western hemisphere, especially those under Spain and Portugal, to seek independence through military and diplomatic means.²⁵ Like the United States, these colonies revolted against their colonial rulers and demanded that neutral nations recognize their political existence.²⁶ Nothing could have better described his hopes for Korea, even though a casual reader of the dissertation might never have seen the connections.

²⁴ Syngman Rhee, Neutrality as Influenced by the United States: A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in Candidacy for the Degree of Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1912), 109.

²⁵ Rhee, 104-105.

²⁶ Rhee, 105.

Promoting Korean Liberation and Protesting Missionary Indifference in Hawaii

Missionaries urged Korean Christians to stay out of politics; Rhee thought that an a-political Christianity would be a diminished form of the faith. After leaving Princeton, he accepted a post with the Y.M.C.A. in Korea. He wrote first to Horace Underwood to inquire about opportunities in the Presbyterian mission. Rhee shared Underwood's vision of "true Christian education" in Korea and wished to teach, preach, and translate religious literature.²⁷ But Rhee also offered to teach classes in international law, modern European history, the U.S. Constitution, and Western philosophy; he wanted to teach students about modern-state building. Missionaries like Samuel Moffett protested when Underwood inserted secular news in Korean Protestant newspapers, but Rhee admired Underwood's practice. He believed that Protestant expansion organically nurtured modernization: "Koreans must be taught to know what Christianity would give us in the present life as well as in our life to come, and that all the blessings of Western civilization are based upon the Cross of Jesus Christ."²⁸ And modernization would produce liberation: it would teach Koreans democratic self-rule and economic development. The Japanese would have nothing to do with such a vision. Imperial officials thwarted his every move. After two years of intense Japanese surveillance and suppression, Rhee set out to promote Korean liberation by becoming a political activist and religious educator in the United States.

In America, Rhee's aims were two-fold: To persuade Americans and to organize an independence movement among Koreans in America. Rhee appealed to Korea's

²⁷ Syngman Rhee, "Letter to H.G. Underwood on April 19, 1910," in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1, 1.

²⁸ Ibid.

modernization and Christianization to rally American audiences. In 1912, Rhee began an interview with *The Washington Post* by declaring that “the old-time ‘Hermit Kingdom’ is no more... Within the space of three years Korea has been transformed from a slow-going country, where tradition reigned, into a live, bustling center of industrialism.”²⁹ With newly developed trolley lines, city lights, mills, factories, and department stores, Seoul could “hardly be told nowadays from Cincinnati, except for the complexion of its residents.”³⁰ And this was a country in which Christians had attracted over 300,000 adherents in fewer than thirty years of mission work. Koreans, he reiterated in numerous speeches, were following America's example. Just as American missionaries preached the gospel in remote lands, Korean Protestants traveled to China, Japan, Manchuria, and Siberia to do likewise: “What Judea has done in a religious way for the Occident will be done by Korea for the Orient, and this work, moreover, will be accomplished within the next 100 years.”³¹ Christian success meant that Korea and the United States were kindred peoples, related by ties that transcended distance, language, and cultural tradition.

But in the next several years, Rhee grew increasingly frustrated with missionaries for their indifference—sometimes even hostility—to his religiously-based nationalism. In 1913, he arrived in Honolulu to work as principal for a Methodist mission school for Korean boys. Founded in 1906, the Compound School offered primary education through the eighth grade in English and Korean. But prior to Rhee's arrival, Korean Methodists in Honolulu had protested when John Wadman, superintendent of the Hawaii Mission of the

²⁹ “Chats of Visitors to the Capital,” *The Washington Post*, November 18, 1912.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ “Korea Christianizing the East,” *The Washington Post*, December 2, 1912.

Methodist Episcopal Church, accepted contributions from the Japanese consul in Hawaii. The Koreans had previously resisted the Japanese consul general's offer and so they regarded Wadman's acceptance of money on their behalf as traitorous. Wadman should return the money; he should even resign. Wadman's reaction was to hire Rhee to work at the school and broker peace between the missionaries and Koreans.³² Yet Rhee clashed with the missionaries. He charged that the Mission discriminated against Korean girls, and he insisted that the school admit them to classes. The school resisted, then acquiesced.³³ The conflict was an early milestone in Rhee's once uncritical view of America. He wanted a democratic Korea; in Hawaii he found a discriminatory American institution. This was not what he had anticipated.

Despite the school's concession, Rhee resigned and formed the Korean Christian Institute in Honolulu. The new superintendent, William Fry, opposed Rhee's demands that his school be financially and academically independent. He demanded the submission of detailed budgets and objected to classes in which teachers brought up Korean nationalism. Like missionaries in Korea, Fry called for abstinence from politics. But Rhee would not surrender: religion and politics belonged together. And since the school adhered to the missionary principles of self-support and self-propagation, it should also be self-governing. Korean money supported both the Korean Methodist Church and the Compound School; Koreans—meaning Rhee—should be able to teach what Korean

³² Yong-ho Ch'oe, "Syngman Rhee in Hawaii: His Activities in the Early Years 1913-1915," in From the Land of Hibiscus: Koreans in Hawai'i, edited by Yong-ho Ch'oe (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 59-61, and David K. Yoo, 66-68.

³³ Koreans in Hawaii, as well as newspapers in Hawaii and the United States, praised Rhee's plan. See "Korean School to Admit Girls to its Classes: Institution Broadens its Original Scope Under Representations Made by Dr. Syngman Rhee," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 15, 1913.

children needed to learn.³⁴ In a letter to one of his graduates bound for college in Oregon, Rhee challenged him: “as opportunity offers itself, speak or write as you can on behalf of our great Cause.”³⁵ Good Christians studied hard and worked for national independence. Somehow his beloved Americans failed to understand the second part of the equation, despite their history.

Missionaries in Korea implored Rhee to be more cautious in his public statements about missions and politics. In 1915, George S. McCune rebuked Rhee for printing the Presbyterian minister’s private criticism of Japanese imperialism. Japanese officials in Korea had previously accused McCune of conspiring with Korean dissidents. In 1912, imperial police searched the missionary’s home during their investigation of a Korean plot to assassinate Governor-General Terauchi Masatake, the highest ranking Japanese ruler.³⁶ The police also interrogated other missionaries and several hundred Koreans. Although they had scant evidence of an assassination ploy, the Japanese indicted 123 Koreans for their supposed criminal activity. 84 of the 123 suspects were Christian. Yun Ch’iho, who was then working as the vice-president of the Y.M.C.A. in Seoul, was

³⁴ Kingsley K. Lyu, “Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945, Part I: 1900-1919,” in *Amerasia* 4:1 (1977), 78. Lyu (1904-1976) was a pastor in charge of Methodist churches on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, and editor of the Honolulu-based *Korean Pacific Weekly* from 1944 to 1946. Many of his sources were from personal interviews with Koreans who lived in Hawaii during the early twentieth century.

³⁵ Syngman Rhee, “Letter to Chisung Pil on December 2, 1919,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1*, 179.

³⁶ Japanese investigators were suspicious of McCune’s influence among Korean Christians. After learning that McCune preached a sermon on the biblical narrative of David and Goliath, the investigators charged that McCune was instructing Korean Christians to confront the Japanese just as the Israelite David defeated his larger Philistine oppressor. See Alexis Dudden, *Japan’s Colonization of Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 120-123, Hyung-Chan Kim, *Letters in Exile: The Life and Times of Yun Ch’iho* (Covington: Rhodes Printing Company, 1980), 56-57, and Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), 64-65.

charged as the mastermind of the conspiracy. Despite an unjust trial that drew criticism from American, Korean, and Japanese observers, Yun and 104 other Korean men were judged guilty of treason.³⁷ Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard, witnessed the trial and went to Tokyo to share his misgivings over the unfair judicial process with the Japanese emperor. Eliot also informed Arthur Judson Brown that “no American would believe on any Korean evidence that a single American missionary was in the slightest degree concerned with the alleged conspiracy.”³⁸

But Rhee’s revelation again raised Japanese suspicions and McCune required a retraction from Rhee of any statements he had attributed to the missionary. Mission work would do more than political posturing to help a people who, both men agreed, remained “poor and helpless and hopeless.” What they needed was revival, not doomed revolutions.³⁹ McCune reminded Rhee that five recent revivals in P’yongyang produced nearly 2,000 new believers: “I want this work to go on and I do not want anything to come between me and God in bringing Korea to Christ.” All of Rhee’s talk about independence and atrocities could bring revival to a halt. If the Japanese forced the missionaries from Korea, conversions would dwindle. He pled with Rhee: “Of course I

³⁷ During two retrials, 99 of the 105 defendants were acquitted of any wrongdoing. The other six defendants, including Yun Ch’iho, served prison sentences of five to six years despite producing strong evidence of their innocence. Several Japanese lawyers denounced the legality of the trials and surmised that the imperial government wanted to imprison the Koreans on account of their Christian beliefs. The criminal proceedings were known as the “Korean Conspiracy Case” and “105 Persons Incident.” See Kenneth M. Wells, New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1936 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 74-78.

³⁸ Arthur Judson Brown, The Korean Conspiracy Case (New York: Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1912), 15. Brown quoted a portion of Charles W. Eliot’s letter to him from September 4, 1912.

⁴⁰ George McCune, “Letter to Syngman Rhee on January 12, 1915,” in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 2, 107.

can go back to U.S.A. and work for God and be more peaceful too. But God needs us here.”⁴⁰ The missionaries did not know precisely what to do with Koreans—like Rhee—who had their own ideas about the aims of Christianity. They were not politicians; they were preachers. A few Koreans—and Rhee was the archetypal example—could not understand the need to separate the offices. Rhee’s vision for Korea was not the Christian paradise that the missionaries had once envisioned.

Diplomatic Appeals and Disagreements over the March First Movement

In 1917 and 1918, at the end of World War I, Woodrow Wilson’s calls for international justice and self-determination encouraged Rhee and other Koreans. Wilson’s 1918 Fourteen Points speech championed “a free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims” based upon national aspirations for autonomous rule.⁴¹ Inspired Koreans believed the time was ripe for revolt. In January 1919, Korean exiles in Shanghai sent John Kiusic S. Kimm to France to head an unofficial Korean delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, in which diplomats from over thirty countries set the terms for the defeated Central Powers.⁴² One month later, 600 Korean students in Tokyo demanded Korean independence. In Korea, thirty-three representatives planned to sign a declaration of independence and stage a non-violent demonstration in Seoul on March 1. At the event, Koreans took to the streets, waving

⁴⁰ George McCune, “Letter to Syngman Rhee on January 12, 1915,” in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 2, 107.

⁴¹ Frank Prentiss Baldwin, Jr., March First Movement: Korean Challenge and Japanese Response, PhD diss., Columbia University, 1969, 18.

⁴² Ki-baek Lee, 340-341. The Korean delegation had no official status because Korea was not recognized internationally as an independent nation after Japanese annexation in 1910.

Korean flags and shouting: “Long live Korean independence (*Mansei*)!” News of the protest ignited similar events throughout the country—a protest movement soon known as March First Movement. More than two million Koreans appeared at more than 1,500 gatherings.⁴³ Japanese authorities, initially surprised, suppressed the movement with brutal military force, arresting nearly 20,000 demonstrators, injuring thousands more, and burning houses, churches, and schools. In one village near Suwon, Japanese forces burned alive Korean protesters inside a church. The movement confirmed Japanese suspicions about Korean Christians: they were dangerous. Fifteen of the thirty-three signers were Protestant, and so were the majority of those who were arrested, including 244 church leaders (54 ministers, 127 Bible teachers, and 63 elders).⁴⁴

The U.S. Department of State denied Rhee a passport to attend the Paris Peace Conference, explaining that his status as a Japanese subject required a passport from the Japanese embassy. In Paris, the Conference denied the Korean delegation’s request to address the group on the grounds that Korea lacked recognition as nation. Kimm nonetheless wrote France’s prime minister, George Clemenceau, and Woodrow Wilson, asking them to read aloud a petition “for liberation from Japan and for the reconstitution of Korea as an independent state.”⁴⁵ He reminded Wilson (but not the “realist” Clemenceau) of Japan’s hostility against Korean Christians: “Is not the gravest indictment of Japan’s work in Korea to be read in the fact that Christianity is seriously

⁴³ Lee, 344.

⁴⁴ Baldwin, 120-123, and Lee, 344.

⁴⁵ John Kiusic Kimm, “Letter to le President de Conseil Clemenceau on May 12, 1919,” and “Letter to President Woodrow Wilson on May 12, 1919,” in RG140 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

regarded as a force hostile to the success of the Japanese system of government in the country?”⁴⁶ Rhee also sent letters leaders at the Paris conference emphasizing Japanese restrictions upon Korean Christians and appealing for international action to free Korea.⁴⁷

In addition, Rhee turned to American Protestants with missionary ties to Korea. He wrote John R. Mott and Arthur Judson Brown that he was mobilizing Koreans in America to support their countrymen in the wake of the Japanese suppression. He reminded them that Christians had suffered arrest and torture in the crackdown. Rhee explained the situation to Mott: “In the name of humanity and for the protection of all the Christians from cruel treatment and barbarous torture, we the Koreans abroad should do something.”⁴⁸ To Brown he praised the missionaries in Korea who had been “insulted and maltreated by the Japanese on account of their sympathy and love for the Korean people.”⁴⁹ He also did not fail to mention that Koreans in America would “stand by the American missionaries and do everything in their power to help the cause of Christianity and freedom in Korea.”⁵⁰ Rhee was pulling American Protestants step by step deeper into the crisis, and he was using Christianity—a Korean Christianity—to persuade them to do more.

⁴⁶ John Kiusic Kimm, “Letter to President Woodrow Wilson on May 12, 1919,” in RG140 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

⁴⁷ “Wilson is Urged to Free Korea,” in *The Atlanta Constitution*, March 17, 1919, and Syngman Rhee and Henry Chung, “Letter to Paris Peace Conference on February 25, 1919,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1*, 66-70.

⁴⁸ Syngman Rhee, “Letter to John R. Mott on March 14, 1919,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1*, 79.

⁴⁹ Syngman Rhee, “Letter to Arthur J. Brown on March 19, 1919,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1*, 82.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

In his eyes, they did not do enough. Herbert Welch, MEC bishop for the Japan and Korea Missions, argued with him about an appropriate response to the March First Movement, and Welch refused Rhee's pleas for open political support from him. Welch insisted on distinguishing "very clearly between the political question, that is the question of national independence or of government reform, and the other questions which relate to justice and humane treatment."⁵¹ He decried Japanese violence against Korean Christians, but he stayed away from questions about imperial rule: missionaries had "no neutrality on brutality" and refused to remain silent on "questions of violence and cruelty." But Welch remained silent about Korean political interests.⁵² He made it clear that in his eyes, mission schools and Korean churches were more important than politics: "To make Korea intelligent and to make Korea Christian means even more than to make Korea fundamentally free."⁵³ Rhee replied that Korean liberation was more than a political movement inspired by Wilsonian democracy; it was a religious cause grounded in Christian teachings. "What I and my countrymen expect the Foreign Mission Board to take up in regard to the Korean situation is not that it should take up the political side of it," Rhee retorted, "but that it should uphold courageously the elements of Justice, Righteousness, Truth, and Humanity, for these are the things for which Christianity stands."⁵⁴ The American Protestant mission to Korea underwent a reversal. Americans

⁵¹ Herbert Welch, "Letter to Syngman Rhee on July 1, 1919," in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1, 240.

⁵² Herbert Welch, "The Korean Independence Movement of 1919," *The Christian Advocate*, July 31, 1919, 972.

⁵³ Herbert Welch, "The Korean Independence Movement of 1919," *The Christian Advocate*, August 14, 1919, 1039.

⁵⁴ Syngman Rhee, "Letter to Herbert Welch on July 5, 1919," in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1, 153.

had once preached to Koreans in Korea; now a Korean was preaching to Americans in America, and he was implying that they had shortcomings. The breach widened another inch.

Rhee appreciated Welch's religious labors, and he said so, but he would not let bishop off the hook when it came to geopolitics. The March First Movement plainly revealed that Koreans deplored overlords from Japan. Missionaries saw the chaos and understood Korean desires more acutely than American politicians at home, but they did not speak out. To Rhee this apolitical stance was parochial, making it appear that missionaries cared more about preserving their small stations than about Korean independence and national dignity. He preached again to Welch: "America, as well as the world at large, knows very little about Korea. What we want is that the truth of Korea be known, because in truth we can rely with our cause."⁵⁵ But the missionaries, to Rhee's consternation, remained quiet. John Fairman Preston's letter to his father on March 17, 1919 confided that their superiors instructed them to remain quiet on political matters. Preston told his father that Koreans felt "discriminated against and treated as half civilized"; they also openly resented the Japanese. But Preston said that he was "very careful to express no opinions on political matters and carefully avoid mixing up in politics, as has been enjoined upon us both by our Consul and by [the PCUS Foreign Mission Board home office in] Nashville." But a public announcement by Preston would not have bolstered Rhee's cause: "The cry for independence is, of course, ill-timed and

⁵⁵ Syngman Rhee, "Letter to Herbert Welch on July 5, 1919," in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1, 154.

impracticable. Like a child crying for a wasp, one wonders what the Koreans would do with it if they had it!”⁵⁶ It was hard for the Americans not to be patronizing to the Koreans; it was becoming even harder for the Koreans to accept being patronized, even by people who wanted to be their friends.

Preston was not the only missionary skeptical of the independence movement. Both Welch and Brown publicly stated that a number of missionaries doubted that Koreans could govern their own affairs without Japanese control. Welch reported that “some of the missionaries who are long-standing and devoted friends of Korea are not convinced that independence would be a genuine blessing at this time.”⁵⁷ Brown cautioned relatives and friends of Presbyterian missionaries to learn more about Korea before condemning the Japanese, noting that two Japanese groups, one civil and the other military, disagreed over imperial policy. The civil party felt outrage at the violence, but the military wanted to deter rebellion with swift and overwhelming force. Brown felt sympathetic toward Koreans, but he saw their protests as misguided and unwise.⁵⁸

Brown’s letter angered Rhee, who sent a copy to Welch with a letter underscoring his dissent. He charged that Brown had betrayed his professed political neutrality by demarcating Japanese political factions: “Is it a more important question to find out

⁵⁶ John Fairman Preston, “Letter to his father on March 17, 1919,” in RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA. Preston was one of several missionaries who wrote endorsement letters for Rhee’s first trip to the U.S. in 1904 (See “Letter to R.D. Wilson on November 5, 1904” and “Letter to Eleanor Watkins on November 5, 1904, The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 4, 39-42).

⁵⁷ Herbert Welch, “The Korean Independence Movement of 1919,” *The Christian Advocate*, August 14, 1919, 1038.

⁵⁸ Arthur Judson Brown, “Letter to the Relatives and Friends of the Chosen Missionaries, June 30, 1919,” in RG140 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

which party is more directly responsible for the atrocities and which party is not, while wanton brutalities continue, than to find out how to stop these atrocities?”⁵⁹ Rhee felt that Brown had pro-Japanese political sentiments that led him to defend Japanese rule and criticize the March First Movement. If missionaries wanted to tell Korean Christians to stay out of politics, they ought to follow their own advice: “For the sake of Christian missions in Korea...the authorities of the mission boards who feel that they must not advocate the cause of Korean independence, because it is a political question, must not condemn that cause, because it is the same political question.”⁶⁰ The Americans, in short, were guilty of hypocrisy, though Rhee was too polite, or perhaps shrewd, to use the word.

Brown managed to offend Rhee at every turn. Rhee disliked it when he used the term “Chosen” instead of Korea. In 1910, Japan had renamed Korea as “Chosen” and designated their presence there as a “Governor-Generalship,” which amounted to an announcement of full colonization.⁶¹ Koreans despised the Japanese names, and the missionaries knew it. One sympathetic missionary in 1920 criticized the term “Chosen” because it insulted Koreans and tacitly supported Japanese efforts to eradicate their cultural identity and historical memory: “It is of greatest importance that we do our part for the preserving of the idea of Korea as a separate and distinct mission field, with individual problems and needs, and this can best be done by the use of Korean descriptive

⁵⁹ Syngman Rhee, “Letter to Herbert Welch on July 28, 1919,” in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1, 169.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Dudden, 119.

at all times.”⁶² Rhee was tempted to mobilize Korean opposition to the missionaries: “If Dr. Brown thinks that the Japanese military forces alone can injure the influence of the American missionaries, he is mistaken. The Korean people in Korea can injure it even more effectively than the Japanese, if they know that the American mission boards are against their national movement.”⁶³

The Korean Protestant nationalists felt no hesitation in using Christian language to describe their cause. Hugh Heung-Wo Cynn, a Korean Methodist pastor in America, compared the independence movement to the death and resurrection of Christ. Like Jesus at Golgotha, Korea was crucified by the Annexation Treaty in 1910. But Korea had risen from the grave with the March First Movement.⁶⁴ The majority of American missionaries and possibly the majority of Korean Protestants saw the world, Christianity, and Korea differently. Could Christ call on a people to seek national independence? Or did he merely call upon them to save their souls? The Americans—at least most of them—thought they were following the Christ who preached and healed without interfering with Rome. The Koreans—at least many of them—thought that they followed the Christ who refused to grovel before Pontius Pilate.

Rise and Fall in the Korean Provisional Government: Noble Intentions and Political Rivalries

⁶² G. Bonwick, “Korean Place Names,” *The Korea Bookman*, December 1921, 33.

⁶³ Syngman Rhee, “Letter to Herbert Welch on July 28, 1919,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1*, 169.

⁶⁴ Hugh Heung-Wo Cynn, *The Rebirth of Korea: The Reawakening of its People, Its Causes and its Outlook* (New York and Cincinnati: Abingdon Press, 1920), 15, and David K. Yoo, 89-91.

Rhee argued, debated, and exhorted, but he also organized. He traveled throughout the U.S. to organize an independent movement among Koreans, using Korean American churches to raise funds and garner support for liberation. But Rhee could be an authoritarian, and some Korean Americans balked at his imperious tactics. Proclaiming the virtues of democracy, he demanded absolute control and treated co-ethnic allies as potential rivals. In Hawaii, Rhee required unquestioned obedience from his followers and cast aside anyone who broached questions about his directives.⁶⁵ After the March First uprising, Koreans established three different provisional governments in Manchuria, Shanghai, and Seoul. Two of the three, in Shanghai and Seoul, elected Rhee as Chief of Executive of their cabinets, whereupon he opened an office in Washington to represent the provisional government as its president. Cabinet members in Shanghai objected to Rhee's self-designation without their approval: he had, they said, violated their constitution. But Rhee refused to relent, and he told them that he used the title of president when he communicated with other nations so that he could gain recognition for the provisional government. An alteration in the title would disclose the internal conflicts. The cabinet yielded and revised their constitution to name him president, but his strong-arm tactics led to his political demise. After years of irritation with his dictatorial ways, the cabinet passed a non-confidence resolution against him in 1922 and impeached him in 1925.⁶⁶

Rhee's relationship with Philip Jaisohn illumines his fractured relationships with even his closest allies. Like Rhee, Jaisohn was a nobleman and progressive reformer in

⁶⁵ Lyu, 84-85.

⁶⁶ Bong Youn Choy, Koreans in America (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979), 156-165.

Korea before migrating to America. In 1884, Jaisohn participated in the abortive coup d'état against his government and had to flee to Japan, where he taught Korean to American missionaries. After three months in Japan, Jaisohn came to America to obtain a Western education. Upon landing in San Francisco, he worked at menial jobs while attending English classes at a local Y.M.C.A. During this time, Jaisohn converted to Christianity and attended a Presbyterian church. He admired the teachings of Jesus that displayed God's compassion for humanity and the imperative for Christians to help the weak and powerless.⁶⁷

When Rhee arrived to America in 1904, he turned to Jaisohn for guidance. By that time, Jaisohn had earned a medical degree from George Washington University Medical School, married Muriel Armstrong, the daughter of U.S. military major George Armstrong, and had become a naturalized American citizen. Even before meeting in America, the two men had befriended one another in Korea when Jaisohn returned home to work as a government adviser from 1896 to 1898. In Korea, Jaisohn founded the nation's first modern newspaper in Korean script instead of Chinese characters. Rhee worked with him for social and political reform before conservative government leaders expelled Jaisohn for pushing a modernizing agenda.

⁶⁷ Channing Liem, Philip Jaisohn (Elkins Park, PA: Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation, 1984), 103, and Hyung-chan Kim, "Philip Jaisohn (Seo, Jae-P'il)," in Distinguished Asian Americans: A Biographical Dictionary (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), edited by Hyung-Chan Kim, et al., 141-142. Like Rhee, Jaisohn was not concerned about denominational allegiances. He attended a Presbyterian church in San Francisco in 1886, partnered with the Methodist Episcopal Church Mission during his years in Korea from 1896 to 1898, and was buried in Pennsylvania with an Episcopalian funeral service in 1951.

When the two reunited in America, they became again close friends and allies. During his years in America, Rhee exchanged more letters with Jaisohn than with anybody else: 62 exchanges over thirty years.⁶⁸ Both men saw Korean liberation as a religious cause inspired by Christian principles.⁶⁹ Jaisohn wrote for the *Korean Student Bulletin*, a quarterly newsletter maintained by Korean students in the United States from 1922 to 1940, to encourage student work for national independence as a just cause with a divine blessing.⁷⁰ He also published *Hansu's Journey: A Korean Story*, which detailed the life of a Korean Protestant exile in America. The protagonist, Hansu, dedicates himself to the independence movement because Jesus stood with all who strive for liberty and justice.⁷¹ Like Rhee, Jaisohn believed that Christianity paved the path for Korean modernization. In 1897, Jaisohn's newspaper, *The Independent*, identified Korean Christians as the "most wide-awake people" in the country because of their moral regeneration and rapid absorption of "the Western idea of enterprise in their daily life," which inclined them to adopt Western technologies.⁷²

⁶⁸ Young Ick Lew, "Introduction," in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1*, 8-26.

⁶⁹ Although Yun Ch'ihō had worked with Rhee and Jaisohn in the past, he did not share their political views. After his release from prison in 1915, Yun maintained that Koreans should accept Japanese rule and direct all of their energies toward social, economic, and educational improvements. Yun resisted overtures to join the independence movement because he believed that Koreans would only achieve independence through gradual internal developments and peaceable relations with the Japanese. In 1917, Yun advised Rhee to be more cautious about his public criticism of the Japanese and expressed to Rhee that his most valuable contributions to Korea were found in his educational work among young Koreans in the United States. See Yun Ch'ihō, "Letter to Syngman Rhee on January 16, 1917," in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 2*, 120-124.

⁷⁰ Philip Jaisohn, "Dr. Jaisohn's Letter to the Convention," *Korean Student Bulletin*, September 1924, 8.

⁷¹ Philip Jaisohn, *Hansu's Journey: A Korean Story* (Philadelphia, PA: Philip Jaisohn & Co., 1922).

⁷² "Editorial Notes," *The Independent*, February 9, 1897, 2.

The two had ambivalent attitudes toward the missionaries. In Korea, Jaisohn and his American wife, Muriel, spent many hours socializing with them. In 1896, Eugene Bell wrote to his parents about befriending the Jaisohns in Seoul, describing Muriel as “young looking and quite pretty” and Philip as “universally popular” among Koreans and missionaries. In their conversations, Jaisohn “had come to the conclusion that the only hope of the country was through missionaries.”⁷³ But after Japanese conquest, Jaisohn was irate at missionaries who refused to support Korean liberation. He bristled at missionary friends who counseled him to patiently trust that God knew the trials of the Korean people: “God,” he said, “is too slow.”⁷⁴ Missionaries praised such Japanese-led improvements as telephone poles and clean streets; Jaisohn asked them how they would feel if robbers painted the fence posts and decorated the front porches of their stolen homes.⁷⁵ In 1913, Rhee and Jaisohn thought about starting an English-language newspaper devoted to Korean political issues because the missionaries reported only on religious matters.⁷⁶ Yet when Jaisohn made diplomatic overtures to powerful Americans, he touted Korea’s Christian progress. In 1920, he shared with Rhee a copy of his letter to President Warren G. Harding, informing the president that Japan suppressed Christianity, hampered evangelism, and violated the freedom to worship. He reminded Harding that

⁷³ Eugene Bell, “Letter to his parents on October 23, 1896,” in RG435 Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

⁷⁴ Liem, 224.

⁷⁵ Philip Jaisohn, “Dr. Philip Jaisohn’s Address, July 1919,” in *My Days in Korea and Other Essays*, edited by Sun-pyo Hong (Seoul, Korea: Yonsei University Press, 1999), 179-182.

⁷⁶ Philip Jaisohn, “Letter to Syngman Rhee on March 20, 1913,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 2*, 68-71, and Syngman Rhee, “Letter to Philip Jaisohn on June 24, 1913,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1*, 5-9.

Korea was both “the one Christian nation in the Orient” and “the one country of the Orient that is not receiving the full active support of Christian nations.”⁷⁷

After the March First uprising, Rhee and Jaisohn came together in Philadelphia to lead the first Korean Liberty Congress, a three-day event in April with speeches and marches to bring attention to the Korean plight. “We have called the Korean Congress,” Jaisohn told the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, “because we want America to realize that Korea is a victim of Japan. Korea’s wrongs have been insidiously covered up by Japan, and we believe that American will champion the cause of Korea as she has that of other oppressed people, once she knows the facts.”⁷⁸ On the last day of the Congress, 150 Korean delegates from Hawaii and the United States paraded through Philadelphia alongside a police escort and marching band until they reached Independence Hall, where Jaisohn spoke and Rhee read the Declaration of Korean Independence.⁷⁹ Soon thereafter, Rhee and Jaisohn would separate over Rhee’s autocratic methods and financial missteps.

After the Congress, Jaisohn advised the Korean provisional government in America on foreign affairs. As president, Rhee established the Korean Commission in Washington by executive order in September 1919 as a means for lobbying the U.S. Congress for support and for raising funds. During the fall, the Commission had some victories. On three occasions, congressional members spoke in the Senate and the House

⁷⁷ Phikip Jaisohn, “Letter to President-elect Warren G. Harding on November 15, 1920,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 5*, 465.

⁷⁸ “Korean Nation Notified of Proposed Congress: News Just Reaches Orient of Liberation Meeting to be Held Here,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 1, 1919.

⁷⁹ Lyu, “Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945, Part II: 1919-1945,” in *Amerasia* 4:2 (1977), 56.

of Representatives to sympathize with Korean aspirations for liberty and criticize Japan's violation of Korean human rights.⁸⁰ But the Commission's fund-raising campaign bogged down in controversy. Without consulting the cabinet, Rhee issued \$250,000 of bonds in the name of the provisional government. The bonds, paying an interest of six percent, were redeemable within one year after the U.S. recognized the provisional government. Without support from other Korean leaders abroad, the bond sale faltered. Koreans in America, who gave generously to the provisional government, did not purchase the bonds and disliked Rhee's disingenuous method of tying bond redemption to the unlikely odds of U.S. recognition of the provisional government.⁸¹

Rhee's financial opportunism and disregard for democratic government upset Jaisohn, who in 1920 called upon Rhee to cooperate with other leaders and admonished him for creating friction among Korean patriots in the United States, Hawaii, and Asia. One letter commended Rhee for his efforts to free Korea but also asked Rhee to be tolerant to those who opposed his views and engage dissenting parties without undue anger. Rhee should debate with "decency and politeness" and refrain from underhanded actions when he lost a majority vote: "Therefore, even if the majority sentiment is against [you], you must take that majority sentiment like a man and cooperate with them to the best of your ability. Personal pride and private interest should not enter into your

⁸⁰ On September 19, Senator Selden P. Spencer (Missouri) read a statement submitted by the Korean Commission. On October 9, Senator James D. Phelan (California) introduced a resolution expressing the U.S. government's sympathy for Korea. On October 25, Representative William F. Mason (Illinois) delivered a similar speech in the House of Representatives. See Choy, 157.

⁸¹ Choy, 156-159, and Lyu, 57-58.

consideration at this time.”⁸² Authoritarian leadership would lead to failure. But Rhee continued to create the kind of discord that culminated in the government’s vote of no confidence in 1922. Another of Rhee’s partners, Ahn Ch’angho, tried to broker a compromise between Rhee and his opponents in the provisional government. Like Jaisohn and Rhee, Ahn was a Protestant and political exile in the United States. But Ahn failed in his negotiating attempts and soon thereafter distanced himself from Rhee to form his own Korean independence group.⁸³

After Ahn and several other prominent Korean nationalists severed ties with Rhee, Jaisohn wrote Rhee about the irresponsible and dishonest practices of the “so-called leaders” of the Korean independence movement.⁸⁴ The letter was a sign that he found Rhee unable to govern and a hindrance to the cause. Rhee had fractured the movement into factions that either supported or rejected his leadership. Jaisohn ended his letter with a tone of discouragement: “For the sake of principle I will continue to advocate Korean independence, but I am not so sanguine as to their future.”⁸⁵ The divisiveness made Jaisohn wonder if Koreans were indeed capable of self-government. A few months later, in September, 1922, Rhee left Washington to resume his work as an educator in Hawaii.⁸⁶ Jaisohn opened a medical practice near his suburban Philadelphia

⁸² Philip Jaisohn, “Letter to Syngman Rhee on September 22, 1920, “in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 2, 527.

⁸³ Wells, 102.

⁸⁴ Philip Jaisohn, “Letter from to Syngman Rhee on June 3, 1922, “ in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 3, 212.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Oliver, 159.

home and also worked as a clinical pathologist for several local hospitals.⁸⁷ The two men no longer worked together as allies, though Jaisohn continued to rally support for Korean independence by delivering speeches at Korean American churches and writing for periodicals like *Korean Student Bulletin* and *The New Korea*. The split presumably made some missionaries think that they had made the right decision in holding Rhee at arm's length, though in keeping with their political quietism, they stayed out of it.

Cultivating Education and Religion among Koreans in Hawaii

Despite his impeachment from political office, Rhee retained Korean supporters in Hawaii and the United States. In 1922, Rhee resumed his educational and religious work with the Korean Christian Church in Hawaii. His educational aims differed from those of the mission schools. In Korea, missionaries taught academic subjects but bore down on religion. Rhee's school also taught religion, alongside daily Bible studies, but he pressed students to pursue academic training in such fields as economics, engineering, and medicine. He was thinking ahead, planning for the cultivation of people who would lead an independent Korea.

In Hawaii, Methodist schools tried to Americanize Korean youth people, educating for assimilation by training Hawaii-born Asian children in American ways.⁸⁸ Rhee followed the public school curriculum so that his students could matriculate into the local public high school, but he added classes in the Korean language, Korean history,

⁸⁷ Liem, 249.

⁸⁸ Ch'oe, 65.

and Sino-Korean classics (*hanmun*).⁸⁹ Rhee wanted his students to succeed in American higher education, but not at the expense of losing their Korean roots.

Other immigrant Koreans had similar concerns about vocational diversity and cultural retention. In *Korean Student Bulletin*, students encouraged industrial and technical training. Contributors to *Bulletin* came mainly from the ranks of international Korean students with study visas and from American-born Korean students. In 1926, a student named Y.H. Choy addressed international students and advocated “vocational education” over the humanities. Too many students, he said, chose to study theology and psychology instead of farming and manufacturing. Korea needed economic independence; this meant that it needed “vocationally trained men, [because] there is a comparative small percent of our students who are studying in vocationally trained lines.”⁹⁰ Some other international students agreed with him, noting the bleak prospects for obtaining government, academic, and ecclesial positions. The imperial government favored either the Japanese in Korea or Koreans educated in Japan. Korean graduates from America usually found work in Christian colleges, but only three—Union Christian College, Ewha College for Women, and Chosen Christian College—existed, and they could offer employment only to a small fraction of applicants.⁹¹ Students with theology degrees also returned home to discover a scarcity of ministerial positions. In 1934, a student named John Chung complained that some fundamentalist churches in Korea

⁸⁹ Ch’oe, 70.

⁹⁰ Y.H. Choy, “What Vocational Education Is and Why We Are Needing It,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 4:4, October 1926, 3.

⁹¹ “Unemployment Question at Home,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 6:2, April 1928, 1 and 4.

would never hire him because they believed that an American education would have corrupted his theological orthodoxy: “When I think of such things, they say I have too much education! Besides, one evangelist in Korea told me that the real enemy of Korea is none but the education of the Korean people. To a Fundamentalist, the welfare of a church and Christian theology is preferable to the welfare of a people.”⁹² Despite Chung’s educational accomplishments at a mission college in Korea and State Teachers’ College in Tennessee, he lamented his future job prospects: “Suppose I go home next summer, what do you think I can do in Korea? Preaching? Teaching? Or what? As far as I know I may be a coolie who carries a jiggye, or a farmer who eats snails and jellyfish with chopsticks.”⁹³ Not every Korean student in America was bitter; probably every Korean student in America was realistic about the challenges that awaited at home.

International students wrote about vocational obstacles; American-born Korean students wrote about their uneasy entrapment between two cultures. In 1930, Martha Choy wrote about the “confessions of an American-born Korean” and described the generational tensions she and others like her encountered as second-generation Korean Americans.⁹⁴ Unlike their parents, the first generation of Koreans in America, American-born Koreans embraced assimilation, adopted Western ways, and befriended Americans of all races. Their parents accused them of betrayal and rebuked them for abandoning their Korean heritage. Choy felt confounded by what she called a “veritable enigma” in Hawaii, with parents who disapproved of her life choices because they were

⁹² John Chung, “A Korean Student’s Life in America,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 12:2, April-May 1934, 6.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Martha Choy, “Confessions of an American-born Korean,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 8:2, May 1930, 6.

“dogmatically conservative in their Orientalism” and “suspiciously skeptical of the whole program of ‘Americanization.’”⁹⁵ Choy resented that her parents sent her to a Korean-language school and a Korean church for the sake of cultural retention, portraying the institutions as hollow instruments for “the propagation of dogmas and prejudices.”⁹⁶

Choy also described tensions between American-born Korean and international students. As a child growing up in Hawaii, she heard fanciful stories about Korea and yearned to visit. When she arrived in college, she was eager to meet Korean students: “All in all, a Korean student, who in the pursuit of such learning had crossed such distances, was a marvel to me; he could not help but be a hero in my eye.”⁹⁷ But the Korean-born students Choy encountered belittled her as an American-born Korean. Choy accused them of holding to a “strange paternalism” that classified her as less Korean because of her American birth. Choy came to distrust the Korean students: “An American-born Korean... finds [the Korean international student] sluggish, somewhat uncouth, stubborn in his provincialism, and all in all, quite impossible. He does much lip-service and raving regarding independence, economic regeneration, speaks disparagingly of American materialism. Little wonder then that the other regards this stranger-countryman with bewilderment.”⁹⁸

Other American-born students, less antagonistic to their parents and to their Korean-born counterparts, still had to wrestle with their identities. In 1935, Anne Kim

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

wrote that the greatest struggle facing American-born Koreans like herself was the feeling of not entirely belonging in either Korea or America. Kim went to high school in New York City and earned a scholarship to Mount Holyoke College. She wrote an essay entitled “Whither American-Born Korean,” in which she observed that American-born Koreans could not count on recognition either as Americans or as Koreans. White Americans classified them as second-class citizens on account of their race whereas native-born co-ethnics regarded them as less authentic Koreans because of their assimilation. Kim was still hopeful that American-born Koreans could overcome the ambiguity by embracing their Korean identity and accepting their role as bridge-builders for native-born Koreans in unfamiliar surroundings. She wanted both groups of Koreans to “understand each other so that we may give and receive help.”⁹⁹ Kim encouraged American-born Koreans to “learn all things Korean, particularly the language, classics, customs, and ideals” and native-born Koreans to be tolerant of American-born Koreans who did not share their knowledge of Korean culture or their passion for Korean independence.¹⁰⁰ The goal should be mutual understanding.

Other first-generation Koreans were not as optimistic about the next generation. Some in Hawaii doubted that their children would be able to maintain Korean institutions like schools and churches because they lacked both language skills and piety.¹⁰¹ Young Kang, editor in Honolulu of *The American-Korean*, said that second-generation Koreans

⁹⁹ Anne Kim, “Whither American-born Korean,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 13:2, March-April 1935, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Duke Cho Choy, “Can Youth Improve and Maintain Korean Institutions in Hawaii,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 15:2, December 1936-January 1937, 6-7.

did not speak Korean fluently, cared more about American events than Korean politics, did not participate in larger Korean social gatherings, and were lax about church attendance.¹⁰² In 1937, ethnographer Bernice B.H. Kim studied Koreans in Hawaii for four years and identified Korean politics as one significant reason for familial strife. The first generation supported the independence movement; their children remained lukewarm. Parents harangued children for being indifferent about their homeland and children accused parents of being more concerned about Korean politics than about finding a rewarding position in their new country.¹⁰³

Rhee knew about these generational tensions in Hawaii. Although he supported American-born Korean students in their academic hopes, he denounced their attempts to disconnect from their Korean heritage and the independence movement: “You are Americans by birth, but you are Koreans by blood. Someday you will be builders of new Korea. Mingle yourselves with Korean boys and girls. Study hard the Korean language and Korean history if you truly love your fatherland. Do not marry foreigners.”¹⁰⁴ He was touching a sensitive nerve. As a small minority group, second-generation Koreans dated and married non-Koreans, taking Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese spouses. In 1933, there were 2,033 Koreans, 6,668 Chinese, 4,686 Filipino, and 44,774 Japanese students enrolled in Hawaiian schools.¹⁰⁵ Margaret K. Pai recounted her experiences growing up in Hawaii and recalled the fierce opposition to a young Korean woman’s marriage to a

¹⁰² Young Kang, “Our Second Generation is a Problem,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 8:2, May 1930, 1, 5.

¹⁰³ Bernice B.H. Kim, *The Koreans in Hawaii*, Master’s thesis, University of Hawaii, June 1937, 194-195.

¹⁰⁴ Lyu, “Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945, Part I: 1900-1919,” 79.

¹⁰⁵ Kim, 190.

Japanese man in 1937. The bride's aunt, a church leader, refused to endorse the interracial marriage, and her church disapproved the use of their chapel. Pai wrote that she and her friends had no objections to interracial dating but agreed not to have romantic liaisons with non-Koreans because of first-generation hostility.¹⁰⁶ Rhee, on the other hand, railed against interracial marriage in *Korean Pacific Magazine*, a magazine he founded shortly after his arrival to Hawaii in 1913.¹⁰⁷ Yet he disobeyed his own directive when he married Francesca Donner, an Austrian woman, in 1934. They met during his travels in Europe in the early 1930s and soon became romantically involved.¹⁰⁸ In 1934, Donner left her Vienna home to marry Rhee in the United States. They wed in New York City in a bilingual ceremony with vows delivered in Korean and English.¹⁰⁹ When Rhee returned to Hawaii with his Austrian wife, he shocked his supporters, who criticized both his hypocrisy and his foreign wife.¹¹⁰

Rhee remained active in the Korean Christian Church in Hawaii. After leaving from the Methodist mission to form his own school, Rhee and eighty of his supporters also began in 1916 to worship separately from the Korean Methodist Church. They

¹⁰⁶ Margaret K. Pai, *The Dreams of Two Yi-min* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 121-122.

¹⁰⁷ Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, Part I: 1900-1919," 79.

¹⁰⁸ "Vienna-born Wife of Rhee Korea Puzzle: Is She Housewife or Real Political Power, Seoul Asks," *Los Angeles Times*, July 19, 1953

¹⁰⁹ Oliver, 163-164. Like many Korean noblemen, Rhee's parents arranged his marriage to a Korean woman when he was a young man. He was married sometime in 1896 or 1897 (date uncertain) and had a son. After Rhee's prison sentence, his wife's whereabouts became unknown. His son was sent to America when Rhee was studying at George Washington University but died from illness in 1908 (See Oliver, 52-53).

¹¹⁰ Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945, Part II: 1919-1945," 75.

formed their own church in Honolulu in 1918, which led to the formation of several related churches in Hawaii and Los Angeles, which united as the Korean Christian Church. Although Rhee never served as a pastor, he wielded his influence to shape the denomination's polity, organizational structure, and church architecture. He told Bernice Kim that his driving vision for the denomination was independence from the Methodists so that his church members could say: "This is really our church which rests upon our land."¹¹¹ During the construction of the Korean Christian Church in the Liliha Street neighborhood of Honolulu in 1935, Rhee instructed the architect to consult Korean art books and adopt Korean architectural styles.¹¹² He gave instructions for the interior plan of the church, requesting two pulpits on the stage, one for public Bible reading and the other for the sermon, and he wanted the choir seating to be arranged so that the singers would face the preacher during the sermon.¹¹³ In 1938, the church was officially dedicated with a brightly colored and elaborate gateway to the main sanctuary that replicated an ancient palace entrance in Seoul.¹¹⁴ It was both a sacred place of worship and a national symbol evoking the rich culture and history of Korea.

As Rhee's denomination was growing, Korean Methodists were also flourishing in Hawaii. Arriving in 1903, they had been among the first Koreans in Hawaii, partly because George Heber Jones helped recruit Koreans from his church in Incheon to

¹¹¹ Kim, 144. Kim interviewed Rhee in Honolulu on July 22, 1935.

¹¹² Syngman Rhee, "Letter to Y.T. Char, April 5, 1935," in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1, 515.

¹¹³ Syngman Rhee, "Letter to Y.T. Char, May 20, 1935," in The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 1, 517.

¹¹⁴ Yoo, 58.

migrate. American recruiters for the Hawaiian sugar planters were initially unsuccessful in attracting Koreans until Jones convinced some of his parishioners about the pleasant weather, financial benefits, and evangelistic opportunities. Fifty-eight of the first 102 Korean immigrants to Hawaii were Methodists. They organized their Methodist Episcopal Church in the midst of prayer meetings in the steerage of the ship that brought them.¹¹⁵ By 1906, they had thirty mission stations, ten evangelists, and four teachers for nearly 2,000 Methodists (out of approximately 7,000 Koreans).¹¹⁶ Even after the forming of the Korean Christian Church in 1918, Korean Methodists kept pace with the new denomination. Inexact estimates suggest that the two churches had equal membership numbers. In the Wahiawa community in 1937, the Korean Christian Church had 210 members, the Korean Methodist Episcopal Church, 150.¹¹⁷ In 1947, both churches in Honolulu had about a thousand members each; they were the two largest Korean congregations in Hawaii.¹¹⁸

Like the Korean Christian Church, Korean Methodists also combined politics and religion. One prominent Methodist minister in Hawaii, Soon Hyun, joined the independence movement before accepting, in 1923, the pastorate of the Korean Methodist Episcopal Church in Honolulu. Hyun also participated from 1896 to 1898 in Jaisohn's progressive reform movement. In 1899, Hyun studied in Japan and learned something about Western approaches to chemistry, geography, history, and physics.

¹¹⁵ Wayne Patterson, The Korean Frontier in America: Immigration to Hawaii, 1896-1910 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 47-50.

¹¹⁶ Kim, 139.

¹¹⁷ Kim, 177.

¹¹⁸ Yoo, 53.

Bible study and church attendance led in 1901 to his conversion. He was persuaded by Christ's promise of eternal life and his call to action on behalf of the poor and oppressed. He believed that Jesus inspired national liberation and resistance against Japanese imperialism. When asked why he had chosen Christianity, Hyun answered, "Because I believed Jesus was more militant than Buddha."¹¹⁹ After returning home in 1902 from Japan, Hyun accepted a position as an overseer and translator for American recruiters for the Hawaiian sugar cane planters. From 1903 to 1907, he and his wife lived in Hawaii, where they worked on the sugar cane plantations and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. Because of Hyun's religious faith, leadership skills, and bilingual abilities, the Methodist Mission appointed him as a preacher on the island of Kauai. He then received a call to serve a Methodist church in Korea but fled to Shanghai in 1919 as a political exile. In 1920, the provisional government appointed Hyun as head of the Korean Commission and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States.¹²⁰ Rhee confirmed Hyun's appointment in a cablegram, but in 1921 he ousted him, probably because they disagreed on one issue or another.¹²¹

Hyun returned to Hawaii and resumed religious duties at the Korean Methodist Episcopal Church in Honolulu, serving both first- and second-generation Koreans. The church had Sunday worship along with social and political activities for men, women, and children. In 1925, the church held a special Sunday service to honor Philip Jaisohn,

¹¹⁹ Peter Hyun, Mansei!: The Making of a Korean American (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 92.

¹²⁰ Hyun, 158-159.

¹²¹ "Cablegram from Syngman Rhee to Soon Hyun on April 4, 1921," in *The Reverend Soon Hyun Collected Works*, Korean American Digital Archive, University of Southern California Digital Library, Los Angeles, CA.

who was present. The choir gave him leis before he spoke in English about the Christian inspiration for Korean liberation and the congregation joined in singing “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus.”¹²² The church printed its bulletins in both Korean and English and adorned them with an interlocking picture of the Korean and American flags.¹²³ It also furnished an economic network for parishioners to advertise their small business enterprises. The last page of church bulletins contained a directory of church members’ stores and services, including the names, in both languages, of the store owners, artisans, and merchants.¹²⁴

After three years in Honolulu, the denomination transferred Hyun in 1926 to the island of Kauai, where he served as an itinerant minister who traveled to seventeen sugar plantation camps and little towns. At each station, Hyun performed worship services, shared news about the independence movement, and collected donations to support the provisional government’s political operations.¹²⁵ In careful handwriting, he listed his monthly itinerary schedule and reported on the numbers of parishioners and Koreans at each of his seventeen visits. His largest station consisted of 40 parishioners out of 65 Koreans and his smallest one consisted of 2 parishioners out of 12 Koreans. At one

¹²² “Korean Methodist Episcopal Church Bulletin on July 12, 1925: Special Service in Honor of Dr. Philip Jaisohn,” in *The Reverend Soon Hyun Collected Works*, Korean American Digital Archive, University of Southern California Digital Library, Los Angeles, CA.

¹²³ “Korean Methodist Episcopal Church Bulletin on March 29, 1925: Special Service in Honor of Dr. Philip Jaisohn,” in *The Reverend Soon Hyun Collected Works*, Korean American Digital Archive, University of Southern California Digital Library, Los Angeles, CA.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Peter Hyun, *In the New World: The Making of a Korean American* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 37.

station, he had no parishioners from the 12 Koreans who lived there. In total, Hyun ministered to 221 of the 322 Koreans on the island.¹²⁶

One of Hyun's children, Peter, left Hawaii in 1929 to enroll at DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, with the hopes of becoming a Methodist minister like his father.¹²⁷ He soon lost interest in theology and developed a passion for theater arts. At DePauw he met with frustrating racial discrimination, and on campus he had no close companions except for his professors. He resented classmates who leered at him, called him an "Oriental," and assumed that his family was in the laundry business. When venturing into Indianapolis, he recalled the "surreptitious stares of people around me; stares of curiosity, stares of scorn, even of hate."¹²⁸ Although Peter was born in Hawaii and spoke English fluently, he never felt at home in the United States. He achieved some success as an actor and theater director but felt that racial prejudice held him back.¹²⁹

Like Rhee and so many other Koreans, Peter also felt disappointment at the broken promises of American politicians and missionaries. Peter accused the U.S. government of first reneging on the Korean-American Treaty of 1882 and then turning a blind eye to Korea after the March First uprising, despite its origins in the idealism of Woodrow Wilson. Missionaries struck him as simply indifferent toward Korean

¹²⁶ "Map of Kauai: Showing Churches, Preaching Stations, and Visiting Camps, no date," in The Reverend Soon Hyun Collected Works, Korean American Digital Archive, University of Southern California Digital Library, Los Angeles, CA.

¹²⁷ Hyun, *In the New World: The Making of a Korean American* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 46-47. I refer to Peter Hyun by his first name rather than his surname to avoid confusion with his father, Soon Hyun.

¹²⁸ Hyun, 75.

¹²⁹ Hyun, 138-158.

Protestant resistance to Japanese imperialism: “Was it a mistake for millions of Koreans to have embraced the religion preached by the American missionaries? Was it foolish to have believed in the new faith and to have placed so much trust in its homeland America – ‘The Land of Freedom’?”¹³⁰ He finally adopted a strategy of humor to counter the ignorance of white prejudices: Did Koreans appear odd to white Americans, who laughed at their accented English and their appearance? “You think the Koreans speak funny English? You should hear the American missionaries speaking Korean...You think Orientals with slanted eyes are funny looking? Ask a Korean farmer to tell you how the American missionaries look: Watery eyes, yellow hair, long nose!”¹³¹ Beneath the humor was an enduring resentment of the missionaries and of white ignorance.

Political Reemergence and the Promise of Liberation during the Second World War

Although the provisional government impeached Rhee, he continued his diplomatic efforts to rally American support. In 1929, he left Hawaii to travel across the United States for four months to attract public attention to Korea. After the Japanese conquest of Manchuria in 1931, Rhee mounted another public campaign. Although his previous tour received scant attention, Rhee planned to use the West’s growing concern over the escalating military conflict between China and Japan to advocate Korean interests. In December, 1932, Rhee went to Europe to lobby the League of Nations in Geneva. In February, he presented a letter to Eric Drummond, the League of Nations

¹³⁰ Hyun, Mansei!: The Making of a Korean American (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 163-164.

¹³¹ Hyun, In the New World: The Making of a Korean American (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 46-278.

secretariat, and spoke over the League's broadcasting facilities.¹³² More than twenty years earlier, Rhee studied international policies of neutrality to earn his doctorate at Princeton. He now argued that the League of Nations could no longer remain neutral toward Japanese intentions to conquer all of Asia. In his memo to Drummond, he included extracts from the League's Lytton Report to demonstrate the strategic importance of Korea in East Asian affairs. In 1932, the Lytton Commission of Inquiry had traveled to Asia and concluded that Japanese military actions against the Chinese in Manchuria were hostile, not defensive.¹³³ Because the Report observed the presence of a large population of Koreans in Manchuria, Rhee contended that the League must also consider Korean interests.¹³⁴ Noting Korea's geographical position near China, Japan, and Russia, Rhee asserted that Korean independence would handicap Japanese advances. Without Korea as a base for military operations, Japan would lose a crucial foothold. Rhee also reminded the League of their duty to uphold international justice and asked them to consider again "the irrepressible and irresistible rising tide of the Korean nationalist spirit."¹³⁵

During the Second World War, Rhee called for U.S. military intervention in Asia even before the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. He warned that the Japanese conquest of Asia endangered American interests. Because the United States had tacitly approved of

¹³² "Appeal is Made for Korea," *New York Times*, February 9, 1933, and Oliver, 160.

¹³³ Katherine Reist, "Lytton Report," in *Encyclopedia of Chinese-American Relations*, edited by Yuwu Song (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), http://www.credoorreference.com.entry/mcfcham/lytton_report, accessed on February 21, 2013.

¹³⁴ Syngman Rhee, "Communication to the Secretariat of the League of Nations by the Korean Delegation, Geneva," *Korean Student Bulletin* 11:3-4, May-June 1933, 2.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

Japanese hegemony in Asia, Japan claimed mastery over the entire region and regarded U.S. maritime activities in the Pacific Ocean as encroaching upon their sphere of influence.¹³⁶ Rhee linked Japan's thirty-year rule of Korea, with its brutal and systematic campaigns to remove all vestiges of Korean culture and language, to what Japan was currently doing in China. He also emphasized Japan's hostility toward indigenous Christians and American missionaries in Korea and China.¹³⁷ Just as the Japanese had taken away the personal and religious liberties of Koreans, they were now threatening to do the same to the Chinese, other Asian peoples, and all free peoples of the world.

Christian pacifists in the United States were a problem. They opposed the war because of their religious principles. In 1939, the Federal Council of Church denounced war as "an evil thing contrary to the mind of Christ."¹³⁸ As Christian thinkers like Charles Clayton Morrison and Reinhold Niebuhr debated the moral implications of supporting the war, Rhee maintained that peace-loving Christians had to pursue justice and righteousness, whatever the cost, including war as a last resort. Christians had to join in the war effort precisely because "lip-service pacifists" in America had betrayed just principles in favor of expedient compromises in previous dealings with Japan.¹³⁹ Pacifism in the face of brutal national aggression was futile; Christians had to "draw the sword in

¹³⁶ Rhee, Japan Inside Out: The Challenge of Today, 2nd ed., 154-156.

¹³⁷ Rhee, 79-81. For reports of Japanese oppression in China, see Kaiyuan Zhang (ed.), Eyewitnesses to Massacre: American Missionaries Bear Witness to Japanese Atrocities in Nanjing (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001).

¹³⁸ Martin E. Marty, Modern American Religion, Volume 3: Under God, Indivisible, 1941-1960 (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 20.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

defense of those things which God has given into their possession.”¹⁴⁰ Pearl S. Buck, writing in the *Asia Magazine*, commended Rhee for showing that Japanese aggression in Asia was no less perilous than Hitler’s Nazism.¹⁴¹ In 1942, Buck joined Rhee at a meeting in New York City’s Town Hall to celebrate Korean culture and inform Americans about Korea’s political struggles.¹⁴²

After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Koreans in America supported U.S. entry into the war. Rhee urged Koreans throughout the world to support American military efforts. Koreans in Asia should destroy Japanese ammunition plants, plant mines on battlefields, and shoot Japanese soldiers. They should “commit every act of sabotage and violence which will hinder, disrupt, or destroy any part of the Japanese war effort.”¹⁴³ And Koreans in Hawaii and the United States should “seek every opportunity to serve, individually or collectively, under the Stars and Stripes.”¹⁴⁴ Although the United States had failed Korea in the past, Rhee called upon his compatriots to fight alongside Americans against their common enemy, Japan: “To fight for America is to fight for Korea.”¹⁴⁵ Korean Americans purchased war bonds and raised additional funds for the American military. In February 1942, a dozen Koreans in Boston collected seventy-five

¹⁴⁰ Rhee, 186.

¹⁴¹ Rhee, 4. In the second edition of *Japan Inside Out: The Challenge of Today*, the publisher included excerpts from Buck’s review.

¹⁴² “Korean Night Held by East-West Association,” *The Free Korea* 1:2, June 1942, 3. Buck later wrote *The Living Reed: A Novel on Korea* (New York: John Day, 1963), which recounted Korea’s fight against Japanese imperialism.

¹⁴³ Syngman Rhee, “A Proclamation to all Koreans at Home and Abroad,” *The Free Korea* 1:1, April 1942, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Rhee, 5.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

dollars to give to the first American flyer to drop a bomb on Japan. They told Boston's mayor that the gift represented their patriotic spirit, their hatred of the Japanese, and their hope that "America will soon smash the Japs, and will let the peoples who are suffering under the Japanese barbaric rule regain their freedom, right and peace."¹⁴⁶ By July 1943, 156 Korean men enlisted in the U.S. Armed Forces.¹⁴⁷ Women from Rhee's Korean Christian Church of Honolulu worked with the Red Cross to make bandages.¹⁴⁸ Nonetheless, they often had to wear "I AM KOREAN" buttons in America to distinguish themselves from the Japanese.¹⁴⁹

As the war continued, Rhee's stature in America grew. His expertise on East Asian affairs and long record of opposition against Japanese aggression enhanced his reputation within Washington's political and religious circles. In 1941 and 1942, Rhee addressed the Sons of the American Revolution, the Women's National Democratic Club, and the congregants of the All Souls' Unitarian Church.¹⁵⁰ *The Washington Post* described him as "a Korean patriot," "father of the Korean Republic," "distinguished Korean scholar," and "calm-faced envoy" who had been presciently warning the American public about the militant Japanese for over three decades.¹⁵¹ In 1944, the *Post's*

¹⁴⁶ "A Prize to the American Flyer Who Drops First Bomb on Japan," *The Free Korea* 1:1, April 1942, 8.

¹⁴⁷ "List of Korean Youths Serving in U.S. Forces," *The Free Korea* 2:2, July 1943, 7-8.

¹⁴⁸ Lyu, "Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, Part II: 1919-1945," 76.

¹⁴⁹ Yoo, 118.

¹⁵⁰ "Korean Patriot to Address S.A.R.," *The Washington Post*, November 17, 1941, "Clubs: No Puppets, the Japanese Seek to Conquer the World, Warns Dr. Rhee, of Korea," *The Washington Post*, April 14, 1942, and "All Souls' Class to Hear Korean Scholar," *The Washington Post*, May 16, 1942.

¹⁵¹ "Korean Patriot to Address S.A.R.," *The Washington Post*, November 17, 1941, "Korea Liberty Parley Opens in D.C. Today," *The Washington Post*, February 27, 1942, "Clubs: No Puppets, the Japanese Seek to

“Society Page” praised him as a venerable statesman who was winning support for Korean liberation among political elites in the nation’s capital. As one State Department official put it: “When Korea comes into its own again, one man will be due most of the credit, and that man is Syngman Rhee.”¹⁵² Rhee had elevated Korea to “remembered nations’ status.”¹⁵³ Newspapers from New York City to Chicago published similar accolades.¹⁵⁴

Conclusion

In 1945, a seventy-year old Rhee returned home after Japanese surrender in the Second World War. His wife, Francesca, remained in Washington, as Rhee entered into the chaos and uncertainty of a divided Korea under American and Soviet control. During Rhee’s first weeks in Korea, his wife wrote letters giving him political information and encouraging his piety: “Sometimes my heart is heavy and I pray to the good Lord to help you and guide you. It is this belief that makes me go on and keeps me from getting desperate.”¹⁵⁵ Several months later, the couple reunited in Korea. As the leader of the Republic of Korea, Rhee continued during his twelve year presidency from 1948 to 1960 to collect as many enemies as followers, and his autocratic and self-interested governance

Conquer the World, Warns Dr. Rhee, of Korea,” *The Washington Post*, April 14, 1942, and “All Souls’ Class to Hear Korean Scholar,” *The Washington Post*, May 16, 1942.

¹⁵² Hope Springs Miller, “Efforts of Dr. Rhee, Wife Result in Korea’s Reaching ‘Remembered Nations’ Status,” *The Washington Post*, August 25, 1944.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ “Japan’s First Victim,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1942, and “Corean Leader Utters Appeal for His People,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 23, 1944.

¹⁵⁵ Francesca Rhee, “Letter to Syngman Rhee on November 2, 1945,” in *The Syngman Rhee Correspondence, Volume 3*, 420.

led again to his removal from office. After massive groups of protesters charged Rhee with election fraud and abuse of power, he had to resign in 1960 and died as an exile in Hawaii five years later. In his last years, Rhee grew weary of the political tensions in churches and stopped attending worship services. After years of fighting others to advance his vision of Christianity, Rhee's religious journey ended peacefully in solitary communion with God.

Rhee's legacy in the United States and Korea is mixed. Some criticize still his corrupt and totalitarian methods; others commend him as a political and religious leader who preached about Korean liberation and Christian redemption. On August 19, 1985, a statue of Syngman Rhee was dedicated on the grounds of the Korean Christian Church of Honolulu on the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of Korea. Rhee holds an open Bible in his left hand and raises his right hand heavenward, and a plaque identifies him as the father of the Republic of Korea and the founder of the Korean Christian Church.¹⁵⁶

Rhee deserves a prominent place in our story because he illustrates the pattern that ran throughout relations between white American Protestants and Koreans. White Americans found it hard to move beyond their vision of a Korean Eden, a Christian nation redeemed by Christ and by the sacrifices of the missionary. That was the vision that initially drew the passion of the young Syngman Rhee. Without recognizing its darker side, he shared the missionaries' hope for a Christian Korea, formed in the image of a Christian America and marked by views of Christianity that permeated conservative—and often liberal—Protestantism. It was a soul-saving vision with a

¹⁵⁶ "Statue of Syngman Rhee," Agnes Rho Chun Collection, Center for Korean Studies Digital Archive, University of Hawai'i, Manoa, accessed on February 21, 2013, <http://cksdigital.manoa.hawaii>.

humanitarian dimension, but it had no place for “meddling” with political matters, whether in America or in Korea. It was also a vision marred by prejudice, often unconscious, on the part of missionaries who loved Korea but distrusted the abilities of Koreans to build their own church and nation. At the end of his life, Rhee still admired America and he still practiced his own form of Christianity, but his admiration had been chastened. The tensions that had marked the inception of the American Protestant mission to Korea had never entirely disappeared, even as late as 1960.

The missionaries probably never saw themselves as prejudiced, and all of them felt that they were engaged in a great sacrificial endeavor that would prepare Koreans to live in a great culture and abide with Christ eternally in the Christian heaven. When Koreans came to America, however, they also found white Americans who saw nothing wrong with being prejudiced against anyone who was different, and the shock of that recognition intensified in some Koreans the desire for a distinctively Korean form of Christianity, free from such instances of lovelessness. Rhee’s life, with its authoritarian and corrupt underside, demonstrated that Koreans, too, could never fit the mold of the paragon of Christian virtue, and Korean disputes, arguments, internal divisions, and prejudices also chipped away at the idyllic vision that had inspired the first American missionaries. But above all, the life of Syngman Rhee reminds us that the Koreans did not remain content to fit into molds prepared for them by idealistic but sometimes overweening white American Protestants.

Despite the accomplishments of Syngman Rhee, there was something tragic about his life. He aimed high and hubris helped bring him down. Despite the accomplishments

of the Protestant mission to Korea, it too had a tragic dimension. The missionaries aimed high, but their limitations as people ensconced in their own culture and unable to see beyond it, they too had to experience a kind of fall as they saw Koreans take their message, alter its cultural dressing, reject some (but not all) of its American features, and move toward a Christian expansion that would cause some Americans, by the late twentieth century, to see the Korean churches as models to imitate. To that extent, Syngman Rhee would have felt that he had indeed succeeded, not merely as a politician but also as a Christian.

The story was largely one of American and Korean men. In an age when women usually assumed secondary positions in both societies, they too suffered from a certain condescension, a tendency to have to suffer patronizing attitudes, and a sad recognition of cultural boundaries that held them in their place. But that was hardly the whole story of women in the Korean and American Protestant narrative. Women have already made their appearance, but not to the extent that does justice to the history. Korean women would also challenge missionaries with contrasting perspectives on the independence movement but also on matters of womanhood, domesticity, and education. Like Syngman Rhee, women in both Korea and America would recognize, with the Koreans usually in advance of the Americans, that Korean Christianity would have its own face.

Chapter 5: American Missionaries, Korean Protestants, and the Contested Making of the Indigenous Christian Woman

Introduction

On June 19, 1934, the Methodist mission celebrated their fiftieth anniversary in Seoul. Although the semi-centennial event heralded the partnership between American and Korean Methodists, the two groups were looking in different directions. Missionaries gazed backward into the past. They cherished the early years, when they had first introduced the gospel to a timid but teachable people who knew little about Christianity, modern technology, or the West. Koreans, in contrast, looked forward to the promising future of an autonomous Church. Bishop J.S. Ryang, the first Korean general superintendent, began the commemoration by stating that Korean Methodism was no longer a foreign mission field but a fully independent indigenous church.¹ Four years earlier, Korean Methodists formed their own denomination, separate from American Methodists. Of the 100 delegates at their first General Conference in 1930, eighty-four were Koreans and sixteen were missionaries.² Another Korean speaker, Helen Kim, a widely recognized teacher at Ewha College, proclaimed that Christ had inspired her countrywomen to rise up as “leaders of movements and carriers of public burdens” in and outside the church.³ The inclination of the missionaries, however, was to reminisce about the early years. The physician Annie Ellers Bunker recalled her first adventures in the

¹ J.S. Ryang, “Chairman’s Opening Address,” Within the Gate: Addresses Delivered at the Semi-Centennial of the Methodist Church of Korea, edited by Charles A. Sauer (Seoul, Korea: Y.M.C.A. Press, 1934), 1.

² Charles A. Sauer, Methodists in Korea, 1930-1960 (Seoul, Korea: The Christian Literature Society, 1973), 27.

³ Helen Kim, “Methodism and the Development of Korean Womanhood,” in Within the Gate, 82.

primitive nation when she and her fellow pioneers overcame hostility from Koreans, who saw them as “foreign devils,” in order to heal sick patients in the new modern hospital.⁴ A keen observer would have noticed that this difference between American and Korean perspectives at the semi-centennial event—Americans glorifying the past, Koreans anticipating the future—represented not simply a coincidental difference but a hint of wider conflict between two groups over the direction of the Korean Church. Missionaries distrusted at least some Korean initiatives and longed for the days of uncontested authority. Koreans spoke glowingly of the missionaries but welcomed a change in leadership. The disagreements mostly simmered, but they occasionally reached the boiling point, and no conflict was hotter than the debate over Christian womanhood. As Korean Christian women chose their own paths in the twentieth century, they clashed with female missionaries about nearly everything, from education, political activism, and religious beliefs to vocational choices, and dress.

The First Impression: The Missionary Making of the Korean Christian Woman

When missionaries arrived in the late nineteenth century, they felt appalled by the lowly status and degraded conditions of Korean women. During his first excursion through the nation’s interior, Appenzeller thought it ludicrous that the women would “run away for dear life” as he approached them.⁵ The strict customs of gender separation and the seclusion of women from the public sphere surprised and worried the missionaries. Huldah A. Haenig described young Korean women as “conspicuous by their absence” in

⁴ Annie Ellers Bunker, “Personal Recollections of Early Days,” in *Within the Gate*, 63.

⁵ Henry Appenzeller, “Diary entry on April 22, 1887,” Henry Gerhard Appenzeller Papers, Burke Theological Library Archives, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, NY.

public places.⁶ She could not quite grasp the curious practice of keeping “the Korean maiden . . . closely sheltered in the privacy of home” until she was twelve.⁷ *The Gospel in All Lands* noted in 1889 that only men occupied the streets; women remained secluded in the inner chambers of their homes: “You see a hundred men to one woman in the throngs on its streets, and Korean women are never seen by other men than their husbands and brothers.”⁸

These restrictions upon women did not exist in Korea until the reign of the Choson dynasty beginning in the late fourteenth century. Prior to the Choson dynasty (1392-1910), women freely mingled with men in the streets, participated in seasonal outings, frequented Buddhist temples, and bathed nude in rivers and streams.⁹ But neo-Confucian scholars of the early Choson dynasty imposed reforms that curtailed women’s public activity in order to divide the sexes according to a “natural” order in which women were subordinate to men and were encased in the fixed social categories of chaste maiden, diligent wife, and devoted mother. By confining women to their homes and restricting their access to Buddhist temples and shaman houses, neo-Confucianists sought to protect the virginity of women and diminish their religious authority among ordinary Koreans.¹⁰ These regulations led to what became known as the *inside-outside rule* – “it

⁶ Huldah A. Haenig, “From West Gate to East Gate,” *Woman’s Missionary Friend*, January 1911, 11.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Frank Carpenter, “The Koreans at Home,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, October 1889, 439.

⁹ Hyaeweol Choi, *Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 47.

¹⁰ Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 23.

meant that women should not see or talk with men who were not family members and should stay in the inner chambers.”¹¹ Unlike upper-class women, lower and middling class women enjoyed more time in public because of their work in the fields and marketplace.¹²

But the missionaries were not pleased by what they saw from common women. They were aghast at the lack of hygiene and clothing among some women in the streets and villages. In 1901, one missionary complained in her diary after encountering an elderly Korean woman, that, “this old woman wore simply a dress skirt over her lower undergarments, but above her waist was bare. She looked as if water had never touched her skin. She was simply scurvy, the dirt scaling off here and there, and her hair was filled with nits.”¹³ Missionaries lamented the uncouth appearance of young Korean girls and objected to the garments of nursing mothers that exposed their breasts. One older female missionary in Seoul, outraged by these revealing outfits, took to the streets to reprimand the women for their impropriety, making what one of her colleagues described as “energetic though futile attempts to pull their skirts and jackets together across the objectionable gap.”¹⁴

Missionaries attributed such improprieties to disadvantages imposed on Korean women from an early age. Even in the upper classes, boys alone received a formal

¹¹ Choi, 48.

¹² Yoo, 23.

¹³ Mattie Wilcox Noble, “Diary entry on October 1, 1901,” The Journals of Mattie Wilcox Noble, 1892-1934 (Seoul, Korea: Hanguk Kidokkyo Yoksa Yongsu, 1993), 101.

¹⁴ Annie Baird, Inside Views of Mission Life (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1913), 19.

education. Equally or more disturbing were the compulsory marriages of young girls. Although the government in 1894 set the legal age of marriage at twenty for men and sixteen for women, girls as young as twelve commonly underwent arranged marriages with older men.¹⁵ As one female missionary wrote: “The Korean woman received no welcome at birth, no love in life, and has no hope in death.”¹⁶ Their condition evoked pity from the missionaries and prompted indictments of the society. Appenzeller described Korean gender relations: “Education is for man, stupidity is for woman.” He concluded that Korean women were “secluded, subjected, degraded, [and] enslaved” with slim odds for progress because they lacked “literary advantages as a child” and possessed “shadowy legal rights as a woman.”¹⁷ He later preached that the unfair treatment of Korean women demonstrated the inferiority of Confucianism and Buddhism to Christianity: “Confucius never spoke a kind word for woman...Buddha had 48 wishes – one was, may I never become woman. Jesus is the only oriental who has a good word for woman.”¹⁸

In 1909, Annie Baird wrote *Daybreak in Korea* after spending nearly two decades in Korea. Her fictive tale is told from the perspective of a twelve-year-old Korean girl, Pobai. But Baird explained in her preface that her book was a reliable source to learn about “facts and incidents such as come daily under the observation of missionaries in

¹⁵ Choi, 77.

¹⁶ Lulu E. Frey, “The Bible Woman,” *The Korea Mission Field*, March 1907, 42.

¹⁷ Appenzeller, “Notes on Women,” Henry Gerhard Appenzeller Papers, Burke Theological Library Archives, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, NY.

¹⁸ Appenzeller, “Help Those Women,” in *The Appenzellers: How They Preached and Guided Korea into Modernization*, 357.

Korea.”¹⁹ Her work emerged as one of the leading textbooks to train prospective missionaries to Korea. In mission study classrooms across North America, students had to read *Daybreak in Korea* in order to learn about Korean women. In one classroom exercise, female students would “impersonate the life of a Korean girl” as depicted by the book.²⁰ The depictions were bleak and pathetic, for Baird presented her protagonist, Pobai, as a sweet and innocent girl trapped in a village beset by filth, poverty, debauchery, and corruption:

She was nearly twelve years old, with round cheeks that glowed red under the olive skin, and a heavy braid of glossy black hair hanging down her back. Only perfect cleanliness was lacking to make her a very wholesome girl to look upon but Pobai was almost always rather dirty. She would have liked to be clean, but so much of her time and strength went into helping her mother keep the men of the family immaculately clad, that she hardly ever had time to think of herself.²¹

The reader follows Pobai on a daily walk through her village as she encounters gambling men, a shrieking woman with torn clothes fleeing from her drunken husband, prostitutes combing their hair and adorning their bodies with oil and perfume, the wretched stench of a festering corpse, and demon-possessed brothers wearing old straw shoes and filthy rags.²² Pobai later has to marry a cruel and abusive Korean man, but eventually she overcomes the tribulations after meeting American missionaries, who teach her the gospel and lead her to Christian conversion.

¹⁹ Annie Baird, *Daybreak in Korea: A Tale of Transformation in the Far East* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1909), 5.

²⁰ *Suggestions to Leaders of Classes: Korea in Transition* (New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, n.d.), 23.

²¹ Baird, 12.

²² Baird, 12-17.

Missionaries believed that they alone could save poor and helpless Koreans, especially the women. Though they criticized the harsh conditions, female missionaries found that Korea's strict gender separation gave them some freedom to practice ministry apart from men. Across Asia, American women like Baird gladly assumed leadership in education, evangelism, and public health, a leadership that far exceeded the limits placed on them at home.²³ In 1909, Presbyterian missionary Margaret Best celebrated her female colleagues in Seoul for service beyond the capacities of their male counterparts: "They gathered the street children into Sabbath Schools and through them gained access to the inner quarters of the high walled houses that shut in women from the outside world."²⁴ With this greater access came demands from the American women for more autonomy and equality in decision-making.²⁵ In 1912, Lillias Underwood protested against a resolution adopted by her mission that threatened to restrict equal voting rights for married female missionaries. She pointed out that the women worked no less hard than their spouses to meet "the awful need of Korean womanhood in the utter barrenness of her social, intellectual, and spiritual existence."²⁶

²³ Ian R. Tyrell, Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 34-35.

²⁴ Margaret Best, "Development of Work among Women," Quatro Centennial, Papers Read Before the Korea Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at the Annual Meeting in Pyeng Yang, August 27, 1909, 45-46.

²⁵ Choi, 26-29.

²⁶ Lillias Underwood, "Shall Married Women Have a Vote on Mission Matters," *The Korea Mission Field*, November 1912, 345-346. In the Presbyterian Mission, single female and all male missionaries had full voting rights after passing the first-year Korean language test, but married female missionaries needed to pass the more rigorous third-year language test to vote. The Mission was concerned that married women would simply duplicate their spouses' votes to create unfair majorities. See Choi, 27.

They might have sometimes worked harder. In their Bible training classes, they pursued rigorous group study from morning to evening. “The method usually pursued is to teach the lesson verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book,” explained one instructor, “to make it so familiar that it becomes part of their life.”²⁷ Because of low literacy rates among Korean women, missionaries employed older female converts, known as Bible Women (*chondo puin*), to assist them.²⁸ Because most Korean Protestants came from the middling classes, missionaries understood that a Bible Woman occupied an enviable position that promised income and prestige. At first, missionaries recruited any female convert who could read. As the Bible classes expanded and trained more converts, the missionaries raised their hiring standards. In about twenty years, one Presbyterian Bible class for women in P’yongyang had expanded by 1909 to ninety-three classes with 3,202 students.²⁹ In order to cultivate virtuous women, female missionaries wanted to produce Korean assistants who would manifest not only the image of God but also the image of the missionaries. They preferred widows, who had no familial household responsibilities, and women whom they had educated and trained for mission.³⁰

The missionaries of course wanted their converts to be faithful, but they also wanted them to be physically clean. Cleanliness would improve public health, and clean

²⁷ Best, 51.

²⁸ In 1899, one female missionary in P’yongyang estimated that one in forty Korean women at her dispensary could read. See Choi, 66.

²⁹ Of the ninety-three classes, seven were taught by missionaries and eighty-six were taught by Bible Women. See Best, 52.

³⁰ Choi, 65-66.

bodies would evidence godliness.³¹ But ideals of Western hygiene sometimes bumped up against cultural traditions. In 1906, M.J. Edmunds told of the difficulties in training indigenous nurses. They worked hard to learn but they “came from the crude native environment” and knew nothing about Western instruments, rubber appliances, thermometers, and even ordinary medicines.³² But as female converts adopted Western hygienic norms, missionaries considered their cleaner and healthier bodies as markers of evangelistic success. In 1916, as one missionary put it, both the piety and the physical appearance of the women at her P’yongyang mission station radiated light in comparison to the darkness and decay enveloping the rest of the country: “It was a hot day and a sultry room with two or three hundred women sitting on the floor and a baby to about every fourth woman...The women were all in their clean linen skirts and white head covering. Christianity has done so much to make the women of Korea clean, on the outside as well as within.”³³ The pious minds and clean bodies of once ignorant and degraded Korean Christian women confirmed the transformative power of the Christian gospel and validated the distinctive achievements of women in the missions.

Korean marital customs, however, posed a threat, both to the spiritual welfare of female converts and to the religious authority of missionary women. Because Korean women did not choose their spouses, they could not select a Christian partner. Often

³¹ Carol C. Chin also argues that American female missionaries in China at the turn of the twentieth century came “from a stratum of American society that placed a high value on cleanliness and godliness and at a time when Progressive reformers were focusing attention on public sanitation.” See Carol C. Chin, “Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Diplomatic History* 27 (June 2003), 334.

³² M.J. Edmunds, “Training Native Nurses,” *The Korea Mission Field*, June 1906, 154.

³³ Belle S. Lockett, “With the Missionaries’ Children,” *Woman’s Work for Woman*, February 1916, 29.

converts wed husbands who forbade them to attend church or enroll in the mission school. After losing numerous students to these marriages, missionaries adopted a resolution in 1900 to discourage their students from marriage before eighteen, and to press the matter with parents.³⁴ At the same time, they endorsed Western notions of courtship as morally superior to arranged marriages. They claimed that arranged marriages too often led to spousal abuse. In 1911, J. Robert Moose argued that American courtships—which led to marriages based on mutual love—were closer to biblical teaching than Korean marital customs: “The wife is selected by the relatives of the husband without his having anything to do with the matter. Of course under these circumstances there can be no courtship, and in most cases little or no love. If a Korean man loved his wife, he would be ashamed to acknowledge it.”³⁵

The missionaries instructed their students to adopt modified American courtship patterns. They understood that Korean women could not mingle with men in social settings, so they acquiesced in Korean gender relations by placing curtains in the middle of their churches to separate men and women during worship.³⁶ Although young Koreans could not court one another, missionaries encouraged Christian parents to select their children’s spouses from within their churches. They also promoted letter-writing as “a new style of courtship” between arranged couples so that future spouses could come to

³⁴ Choi, 78.

³⁵ J. Robert Moose, Village Life in Korea (Nashville and Dallas: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, Smith & Lamar, 1911), 235.

³⁶ H.T. Owens, “Korea, the ‘Permit’ Nation,” *The Missionary Survey*, December 1919, 728.

know one another and share religious convictions.³⁷ Even if missionaries could not replicate American-style courtships, they could do something to improve relationships among young Korean men and women. Some of the missionaries even took the initiative and arranged Christian marriages by having Korean preachers and Bible Women intercede as matchmakers:

Of course the young man had not been courting her a la American – her village would have been scandalized if he had – even if he had known how; besides, the young lady would have been dreadfully embarrassed ever to have been confronted by him. But neither had the match been made through a go-between, for a better day is dawning in the land of Morning Calm. The circuit preachers and the Bible Women had conveyed the messages back and forth while the parents had talked it over with the young people who had consented. Their ages were respectively 18 and 17, but would probably have been 8 and 7 years, prior to Christian influence. The young gentleman was studying in Seoul and the young lady in an advanced mission school.³⁸

A year later, another missionary observed that young converts were “beginning to choose their own helpmeets.” This was a “tremendous break with the past” that evinced gratifying progress in the mission.³⁹ Female missionaries thought that these changes would increase the odds that their students would marry Christian men. The result would be women converts with sound minds, clean bodies, and converted husbands.

Some Western practices, however, struck the missionaries as threatening. How much Western education was appropriate for Korean women? Should they teach English and other Western subjects? The questions produced disagreement. Methodist Mary Scranton, who established the first girls’ school, *Ewha Haktang*, said that it would not

³⁷ J.S. Gale, “A New Style of Courtship,” *The Korea Mission Field*, April 1906, 119-120.

³⁸ Cordelia Erwin, “Transition, a Korean Christian Wedding,” *The Korea Mission Field*, 1918, April 1918, 73.

³⁹ Owens, 728.

westernize Korean girls. Presbyterians also distinguished westernizing and evangelizing in their schools. “In all meetings for women and in the home life of the girls’ school,” wrote Margaret Best, “the effort was made to keep surroundings and atmosphere Korean and not introduce disturbing, distracting, and useless foreign elements.”⁴⁰ Others countered that Western subjects like arithmetic and science did not distract from the mission. In 1914, one Ewha teacher, Lulu Frey, argued that her students could learn from a diverse curriculum, both Western and Korean, without losing their orthodox faith. Frey acknowledged that both sides in the educational debate had some valid arguments, but concluded that students should be afforded the same quality education as their teachers, regardless of race. “In coveting for the Korean women lives of rich service,” Frey asked, “dare we offer them any less preparation than we considered necessary for ourselves?”⁴¹ Grace Harmon McGary advocated the teaching of advanced topics like psychology and sociology, insisting that Christian education for women in Korea should be no different from education in the United States: “I defend higher education for Korean women from much the same standpoint as for American women, for what difference ought color and country to make in the privileges of creatures all alike in God’s image!”⁴² Annie Baird agreed that racial discrimination was an evil, but she wondered if the absence of algebra made much difference. Did students—or missionaries, for that matter—need to learn “Differential Calculus” and “Spherical Geometry”? “One would like to know just as a

⁴⁰ Best, 47.

⁴¹ Lulu E. Frey, “Higher Education for Korean Girls,” *The Korea Mission Field*, October 1914, 308.

⁴² Grace Harmon McGary, “Higher Education for Women in Korea,” *The Korea Mission Field*, August 1916, 214.

matter of information how many women missionaries on the field ever studied these subjects, and of those who did, how many shudder at the recollection.”⁴³

They may have disagreed about Western education but they found no reason for debate about the superiority of traditional Korean dress. Korean women during the Choson period wore long skirts (*ch'ima*) and blouses (*chogori*) in a triangular silhouette that deemphasized the upper torso and covered the arms and legs. Upper-class women chose brightly-colored dresses made with silk, gauze, satin, and damask. Lower-class women typically wore white dresses made of cotton, ramie, and hemp. Traditional male clothes consisted of long, flowing pants and shirts made of white woven hemp and a black cylindrical hat made of horsehair and bamboo (*kat*).⁴⁴ Although the first mission school for boys in 1897 discarded Korean dress for European military garb, school uniforms for girls followed Korean styles.⁴⁵ The missionaries were pleased; while Western women wore tight-fitting gowns and short skirts—provocative clothing that drew indelicate glances—Korean traditional dress conveyed a modesty that exemplified an image of Christian womanhood.⁴⁶ A Korean woman once gently but insistently told Baird that the placket of her shirt-waist sleeve exposed her forearms and that the gap required immediate attention. In other words, Korean women could teach Americans a thing or two about propriety. Best said that the Americans had learned “that as true a

⁴³ Annie L.A. Baird, “Higher Education of Women in Korea,” *The Korea Mission Field*, April 1912, 115.

⁴⁴ Hyung Gu Lynn, *Fashioning Modernity: Changing Meanings of Clothing in Colonial Korea*, *Journal of International and Area Studies* 11:3 (2004), 77.

⁴⁵ Martha Huntley, *Caring, Growing, Changing: A History of the Protestant Mission in Korea* (New York: Friendship Press, 1984), 86.

⁴⁶ Baird, 19.

Christian heart could beat beneath the dainty silk gown of the Korean lady or the homely cotton garment of her lowlier sister as beneath the strangely fashioned dress of the Westerner.”⁴⁷ But the missionaries had to accept another failure: some Korean Christian women in the twentieth century defied mission school regulations and adopted Western dress, especially after Japanese colonization. They not only defied regulations about dress; they also had their own ideas about proper beliefs and practices.

The Second Act: Korean Christian Women Make Their Own Choices

During the Choson dynasty, most Koreans had little to no hope of obtaining a formal education. Even educated upper-class women received only informal training in the basics of domesticity.⁴⁸ The few literate women studied textbooks about their household duties as wives and mothers. One popular manual, the *Naehun* (Instructions for women), consisted of seven chapters that covered a woman’s manner of speech, her conduct, filial piety, matrimony, marital relations, motherhood, family relations, and thrift.⁴⁹ Neo-Confucian scholars saw learned women as threats to patriarchal gender boundaries. Yi Ik (1681-1763) declared that “reading and learning are the domains of men. For a woman it is enough if she knows the Confucian virtues of diligence, frugality, and chastity. If a woman disobeys these virtues, she will bring disgrace to the family.”⁵⁰ Koreans often criticized the missionaries but they conceded that women like Mary

⁴⁷ Best, 47.

⁴⁸ Yoo, 38.

⁴⁹ Yoo, 39.

⁵⁰ Yung-Chung Kim, ed., *Women of Korea: A History of Ancient Times to 1945* (Seoul, Korea: Ewha Womans University Press, 1976), 154.

Scranton advanced female education. In 1918, Yun Ch'ih'o explained that "indeed, if the Christian missionaries had accomplished nothing else in Korea, the introduction of female education alone deserves our lasting gratitude. Up to a few years ago girls' schools were not even thought of outside the Christian church."⁵¹ The first generation of female professionals in the early twentieth century was not uniformly Christian, but most had studied at mission schools. One of them, Hwang Sin-dok, observed in 1933 that "almost all women over thirty who were educated and had worked in society had been exposed to Christianity, even if it was only minor contact."⁵²

But as educated Korean women sought to rise in the public sphere, they discovered repeated resistance: from Japanese imperialists, Korean neo-Confucians, and American Protestants. The Japanese colonialists forbade instruction in religion and in the Korean language. They founded government schools to train their subjects in modern and Japanese ways. The first Japanese Governor-General declared that the new purpose of education was "to cultivate such character as befitting the imperial subject through moral development and dissemination of the national [Japanese] language."⁵³ Both missionaries and Koreans felt the burden of the new ordinances. Annie Baird's zoology textbook failed to earn the imprimatur of the Vice-Minister of Education because she wrote it in Korean.⁵⁴ In 1916, the director of the Internal Affairs Department reminded Heong-Wo

⁵¹ Yun Ch'ih'o, "The Sort of Education Korean Girls Need," *The Missionary Voice*, April 1918, 114.

⁵² Choi, 39.

⁵³ Han-Kyo Kim, "The Japanese Colonial Administration in Korea: An Overview," in Korea under Japanese Rule (Western Michigan University: The Center for Korean Studies Institute of International and Area Studies, 1973), edited by Andrew C. Nahm, 50.

⁵⁴ M. Tawara, "Letter to Annie Baird on August 10, 1909," Annie Baird Papers, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Cynn, a Korean Methodist teacher, about the ordinances. He gave Cynn's students permission for religious meetings outside the school building and after school hours, but forbade religious instruction in the classroom: "I will call your attention to the Instruction of the Governor-General, issued on March 24, 1915, which says, 'In such schools no religious teaching is permitted to be included in their curricula nor religious ceremonies can be allowed to be performed.'"⁵⁵

Missionaries and Koreans shared grievances about imperial educational restrictions, but they disagreed about the purpose of mission schools. Like Syngman Rhee and Yun Ch'ihō, many Korean women also enrolled in them primarily to learn English and Western subjects. With the opening of Korea to foreign nations, Korean women saw the possibility of breaking free from neo-Confucian norms, and they saw the schools as a means to this end. As Korea modernized, these women embraced new opportunities to work outside the home in education, medicine, art, literature, and social work. Though they were zealous Christians, their leap into the public sphere troubled their American tutors. Even as Korea changed before their very eyes, women missionaries still strove to raise virtuous wives and mothers. As late as 1934, Best boasted that her school promoted domesticity "so that our graduates may be fitted to fill placers of responsibility and usefulness in their own homes."⁵⁶ But instead of following the missionaries' script, the Korean women appealed to Jesus as they forged their own path forward. A number of them—including women of influence—remained single, cut their hair, dressed like

⁵⁵ K. Usami, "Letter to H.H. Cynn on August 29, 1916," General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ.

⁵⁶ Margaret Best, "Fifty Years of Women's Work," in The Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Korean Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., June 30-July 3, 1934 (Seoul, 1934), 89.

Westerners, entered the workforce, joined the Korean independence movement, and spoke out against Japanese soldiers, Korean males, or female missionaries who stood in their way.

Helen Kim was a Korean woman who embraced Christianity to become a pioneer in her own right. Born in 1899 into a poor family of subsistence farmers in Incheon, she eventually graduated from a mission school and received a scholarship to study in America because of her academic promise and her piety. Kim earned a BA from Ohio Wesleyan College (1924) and a MA from Boston University (1925) and then returned to Korea to work as a teacher at Ewha College. In 1930, she traveled again to America to study at Columbia Teachers College, becoming in 1931 the first Korean woman to earn an American doctorate. In 1939, she became the first Korean president of Ewha. Like other prominent Korean Christians, Kim's relationship with missionaries was complex. She numbered some among her dearest friends, but she was often at odds with them.

As a young girl, Kim gravitated toward the mission school's offerings in literature, geology, astronomy, and geometry. As she and her older sisters studied at Ewha, their middling class family admired the missionaries for reforming Korea's patriarchal and elitist society by teaching common women. Kim wrote of how Ewha's first college graduation in 1914 ushered in a new era of hope and promise for Korean women. As she watched the three college graduates in their caps and gowns, she shed

“tears of joy for the accomplishments of girls so long neglected and looked down upon” in her society.⁵⁷

Initially, at least, she had little enthusiasm for missionary religious instruction. She attended church with her family and later at Ewha, but she realized at fourteen years of age that her faith was “a nominal acceptance of a set of frozen dogmas [that] was expressed in a routine of lifeless exercises.”⁵⁸ Hearing a preacher ask a congregation to confess their sins, Kim at first resisted because she felt that she had no reason to confess. But as she deliberated on the Christian doctrine of repentance, first during the church service and then into the night, Kim concluded that she “had to get at the reality of religion or else give up altogether the meaningless and therefore hypocritical observances of religious practices.”⁵⁹ She prayed desperately, asking for a revelation of God’s existence and of Christ’s redemptive work. Her prayer resulted in the illumination that her sins were “pride, self-will, and hatred for the Japanese.”⁶⁰ Kim fell to the floor and repented. Sensing that God forgave her, she had a vision in which God removed from her three bags (symbolizing her three chief sins) and directed her toward a large moat filled by a mass of entrapped Korean women with outstretched hands. Kim interpreted the vision as a divine call to help women in her country and beyond.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Helen Kim, Grace Sufficient: The Story of Helen Kim (Nashville: Upper Room, 1964), 31.

⁵⁸ Kim, 29.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Kim, 30.

Like the missionaries, Kim placed her hope in education but not in mere domestic and industrial training. Yun Ch'ihō, writing in *The Korea Mission Field*, criticized the girls' schools for teaching literature and science at the expense of domestic training. Believing that education should make "an intelligent wife, a sweet daughter-in-law, [and] a good housekeeper," Yun wanted the schools to teach cooking, knitting, and the like.⁶² Kim, in contrast, sided with missionaries like Frey and McGary who wanted a broader curriculum. She countered Yun with the argument that women students used advanced subjects like geometry and poetry to become more enlightened Christians and more productive homemakers.⁶³

Kim wanted to push beyond a curriculum formed by the notion that domesticity was the sole option for women. Some of the missionaries moved in the opposite direction. In 1918, Alice Appenzeller, a second-generation missionary and instructor at Ewha, praised graduates for cultivating Christian homes, "quietly and sweetly spreading the leaven of the Master's spirit wherever they go."⁶⁴ Charlotte Bell Linton concurred six

⁶² Yun Ch'ihō, "A Plea for Industrial Training," *The Korea Mission Field*, 1911, 187. His recommended curriculum was: "(1) Bible and Singing, (2) Korean dress making – cutting, sewing, etc., (3) Washing and ironing, (4) Cooking – Korean style, (5) Foreign Cooking – at least such of it as can be done on a 'wha-ro,' or a small stove, (6) Embroidery, (7) Knitting, (8) Practical hygiene, (9) Sweeping, dusting, bed-making, (10) Some 2,500 Chinese characters of commonest use, thoroughly mastered, (11) Arithmetic-simple and practical and abacus, (12) Geography and History." See also Yun, "A Korean's Opinion on Female Education in Korea," *The Korea Mission Field*, June 1918, 124.

⁶³ Helen Kim, "The Relation of Higher Education to the Home," *The Korea Mission Field*, June 1918, 125-127.

⁶⁴ Alice Appenzeller, "Higher Education for Women," *The Korea Mission Field*, October 1918, 213.

years later that the great accomplishment of the schools was the training of women as mothers who would ensure a “proper sort of godly atmosphere at home.”⁶⁵

Kim, who never married, preferred that educated Korean women seek leadership positions in the church and the political order and that they constantly pursue gender equality. In the journal *Sin yoja* (New Woman), she excoriated Korean men who desired pure and upright wives without first improving themselves. She depicted Christian men—at least some of them—as charlatans: “Among those who pretend to be devoted Christians, when they go to church clutching their Bibles and hymn books at church, listening piously, you sometimes see some of them surreptitiously glance down the aisle, examining the women. I do not think these men have true faith.”⁶⁶ Kim would not be confined to the home, and she wanted other educated women to help change Korean society by claiming equality in the work of reform. “If we want to make our society healthy and prosperous, men must advise women on their shortcomings, and women must caution men on their limitations. By doing so, men and women will fulfill their sacred calling and display the genius within themselves.”⁶⁷

Educated Korean women like Kim distinguished themselves by fierce rhetoric and Western dress. By the 1920s, many urban intellectual men had adopted Western dress. Although traditional garments were markers of ethnic identity in the face of Japanese

⁶⁵ Charlotte Bell Linton, “Letter to family on October 31, 1924,” William Alderman Linton Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

⁶⁶ Helen Kim, “Namsong ui pansong ul ch’ok ham (Urging men to critically reflect on themselves),” *Sin yoja* 4 (June 1920), in *New Women in Colonial Korea: A Sourcebook*, compiled and translated with an introduction by Hyaeweol Choi (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), 33.

⁶⁷ Kim, 34.

imperialism, the men eventually turned away from tradition. Clothing assumed a different meaning as traditional dress began to suggest primitiveness while Western dress represented progress.⁶⁸ Educated Korean women were quicker than men to take up the Western style because it was less cumbersome and more practical, but their openness to change engendered more controversy than the male transition.

Newspapers derided them for wearing shorter skirts that exposed their calves and knees. These “new women” were vain, materialistic, and overtly sexual. In 1928, the newspaper *Choson ilbo* printed cartoons depicting the “new woman” with an obsession for expensive Western clothing and jewelry.⁶⁹ But having changed their clothes, the women also changed their hairstyle to short bobbed hair (*tanbal*), a turn that distressed male intellectuals, who claimed that bobbed hair confused gender norms and promoted sexual permissiveness.⁷⁰ Kim had to defend her bobbed hair: it was attractive, easy to clean, and a “necessary condition for women’s liberation to take place” because it removed a physical distinction between the sexes.⁷¹

The American women allied themselves with the Korean male intellectuals. They scolded their students for giving up their modest dress and insisted that traditional garments pleased Christ more than suggestive Western skirts. But at least some Korean

⁶⁸ Lynn, 79-87.

⁶⁹ “Kkore p’i nun kongjak (Peacock with its tail feathers on display),” and “Mo-don kkol ui changsin undong (Modern Girls’ race for accessories),” *Choson ilbo*, February 9, 1928 and February 5, 1928, in Choi, 83 and 85.

⁷⁰ Yoo, 74-76.

⁷¹ Kim, “Yoja tanbal i ka hanga pul hanga (Is short hair good or bad?),” *Pyolgon’gon* 18 (January 1929), in Choi, 159.

Christian women believed that Christ had freed them from traditional clothing, which they associated with gender inequality and subservience. Louise Yim explained that she and her classmates wanted to escape the “yards and yards of linen cloth, which covered our bodies from head to foot and made us look like piles of dry goods.”⁷² Yim felt dismay when her missionary instructor insisted that “the mission is here to improve your morals, not to change customs!”⁷³ Yim led a boycott of classes and worship services. The students gained the right to dress as they pleased.⁷⁴

The sartorial disagreements symbolized a break between two groups of women over the future direction of the Korean Church. Female missionaries saw themselves as pioneers whose success derived from conservative theological doctrines like biblical inerrancy and complementarian gender roles. They viewed Western dress as a portent of modernity in their mission field. Even as they celebrated the Korean Church’s increasing autonomy in the 1920s and 1930s, they feared that modernity would erode the pure and orthodox faith of Korean Christians. Gathered in 1934 for the fiftieth anniversary of Presbyterian missions, they advanced ambivalent and cautious opinions. Gordon Holdcroft’s “forward look” had as its shadow side worries whether the Koreans, without help, could withstand theological modernism and the “material allurements of present day civilization.”⁷⁵ Missionaries had once battled against the seclusion of women from the public sphere, but when young Korean women in Western dress began to assert equal

⁷² Louise Yim, My Forty-Year Fight for Korea (New York: A.A. Wyn, 1951), 68.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Yim, 70. According to Yim, this protest occurred at a mission school in Chunju during October 1915.

⁷⁵ J. Gordon Holdcroft, “The Forward Look,” in The Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Korean Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., June 30-July 3, 1934, 208.

rights and to take positions in schools, factories, and department stores, missionaries worried that modernity was a snare. Eva Pieters put it this way:

Even the short hair, the permanent wave, the rouge, the lipstick, the short skirt, and the French heeled slippers have found ready entrance into the hearts of the Korean young ladies. These radical changes in the social life of the Korean young woman – changes that have been rather imposed from without than resulting from gradual development – have brought with them new needs as well as new dangers, of which we, as missionaries, have been keenly aware. How to help these girls to acquire the right outlook upon the world, to develop their mental and moral stamina, to satisfy the craving for social life, to guard against their seeking quick means of gratifying their natural desire for self-adornment[?] These and similar problems have been keenly felt by our women workers.⁷⁶

Pieters could not see that Korean Christian women themselves sought some of these changes. Women like Helen Kim and Louise Yim were not succumbing to societal pressures; Western dress was for them a symbol of a religiously motivated push for gender equality.

Korean Christian women forged their own identities. They also sought an indigenous identity for the Korean Church. While grateful to the missionaries, they were ready to lead. In 1923, Choi Pil Ley observed that educated Korean women were doctors, teachers, school principals, bank clerks, factory workers, and journalists. They no longer required nannies: “Ten years ago women’s work in the church was of necessity largely in the hands of the women missionaries... Now most of such church business is in Korean

⁷⁶ Eva Pieters, “Undated Report by Eva,” *The Pieters in Korea*, 133. The report comes from the Pieters family’s personal memory book (Pieters Family Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA).

women's hands."⁷⁷ To the missionaries, such assertions threatened the survival of the Church in Korea. They viewed themselves as indispensable.

The relationship between two instructors at Ewha, Alice Appenzeller and Helen Kim, embodied the tension. Missionaries publicly heralded the cross-cultural pairing of these two women. Appenzeller was the eldest child of the first Methodist missionaries; she had returned to the place of her birth to continue her parents' work. Kim was a mission school graduate who had earned a doctorate in the United States. But behind closed doors the two wrangled over who was best qualified to set the school's agenda and vision. Kim pushed for a women's medical department and a merger with the neighboring men's school, Choson Christian College, but the conservative Appenzeller argued that the school was already overextended. In 1939, Appenzeller nominated Kim to succeed her as school president only after the Japanese forced all missionary instructors to resign.⁷⁸ Appenzeller struggled to accept this reversal. Over the next several years, Appenzeller questioned Kim's decision-making at Ewha in letters to her friends.⁷⁹

When missionaries kept harping on domesticity, some Korean women began to associate Christianity with patriarchy and gender discrimination. The missionaries recalled that they had freed the women from neo-Confucian shackles, but Korean women replied that they had no interest in a cultural imprisonment grounded on a religious

⁷⁷ Pil Ley Choi, "The Development of Korean Women during the Past Ten Years," *The Korea Mission Field*, November 1923, 223.

⁷⁸ Clark, 184.

⁷⁹ Alice Appenzeller, "Letter to Moneta Saher on February 24, 1948," in Marion Lane Conrow Papers, General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ.

message. In 1930 Kim Kang'chun scathingly asserted that both "Western Christianity and Eastern Confucianism" held women back.⁸⁰ Even the Christian scriptures, she said, treated women as subordinate: "First, man comes from God, while woman comes from man. One can easily infer that man is the most powerful being after God, and while God rules the universe, man rules woman. Paul insists [on] this point."⁸¹ Any serious reader of the Bible would conclude that according to Christian teaching women were created to serve men. To Kim, Korean Christian women fleeing from oppressive Confucian doctrines were exchanging one set of shackles for another.

Other Korean women also complained that the mission schools taught too much about religion and too little about other subjects. They also accused the teachers of being oppressive and unconcerned about the true welfare of students. The students at one school rebelled when the missionaries monitored their movements and opened their mail.⁸² A graduate of another school accused the missionaries for trying to impress their American friends by boasting of increased enrollments rather than trying to educate Korean children. The teachers, she said, were callous and indifferent when she and four hundred other students suffered in cramped classrooms without desks or seats:

Are the schools established for your own reputation, or to live up to some agreement, or are they for the scholars? We recognize the fact that the schools are Christian propaganda, but there ought to be more love in the management. The

⁸⁰ Kang'chun Kim, "Yonae kaejoron-I kul un t'ukhi song e nun ul ttuge toeja sasang chok kaltung e ponmin hanun nuna tul ege turimnida (A thesis on the reform of romance: I dedicate this article especially to sisters who have just awoken to sexuality and struggle with conflicting ideas)," *Yosong chiu* 2:2 (April 1930), in Choi, 113.

⁸¹ Kim, in Choi, 114.

⁸² William C. Kerr, "Review of Current Korean Periodical Literature," *The Korea Bookman*, December 1924, 36.

attitude and methods are an anachronism, they are for profit, they are half-Christian... We could have endured the inconvenience if it had not been for the red-faced refusal [from the teachers]: "The increasing or decreasing of the size of the rooms is our business and none of yours. Benches and desks are for civilized people; you must think of the opportunity to study in even this much of a room as a blessing." We only mourned and sighed over our poor condition.⁸³

The missionaries heard these criticisms, and some accepted them. In 1917 Kate Cooper asked her colleagues to consider how their condescending attitudes dishonored the ministry of Christ and distanced them from the people they had come to serve.⁸⁴

A closer look into Helen Kim's family reveals a household that flouted missionary expectations. Prior to their conversion, Kim's parents followed Confucian teachings, especially ancestral worship. On the anniversary of the birth or death of each ancestor, they held elaborate ceremonies in which the table overflowed with the finest foods, candles, and incense to honor the ancestor. Dressed in new mourning clothes, Kim's father read from his scroll a newly written message to the spirit of the ancestor as the other male family members stood behind him before they all bowed three times in unison. Even after her own conversion, Kim defended these ceremonial practices as something other than idolatry or paganism; they signified a moral remembrance of their ancestors and manifested a vibrant cultural heritage. Unlike her missionary friends, who had nothing good to say about Confucianism, Kim cherished the ethical values conveyed by her Confucian upbringing.⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Kate Cooper, "The Peculiar Temptations of Missionaries," *The Korea Mission Field*, April 1917, 103-104.

⁸⁵ Kim, 7-8.

Kim's parents held on to some Confucian ways after they became Christians. Missionaries prohibited ancestral worship, but Kim's father thought it unethical to forsake his ancestors in order to become a Christian. In an act of religious hybridity, the Confucian ancestral dates remained on Kim's family calendar, but with Christian memorial services in place of former veneration practices. Kim's mother embraced Christianity, but she also "never quite made the complete transfer from the conception of many spirits to monotheism."⁸⁶ She attended church regularly, expressed her love for Christ daily, and testified to her friends and neighbors, but she always had Confucian sensibilities, which were visible when she comforted a grieving Kim after the unexpected death of two of her siblings:

These two tragedies in my family made me think seriously for the first time about life and death. Mother was very brave and told me not to grieve. When I asked her "What is death?" her answer was, "when Confucius was asked the same question he said, 'Man does not know what life is, how can he know what death is? Then she added, "God knows best and they are in his hands. We need only believe and wait for the day we meet them again in heaven."⁸⁷

Kim's account of her mother's blend of Christianity and Confucianism hardly corresponded to missionary ambitions, but Kim attributed to her mother a faith fully as strong as "the faith of those well versed in theology."⁸⁸ She implied that the missionaries were wrong; converts did not have to abandon all of their older beliefs and practices.

The sharpest conflict was about politics and the Korean independence movement. Korean women were no less patriotic than their male counterparts, and American women

⁸⁶ Kim, 12.

⁸⁷ Kim, 34-35.

⁸⁸ Kim, 12.

were as skeptical as their male colleagues about Korean nationalism. While sympathetic to Korea's geopolitical plight, they wanted in their mission schools no rebels and political activists. The goal was a sacred home life in which wives and mothers would win souls to Christ. But some Korean Christian women believed that their faith required them to fight for national independence. Louise Yim did not want to become a housewife; she would be, in her fondest dreams, a Joan of Arc leading an army against imperialists.⁸⁹

Imprisoned for her actions in the independence movement, Induk Pakh claimed that her Bible reading strengthened her political will. "Stirred by what I read I wanted God to use me just as He used Paul, and kneeling in that lonely cell I dedicated myself to His service."⁹⁰

Helen Kim also believed—it was a lifelong passion—that Christ had beckoned her to support Korean independence.⁹¹ As a teacher at Ewha College in the 1920s, Kim formed the "Ewha evangelistic band" with six other women and they barnstormed around the nation hosting revival meetings. They sang hymns, preached, and testified, but they also called for resistance to Japanese occupation and highlighted the liberating principles of Christianity: "Our talks had individual and social appeal, usually ending with a highly patriotic note, for the ideals of human dignity and social justice are so linked with

⁸⁹ Yim, 34.

⁹⁰ Induk Pakh, *September Monkey* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 65.

⁹¹ In the last years of the Japanese occupation (1941-1945), Kim collaborated with Japanese imperialists in order to keep the doors open at Ewha College. As the school's president, she read speeches at Ewha in support of Japanese war efforts during World War II. In her autobiography, Kim explained that the speeches were written by Japanese government officials and her students knew that she did not mean what she said: "They were all good speeches from the Japanese standpoint, but I knew all the time that the girls were understanding my unspoken words" (Kim, 98).

Christian teaching and practice that they are inseparable.”⁹² Kim’s dissertation, *Rural Education for the Regeneration of Korea*, criticized the Japanese for forcing Korean students to learn their language. She challenged a 1922 ordinance that described Japanese language instruction as “indispensable for daily life” by noting that subjects like public health, economics, and science were far more important for the majority of Korean students who did not even speak Japanese outside of school.⁹³ Between 1920 and 1930, the percentage of Koreans conversant in Japanese increased from 2.12 to 8.27 percent, but as the figures illustrate, few Koreans spoke Japanese even after two decades of imperial rule.⁹⁴

In 1928, Kim delivered a speech at the International Missionary Council meeting in Jerusalem. The Christian gospel, she said, had empowered Korean women to take the lead in church and society. “I think Christ would pity us women,” Kim remarked, “if we are timid and hesitate about bearing witness to Him in all walks of life, not only in domestic life, but also in the industrial, commercial, political, and international life of humanity.”⁹⁵ Kim interrupted a session on international affairs to speak out against comments from Japan’s delegation. *New York Times* reporter Howard A. Bridgman described how she “claimed the platform and in sweet but vigorous tones set forth

⁹² Kim, 49.

⁹³ Helen K. Kim, *Rural Education for the Regeneration of Korea*, (Ph.D diss., Columbia University, 1931), 32-34.

⁹⁴ Wonmo Dong, “Assimilation and Social Mobilization in Korea,” in *Korea Under Japanese Rule*, 158-159.

⁹⁵ “Miss H.K. Kim spoke in behalf of women in Korea,” in *The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, March 24-April 8, 1928: The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems of Thought and Life, Volume I* (New York City and London: International Missionary Council, 1928), 304.

Korea's objection to being under the domination of Japan."⁹⁶ She refuted Japanese denials of racial discrimination by pointing out that few Koreans served in the imperial government and police force.⁹⁷

The massive uprising against imperial rule during the March First Movement surprised the missionaries, who had underestimated the intensity of Korean resistance, particularly among their female students. As Koreans gathered in Seoul to protest, the teachers at Ewha stopped students from participating.⁹⁸ In Songdo, one hundred students defied their principal, Ellasue Wagner, and marched toward the city gates, with hymn books in one hand and Bibles in the other, to pledge solidarity with their compatriots.⁹⁹

The missionaries wanted to be politically neutral, but they acted, as they saw it, to protect their students from Japanese retaliation. The brutal tactics of the impersonal police force, who struck female protesters with their batons, horrified the teachers. When policemen came to arrest students, missionaries pressed for humane treatment. At Ewha, Lulu Frey asked that her students not be bound with rope en route to prison.¹⁰⁰ As they learned about abusive interrogations in female prisons, missionaries spoke out against the Japanese. After their students were released, missionaries collected their testimonials to

⁹⁶ Howard A. Bridgman, "As Missionaries View Their Growing World: At the Recent Jerusalem Conference Delegates From Many Countries Exchanged Views on Nationalism, Child Labor and Other Problems," *New York Times*, May 6, 1928. Helen Kim's picture accompanies Bridgman's article, with the caption, "A Delegate at Jerusalem: Miss Helen Kim, Dean of the Women's College at Seoul, Korea."

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Mattie Wilcox Noble, "Diary entry on March 1, 1919," 275.

⁹⁹ Walter R. Lambuth, "A Korean Joan of Arc," Walter R. Lambuth Papers, General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ.

¹⁰⁰ Pahk, 59.

report to mission boards at home, revealing to the world that the Japanese stripped, starved, beat, and tortured women prisoners. One Ewha student told of being forced to kneel alongside others, who had to hold chairs over their heads, remove their clothes, and endure verbal and physical assaults.¹⁰¹ The Federal Council of Churches in the United States published her account along with others.¹⁰²

After the March First Movement, Korean women in the United States joined in their nation's push for liberation. At the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) for Foreign Missions convention in Des Moines, Iowa in 1920, one young Korean lobbied for American support by arguing that instead of sending missionaries Americans should help the country resist Japan: "Korea needs you because Korea is looking to America as a savior of other peoples... You have developed as a free people, intellectually, physically, and morally, and now is a chance for you to go out and help other people to share these blessings with you."¹⁰³ She praised Christ for inspiring young women like her to leave the shelter of their homes and "march down the street fearlessly."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ "The Experience of a Korean Girl Under Arrest by the Japanese Police," in Esther and Jeanette Hulbert Papers, General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ.

¹⁰² The Korean Situation: Authentic Accounts of the Recent Events by Eyewitnesses (New York: The Committee on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1919).

¹⁰³ "Korea Needs You," North American Students and World Advance: Addresses Delivered at the Eighth International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Des Moines, Iowa, December 31, 1919 to January 4, 1920, edited by Burton St. John (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1920), 335.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

As Korean women continued to address the SVM convention each year, its delegates began to take notice. African American theologian and civil rights leader Howard Thurman recalled an experience when he was a seminary student:

One afternoon some seven hundred of us had a special group meeting, at which a Korean girl was asked to talk to us about her impression of American education. It was an occasion to be remembered. The Korean student was very personable and somewhat diminutive. She came to the edge of the platform and, with what seemed to be obvious emotional strain, she said, "You have asked me to talk with you about my impression of American education. But there is only one thing that a Korean has any right to talk about, and that is freedom from Japan." For about twenty minutes she made an impassioned plea for the freedom of her people, ending her speech with this sentence: "If you see a little American boy and you ask him what he wants, he says, 'I want a penny to put in my bank or to buy a whistle or a piece of candy.' But if you see a little Korean boy and you ask him what he wants, he says, 'I want freedom from Japan.'"¹⁰⁵

Thurman then compared Koreans to the outcast Jewish minority in the Roman Empire and "the Negro in American life," arguing that the quintessential question of the disinherited in every age was to discern the right attitude toward the rulers who controlled their lives.¹⁰⁶ Some Korean students in America related their anti-colonial struggle to the civil rights movement. After returning home from her studies at Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, Induk Pahk taught Negro spirituals to her Methodist church in Seoul.¹⁰⁷

Female missionaries had mixed feelings about a Korean Christian feminism that fused faith and politics. They reacted to the activism of their students with astonishment. Martha Scott Bruen saw the Koreans in a new light after the March First uprisings: they

¹⁰⁵ Howard Thurman, "Jesus – An Interpretation," in *A Strange Freedom: The Best of Howard Thurman on Religious Experience and Public Life*, edited by Walter Earl Fluker and Catherine Tumber (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 138-139.

¹⁰⁶ Thurman, 139.

¹⁰⁷ Pahk, 169.

no longer filled “the places of underlings and servants” but revealed a capacity for tenacity, courage, and leadership that had the potential to change “their home and civic life.”¹⁰⁸ Bruen still wanted the missionaries—herself included—to mold the Koreans, but unfortunately, from the missionary perspective, the Koreans seemed less pliable than they once had been.

The Americans began to show increasing frustration with Korean Christian women. They complained among themselves about how their once demure and daintily-clad Korean girls now acted and looked no different than Western women. Some longed for the days of “Old Korea,” when the Korean girls obeyed their instructions and set out to fulfill their religious duties as wives and mothers. In 1948, one retired missionary looked back upon her forty years in Korea. The early years, she said, were good. But then came the “New Korea,” with its “hodge-podge” of “half-baked ideas” that led the Korean Church away from the ancient gospel of conservative evangelical Christianity.¹⁰⁹

The Third Space: Agnes Davis and the Making of a Bi-Racial Christian Marriage in Korea

In 1934, a white American woman named Agnes Davis arrived in Korea to marry David Chuhwang Kim, a Korean whom she met and fell in love with during their time together as classmates at Drew University. Because interracial marriages were uncommon and unlawful in a number of U.S. states, some of Davis’s classmates and

¹⁰⁸ Martha Scott Bruen, “Personal Report, 1918-1919,” in 40 Years in Korea, 262.

¹⁰⁹ Ellasue Wagner, “Personal letter on May 24, 1948,” in Ellasue Wagner Collection, General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ.

teachers and some missionaries in Korea attempted to dissuade her.¹¹⁰ Motivated, however, by religious faith and love for her fiancé, a resolute Davis married him and then lived with her husband's family in a Korean village. Davis was unique in Korea. She occupied what postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha identified as a "Third Space," in-between the colonizing and the colonized.¹¹¹ She was a committed American Protestant, but she was no missionary.¹¹² She married a Korean and resided within his community, but stood apart as an outsider because of her race. Davis lived in the interstices, caught between two cultures. Because she experienced both sides of the encounter between missionaries and converts, her insights illuminate with special clarity the gap between them.

When Davis and Kim began dating in America, her classmates and teachers objected. Like many Korean students in America, Kim had graduated from a mission school and received a scholarship to study at Drew. The couple met when Davis loaned her class notes to Kim and helped him with English. She fell in love with him admiring his kind spirit, inquisitive mind, and religious faith. Kim also felt attracted to Davis, but he sought to end their relationship because of what he saw as the hopeless prospect of a

¹¹⁰ In 1934, most U.S. states had anti-miscegenation laws that banned interracial marriage. For example, Virginia passed the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which criminalized marriage between white and nonwhite persons. In 1948, the California Supreme Court in *Perez v. Sharp* ruled that the state's anti-miscegenation law violated the Fourteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution, becoming the first state court to declare its anti-miscegenation law as unconstitutional. It was not until 1967, when the U.S. Supreme Court in *Loving v. Virginia* ruled that Virginia's anti-miscegenation law was unconstitutional, that all U.S. states repealed anti-miscegenation laws. See Fay Botham, *Almighty God Created the Races: Christianity, Interracial Marriage, and American Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 1-5.

¹¹¹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 36-39.

¹¹² Although the missionaries were not politically aligned with the Japanese imperialists, several Korean scholars have identified American mission work for Korean women as another form of colonialism (See Yoo, 10-12).

Korean marrying a white American. But Davis persisted, and when the Dean of Students admonished her, she replied that God had no interest in preventing interracial marriage. She had nothing but disdain for U.S. anti-miscegenation laws that forbade interracial unions as unnatural and evil corruptions of some divine plan.¹¹³ “If ever such prejudice is to be overcome, and our talk of Christian brotherhood to mean anything, someone has to begin acting as if the people of other races were brothers,” Davis told her dean, “I will glory in meeting it with my head held high, and with unruffled faith in the rightness of my stand.”¹¹⁴

Yet when Davis arrived in Korea, she found that missionaries had the same racial prejudices as white Americans at home. Despite their preachments about the virtues of domesticity, they also displayed more than a small degree of condescension toward Korean wives, whom they saw as subservient to men and paternal families. In 1891, Henry Appenzeller lamented that married Korean women were obliged to serve both their husbands and mother-in-laws. A Korean wife, he observed, could do little but iron, cook, clean, and sew; “her world centers around a smoky kitchen and the needle.”¹¹⁵ Another observer reported that a married Korean woman “belongs almost body and soul to her husband.”¹¹⁶ Forty years after these comments, missionaries still were bewildered that an American woman would become a Korean wife. One of them warned Davis about *samjong chido*, the three rules for women in Korean Confucian teaching: When a child,

¹¹³ Botham, 5.

¹¹⁴ Agnes Davis Kim, *I Married a Korean* (New York: The John Day Company, 1953), 10.

¹¹⁵ H.G. Appenzeller, “Woman’s Work in Korea,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, September 1891, 424.

¹¹⁶ Frank Carpenter, “The Koreans at Home,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, October 1889, 439.

she must submit to her father; in marriage, to her husband; in widowhood, to her eldest son.¹¹⁷ They told Davis about unsanitary conditions in rural Korea and warned her about the cruel treatment she would be certain to receive from her tyrannical mother-in-law.¹¹⁸ Missionaries celebrated Christian romance in Korea and wrote sentimental fictive tales about romances between missionaries or between converts, but they felt some dismay at the thought of Davis and Kim's interracial coupling.¹¹⁹

After the wedding, Davis discovered that her mother-in-law was neither to be feared nor pitied. As the two women shared the numerous household chores, Davis learned to appreciate the rhythms of female companionship as women washed and ironed clothes or cooked food. Davis affectionately called her mother-in-law "O-man-ee (the Korean word for mother)," and claimed that the seeming meekness and submission of Korean wives were signs of strength, not degradation.¹²⁰ The work was taxing but not symbolic of primitive backwardness. Missionaries failed to understand how Korean women used domestic tasks as social gatherings. Although her mother-in-law never attended a mission school, Davis found in her the Christian values of selflessness, serenity, and patience through her daily living. Davis called her the best teacher she ever

¹¹⁷ Kim, 30.

¹¹⁸ Kim, 31.

¹¹⁹ James S. Gale's The Vanguard: A Tale of Korea (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1904) and Lois Hawks Swinehart's Jane of the Orient (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1924) are examples of fictive tales about romances between single missionaries in Korea. William Newton Blair's Chansung's Confession (Topeka, KS: H.M. Ives and Sons, 1959) and W. Arthur Noble's Ewa: A Tale of Korea (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1906) are examples of romances between Korean converts. Ellasue Wagner wrote an unpublished book, The Concubine, which presents a cautionary tale about how an American woman who "hates religion and despises missionaries" struggles to adjust to Korean life after marrying an aristocratic Korean man (See "The Concubine Book Proposal," in Ellasue Wagner Collection, General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ).

¹²⁰ Davis, 229.

had. Korean women, she wrote, were not lost without missionaries. Her mother-in-law, for one, did not require missionary instruction to exemplify the love of Christ in her home and community.

From her village, Davis better understood Korean critiques of missionary lifestyles. In stark contrast to the missionaries, Davis lived in a typical Korean house with three rooms each eight feet square: “The home was built with a framework of small logs, the wall spaces formed by a lattice of rice-straw rope and corn or cane stalks, made wattlelike and plastered inside and out with mud or clay.”¹²¹ Although Davis liked some of the missionaries, she grew increasingly aware of their ostentation and luxury in comparison to the simplicity reflected both in the lives of Koreans and the teaching of Jesus. At the same time Davis was adjusting to her outdoor toilet, mud walls, and the persistent odor of manure from nearby farms, Marie Adams, a missionary from China visiting Korea on furlough, was frequenting Western-style hotels, sightseeing in the mountains, and enjoying camaraderie with the “Southern Methodist ladies” in Seoul.¹²² And Frank Herron Smith was telling friends that his wife and children missed having Korean servants during their furlough in America and wanted to return to Korea because they did not like having to do a “good deal of dish-washing and such work” themselves.¹²³ Davis had once read E. Stanley Jones’ *Christ of the Indian Road* and had desired to imitate Christ’s humility. She had wanted to learn both from the missionaries

¹²¹ Kim, 58.

¹²² Marie Adams, “A Vacation in Korea,” *Woman’s Missionary Friend*, November 1939, 303.

¹²³ Frank Herron Smith, “Letter on January 20, 1922,” in Burke Theological Library Archives, Union Theological Seminary, New York City, NY.

and from immersion into her husband's way of life. She discovered that the missionaries she had admired from afar now seemed materialistic. She learned more about humility from her mother-in-law.¹²⁴

Davis recognized the paradoxical quandary of married female missionaries who criticized Korean women for adopting modern Western norms yet wanted American comforts for their own families. Before marrying Kim, Davis stayed in several missionary homes. She observed how the women worried about household finances, budgeting expenses with frugal vigilance. "Missionaries have to shave corners financially," Davis observed, "They have to pay servant salaries, keep up large houses, and they try to maintain the American standard of living, for the sake of their children, I was told."¹²⁵

Missionaries wanted Korean women to be attentive mothers, but they sent their own children to boarding schools in America or Seoul and P'yongyang. Boarding schools like Pyeng Yang Foreign School (PYFS) charged less than schools in other countries, but for some missionaries, the expense seemed daunting. In 1921, tuition and housing for four months at PYFS cost \$72.50.¹²⁶ Parents considered homeschooling, but most determined that boarding school was a worthwhile investment. It also alleviated "the

¹²⁴ Kim, 12-13, 55-66, 222-233.

¹²⁵ Kim, 42.

¹²⁶ "P'yongyang Foreign School Bill for Bruce F. Hunt, March 29, 1921," in Hunt Family Papers, Montgomery Library Archives, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA.

exacting and exhausting duties of teaching one's own children" and eased other "ordinary responsibilities of the wife and mother on the mission field."¹²⁷

Foreign schools in Korea tried to replicate both an American curriculum and way of life for their students. The students sometimes wrote their parents that they missed them, but they also enjoyed their American friends and teachers.¹²⁸ In 1931, the PYFS student newspaper, *The Kum and Go*, reported about pep rallies, sports teams, difficult tests, debate meets, and field trips, the ordinary features of a school in the United States.¹²⁹ Missionaries' children thrived academically and socially alongside other Americans at these schools, but they knew few Korean peers.

One of them remembered that his rare interactions with Korean children were hostile, with the young boys hurling stones and insults at one another: "We got ourselves into stone throwing fights – something about which our parents would really get upset saying that we were setting back their hard mission work ten years... The Korean kids would yell in Korean at us – things like 'Yang Gook Nome a Coe Boodee,' which means 'Foreign Devil with a Big Nose.'"¹³⁰ As Davis worked with her husband to start a school and hospital in their village, she saw that Koreans wanted to work and live alongside

¹²⁷ J. Fairman Preston, "The Problem of the Primary Education of Missionaries' Children," *The Korea Mission Field*, March 1919, 51.

¹²⁸ Bruce F. Hunt, "Letter to parents on February 7, 1913 and January 18, 1918," in Hunt Family Papers, Montgomery Library Archives, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA.

¹²⁹ "Boys Entertain on Halloween," "Hurrah for the New Gym," "Pupils Begin School Routine," "School Spirit," and "P.Y.F.S Diary," *The Kum and Go*, November 1931, 1-4. The newsletter also reported that the school had 101 students and 14 teachers. One-fifth of the enrolled students were children of missionaries in China. In the 1930s, Ruth Graham, whose parents were missionaries in China, was enrolled at PYFS.

¹³⁰ Stacy L. Roberts, Jr., *My Memoirs*, 02 0131f Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Americans in genuine partnerships. Missionaries criticized the strict separation of genders, but they maintained racial divisions by building Western homes and founding foreign schools restricted to white children. Davis understood that they had no malicious intentions, but she understood why Koreans felt a burden of discrimination.

Proclaiming that the gospel had united American and Korean women, the missionaries often told their children not to play with Korean children, even those who attended church. They wished to protect their children from diseases and unsound spiritual habits.¹³¹ Davis, like Korean women, took note of this distance between the children. Missionaries taught Korean parents in the classroom how to rear their children, but the Koreans recognized that they implicitly assumed that Korean children were less precious than white American ones. Stacy L. Roberts, Jr., recalled that in his first eighteen years, 1921 to 1939, he had a lively and joyous childhood in Korea, but he also remembered that he was “isolated in a kind of ivory tower.” He did not play with Koreans.¹³²

From her “Third Space,” Davis could also see that Korean Protestants in her village did not practice religion like the Americans. Sensing the ambivalence and ambiguity of the colonial encounter—experiencing, in other words, the way in which postcolonial identity was, as Bhabha would later write, a hybrid of colonial and

¹³¹ Mary Ames Sharrocks, “The Influence of the Missionary’s Home,” *The Korea Mission Field*, April 1916, 99-102.

¹³² Roberts, *My Memoirs*, 02 0131f Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

indigenous cultures—Davis discovered that Korean converts combined traditional beliefs with Christian ones.¹³³

She was at first surprised that so many turned to shamanistic tradition when they or their family members became ill. They prayed to the Christian God for healing, but asked local shamans to drive out the evil spirits causing the physical ailments. Like the missionaries, she disapproved of this religious syncretism. Whereas Helen Kim defended her mother's religious blending, Davis felt disappointed that so many converts in her village held on to a shamanism that filled them with "unreasonable" fears incompatible with the Christian faith.¹³⁴ The missionaries had responded to syncretism among Korean Christians with increased biblical instruction. Davis preferred modern medicine. It would relieve suffering and replace shamanistic belief at the same time.¹³⁵

"Would I Do It Again?" An older Davis, who titled a chapter of her book with this question, was not so sure. Though she loved her husband deeply, she recalled the prejudice she—and he—had to endure.¹³⁶ Though he had passed his ordination exams and demonstrated the highest level of ministerial competence, the Korean Methodist bishops refused to ordain Kim, for he had an American wife. Koreans had their own prejudices about interracial marriage. His religious superiors believed that Kim would be too distracted by his foreign wife's adjustment to Korea and that his lowly pastor's salary

¹³³ Bhabha, 19-39.

¹³⁴ Kim, 104-105.

¹³⁵ Kim, 102-110, 144-146.

¹³⁶ Kim, 222.

would not meet her extravagant needs.¹³⁷ Kim worked as a farmer, school teacher, and translator for the U.S. military during the Korean War.

In an evaluation of her husband's life, Davis wondered whether his "contribution to world Christianity" would have been greater if he had not married her.¹³⁸ But her commitment to her husband and Korea never wavered. During the hard years of the Korean War and its aftermath, Davis moved away from her husband to live in America. In 1961, she returned and the couple reunited on their farm in Susaek. After her husband's death, Davis taught English Bible classes in their Korean home until she died in 1986 at the age of eighty-five.¹³⁹

Conclusion

In 1958, Methodist missionary Sadie Maude Moore delivered an address at Ewha University to congratulate Helen Kim for her ground-breaking work of educating and emancipating Korean women. Born on separate shores one month apart from each other, the two became close friends through their work in higher education. Moore arrived to Korea in 1924 and later taught at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul and served as the English secretary for the Ewha Board of Trustees. She began her address by apologizing for her poor Korean language skills and speaking like a kindergartener despite her advanced age. The missionary then praised, in English, Kim's bright mind

¹³⁷ Kim, 35-38.

¹³⁸ Kim, 222.

¹³⁹ Donald N. Clark, "Mothers, Daughters, Biblewomen, and Sisters: An Account of 'Women's Work' in the Korea Mission Field," in *Christianity in Korea*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 189.

and vigorous health and, in Korean, her *ingeuk* (special personality) and *haengbok* (good fortune). She concluded with a story about Kim's strong faith.¹⁴⁰

Three years later, Kim presented Moore with an honorary doctorate from Ewha, commending her as an exemplary educator who understood that the missionary's duty was "to work behind the scenes and identify with the nationals as cooperative fellow workers, giving friendship and counsel without showing authority or making demands."¹⁴¹

The remarks hint at progress in relations between American and Korean Protestant women over time as the two groups learned to respect each other. But they do not erase the contentious history. For several decades, American and Korean women disagreed about matters of faith. They clashed over dress and behavior, actions and dreams for a different life. The missionaries were breaking with their traditions and embracing new opportunities to lead, but they sought to prevent Koreans from making a similar break from a Western and conservative form of Christianity.

Despite their lavish praise for Korean women, the missionaries could not see them as equals. They could not regard the Koreans, no matter their age or ability, as fellow sisters in Christ. They saw them as daughters who required maternal protection. The missionaries had constructed a beautiful template for Korean women to follow, but

¹⁴⁰ Sadie Maude Moore, "Congratulations, Dr. Kim, Ewha University, May 9, 1958," in Sadie Maude Moore Papers, 1928-1982, Archives and Manuscripts Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

¹⁴¹ Helen Kim, "Tribute to Sadie Maude Moore, 1961," in Sadie Maude Moore Papers, 1928-1982, Archives and Manuscripts Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

Koreans like Helen Kim had their own ideas about what it meant to be Christian women in their changing country.

The fractured relationships were part of a larger fissure between American missionaries and Korean Protestants in the age of Japanese imperialism. Korean converts, men and women alike, were profoundly discouraged by the missionaries' political neutrality and paternalistic insistence that they knew what was best in Korean matters. They also resented how the missionaries created their own racially discriminatory community with superior houses and segregated schools. But as Koreans began to lead their own churches and schools, missionaries felt disappointment at Korean theological and political positions.

Like American Christians, Koreans fell into doctrinal controversies between fundamentalist and modernist camps, debating rancorously about Moses' authorship of the Book of Genesis at the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1934. Conservative missionaries felt dismay when they met progressive Korean pastors; progressive missionaries felt alienated from fundamentalist Korean pastors. And the missionaries also felt a sense of trepidation when some Korean church leaders became interested in the possibilities of a socialist economic order. As much as the missionaries publicly declared their desires for autonomous Korean leadership, they still wanted to hold on to the keys to the kingdom for as long as they could.

In 1940, the missionaries finally ceded their claim to the Korean Church. They succumbed to geopolitical forces beyond their control. During the Second World War, all but a few missionaries followed the recommendation of the U.S. State Department that

they leave the country. In 1945, Korea finally attained independence from Japan. But it then divided into two nations. Five years later, America would go to war in the Korean peninsula. Now the foreigners in Korea were predominantly soldiers, not missionaries. Koreans, whether at home or abroad, now came to know a diverse array of American Protestants who were not connected to mission work. New bonds would form, new tensions would arise, but the post-war world would have been unrecognizable to the first missionaries and the first converts who had to learn to live together in a strange and fragmented set of relationships.

The Americans came with a dream of building a Christian society. They were barely aware that they wanted to build it in their own image. Some Koreans received them, listened to their message, and found it convincing. But they soon had their own dreams of their own kind of Christian society. Despite the tensions, or perhaps because of them, Christianity flourished—and flourishes—in Korea, which now sends its own missionaries to the world, including America.

Chapter 6: Liberation, War, and the Making of Transnational Friendships between American and Korean Protestants

Introduction

In 1960, the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) held its one hundredth General Assembly in Jacksonville, Florida. A Korean minister, Duk Hwan La, traveled to the gathering as a representative of the Presbyterian Church in his homeland. He thanked the Americans for their mission work in Korea. As commissioners from the southern states celebrated denominational growth, La asked them to also remember the “historical relationship” between American and Korean Presbyterians. He prayed that the two groups would continue to “bind together the strong ties of friendship” in the future.¹ The choice of words was telling. La’s emphasis on friendship signaled an era in which the Americans and Koreans built partnerships marked by respect and reciprocity. During the Korean War, they joined in rebuilding churches in the south and aiding persecuted Christians in the north. Americans viewed the country as a battlefield in the geopolitical clash between communism and democracy, but some also viewed the Koreans as allies, sometimes even as mentors, in Christian evangelism. Sometimes the Americans still expected Koreans to follow their agendas, from evangelical Biblicism to mainline ecumenism, but Americans and Koreans also formed intimate friendships and institutional partnerships, and the Americans began to admit something that it would have been hard for the first generation of missionaries to acknowledge: despite a disturbing

¹ La Duk Hwan Papers, 06 0324e Archives, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA. La returned to America the following year to present a more substantive address on the history of Korean Presbyterianism at the 101st PCUS General Assembly in Dallas, Texas. See Ted Pratt, “Our Distinguished Guests,” *Presbyterian Survey*, June 1961, 15 and Minutes of the 101st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, (Augusta, Georgia: The Assembly, 1961), 22.

tendency toward conflict, Korean Christianity sometimes seemed more lively and compelling than the forms that prevailed in America.

A Mission Field Turns into a Battlefield: American Missionaries Stand by their Korean Friends

On June 25, 1950, North Korean military forces crossed the border into South Korea and soon captured the capital city of Seoul. President Harry Truman responded by sending American troops. At the onset of the war, the American public knew little about Korea except that their soldiers were fighting there against evil Communist forces. The American media followed a precedent familiar in the history of Western rhetoric during warfare: they depicted Western soldiers as “‘professional,’ ‘confident,’ ‘loyal,’ ‘resolute,’ and ‘brave,’” in contrast to enemies who were “‘brainwashed,’ ‘desperate,’ ‘blindly obedient,’ ‘ruthless,’ and ‘fanatical.’”² So Hanson W. Baldwin, the military editor of the *New York Times*, depicted the North Koreans as an “‘army of barbarians” and all Koreans as “‘simple, primitive, and barbaric peoples” who needed to be instructed that U.S. forces, not the Communists, were their friends on the battlefield.³

Letters written during the war sometimes captured the mood of hostility: Koreans were “‘bastards” and “‘the world’s worst bunch of cutthroats.”⁴ American soldiers found

²R.S. Sugirtharajah, “Postcolonialism: Hermeneutical Journey through a Contentious Discourse,” in *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, edited by R.S. Sugirtharajah (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 23.

³ *New York Times*, July 14, 1950, and August 21, 1950. See also Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2010).

⁴ “Letter from Roderick McKay Montgomery to Helen Pindar Montgomery on August 9, 1950,” in Pindar Family Papers, 1800-1979, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

the country drab and desolate, surrounded by hostile Communists in China and the Soviet Union and cursed by bad roads and frigid winters.⁵ One of them found Korea “strange and unworldly, as if I had been dropped on another planet.” Another had a more graphic response: “Look at this shit hole. Why are we over here fighting for this?”⁶ Letters from soldiers expressed pity for beggars and orphans, who pestered them for candy and cigarettes, and they complained about Korean barbers and cooks who stole from soldiers in the camps. “Trust and honesty were not apparent morals in Korea,” wrote one soldier, “The desperate, displaced people took what they could, robbing, stealing, commandeering anything in order to survive.”⁷ Soldiers typically referred to all Koreans as “gooks,” a term that probably came from American usage in the Philippines and then the Pacific War. In Korea, it represented the namelessness of both North Korean enemies and South Korean allies.⁸ As Secretary of State Dean Acheson recalled: “If the best damn minds in the world had set out to find us the worst possible location to fight this damnable war politically and militarily, the unanimous choice would be Korea.”⁹

In contrast, at least some American missionaries, who had cultivated friendships with Koreans for decades, insisted that Koreans were a dignified people ensnared in a war not of their own making. They criticized their government for agreeing to the division of Korea and then mishandling the occupation. In 1945, the U.S. government

⁵ David Halberstam, The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War (New York: Hyperion, 2007), 1.

⁶ Richard B. Holmsten, Ready to Fire: Memoir of an American artilleryman in the Korean War (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2003), 42-44.

⁷ Holmsten, 54.

⁸ Cumings, 80.

⁹ Halberstam, 1.

wanted to establish its presence in Korea quickly, so it selected General John R. Hodge to lead the occupation because his forces were nearby in Japan. Hodge, an effective officer on the battlefield, had little knowledge of Korea and little skill in governing. Initially, U.S. authorities ordered South Koreans to obey the Japanese governor-general and his 70,000 Japanese officials, but Korean protests led to a gradual removal of the Japanese from the country. Fearful of Communist infiltration, American generals and diplomats distrusted local Korean gatherings. They lacked translators and interpreters and struggled to understand the competition for power among South Korean leaders.¹⁰

While U.S. officials complained about the Koreans' inability to govern themselves, Methodist missionary Thoburn T. Brumbaugh argued that Koreans could become a "rampart in the advance of Christian democracy" if the United States gave them more effective help.¹¹ He noted that hundreds of thousands of Korean Christians had worked with American missionaries to sustain their churches against Japanese suppression.¹² Presbyterian missionary William N. Blair wrote that Korean Christians had withstood "the fires of continued suffering and loss" and proven that they were up to the task of democratic self-rule.¹³ Another Presbyterian complained privately that American officials were not supporting Korean political and economic initiatives. Instead, they

¹⁰ Michael J. Seth, A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 88-89.

¹¹ T.T. Brumbaugh, "Behind America's Shield of Steel," *The Christian Century*, June 30, 1948, 643.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ William Newton Blair, Gold in Korea, 3rd edition (H.M. Ives & Sons: Topeka, KS, 1957), 3. The first edition and second editions were published in 1946 and 1947, respectively.

treated Koreans as “a doormat on which everybody rubs their feet” and gave them few opportunities to lead.¹⁴

Missionaries challenged American perceptions of Korean ineptitude by recalling how Korean converts resisted Japanese mandates. Beginning in 1935, the Japanese forced Koreans to bow before Shinto shrines and pledge loyalty to the emperor. The Japanese insisted that this was merely a civic act, but a number of missionaries and Koreans refused, on religious grounds, to participate. In 1936, the Vatican agreed that the ceremony was civic, as did the Korean Methodist Church, and Presbyterian missionary Horace H. Underwood maintained that it was no more religious than American rituals at the Lincoln Memorial or the tomb of the Unknown Soldier.¹⁵ But most of Underwood’s Presbyterian colleagues disagreed. The northern and southern missions closed their schools rather than acquiesce in compulsory Shinto ceremonies. After imperial officials coerced the Korean Presbyterian Church in 1938 to accept the policy, recalcitrant Koreans either went to prison or fled to Manchuria.¹⁶ Some Americans also suffered; in 1941, imperial authorities jailed two Presbyterian missionaries for removing Shinto shrines from their Korean servants’ homes.¹⁷ But the resistance led some Koreans to associate Christianity with defiance of Japan, and the actions of Christian resisters drew favorable attention to the churches. After liberation, overflow crowds made it necessary for some churches to set up tents outside their worship centers. A writer in *The Christian*

¹⁴ Bruce F. Hunt, “Letter to his parents on September 25, 1947,” in Hunt Family Papers, Montgomery Library Archives, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA.

¹⁵ “Religion: Respectful Salute!,” *TIME Magazine*, May 2, 1938.

¹⁶ Lee, 54-60.

¹⁷ “Religion: Persecution,” *TIME Magazine*, May 26, 1941.

Century surmised that “the long years” of suffering under “the cruel power of the Japanese army” had deepened the faith of Korean Christians.¹⁸

Missionaries lauded Korean Christian resilience and contended that it proved the potential for South Korea to develop its own democratic government.¹⁹ Underwood criticized American perceptions of Koreans as primitive and barbaric, explaining that they possessed a quiet pride that Americans misunderstood as passivity. He recognized all too well that “like men all over the world, the Korean has faults. He can be cruel, he can be selfish, he can become insanely angry, he is too prone to be cliquish and to split union movements wide open with schism and divisions.”²⁰ A year before the war, young Korean Communists had murdered Underwood’s wife, Ethel, after they broke into the Underwood home to attack her guest, Mo Yunsuk, a poet who worked with the United Nations.²¹ But Underwood still described Korean Christians as “sincere and zealous in [their] Christian faith,” and fully able to rebuild their nation.²²

Kyung-Chik Han: Mighty Pastor and Noble Friend

One of Underwood’s Korean friends was a renowned Presbyterian minister named Kyung-Chik Han. Han was born in Pyongyang in 1902 and first met Presbyterian

¹⁸ Winburn T. Thomas, “Christian Survival in Korea,” *The Christian Century*, November 10, 1948, 1203.

¹⁹ “Religion: Missionaries to Korea,” *TIME Magazine*, March 13, 1944.

²⁰ Horace H. Underwood, *Tragedy and Faith in Korea* (New York: Friendship Press, 1951), 17.

²¹ “Religion: Missionary’s Reward,” *TIME Magazine*, March 28, 1949, and Clark, 355.

²² Underwood, 17. When the war began, Underwood left New York, where he was receiving medical treatment for a heart condition, to help repair the damage at the Christian college in Seoul. In 1951, the sixty year-old missionary died from the physical rigors of fleeing the city after Chinese forces entered into the conflict. His sons buried him next to their mother, Ethel, after U.N. forces recaptured Seoul. See Clark, 400.

missionaries there as a child. He attended a mission school and worked as a secretary and translator for several missionaries. While accompanying one missionary couple, William and Annie Baird, on a vacation to Sorae Beach in 1923, Han, who was studying to become a chemist, had a religious experience in which he prayed in tears as he heard God's voice beckoning him to preach the gospel.²³ William Baird arranged for Han to study in Kansas at the College of Emporia. After graduating, Han attended Princeton Theological Seminary from 1926 to 1929 before returning to work as an instructor, pastor, and orphanage director in northern Korea. In 1945, he fled from the north and founded Young Nak Presbyterian Church in Seoul. By 1971, the church had 12,000 members and was the largest Presbyterian congregation in the world.²⁴

As his church grew, chaplains, evangelists, missionaries, soldiers, and statesmen made it a point to visit. In the 1950s, Han welcomed John Foster Dulles, Billy Graham, E. Stanley Jones, Bob Pierce, and two Chiefs of Chaplains of the U.S. Army to speak from his pulpit.²⁵ *The Christian Century* editor Harold E. Fey detailed his visit to Han's "great church in Seoul," marveling at the sermon and the service: "I have seldom heard such singing, or seen such close participation by all sorts and conditions of men and women in each phase of the service, or felt more deeply the power of the Spirit that was surely there. Here in this place was a Church of Christ."²⁶ The following December, Billy

²³ Kyung-Chik Han, "My Gratitude," in *Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 1*, edited by Eun-Seop Kim (Seoul, Korea: Kyung-Chik Han Foundation, 2010), 102-103.

²⁴ Chul-Shin Lee, "Rev. Kyung-Chik Han's Life and Thought," in *Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 9*, 24, and Timothy S. Lee, 65.

²⁵ Harold Voelkel, *Open Door to Korea* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 59.

²⁶ Harold E. Fey, "A Great Church in Seoul," *The Christian Century*, December 26, 1951, 1506.

Graham joined with Han to host revival meetings at Han's church.²⁷ Han also befriended the evangelical Bob Pierce, served as his translator during one of Pierce's evangelistic tours, worked with him in providing relief to widows and orphans, and helped him organize the first World Vision humanitarian programs.²⁸ These leading American Protestants looked to Han as an exemplary Christian pastor. Their admiration was an early sign of a change in American Christian attitudes toward Korean forms of Christianity.

During the war, Pierce published a book on "The Untold Korea Story." He explained that neither the religious nor the secular press had told Americans about the marvel of Korean Protestantism. Pierce described the passion Koreans exhibited in worship services from dawn to dusk. He depicted Presbyterians at Han's church praying aloud, weeping and shouting, and he said that he had never seen anything like it in America except among Pentecostals.²⁹ Like earlier missionaries, Pierce viewed Koreans more favorably than the Japanese, who were "shot through with modernism and higher criticism."³⁰ In contrast, the Koreans he had met held fast to conservative theological beliefs. Pierce had discovered what earlier conservative missionaries had long claimed to know—the Korean Church was a modern-day example of Christian expansion that confirmed the potency and relevance of conservative evangelicalism.

²⁷ Billy Graham, Just as I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham (HarperSanFrancisco and Zondervan, 1997), 197, and Seungjin Lee, "Rev. Kyung-Chik Han and the Korean War," in Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 9, 216.

²⁸ Lee, 215-216.

²⁹ Bob Pierce, as told to Ken Anderson, The Untold Korea Story (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951), 26-27.

³⁰ Pierce, 16.

Pierce called Han a “Korean saint,” praising his preaching, piety, and humanitarian work among war refugees. Han’s daily pastoral activities, which occupied as many as eighteen hours a day, would, Pierce thought, topple any American clergyman.³¹ And because he had met so many others like Han, Pierce wrote that complacent American Christians had much to learn from Koreans. In 1959, he pointed to his religious experiences with Korean Protestants as one of the reasons why “Korea is so close to the hearts of all the World Vision people.”³² In 1975, Han paid tribute to Pierce as an honored guest speaker at the twenty-fifth anniversary of World Vision in Los Angeles. Han treasured his friendship with Pierce and considered him “a true servant of Jesus Christ who loved his neighbors as himself,” wherever they might live.³³

Both mainliners and evangelicals admired Han not only for his religious successes but also for his anti-communism. The mainliners were as anti-communist as the evangelicals. Reinhold Niebuhr’s *Christianity and Crisis* and its liberal editorial board, which included the ethicist Liston Pope and the dean of Union Seminary in New York, Henry Sloane Coffin, had advocated the use of U.S. military force in Korea: “We hate war, but our heritage is at stake if we are not fully prepared for war... This then is the gospel for a day of dilemma in our international life, given the kind of a world in which we live, evil on occasion must be bound by evil.”³⁴ In *The Christian Century*, Fey argued

³¹ Pierce, 45-49.

³² Richard Gehman, *Let My Heart be Broken* (New York, Toronto, and London: McGraw-Hill Company, 1960), 74. Pierce also told Gehman, “When these Koreans pray, they really put all their emotions to it” (Gehman, 84).

³³ Kyung-Chik Han, “My Gratitude,” in *Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 1*, 305.

³⁴ Clarence Kilde, “The Gospel for a Day of Dilemma,” *Christianity and Crisis*, October 15, 1951, 132.

that Korea presented “ultimate issues”: “In the providence of God, Korea may turn out to be the place on earth where Christ and communism for the first time really come to grips, not theoretically but actually in a life-and-death struggle, with Christ the victor.”³⁵ On the evangelical side, Billy Graham and Bob Pierce also supported resistance to Communism in Korea. Pierce’s observation echoed many others: “It took G.I. blood to inform most Americans—including a good many evangelical Christians—that the peninsular nation of Korea is one of great significance in the confused pattern of present-day world history.”³⁶

As a stalwart in the Christian struggle against Communism, Han became an inspiration to Americans. Before he fled to Seoul in 1945, he had opposed Communism in northern Korea. Because he had suffered persecution and witnessed atrocities against Christians, Americans viewed him as an authority on the ideological battle. In 1961, Carl F. Henry published an interview in which Han detailed how he and another pastor escaped imprisonment by walking over mountain paths for fifty miles through the night to cross the thirty-eighth parallel into South Korea. But Han also told Henry—and Henry’s readers in *Christianity Today*—how North Korean forces occupying Seoul had seized 500 Christian leaders and massacred them in North Korean prisons.³⁷ Henry asked Han what lesson the world Christian community needed to learn. Han gave the answer

³⁵ Harold E. Fey, “Korea Must Live!,” *The Christian Century*, February 20, 1952, 216.

³⁶ Pierce, 5.

³⁷ Carl F. Henry and Kyung-chik Han, “The Communist Terror: Plight of the Korean Christians,” *Christianity Today*, September 25, 1961, 35. Estimates show that anywhere 70,000 to 100,000 North Korean Christians migrated to South Korea between 1945 and 1950. It is uncertain how many were killed by Communists, but the number is certain to be in the many thousands. See Lee, *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea*, 60-69.

that Henry expected: “Well, we must tell to all Christians who are living in the free world that as long as Communists remain in power in any country, Christian activities will almost be impossible. That doesn’t mean you can’t have Christian faith.”³⁸ Han held literal views of the second coming of Christ, and he encouraged believers, especially in Communist countries, to “fight the good fight of faith and give everything we have for the cause of Christ,” bolstered by the confidence that Jesus could return at any time.³⁹

In 1966, Billy Graham introduced Han as a speaker at the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin. Evangelicals viewed the meeting, which was sponsored by *Christianity Today* and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, as a successor of the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh and a showplace for the growth of evangelicalism in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Han spoke on the same day as John R.W. Stott of All Souls Church in England and Harold John Ockenga of Park Street Church in the United States, two celebrities of the evangelical world.⁴⁰ He talked about the 1907 revivals, which he interpreted as a continuation of earlier European and American Christian resistance to a faithless “natural science and humanistic philosophy that denied the supernatural and robbed Jesus of his deity.”⁴¹ He told the Americans that the Spirit was continuing to work in Korea as it had once done in British and American

³⁸ Henry and Han, 36.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ On October 28, 1966, John R.W. Stott gave the second of his three addresses, “The Great Commission, Part II,” and Harold John Ockenga gave an address, “The Basic Theology of Evangelism,” before Kyung-Chik Han’s address, “By My Spirit.” See Billy Graham Center Archives from the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism, <http://www2.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/docs/Berlin66/audio.htm>, accessed on September 7, 2013.

⁴¹ Kyung-Chik Han, “By My Spirit,” *Christianity Today*, November 11, 1966, 28.

revivals. And he gratified evangelicals by telling them how important they had been to Koreans. They had overcome impossible obstacles to teach the gospel to his people. Now the Koreans were creating churches admired throughout the Christian world. The Christians at the Congress needed a “worldwide missionary vision and strategy” to contest the threat of Communism—a fount of “atheism, materialism, and totalitarianism”—and resist the forces of secularism throughout every continent.⁴² The implication was that the example of Korean Christians could provide the model.

At his church in Seoul, Han preached on these themes. He claimed that the same Holy Spirit that appeared at the Pentecost event recorded in Acts 2 also appeared in the 1907 revivals, using them to expand the church. It was no coincidence, he added, that in the days before the revival “missionaries from Presbyterian and Methodist churches ecumenically gathered to pray so that God would bless Korea.”⁴³ He also told his Korean congregation that the Korean Church understood Jesus’ instruction on persecution in the Beatitudes because of their struggle against Japanese imperialism and Communism:

In fact, many of our believers were insulted, persecuted, and falsely accused during the Japanese Occupation and the Korean War. As Jesus says here, literally some of them lost their houses; some lost their hometown; some lost their parents, brothers, sisters, wives, and even their land. Furthermore, some were sentenced wrongly and put into prison, some were even shot but survived through a narrow escape. This is what Jesus says to all who suffer and are persecuted for their faith. ‘Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before me’ (Matthew 5:12)...Help us to be the children of God who understand that if we act righteously in whatever

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Kyung-Chik Han, “The Secrets to Church Revival, June 5, 1960,” in Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 6, 201.

circumstances and are persecuted, we are not to be discouraged or complain but rather to rejoice and be glad.⁴⁴

Such experiences, he explained elsewhere, prepared the Koreans for “the mission of preaching the gospel of Christ through this Christian country to the one billion people in East Asia.” Han appreciated his American friends, but he insisted that now Koreans needed to create their own methods of expanding the mission.⁴⁵

The end of the war found some American missionaries ambivalent about themselves and baffled not only by the successes but also the demands and divisions of the Korean churches. They praised Korean Christians but worried about what seemed to be a sudden proclivity toward schism, generated by theological disputes, ecumenism, and issues of church discipline. After the liberation, Korean Christians had to make decisions about church leaders who had complied with the imperial law and participated in Shinto ceremonies. The issue hit the Presbyterians especially hard, and in 1952 hard-line Presbyterian resisters formed their own denomination rather than worship with compromisers.⁴⁶ Presbyterians divided again after conservatives complained that participation in the World Council of Churches (WCC) sullied the church with liberalism.⁴⁷ The Americans found the discord unsettling. The churches were growing beyond all expectation, but at the same time they were unable to speak with a united

⁴⁴ Kyung-Chik Han, “Blessed are those who are Persecuted for Righteousness’ Sake, February 21, 1960,” in Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 7, 417-418.

⁴⁵ Kyung-Chik Han, “The Great Commission of Christ, January 31, 1954,” in Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 5, 160; Hyae-jeong Yi, “Kyung-Chik Han’s Christian Ideology of Founding a Nation: In Light of His Understanding of the Gospels,” Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 9, 179.

⁴⁶ Lee, 59.

⁴⁷ Kim, 503-522.

voice. Samuel Hugh Moffett said that Koreans were dishonoring the name of Christ with their acrimony and disunity: “Where else, in the world, for example, is there a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ Presbyterian Church, and neither in fellowship with the other? Is Jesus Christ divided?”⁴⁸ He was aggrieved at the actions of “zealous and determined Korean Christians.”⁴⁹

Missionaries worried about their place in post-war Korea. Though welcoming the autonomy of Korean Protestants, they also wanted to maintain influence in the institutions they had founded, especially the universities and hospitals. In 1960, Methodist Charles A. Sauer chaired the board of directors of the prestigious Yonsei University when the board dismissed two South Korean faculty members and selected Horace G. Underwood, a descendant of one of the school’s founders, to serve as acting president. Students and faculty alike resented the decisions. At violent demonstrations, some students demanded that the missionaries go back to America. The unrest produced a confrontation with the police after students attempted to raid the homes of Sauer and Underwood.⁵⁰

In 1961, Moffett spoke on the topic of “Prophet and Partner: The Missionary’s Future.” He acknowledged the resentment and recognized that the missionaries had to adapt to a new situation. They also needed to be aware of the tangled history of Western

⁴⁸ Samuel Hugh Moffett, The Christians in Korea (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), 25.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Twelfth Annual Report of the General Council to the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in the United States, Dallas, Texas, April 27, 1961, 107. See also Gregg Brazinsky, Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 204-209.

missions and colonialism in order to divorce themselves from “political imperialism, dollar diplomacy, cultural aggression and ecclesiastical paternalism.”⁵¹ But he bristled at the notion that the Koreans no longer required missionaries. Because the Koreans were a “younger church,” the missionaries still provided invaluable counsel as more experienced Christians who had overcome many of the obstacles that the Koreans would face:

Don’t spend your whole missionary career crippled with a guilt complex about your incomplete indigenization. No matter how hard you try and you’d better try hard there will always be a foreignness about you. Don’t mope about it. Use it for the glory of God, as Paul used his Roman citizenship. There will be ways in which God will be able to use you better as an American than as a poor imitation of a Korea[n]. Be yourselves, in Christ. Among the top priorities in your prophetic mission as missionaries, one stands out as urgently demanding the formulation of a missionary strategy: the recovery of ethical standards in the Christian community.⁵²

Paradoxically, the missionary was to be both prophet and partner, instructing with authority while cooperating with respect.

Like Han, Moffett believed the Koreans were moving “from a persecuted church to a church with power.”⁵³ But the two men had slightly different assessments of what was happening and what should happen. Han wanted the missionaries to stay, but he also wanted Koreans to lead their own churches. Moffett accepted the need for indigenous leadership, but he wanted Americans to retain authority in their schools and hospitals. In addition, Moffett wanted Americans to instruct Koreans about methods that had worked in America. Han, however, wanted Koreans to learn from American mistakes. As a

⁵¹ Samuel Hugh Moffett, “Prophet and Partner: The Missionary’s Future, February 13, 1961,” in Charles A. Sauer Papers, United Methodist Archives Center, Drew University, Madison, NJ.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

student at Princeton Seminary, he had seen the faculty divide between fundamentalists and modernists. He respected J. Gresham Machen, the fundamentalist who had left Princeton to found Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, but he disagreed with Machen's "hostile criticism" of other faculty members and "narrow-minded" treatment of theological opponents.⁵⁴ The experience predisposed Han to favor ecumenical cooperation. Like other conservatives, he worried about liberalism in the WCC, but he endorsed Korean Presbyterian membership as a means to participate in its global Christian community.⁵⁵

Han's combination of ecumenism and evangelicalism won endorsements from mainline and evangelical Protestants in the United States, but also demonstrated the ways in which both groups continued to project their agendas upon Korean Christians. Mainline Protestants blamed the mission boards for the fighting among Koreans, complaining that they continued to send denominational missionaries who competed for converts and refused to cooperate with each other.⁵⁶ *The Christian Century* challenged the missionaries to "follow the example of the Koreans and work together on plans that have as their goal the best interests of the Kingdom in Korea rather than the best interests of any particular denomination."⁵⁷ Conversely, evangelicals suggested that Americans could learn from the daybreak prayer meetings at churches like Han's throughout South

⁵⁴ Kyung-Chik Han, "My Gratitude," in *Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 1*, 158.

⁵⁵ Soong-Hong Han, "Kyung-Chik Han's Spirituality and His Influence on the Korean Protestant Church," in *Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 9*, 120-122, and Kim, Unyong, "The Preaching World of Kyung-Chik Han, a Luminary of the Pulpit," in *Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 9*, 487-488.

⁵⁶ "Save Korean Missions!," *The Christian Century*, October 25, 1950, 1255-1257, and "Korea's Effect-Plus and Minus," *The Christian Century*, November 15, 1950, 1351-1353.

⁵⁷ "Christians Show Martyrs' Spirit," *The Christian Century*, February 21, 1951, 229.

Korea. One evangelical missionary used the Korean example to rebuke lukewarm American Protestants and especially women: “While the American Church is giving up its mid-week prayer meeting, the Korean Church takes up pre-dawn prayer...it is amazing to witness the uninhibited public prayer of these believing women in open meetings. They put far to shame their supposedly advanced and emancipated sisters of the west.”⁵⁸ Korean successes, he added, vindicated the emphasis on proselytism and biblical instruction above cultural exchange and social work. The “swivel chair missionaries in offices in New York” and the “professors in American theological seminaries” should go to Korea and see the results of unwavering faith in the gospel as presented in the inerrant Scriptures.⁵⁹

The two competing American factions had conflicting explanations of Korean Christian expansion. In 1958, *The Christian Century* explained that “the reasons for the proportionately large growth of Protestantism are elusive” but warned against attributing it simply to noble American missionaries. The journal pointed instead to the combination of evangelism and ecumenism in most of the Korean churches.⁶⁰ The evangelical *Christianity Today*, by contrast, emphasized how “the names of Allen, Underwood, Appenzeller, Moffett and Baird” had become “an inseparable part of the history of

⁵⁸ Arch Campbell, *The Christ of the Korean Heart* (Columbus, OH: Falco Publishers, 1954), 79-80.

⁵⁹ Campbell, 180. See William R. Hutchison’s treatment of William Ernest Hocking’s 1932 book, *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen’s Inquiry after One Hundred Years*, and “The Ecumenical-Evangelical Standoff” in the years after the Second World War for more about the contentious foreign mission debates between mainline and evangelical Protestants in *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 158-183.

⁶⁰ “Korea Moves Toward a New Faith,” *The Christian Century*, November 12, 1958, 1294.

modern Korea.”⁶¹ Revising history, the editors claimed that the missionaries helped plan the Korean independence movement and March 1919 demonstrations, conveniently forgetting that the political events had caught the Americans by surprise and that some missionaries had prevented their Korean students from participating.⁶² The moral of the story, for *Christianity Today*, was that liberal critics of evangelical foreign missions were wrong: “In a day when some critics are morbidly proclaiming the demise of foreign missions it is refreshing to have this further confirmation of the power of the Gospel in changing men’s lives and elevating the standing of human society.”⁶³ L. Nelson Bell, Billy Graham’s father-in-law, later asserted that “there is no church in the world more conservative in theology than the Korean Presbyterian Church” and that Presbyterian missionaries likewise “have for generations been as one in their allegiance to the historic evangelical faith.”⁶⁴

Han’s American friends used him to support their positions on economics, ecumenism, evangelism, and theology. They often overlooked the nuances of his anti-Communism, forgetting that he not only criticized communism but also insisted that the gospel transcended every human economic order, including capitalism. Christians were to criticize every social order, and Korean believers had a duty to “struggle with the shortcomings of capitalism” in order to remake their society according to the biblical

⁶¹ “The Gospel, the Power that Changed Korea,” *Christianity Today*, November 23, 1959, 21.

⁶² Frank Baldwin, “Missionaries and the March First Movement: Can Moral Men be Neutral?,” in Korea under Japanese Rule (Western Michigan University: The Center for Korean Studies Institute of International and Area Studies, 1973), edited by Andrew C. Nahm, 198-199.

⁶³ “The Gospel, the Power that Changed Korea,” *Christianity Today*, November 23, 1959, 22.

⁶⁴ L. Nelson Bell, “Hopes Rise for Korean Reconciliation,” *Christianity Today*, January 18, 1960, 28.

principles of justice and mercy.⁶⁵ This did not mean, however, that the Marxists had it right. Although Christianity, like socialism, stood in favor of the “working class rather than the bourgeoisie class,” Marxists wrongly sought social revolution solely through changes in the means of production.⁶⁶ They reduced the dignity of human beings by stressing only their social location and mistakenly saw religion as an opiate “made to dull the worker from their painful reality.”⁶⁷

As the missionaries challenged popular opinions about primitive Koreans and lifted them up as exemplars of faith, it was almost inevitable that they would oversimplify. The example of Han illustrates the pattern. His admirers chose conflicting traits to valorize. Some praised his ecumenism, some his theological conservatism. All praised his anti-communism, but most overlooked his criticisms of capitalism. For his part, Han was of two minds about the missionaries. He liked them and he wanted them to stay; but he also wanted them to recognize that they could no longer dominate Korean Christian institutions. Han exemplified the new patterns of friendship and cooperation, and he typified the Koreans whom Americans admired for their intense piety. But he was a far more complex figure than either evangelicals or ecumenicals made him out to be. And Korea was a far more complex place.

A Methodist Minister's Wife Befriends Two South Korean Women in North Georgia

⁶⁵ Kyung-Chik Han, “Christianity and Communism, 1947,” in Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 4, 424.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Han, 428.

On September 30, 1948, Etta Pursely Barton, a Methodist minister's wife, met two female Korean students, Chungil Choo and Chinsook Kwon, at the Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville. Barton was a fifty year-old woman teaching Sunday School to young adults, and she invited college women to her church. She and her husband, J. Hamby Barton, had lived in the town since his appointment to Milledgeville's First Methodist Church in 1945. Choo and Kwon were among the first Korean students to come to the United States after the liberation. Dressed in traditional Korean clothing, a long, colorful skirt and short jacket (*chima*), the two Korean women were reticent and apprehensive. Barton asked them if they were Christians; they told her that they were followers of Confucius. Barton welcomed them to her church, and the three women began a friendship encompassing over forty years. Barton did not hesitate to say that she learned more about the world from her two friends than she ever taught them.

In the United States, Choo and Kwon converted to Methodism, graduated from the college, and completed graduate studies in Tennessee before returning to Korea in the last months of the war. Choo then taught in the College of Education at Seoul National University and Kwon worked in public health as a nutritionist. In 1950, two years after meeting the two Korean women, Barton began a foundation that provided financial aid for foreign students in the United States. Barton's friendship with Choo and Kwon influenced her actions; it also propelled her work against anti-Asian racism in the American South and expanded her religious vision. Barton explained that she did not go to Korea, but that Korea had come to her in the form of two students: "They have

broadened our horizon and deepened our faith so we give thanks to God for sending Korea to us.”⁶⁸

When the two students arrived in 1948, the registrar’s office asked Barton to meet them. Barton had become a maternal figure to many of the students, who referred to her as “Ma Barton.”⁶⁹ Choo and Kwon were among the two hundred students sent to the United States by the South Korean government to study and receive training as prospective leaders. Unlike earlier students from Korea, Choo and Kwon did not come from mission schools.⁷⁰ Choo’s closest interaction with an American had occurred when she ran away from an American soldier in Korea who whistled at her, but she was overjoyed to be selected to study in America, “the nation that sounded like a fairy-land to me at that time.”⁷¹

The women had studied English in Korea, but they initially felt overwhelmed: “We almost had to relearn our English when we were faced with the Southern accent.”⁷² Though they were not Christian, Choo and Kwon frequently went to Barton’s church.

⁶⁸ Etta Pursely Barton, “Korea Came to Me,” in Etta Pursely Barton Papers, Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.

⁶⁹ Etta Pursely Barton, The Phone Rang: A Story of Long Life and Happiness (Columbus, Georgia: Brentwood Christian Communications, 1984), 54-61.

⁷⁰ From 1884 to 1945, there were several hundred Korean students in North American colleges and universities. Many of these students, like Kyung-Chik Han, were educated in mission schools in Korea and supported by American missionaries. Others were immigrants, or the children of immigrants, who came to the United States before restrictive immigration policies, culminating in the Immigration Act of 1924, barred Korean entry into the country. In 1932, the Korean Division of the Friendly Relations Committee in New York published a student directory with 493 Korean students in the United States and Canada. See “Korean Students in America,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 10:3-4, December 1932, 8.

⁷¹ Chungil Choo Chung, “The Wisdom of Water,” 26, in Etta Pursely Barton Papers. After her marriage to Bom Mo Chung, Choo changed her last name to “Chung.” I refer to Chungil Choo Chung by her maiden name, “Choo,” in order to maintain consistency and to avoid confusion with references to Bom Mo Chung.

⁷² Chung, 31.

She studied international relations and global justice, taught from books like Stringfellow Barr's *Let's Join the Human Race* (1950), and advanced Barr's notions of cross-cultural partnerships and global neighbors.⁷³ Barton's religious persuasions reflected currents within mid-twentieth century American Methodism as it evolved into a "responsible world political organization promoting peace with justice."⁷⁴ She took the two Koreans to Methodist student conferences throughout Georgia not only to expose Choo and Kwon to Christian students but also to introduce American students to a wider world. She invited the two Koreans to spend time with her family for Christmas, along with two Chinese students and five Korean students from other colleges in Georgia.⁷⁵

Nine months after Choo and Kwon visited Barton's church, they converted to Christianity. When she was baptized, Choo spoke publicly of her conversion: "I came to America wanting to learn only two things, your scientific achievements and your economic success. But I have learned that you have something much more valuable to give. That is your Christian philosophy of life."⁷⁶ Both Barton and Choo insist that the initiative for the conversion came from the two Korean students. Barton had grown fond of them and prayed that they would accept the Christian God "as the loving Father of all mankind," but she did not want to force her religion upon the Koreans.⁷⁷ Sixteen years

⁷³ Barton, 108-109.

⁷⁴ Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, *The Methodist Experience in America, Volume 1: A History* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 377. In their history of the Methodist experience in America, Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt delineate three distinct phases – Pietist, nurturing, and advocating – in the development of American Methodism.

⁷⁵ Barton, 64.

⁷⁶ Barton, 68.

⁷⁷ Barton, 67.

after her conversion, Choo described the Bartons as “true Christians” who were “devoted to their religion and to the belief in [the] brotherhood of all mankind.” It impressed her that they opened their home to foreign students every Christmas, and she credited them with enlarging her vision of “One World.” “The most point is that they did it in a quiet loving way, and not in a preaching way,” wrote Choo, “Pa Barton preached in the church with passion and faith, but he was a man of quiet action otherwise. Ma Barton presented before me an ideal image of a woman who knew how to live beautifully.”⁷⁸

Choo’s account unveiled a difference from the experience of some of the earlier Korean students in America. Inspired by the missionaries, those students had embraced Christianity as a religion of hope and liberation and expected to find in America a Christian utopia. Some ended up deploring the racism of Americans and eventually the paternalism of the missionaries. The *Korean Student Bulletin* for example, decried missionary literature that featured intrepid white Americans saving uncouth Koreans. One student insisted that missionary literature contributed to racism in America: “We wonder who will solve the vexing problem of our racial prejudice which our present day missionaries pour into the formative minds of young Americans through tales such as this.”⁷⁹ In contrast, Choo and Kwon experienced the Bartons as parental figures—their “American parents”—who related to them without paternalism, people with a large view of a large world.

⁷⁸ Chung, 41.

⁷⁹ “Book Review: Sarangie, A Child of Chosen: A Tale of Korea,” *Korean Student Bulletin* 4:4, October 1926, 7.

When the two women received scholarship aid to study at the University of Tennessee but lacked the funds for board and books, Barton appealed to several foundations, had no success, and decided to raise the money herself. She established the *Student Educational Foundation* to solicit tax deductible funds, which first aided Choo and Kwon, and then she devoted her life to supporting foreign students in America. She wanted the foundation to aid students who wanted to return to their home countries. Renamed in 1982 as the *Barton Education Trust*, the organization reflected Barton's Methodist worldview: "In the belief that PEACE can only come to the world through mutual trust and understanding, the Barton Education Trust was formed in 1950 to aid worthy students in pursuit of an education...they are our ambassadors, spreading our philosophy of PEACE and goodwill around the world."⁸⁰ By 1989, three years before Barton's death, her foundation had helped fifty-four students from fourteen nations.⁸¹

The Deepening of Transnational Friendships

During the Korean War, Barton exchanged letters with Choo, Kwon, and Choo's fiancé, Bom Mo Chung, who was studying psychology at Louisiana State University and the University of Chicago. From Tennessee, Kwon wrote letters expressing her religious faith in the face of sorrow and worry about her family's safety in Seoul. After hearing the news of the attack on Seoul, Kwon attended church with Choo in Knoxville: "We were almost overcome with grief and knew not what to do. But, kneeling at the altar of the church in prayer, we received strength and comfort. We then were able to get up and go

⁸⁰ "Statement of Purpose," in Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

⁸¹ Etta Pursley Barton, *The Phone Still Rings: Sequel to "The Phone Rang"* (Columbus, GA: Brentwood Christian Press, 1989), 5.

on with our studies with the hope and faith that a better day would dawn for our people.”⁸² Kwon wrote to Barton about her anguish: “I have no word to say now about the fate of Korea...to fear about our life seems our fate.”⁸³ In reply, Barton told Choo and Kwon how her relationship with them formed her view of the Korean War. She and other friends of the two women, she said, did not see the Korean people as shadowy enemies or hapless victims but as intelligent students and faithful co-religionists. “Wherever we go people are asking about you and wishing you a good year in school,” Barton shared, “Then lots of folk are seeing the liberation of Seoul as a more personal matter since they know you and are interested in the welfare of your people. You have made a worthwhile contribution toward world brotherhood as you have walked the ways of America.”⁸⁴ In a six-month period in 1950, Barton and Choo exchanged forty-six letters.⁸⁵

The relationship changed Barton, but she also changed the perception of America held by the two women. As college students in South Korea during the 1940s, Choo and Kwon studied in a politically charged environment in which faculty and students debated the merits of communism, Western democracy, and socialism. Leftist students denounced American involvement in South Korean affairs and demonstrated against it. They felt deep suspicion, for example, about their government’s plans to unite several smaller

⁸² Barton, 77.

⁸³ “Letter from Sue Kwon to Etta Pursely Barton on July 3, 1950,” in Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

⁸⁴ “Letter from Etta Pursely Barton to Gail Choo and Sue Kwon on September 24, 1950,” in Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

⁸⁵ Choo wrote Barton on June 14, 23, 27, July 3, 8, 19, 31, August 4, 7, 14, 18, 23, September 17, 19, 23, 27, October 1, 8, 13, 20, 25, 31, November 3, 6, 8, 14, 17, 19, 27, December 4, 9, and 14 in 1950. Barton wrote Choo on June 14, 17, September 16, 24, 28, October 2, 6, 13, 31, November 7, 29, December 1, 6, and 8 in 1950. See Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

colleges into one national university, fearing that the plan “would only serve to raise the innocent puppets of American imperialism.”⁸⁶ Choo wanted to study in America, but she also had some suspicions of Americans, having seen more than her share of aggressive, dismissive, and rude American soldiers and civilians. Choo’s fiancé was also skeptical about the motives of the Bartons. He did not believe their rosy letters to their Korean family and friends. Rather, he thought Choo and Kwon were being forced to write these letters as part of an American ploy to propagate U.S. interests. American forces in South Korea treated Koreans as inferior; Chung could not accept that the Bartons respected Choo and Kwon as equals. But when he came to America, he eventually developed his own deep friendship with the Bartons.⁸⁷

Choo and her fiancé returned to South Korea several months before the Armistice Agreement ended the Korean War in July of 1953. The war claimed the lives of 33,000 Americans, 415,000 South Koreans, and 1.5 million North Koreans and Chinese.⁸⁸ Staggering Korean civilian death tolls resulted from relentless aerial bombing campaigns.⁸⁹ Choo and Chung wed in 1953 and began working as college teachers in Seoul. Choo gave birth to a daughter the following year. Chung kept Barton informed about the devastating collapse of the country. The few standing cities were overcrowded

⁸⁶ Chung, 21.

⁸⁷ Barton, 79.

⁸⁸ Halberstam, 4.

⁸⁹ Jodi Kim, Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 148-149.

with people searching for homes and jobs.⁹⁰ Choo told Barton that she wept constantly over the plight of her country.⁹¹ But she still remembered her stay in America with affection. Her parents wrote Barton a letter Choo translated: “Our joy is further doubled because Chungil has studied in your country the most precious knowledge that she would need as the basis of her service to her country and world’s people and also because that her resolution to be of service seems firm due to your guidance.”⁹² But the situation was bleak. Chung described the destruction to the Bartons:

I am now in Seoul, my home city. Yes, it is my home, a ghost-city with vast area of brick-skeleton. The city is a strange mixture of modern city, country - scene, slum, and ruin. It is a stranger to me and only the streets among ruins lead me where to go, and sadly remind me of my whereabouts. Once one of the most beautiful and crowded areas of the city is now covered with acres and acres of shattered bricks and rampant grasses. Can’t guess how much of the city is in this condition. To my naked eyes, it seems that about $\frac{3}{4}$ of it is in unusable ruin. Can’t guess how many lives are lost when this much of the city was crumbled down. Can’t guess what a scene was developed when this much was in the hand of Nero. Can’t guess how much it would require to rebuild even to its previous image of Seoul. Truce, quasi-peace, as much more anxious period...It’s like getting out of a hot boiling water and stepping into a dark, gloomy, quiet, and messy room. Happy that God created man so that he keeps on hoping and hoping persistently in the future even in such a circumstance.

At the end of his letter, Chung asked Barton to send him a copy of Harvard professor S.S. Stevens’ *Handbook of Experimental Psychology* (1952) for his academic work.⁹³

In 1957, Barton delivered an address entitled “The Shrunken Globe,” in which she challenged her audience to seek cross-cultural partnerships. She shared the history of her

⁹⁰ “Letter from Bom Mo Chung to Etta Pursely Barton on September 28, 1952,” in Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

⁹¹ “Letter from Gail Chung to Etta Pursely Barton on January 8, 1953,” in Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

⁹² “Letter from Gail Chung to Etta Pursely Barton on February 19, 1953,” in Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

⁹³ “Letters from Bom Mo Chung to Etta Pursely Barton on August 29, 1953,” Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

foundation and the fateful day she met Choo and Kwon in 1948, and she urged her listeners to befriend the thousands of foreign students who were entering American colleges and universities: “You and I may not have the opportunity to promote world changing legislations, or introducing wide sweeping reforms, but we all have the everyday opportunity of learning about our neighbors, seeking to understand them, and building friendship with them.” She warned that many foreign students experienced racial discrimination in America and thus went back home “bitter and distrustful of America and her fine talk of Christian democracy.”⁹⁴

Choo, however, carried neither bitterness nor distrust from her experience in America. She recalled her friendship with the Bartons: “Never before in our lives, had we been offered by anybody who was not related closely to us by blood, color, race, or otherwise the kind of generosity that the Bartons showed us that day.”⁹⁵ To Choo, the Bartons embodied Wesleyan teachings that combined personal piety and social witness.⁹⁶ After returning to Korea she found that her Methodism helped her not only expand her vision of God’s redemptive activity in the world but also to remain open to the insights of other religious traditions, such as Buddhism, that had attracted her interest as a young girl.

⁹⁴ “The Shrunken Globe: Address from October 8, 1957 at Sylvania’s Women Club,” in Etta Pursely Barton Papers.

⁹⁵ Chung, 31.

⁹⁶ Harold J. Recinos, “In a Divided World, Methodism Matters,” in The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies, edited by William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 691.

Choo wrote a memoir of her experiences and sent Barton a copy. In it, she talked about her Christian faith but also explained her newly discovered appreciation for Korean traditions and popular beliefs. She dedicated her memoir to her Korean and her American parents. As Choo's request, Barton sought, without success, to find a publisher for the manuscript. It was not a manuscript that would have appealed to most Protestants, including Methodists, of the era. She wrote much too favorably of Buddhism, traditional Korean religions, Korean traditional medicine, and folk beliefs about the natural world. Choo's religious journey unveils the complexity and ambiguity of efforts to indigenize Protestant theology. Although Barton praised Choo's memoir, the manuscript would have troubled most of the early missionaries as well as most Protestant lay readers in mid-twentieth century America. Korea was an example of Protestant missionary success, but the Americans were never able to remake the Koreans in their own image. Koreans were never of one mind about Christian thought and practice, but as more and more of them became Christian, they found their own ways of combining their faith and their culture.

Conclusion

In 2000, Billy Graham wrote a eulogy for Kyung-Chik Han the day after his death at the age of ninety-seven. Graham told how he first met Han during his initial visit to Korea in 1952. He recalled praying together with him at his church in the frigid mornings at daybreak. "In Dr. Han's presence," Graham recalled, "I felt my own inadequacy and often prayed that I could be more like him."⁹⁷ In 1992, Graham sought Han's advice when presented with the opportunity to visit North Korea. Although the trip was

⁹⁷ Billy Graham, "With Every Good Wish and Warm Regards," in Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 3, 17.

controversial in America and South Korea, Han privately urged Graham to go with the hope that Graham's visit would make even a small dent in the many barricades that isolated North Korea from the rest of the world. Graham's admiration for Han was unbounded: "[Han's] love, humility, and boldness combined to make him one of the greatest men of God in the twentieth century."⁹⁸ Han felt an equally intense fondness for Graham and for many of the missionaries. He expressed deep appreciation for the Presbyterian missionaries who had counseled him when he decided to pursue ministry.⁹⁹ He also cherished Graham and Bob Pierce for their support of his ministry and their efforts to rebuild his country after the war. And no doubt he felt some degree of pleasure when Graham, probably the best-known American evangelist in the world, sought his advice and counsel.¹⁰⁰

Barton continued to support Korean students in the United States through her foundation and exchanged letters with Choo's daughter as she completed undergraduate studies in South Korea and graduate studies at the University of Illinois. She visited South Korea twice, in 1969 and 1980, and stayed with Choo and Kwon. She not only visited Protestant churches but also went to a Won Buddhist temple with Choo. As Choo

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Blair encouraged Han to study at Princeton Theological Seminary, but Moffett advised Han to remain in Korea because of the liberal theological trends in the United States. See Kyung-chik Han and Byeonghui Kim, "Interview," in Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Vol. 1, 382.

¹⁰⁰ Han and Kim, 454-458.

translated the Buddhist priest's message after the service, Barton commented that the priest's teachings shared some similarities with the Golden Rule.¹⁰¹

In the late nineteenth century, the first American missionaries arrived eager to evangelize Koreans and establish churches, hospitals, and schools. But encountering a culture and history entirely different from their own, missionaries found it hard to regard Koreans as their equals. The traditional clothing, mud-walled huts, and wooden rickshaws appeared primitive to their Western eyes. One missionary confessed that it was impossible for him and other Americans not to feel superior to Koreans because of the cultural and technological differences between the two peoples.¹⁰² During the years of Japanese colonialism, Koreans resented the missionaries' political neutrality, and Americans viewed the Korean independence movement as futile. They wanted Koreans to direct their energies to religious expansion.

As Koreans began a new stage of its national history after liberation, American and Korean Protestants also entered into the next phase of their relations with one another. No longer divided by imperial politics, they united against a common foe in Communism. Experienced missionaries defended Koreans from charges of barbarism and ineptitude by pointing to the superior faith of Korean Christians. Although Americans continued to project their own agendas upon Koreans, they increasingly saw Koreans as equal partners in religious and humanitarian endeavors.

¹⁰¹ "Letter from Etta Pursely Barton to her family on August 3, 1980," in Etta Pursely Barton Papers, and Barton, 475-485.

¹⁰² Homer B. Hulbert, Echoes of the Orient: A Memoir of the Far East (Seoul: Toso ch'ulp'an Sonin, 2000), 147.

Barton and Han point toward a reversal of authority that became more fully visible in the 1980s. American missionaries had once regarded Korean converts as their spiritual children to mold and nurture in the faith. But those days were long gone. As Barton, Choo, and Kwon grew older, Barton became the one eager to learn what the Korean women had to teach about the wider world. Han began his career working as a lowly assistant in the Protestant mission. As his ministry flourished, he became a respected adviser to Americans who admired his religious success. During the last two decades of the twentieth century, Han and other Korean Protestant pastors emerged as influential leaders on the world Christian stage. They achieved what so many of the early Korean church leaders had struggled and yearned to attain – equal relations with white American Christians. Some Koreans went even further and reversed their relationships with Americans. They increasingly felt that their forms of faith were superior to American forms and considered it their mission to revive what they saw as an American Church in decline. The evolution of Barton's relationships with Choo and Kwon and Han's relationships with American Protestants serve as a portent for this reversal.

Conclusion

The Reversal

As Korean Protestantism exploded from 740,000 adherents in 1945 to 12,000,000 in 2000, the bond between American and Korean Protestants across many denominations, from Presbyterian to Pentecostal, grew stronger. American church leaders frequently visited South Korea to learn from Korean pastors. In 1987, *Christianity Today* observed that “the phenomenal growth of the church in South Korea has made it the darling of countless church-growth consultants, and a supreme model for aspiring mega-visioned pastors here in the U.S.”¹ The journal sent writers to interview such pastors as Kyung-Chik Han and Yonggi Cho, who had founded the world’s largest church with 500,000 members. The writers came back with stories about the prayer practices of Korean Christians, the high respect they showed to church leaders, the commitment of the laity, a confrontational style of evangelism and church leadership, and an intense belief in supernatural occurrences.² To some extent the list reflected distinctive features of traditional Korean society: the respect for church leaders seemed natural in a society indebted to a Confucian past, and the supernaturalism was a reminder of the widespread belief in spirits and extraordinary powers that the first missionaries noticed when they arrived in the country. But the journalists were also discovering beliefs and practices

¹ Harold Smith, “Politics Test the Korean Church,” *Christianity Today*, May 15, 1987, 15.

² “Will Success Spoil the South Korean Church?,” 32-35. In 2007, Cho’s church, Yoido Full Gospel Church, remained the largest church in the world with 830,000 members. See “O Come All Ye Faithful,” *The Economist*, November 1, 2007 (<http://www.economist.com/node/10015239>, accessed on September 17, 2013).

reminiscent of the early mission, when the missionaries relied on lay preachers and teachers to reach people whom the Americans could not have attracted.

The early missionaries would have been astonished and gratified at the intensity of Korean worship. Churches held daily daybreak services at 4:30 in the morning and a weekly all-night prayer meeting, usually on Fridays, that lasted from 10:00 in the evening until 4:00 the next morning. A Korean survey of 100 pastors revealed that all of them engaged in daybreak prayer, with eighty percent continuing to pray for an hour after the corporate worship. Half the pastors participated in overnight prayer once a week.³ And the pastors expected the laity, especially deacons and elders, to attend these prayer services. They also instructed them to give at least a tithe, a tenth of their income, to the churches. But the laity were willing to do even more. After giving tithes and other offerings, many also supported building projects. And they organized weekly small group meetings of ten to twelve parishioners for Bible study and prayer. Even the darker side of Korean churches—a tendency to split apart after aggressive confrontations—led to church growth: both factions became as large as or larger than “the sum total of the united body before division.”⁴

In 1985, seven African American clergy from Los Angeles visited the country and studied the prayer practices and the leadership style of Korean pastors.⁵ They were among a significant number of Americans who made a similar pilgrimage and who found

³ Harold Smith and Myung-Hyuk Kim, “A Lot of Tired Prayer Warriors,” *Christianity Today*, November 20, 1987, 37.

⁴ “Will Success Spoil the South Korean Church?” 35.

⁵ Jarrette Fellows, Jr., “Pastors Learn Secrets of Nation that Arose from Ashes of War,” *Los Angeles Sentinel*, October 24, 1985.

much to admire in the Korean church. American observers wrote back home that Korean pastors seemed not to worry much about being liked, and that they placed high demands on the laity: “Every convert is immediately put to work at spiritual tasks, not just painting the basement. Each learns that to be a Christian is to be a minister.”⁶ At least some, perhaps most, American Christians no longer went to Korea to convert unbelievers. They wanted to learn secrets of revival and church growth.

Korean immigrant churches, moreover, conducted what was in effect a mission to the United States. Between 1965 and 1989, the number of Korean American churches increased from fewer than thirty to 2,000, with more than 600 churches in Southern California, 400 in New York City, 140 in Chicago, and 120 in the area of Washington, D.C. and Baltimore.⁷ By the end of the 1980s, Young Nak Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, carrying the name and following the principles of Han’s church in Seoul, ranked fourth among the fastest growing American churches, with more than 4,000 weekly congregants. The church constructed a nine million dollar worship and study complex.⁸ In 1995, Koreans constituted a large portion of the 4,253 Asians enrolled in the seminaries associated with the largest theological accrediting agency, the Association of Theological Schools. Increasing in numbers by 60 percent in four years, Asians, with Koreans in the lead, became the fastest-growing ethnic group in theological education.⁹ At least one school, the Claremont School of Theology, a liberal Protestant seminary in

⁶ Kenneth S. Kantzer, “What Happens When Koreans Pray,” *Christianity Today*, August 16, 1993, 13.

⁷ Dan Moul, “For Koreans in America, Growth and Growing Pains,” *Christianity Today*, March 3, 1989, 56.

⁸ John Dart, “Church Reflects Growing Korean Activity,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1989.

⁹ “Asian-American Pastors: Great Expectations,” *Christianity Today*, August 12, 1996, 51.

California, offered courses in Korean to attract Korean students who wanted to lead immigrant churches.¹⁰

The immigrants changed some large denominations, especially the Methodists and Presbyterians, who had once taken the lead in the Korean mission. Between the mid-1970s and the late-1990s, Korean American congregations in the United Methodist Church increased from fewer than twenty to more than 280.¹¹ A Methodist official in Southern California praised Korean Americans for “revitalizing the denomination.”¹² In the Presbyterian Church (USA), the largest Presbyterian denomination, Koreans were the fastest-growing ethnic group. By the end of the 1990s they numbered 50,000 members organized into 320 congregations.¹³ Korean Americans now insisted that their conservative theology should be the model for American Presbyterian churches. A pastor named Samuel Kim believed that the Presbyterians in America were declining because they did not follow Korean examples: “On the whole, American Presbyterians lack that explicit evangelism – the idea of spreading the gospel. That’s why they have not experienced any growth.”¹⁴ On social issues, too, the Koreans insisted on conservative teachings: although the General Assembly was almost evenly divided on an amendment in 1997 banning gays from church ministry, Koreans almost unanimously voted against

¹⁰ “Theology School Plans Classes for Korean Ministry Students,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 5, 1987.

¹¹ Gustav Niebuhr, “Presbyterians Devise Plan to Diversify Denomination,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1998.

¹² Ira Rifkin, “Korean Immigrants Flock to Growing Congregations,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1988.

¹³ Gustav Niebuhr, “Presbyterians Devise Plan to Diversify Denomination,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1998 and “PCUSA Koreans: A Growing Influence,” *The Christian Century*, November 10, 1999, 1080.

¹⁴ “PCUSA Koreans: A Growing Influence,” *The Christian Century*, November 10, 1999, 1080.

allowing gay clergy.¹⁵ In 2001, 37,000 Korean Presbyterians united behind a letter demanding a ban on same-sex ceremonies in order to prevent the denomination's "demise."¹⁶ It was now the Koreans, not the American missionaries, who were offering instruction, trying to persuade the American churches to look and act a little more like the churches in Korea.

The Koreans were now the missionaries not only in America but in the rest of the world. By 2005, the odds were likely that a Protestant foreign missionary was either American or Korean. With 13,000 long-term missionaries in every corner of the world, South Korea ranked second only to the United States in the number of mission workers, and there were predictions that the country could soon be the world's leader in the foreign mission enterprise.¹⁷ Koreans had once been America's finest converts, but now they had emerged as America's greatest competitors in global missions.

The Historical Legacy

The growth of Korean Protestantism is part of larger demographic shifts in the world Christian population. At the beginning of the twentieth century, eighty percent of the world's Christian population lived in Europe and North America. By the end of the century, sixty percent of the world's Christians were found in Africa, Asia, and Latin

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ "Koreans Plead for Ban on Same-Sex Unions," *The Christian Century*, January 3-10, 2001, 11.

¹⁷ Rob Moll, "Missions Incredible: South Korea Sends More Missionaries Than Any Country But The U.S. And It Won't Be Long Before It's Number One," *Christianity Today*, March 1, 2006, 28-34.

America.¹⁸ The globalization of Christianity has stimulated new evaluations of the Western mission legacy that challenge older myths about missionaries and indigenous converts. The monolithic portrait of missionaries as either evangelical heroes or imperial villains has given way to more intricate understandings of how missionaries functioned in foreign lands.¹⁹ And indigenous Christians no longer reside in the shadows or margins of history, as scholars recognize their often decisive participation in religious transmission and reception.²⁰

The attention to indigenous converts recognizes their agency and creativity in remaking the religion with their own ecclesial structures, rituals, and theologies. But the tangled relationships between American missionaries and Korean Protestants demonstrate that cross-cultural religious transmission is a fractured process charged with constant negotiations and oppositions. Americans and Koreans brought different—and often conflicting—aspirations, fears, ambitions, and frustrations to the shaping of Korean

¹⁸ Peter Vethanayagamy, “Mission from the Rest to the West,” in Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission, edited by Ogbu U. Kalu, Peter Vethanayagamy, and Edmund Kee-Fook Chia (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 59.

¹⁹ For example, scholars have focused on the roles of missionaries as linguistic translators, transnational moral reformers, unwitting colonial co-conspirators, beneficent cultural imperialists, and transmitters of global modernity. See Lamin Sanneh, Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), Ian Tyrrell, Reforming the World: The Creation of America’s Moral Empire (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution, Vol. 1, Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), Carol C. Chin, “Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Diplomatic History* 27 (June 2003), 327-352, and Ryan Dunch, “Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity,” *History and Theory* 41 (October 2002), 301-325.

²⁰ Andrew Walls, The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), Peter C. Phan (ed.), Christianities in Asia (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, Clouds of Witnesses: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011), Ondina E. Gonzalez and Justo L. Gonzalez, Christianity in Latin America: A History (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), and Ogbu U. Kalu, African Christianity: An African Story (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007) and African Pentecostalism: An Introduction (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Protestantism. Ultimately, the Koreans would “win out” and control their own churches, as indigenous Christians always have, but minimizing American involvement obscures our historical understanding as much as ignoring Korean initiatives.

Missiologists seek to emphasize “the indigenous discovery of Christianity rather than the Christian discovery of indigenous societies” by turning away from Western missionaries and focusing instead upon how converts in other societies transformed the religion.²¹ But early Korean Protestantism had local and global components that worked both in tandem and against one other. This tension is inherent in Christianity as a universal religion practiced in particular social settings, and Korean churches at home and abroad were local expressions of faith marked by their own cultural distinctiveness. Yet they also maintained connections to the Western churches and felt their continuing influence. American missionaries held superior material resources that gave them power and stature in Korea, and Korean converts also respected them for their piety. This stature enabled the missionaries to believe that they knew how the Koreans ought to organize their denominations and practice their worship. As late as 1988, one Korean American Presbyterian pastor in Los Angeles explained that his church’s worship service excluded every remnant of Korean culture other than language “because the missionaries told us to throw away our own culture...so we adopted the American style.”²² His comment did not reflect any Korean consensus, certainly not in 1988 and probably not in 1938, but it is a

²¹ Lamin Sanneh, Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 13.

²² Ira Rifkin, “Korean Immigrants Flock to Growing Congregations,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1988.

reminder that missionaries left an imprint, whether positive or negative, on the Korean Church.

The main point to be made about the missionaries is the most obvious one: they were Christians. Although they dealt with complicated matters of politics, administration, economics, and health care, they were primarily religious actors who believed that they were offering the promise of salvation by preaching the gospel and teaching God's word. This overriding evangelical intention meant that the early missionaries had clear objectives but also narrow perspectives that led them to envision Korea as a religious *tabula rasa* for their making. The reason the missionaries refused to support the Korean independence movement was because they saw themselves as church planters, not nation builders. They thought that they were saving Korean souls by teaching the truths of the Bible, not creating Korean patriots by teaching the political maxims of the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

Perhaps, then, it is more accurate to identify the missionaries as religious imperialists, in the sense that they endeavored to impress their Protestant values upon Koreans. One historian has argued against this notion of religious imperialism by pointing out that Americans were "almost always lousy at converting large numbers of non-Westerners."²³ But in one of the few nations where they were successful, American missionaries sought to create an idealized Christianity unblemished by Asian religions, secularism, and theological liberalism. Because the Korean Church was their great experiment, they tried to control it for over six decades. This Protestant religious

²³ Jay Riley Case, *An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812-1910* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 7.

enthusiasm even led them to protect their converts from American culture. Some of the American women, for example, banished English from their school curriculums and forbade their students to wear Western clothing because they feared that the currents of modernity would sweep away the piety of Korean women. They desired to help “Koreans become better Koreans only.”²⁴ But the underlying assumption was not hard to miss – Korean converts would lose their religious zeal if they absorbed Western ideas.

But it is too simplistic to characterize the missionaries as agents of intolerance who cared only about advancing their religious agenda. They lamented the suffering of Koreans at the hands of foreign rulers. They established the first modern schools and hospitals in Korea and helped Koreans who desired to study in the United States. Over time, a number of missionaries became self-critical about their own racism and spoke out against prevailing American preconceptions about Korean backwardness.

The American missionaries argued among themselves, as did their Korean converts, and the contestations could be fierce. Despite their comity agreements and ecumenical councils, missionaries from different denominations competed for converts, organized mutually antagonistic churches, and built denominational schools. Should they be simply evangelists? Or should they correct social ills? The questions evoked passionate disagreements. One American diplomat in Korea complained that the only thing he observed missionaries do was argue with one another.²⁵ These disputes were sometimes personal and petty, but they were largely about religious matters. The in-fighting was contentious because the missionaries believed that they were responsible for

²⁴ “Notes from Korea,” *The Gospel in All Lands*, August 1888, 373.

²⁵ George C. Foulk, “Letter to his parents and brothers on August 18, 1885,” 123.

the salvation of Korean souls. Koreans were no less divisive in their own clashes because they too believed that false doctrines and wrong practices had eternal consequences.

My analysis of Korean Protestants resists the hagiographic tendency to valorize indigenous converts as heroic figures who maintained their agency in the face of powerful forces like Western colonialism and geopolitical conflict.²⁶ Like the Americans, Koreans were also human beings with admirable and flawed qualities. They could be courageous, selfless, loyal, and kind, but they could also be timid, self-serving, disloyal, and unkind, and they had their own cultural and racial biases. When David Chuhwang Kim and Agnes Davis married, the reaction illustrated that some Koreans were no less disapproving than some Americans of interracial unions.

This historical legacy of the Protestant mission in Korea resonates in the United States today because American Christians venture forth as missionaries more often than they ever did in the past. Although some historians say that the peak of the mission enterprise came in the half-century between 1880 and 1930, more American missionaries, more faith-based humanitarian workers, and more short-term volunteers serve abroad today than at any period in the past.²⁷ American churches spend nearly four billion dollars annually on overseas ministries. Every year, more than 1.5 million Americans participate in short-term foreign mission trips that last anywhere from one week to

²⁶ Charles E. Farhadian, "Introduction," in Introducing World Christianity (Malden, MA; Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), edited by Charles E. Farhadian, 3.

²⁷ Robert Wuthnow, Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2009), 235, and Robert J. Priest, "Short-Term Missions as a New Paradigm," in Mission After Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission, 84-86. Both Wunthow and Priest challenge assumptions about the waning of the American missionary impulse in the mid-late twentieth century. William R. Hutchison's Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions is one example that argues that the heyday of American foreign missions occurred from 1880 to 1930.

several months.²⁸ And they face some of the same dilemmas that once burdened the missionaries to Korea. Christianity has shifted to the Global South, but the financial power remains among Christians in the North. Americans are more cautious about paternalism, but they still come from a nation with vastly more economic resources and global influence than the nations to which they carry the gospel. Cross-cultural relationships can therefore be fraught with unconscious assumptions and tensions lying beneath the surface of even casual conversations or gestures. But as the missionaries to Korea soon learned, the mission field is a place in which preconceptions soon fall apart.

The emergence of Korean American churches over the last thirty years also demonstrates the ways in which world Christian movements are transforming American Christianity. Immigration has always been a major source of Christian diversity in the United States.²⁹ Since 1965, immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia are simultaneously adding to the number of Christians in the United States and increasing the ethnic and racial diversity within American Christianity.³⁰ But immigrant groups like Korean American Protestants are also challenging white American Christians to relinquish their status as the standard-bearers of the religion. In the history of the relationships between American and Korean Protestants, this call for change is the unintended result of Americans initiatives from over a century ago. Koreans first

²⁸ Wuthnow, 1, and Priest, 85.

²⁹ Catherine A. Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin, "Introduction," in American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity, edited by Catherine A. Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 17.

³⁰ Eighty-five percent of post-1965 immigrants in the United States are non-European and at least two-thirds of these immigrants are Christian. See R. Stephen Warner, "The De-Europeanization of American Christianity," in A Nation of Religions: The Politics of Pluralism in Multireligious America, edited by Stephen R. Prothero (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 233-255.

exceeded American religious expectations in their nation and then increasingly saw it as their mission to revitalize and reform Christian churches and denominations in the United States. Because nearly eighty percent of Korean Americans today are Protestant, the Korean immigrant church is undoubtedly the center of Korean American community life.³¹ But some Korean American church leaders are looking beyond their ethnic parishes and seek to guide all American Christians to better understandings of the different cultural forms of faith that exist in urban, suburban, and rural neighborhoods all across the country.³²

The story of the American mission to Korea is a narrative of reversal, though the term carries multiple meanings. One reversal of expectation came when the missionaries found that Koreans could steadfastly hold to beliefs and practices that they had learned from generations of cultural transmission. Korea was no *tabula rasa*, and the Americans could not realize the Christian utopia that they had envisioned. For one thing, many Korean converts tenaciously refused to abandon cultural practices that the missionaries found troubling. In this sense, reversal meant failure, at least in the eyes of the missionaries themselves.

Another reversal of expectation occurred when Koreans integrated Western ideas to their Christian beliefs and practices. Americans determined that Western influences could corrupt the Korean Church, but Korean converts decided for themselves how to

³¹ Warner, 237, and David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung, "Introduction," in Religion and Spirituality in Korean America, edited by David K. Yoo and Ruth H. Chung (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 2. According to Yoo and Chung, "While figures vary, survey data suggests that 80 percent of Korean Americans are affiliated with Protestant ethnic churches, 11 percent are Roman Catholics, 5 percent are Buddhists, and 4 percent are other or no religion."

³² See Soong-Chan Rah, The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009).

combine certain Western elements like clothing, technology, and secular education with their cultural context. This reversal surprised the missionaries. They dressed and talked like Koreans to present Christianity as a Korean religion. But Korean Protestants adopted some American cultural, political, and economic ideas to fulfill their religious ambitions.

The reversal of position came when Korean converts insisted on controlling the churches, schools, and hospitals that the missionaries had helped to build. From the beginning, Koreans evidenced ample suspicion of paternalism. They could be incisively critical of what they saw as the luxurious homes, extravagant diets, and elegant clothing of some of the missionaries, and eventually they could also be suspicious of too much American control over their institutions and their forms of Christian faith. The Koreans wanted to reverse positions with the Americans, to seize control. This was not the reversal of failure, though it did bring with it a measure of psychic suffering on the part of at least some of the missionaries. It was more like what one might call, from the vantage of some of the missionaries, a disappointing reversal, and from the perspective of most Korean Protestants, a satisfying reversal. By the mid-twentieth century, however, almost all American missionaries in the ecumenical traditions, and probably most in conservative missions, not only accepted but also encouraged this transition. The reversal of position, they saw, resulted in a powerful Christian presence.

The greatest reversal, however, came when some American Protestants—the ones who were aware of the changes in the world Church—began to see Korean Protestants as more conscientious in living the faith, more able to attract adherents, and more influential within their culture than American Christians were in their own culture. When some Americans began traveling to Korea to learn about evangelism, when some of them

envied the respect that Korean lay people had for their pastors, and when some of them found that Koreans sometimes felt the obligation to instruct Americans how to administer their churches, then they felt the force of a reversal of authority that evoked a wide spectrum of responses, from wonder and admiration to worry and even anger. The conservatism of Korean Protestants who had immigrated to America disappointed Americans who took an opposing position on such an issue as the appropriate answer of the churches to pleas from gay and lesbian Christians. The success of Koreans in forming new, large, enthusiastic churches excited other Americans, who saw the Korean example as a model for renewing American denominations. The first American missionaries to Korea could never have imagined the end result of their mission; they dreamed that they could plant the seeds for a faithful, sacrificial, loyal, and zealous Church in Korea (and they succeeded), but they might have been more than a little surprised to know that by the twenty-first century some Koreans would dream of planting the seeds for a faithful, sacrificial, loyal, and zealous Church in America. They would have seen that as a most unlikely reversal.

Bibliography

Archives and Manuscript Collections

Archives and Manuscripts Department, Emory University, Pitts Theology Library, Atlanta, GA

Center for Korean Studies Digital Archive, University of Hawai'i, Manoa

General Commission on Archives and History, The United Methodist Church, Drew University, Madison, NJ

Korean American Digital Archive, University of Southern California Digital Library, Los Angeles, CA

Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Emory University, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta, GA

Missionary Research Library Collection, Columbia University, Burke Theological Library, New York, NY

Montgomery Library, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA

Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Appleton's Magazine

The Atlanta Constitution

Chicago Daily Tribune

The Chinese Recorder

The Christian Advocate

The Christian Century

Christian Science Monitor

Christianity and Crisis

Christianity Today

The Church at Home and Abroad

Colorado Spring Gazette

The Economist

Emory Alumnus

The Foreign Missionary, containing particular accounts of the work of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian church and selected articles and facts from the missionary publications of other Protestant societies

The Free Korea

The Gospel in All Lands

Heathen Children's Friend

Heathen Woman's Friend

The Idaho Daily Statesman

The Independent

The Korea Bookman

The Korea Field

The Korea Methodist

The Korea Mission Field

The Korean Repository

Korean Student Bulletin

The Kum and Go

The London Times

Los Angeles Sentinel

Los Angeles Times

The Missionary Review of the World

The Missionary Survey

The Missionary Voice

The Morning Calm

New York Times

North American Review

The Outlook

Philadelphia Inquirer

Presbyterian Survey

TIME Magazine

The Washington Post

Woman's Missionary Friend

Woman's Work for Woman

Books and Articles

Abraham, William J. and James E. Kirby. *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Ahn, Heui Yeol. *The Influence of the Niagara Bible Conference and Adoniram Judson Gordon on Malcolm Fenwick and Korean Baptist Missions*. PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002.

Allen, Horace N. *Things Korean: A collection of sketches and anecdotes, missionary and diplomatic*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1908.

The Appenzellers: How they Preached and Guided Korea into Modernization, Volumes 1-2. Daejeon, Korea: Pai Chai University Press, 2010.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

The Annual Report of the Korean Religious Book and Tract Society, 1911-1919. Seoul, Korea: The Society, 1917-1919.

The Asiatic Fields: Addresses delivered before the Eastern missionary convention of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, Pa., October 13-15, 1903. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1904.

Baird, Annie L.A. *Daybreak in Korea: A Tale of Transformation in the Far East*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1909.

_____. *Inside Views of Mission Life*. Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1913.

Baird, William M. *William M. Baird of Korea: A Profile*. Oakland: Richard H. Baird, 1968.

Baldwin, Jr., Frank Prentiss. *March First Movement: Korean Challenge and Japanese Response*. PhD diss., Columbia University, 1969.

Barrows, John Henry, ed. *The World's Parliament of Religions: an illustrated and popular story of the World's First Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in connection*

with the Columbian Exposition of 1893, Volume I. Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893.

Barton, Etta Pursely. *The Phone Rang: A Story of Long Life and Happiness*. Columbus, Georgia: Brentwood Christian Communications, 1984.

_____. *The Phone Still Rings: Sequel to "The Phone Rang."* Columbus, Georgia: Brentwood Christian Communications, 1989.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Blair, William N. *Chansung's Confession*. Topeka, KS: H.M. Ives and Sons, 1959.

_____. *Gold in Korea*. Topeka, KS: H.M. Ives & Sons, 1947.

_____. *The Korea Pentecost: And Other Experience on the Mission Field*. New York: BFM of the PCUSA, 1910.

Blassingame, John W. and John R. McKivigan, eds. *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, Volume 4: 1864-80*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Boehmer, Elleke. *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890-1920: Resistance in Interaction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Botham, Fay. *Almighty God Created the Races: Christianity, Interracial Marriage, and American Law*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Bradley, James. *The Imperial Cruise: A Secret History of Empire and War*. New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2009.

Brazinsky, Gregg. *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Brekus, Catherine A. and W. Clark Gilpin, eds. *American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

Brown, Arthur J. *The Korean Conspiracy Case*. New York: Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1912.

_____. *The Mastery of the Far East: The Story of Korea's Transformation and Japan's Rise to Supremacy*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1919.

_____. *Report on a Second Visit to China, Japan, and Korea, 1909, with a Discussion of Some Problems of Mission Work*. New York: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1909.

_____. Report of a Visitation of the Korea Mission of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A (1901). New York, 1902.

_____. The Truth and Falsehood about Korea Missionaries. New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, 1904.

Brown, Oswald Eugene and Anna Muse Brown, eds. Life and Letters of Laura Askew Haygood. Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, 1904.

Bruen, Clara Hedberg. 40 Years in Korea.

Buck, Pearl S. The Living Reed: A Novel on Korea. New York: John Day, 1963.

Bullock, Henry Morton. A History of Emory University. Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1936.

Burnett, Scott S., ed. Korea-American Relations: Documents pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume III: The Period of Diminishing Influence, 1896-1905. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989.

Burton, Margaret Ernestine. Comrades in Service. New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1915.

Buswell, Robert and Timothy S. Lee, eds. Christianity in Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006.

Campbell, Arch. The Christ of the Korean Heart. Columbus, OH: Falco Publishers, 1954.

Candler, Warren A. T.H. Yun, of Korea, and the school of Songdo. Nashville: Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, n.d.

Case, Jay Riley. An Unpredictable Gospel: American Evangelicals and World Christianity, 1812-1910. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Chang, Derek. Citizens of a Christian nation: Evangelical missions and the problem of race in the nineteenth century. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Chin, Carol C. "Beneficent Imperialists: American Women Missionaries in China at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." *Diplomatic History* 27:3 (June 2003): 327-352.

Ch-oe, Yong-ho, ed. From the Land of Hibiscus: Koreans in Hawai'i. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007.

Choi, Hyaeweol. Gender and Mission Encounters in Korea: New Women, Old Ways. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Choi, Hyaeweol, ed. *New Women in Colonial Korea: A Sourcebook*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.

Clark, Donald N. *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience, 1900-1950*. Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003.

Chandra, Vipin. *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Choy, Bong Youn. *Koreans in America*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1979.

Chung, Henry. *The Case of Korea: A collection of evidence on the Japanese domination of Korea, and on the development of the Korean independence movement*. New York, Chicago, etc: Fleming H. Revell, 1921

Comaroff, John L. and Jean Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution, Vol. 1: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Competent Witnesses on Korea as a Mission Field. New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1909.

Cumings, Bruce. *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997.

_____. *The Korean War: A History*. New York, Modern Library, 2010.

Cynn, Hugh Hyeng-wo. *The Rebirth of Korea: The reawakening of the people, its causes, and the outlook*. New York and Cincinnati: Abingdon Press, 1920.

Davis, George T.B. *Korea for Christ: The Story of the Great Crusade to win one million souls from Heathenism to Christianity*. London: Christian Workers' Depot, 1910.

Dennis, James S. *Foreign Missions after a Century*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1893.

DuBois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903.

Dudden, Alexis. *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005.

Dunch, Ryan. "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity." *History and Theory* 41:3 (October 2002): 301-325.

Evans, Curtis J. *The Burden of Black Religion*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Farhadian, Charles E., ed. *Introducing World Christianity*. Malden, MA; Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. *Commission on Relations with the Orient. The Korean situation; authentic accounts of recent events*. New York, 1920.

Fenwick, Malcolm C. *The Church of Christ in Corea*. New York: George H. Doran Co., 1911.

The Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Korean Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., June 30-July 3, 1934. Seoul, Korea: 1934.

Fleming, Leslie A., ed. *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*. Boulder, San Francisco, and London: Westview Press, 1989.

Fluker, Walter Earl and Catherine Tumber, eds. *A Strange Freedom: The Best of Howard Thurman on Religious Experience and Public Life*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.

Fouk, George Clayton and Samuel B. Hawley. *America's Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Fouk, 1884-1887*. Lanhan, MD: Lexington Books, 2006.

Fowler-Willing, Jennie and Mrs. George Heber Jones. *The Lure of Korea*. Boston: Methodist Episcopal Church Woman's Foreign Missionary Society Publishing Office, 1910.

Gale, James Scarth. *Korean Sketches*. Chicago and New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1898.

_____. *Korea in Transition*. New York: Young People's Mission Movement, 1909.

_____. *The Vanguard: A Tale of Korea*. Chicago and New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1904.

Gehman, Richard. *Let my Heart be Broken with the Things that Break the Heart of God*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966.

Gifford, Daniel L. *Every-day life in Korea: A collection of studies and stories*. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1898.

Gilmore, George W. *Korea from its Capital: With a Chapter on Missions*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1892.

- Goldstein, Eric L. *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Gonzalez, Ondina E. and Justo L. Gonzalez. *Christianity in Latin America: A History*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Gould, Stephen Jay. *The Mismeasure of Man, Revised and Expanded*. New York and London, W.W Norton & Company, 1996.
- Graham, Billy. *Just as I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*. HarperSanFrancisco and Zondervan, 1997.
- Grant, John Webster. *The Church in the Canadian Era: The First Century of Confederation*. Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson Limited, 1972.
- Griffis, William Elliott. *Corea, the Hermit Nation*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1882.
- _____. *Corea: Without and Within: Chapters on Corean History, Manners and Religion with Hendrick Hamel's Narrative of Captivity and Travels in Corea, Annotated*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1885.
- Grayson, James Huntley. *Korea: A Religious History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Gulick, Sidney L. *The White Peril in the Far East*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1905.
- Halberstam, David. *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War*. New York: Hyperion, 2007.
- Hamilton, Angus. *Korea*. London: W. Heinemann, 1904.
- Harrington, Fred Harvey. *God, Mammon, and the Japanese; Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American relations, 1884-1905*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944.
- Holifield, E. Brooks. *God's Ambassadors: A History of the Christian Clergy in America*. Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007.
- Holmsten, Richard B. *Ready to Fire: Memoir of an American artilleryman in the Korean War*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2003.
- Hulbert, Homer B. *The Passing of Korea*. New York, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1906.
- _____. *Echoes of the Orient: A Memoir of the Far East*. Seoul, Korea: Toso ch'ulp'an Sonin, 2000.

- Hunt, Everett N. *Protestant Pioneers in Korea*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1980.
- Huntley, Martha. *Caring, Growing, Changing: A History of the Protestant Mission in Korea*. New York: Friendship Press, 1984.
- Hutchison, William R. *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Hyun, Peter. *In the New World: The Making of a Korean American*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995.
- _____. *Mansei!: The Making of a Korean American*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986.
- International Missionary Council. *The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, March 24-April 8, 1928: The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems of Thought and Life, Volume 1*. New York City and London: International Missionary Council, 1928.
- Jaisohn, Philip. *Hansu's Journey: A Korean Story*. Philadelphia, PA: Philip Jaisohn & Co., 1922.
- Jaisohn, Philip and Sun-pyo Hong. *My Days in Korea and other Essays*. Seoul, Korea: Yonsei University Press, 2009.
- Jones, Arun W. *Christian Missions in the American Empire: Episcopalians in Northern Luzon, the Philippines, 1902-1946*. Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang, 2003.
- Kalu, Ogbu U. *African Christianity: An African Story*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007.
- _____. *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Kalu, Ogbu U., Peter Vethanayamony, and Edmund Kee-Fook Chia. *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.
- Kim, Agnes Davis. *I Married A Korean*. New York: John Day, 1953.
- Kim, Bernice B.H. *The Koreans in Hawaii*. Master's thesis, University of Hawaii, June 1937.
- Kim, Elaine H. *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean nationalism*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

_____. "Myth, Memory, and Desire: Homeland and History in Contemporary Korean American Writing and Visual Art," in *Holding Their Own: Perspectives on the Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States*. Edited by Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Heike Raphael-Hernandez. Tubingen: Stauffenburg-Verlag, 2000.

Kim, Eun-seop, ed. *Kyung-Chik Han Collection, Volumes 1-10*. Seoul, Korea: Kyung-Chik Han Foundation, 2010.

Kim, Hwal-lan. *Grace Sufficient: The Story of Helen Kim by Herself*. Nashville: The Upper Room, 1964.

_____. *Rural Education for the Regeneration of Korea (diss)*. New York: Kim, 1931.

Kim, Hyung-chan. *Letters in Exile: The Life and Times of Yun Ch'ih'o*. Covington, GA: Rhoades Printing Company, 1980.

Kim, Hyung-chan, et al., eds. *Distinguished Asian Americans: A Biographical Dictionary*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999.

Kim, Jodi. *Ends of Empire: Asian American Critique and the Cold War*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Kim, In Soo. *History of Christianity in Korea*. Seoul, Korea: Qumran Publishing House, 2011.

Kim, In-su and Horace Newton Allen. *Allen Uisa ui son'gyo, oegyo p'yonji, 1884-1905*. Seoul, Korea: Changnohoe Sinhak Taehakkyo Pusol Han'guk Kyohoesa Yon'guwon, 2007.

Kim, In-su and Horace Grant Underwood. *Ondoudu Moksa ui son'gyo p'yonji: 1885-1916*. Seoul, Korea: Changnohoe Sinhak Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2002.

Kim, Yung-Chung, ed. *Women of Korea: A History of Ancient Times to 1945*. Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1976.

Korea Presbyterian Mission. *Report for 1899-1900 of the Pyeng Yang Station, Presented to the Annual Meeting held at Pyeng Yang, September 1900*.

The Korean Situation: Authentic Accounts of the Recent Events by Eyewitnesses. New York: The Committee on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1919.

Ladd, George Trumbull. *In Korea with Marquis Ito*. New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1908.

- Lee, Ki-baek, translated by Edward Wagner with Edward J. Schulz. *A New History of Korea*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Lee, Timothy S. *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010.
- Lee, Yur-Bok and Wayne Patterson. *One Hundred Years of Korean-American Relations, 1882-1982*. University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1986.
- Lew, Young Ick, Yeong Sub Oh, Steve G. Jenks, and Andrew D. Calhoun, eds. *The Syngman Rhee English Correspondence, Volumes 1-10*. Seoul, Korea: Institute for Modern Korean Studies, Yonsei University, 2009.
- Liem, Channing. Philip Jaisohn. Elkins Park, PA: Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation, 1984.
- London, Jack and Daniel A. Metraux. *The Asian Writings of Jack London: Essays, Letters, Newspaper Dispatches, and Short Fiction*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009.
- Lynn, Hyung Gu. "Fashioning Modernity: Changing Meanings of Clothing in Colonial Korea." *Journal of International and Area Studies* 11:3 (2004): 75-93.
- Lyu, Kingsley K. "Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945, Part I: 1900-1919." *Amerasia* 4:1 (1977): 23-90.
- _____. "Korean Nationalist Activities in Hawaii and the Continental United States, 1900-1945, Part II: 1919-1945," in *Amerasia* 4:2 (1977): 53-100.
- Maffly-Kipp, Laurie, Leigh Eric Schmidt, and Mark Valeri, eds. *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian life in America, 1630-1965*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.
- Marty, Martin E. *Modern American Religion, Volume 1: The Irony of it All, 1893-1919*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.
- _____. *Modern American Religion, Volume 3: Under God, Indivisible, 1941-1960*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- McClain, James L. *Japan, a Modern History*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002.
- McCully, Elizabeth A. *A Corn of Wheat or the Life of Rev. W.J. McKenzie*. Toronto: The Westminster Co. Limited, 1903.

McCune, George M. and John A. Harrison, eds. *Korea-American Relations: Documents pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume I: The Initial Period: 1883-1886*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951.

Methodist Episcopal Church Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. *Fifty Years of Light*. Seoul: The Society, 1938.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Korean Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1896. Shanghai, China: 1896.

Minutes of the 101st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Augusta, Georgia: The Assembly, 1961.

Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Korean Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1903. Seoul, Korea: Methodist Publishing House, 1903.

Moffett, Samuel Austin. *Samuel A. Moffett: First Letters from Korea, 1890-1891*. Seoul, Korea: Hyesun Press, 1975.

Moffett, Samuel Hugh. *The Christians of Korea*. New York: Friendship Press, 1962.

Moose, J. Robert. *Village Life in Korea*. Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, Smith & Lamar, agents, 1911.

Mullen, Bill V. and Cathryn Watson, eds. *W.E.B. DuBois on Asia: Crossing the World Color Line*. Jackson, Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 2005.

Nahm, Andrew C., ed. *Korea under Japanese Rule*. Western Michigan University: The Center for Korean Studies Institute of International and Area Studies, 1973.

Nevius, John Livingstone. *China and the Chinese: A General Description of the Country and Its Inhabitants; Its Civilization and Form of Government; Its Religious and Social Institutions; Its Intercourse with Other Nations, and Its Present Condition and Prospects*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869.

Noble, Mattie Wilcox. *The Journals of Mattie Wilcox Noble, 1892-1934*. Seoul, Korea: Hanguk Kidokkyo Yoksa Yonguso, 1993.

Noble, W. Arthur. *Ewa: A Tale of Korea*. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1906.

Noll, Mark A. and Carolyn Nystrom. *Clouds of Witnesses: Christian Voices from Africa and Asia*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011.

Oak, Sung-Deuk. *The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea: North American Missionaries' Attitudes Towards Korean Religions, 1884-1910*. ThD diss., Boston University, 2002.

_____. Sources of Korean Christianity. Seoul, Korea: Institute for Korean Church History, 2004.

_____. The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876-1915. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013.

Okihiro, Gary Y. Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Oliver, Robert Tarbell. Syngman Rhee, the Man Behind the Myth. New York, Dodd, Mead, 1954.

Oppert, Ernst. A Forbidden Land: Voyages to Corea. London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1880.

Pahk, Induk. September Monkey. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954.

Pai, Margaret K. The Dreams of Two Yi-min. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989.

Paik, George L. History of Protestant Mission in Korea, 1832-1910, 4th ed. Seoul, Korea: Yonsei University Press, 1987.

Palmer, Spencer J., ed. Korea-American Relations: Documents pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume II: The Period of Growing Influence: 1887-1895. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.

Park, Chung-Shin. Protestantism and Politics in Korea. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003.

Patterson, Wayne. The Ilse: First-Generation Korean Immigrants to Hawai'i, 1903-1973. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.

_____. The Korean Frontier in America: Immigration to Hawaii, 1896-1910. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988.

Phan, Peter C., ed. Christianities in Asia. Maiden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Pierce, Bob, and Ken Anderson. The Untold Korea Story. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1951.

Prothero, Stephen R., ed. A Nation of Religions: The Politics of Pluralism in Multireligious America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Quatro Centennial, Papers Read Before the Korea Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. at the Annual Meeting in Pyeng Yang, August 27, 1909. Seoul, Korea: 1909.

Rah, Soong-Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009.

Rhee, Syngman. *Japan Inside Out: The Challenge of Today*, 2nd ed. New York: Revell, 1941.

_____. *Neutrality as Influenced by the United States: A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of Princeton University in Candidacy for the Degree of Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1912.

Rhee, Syngman, translated by Han-Kyo Kim. *The Spirit of Independence: A Primer of Korean Modernization and Reform*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001.

Rhodes, Martha, ed. *Sex, Love, and Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*, edited by Martha Rhodes. New York and London: New York University Press, 1999.

Richey, Russell E., Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt. *The Methodist Experience in America, Volume 1: A History*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010.

Richey, Russell E., Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, eds. *The Methodist Experience in America, Volume 2: A Sourcebook*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.

Robert, Dana L. *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996.

Ryang, J.S., ed. *Southern Methodism in Korea*. Seoul, Korea: Board of Missions, Korea Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1926.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Sanneh, Lamin. *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 2nd edition. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2009.

_____. *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003.

Sauer, Charles A. *Methodists in Korea, 1930-1960*. Seoul, Korea: The Christian Literature Society, 1973.

Sauer, Charles A., ed. *Within the Gate: Addresses Delivered at the Semi-Centennial of the Methodist Church in Korea*. Seoul: The Korean Methodist News Service and YMCA Press, 1934.

Schmidt, Leigh Eric. *Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

Scranton, William B. *Letters of William B. Scranton*. Korea: William Scranton Foundation, 2010.

Seager, Richard Hughes. *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter*, Chicago, 1893. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Seth, Michael J. *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010.

Shearer, Roy E. *Wildfire: Church Growth in Korea*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1966.

Snow, Jennifer C. *Protestant Missionaries, Asian Immigrants, and Ideologies of Race in America, 1850-1924*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Song, Yuwu, ed. *Encyclopedia of Chinese-American Relations*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009.

Speer, Robert E. *Report of the Deputation of the Presbyterian Board of Missions to Siam, the Philippines, Japan, Chosen, and China, April-November 1915*. New York: Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1916.

Speer, Robert E. and Seung-Tak Kim, *Report on the Mission in Korea of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 1897*. *Korea Institute for Advanced Theological Studies Theological Journal* Volume 2:2 (Fall 2006): 411-468.

Song, Kil-sop. *American Protestant Missionary Perceptions of the Korean Independence Movement in 1919 and its Effects upon the Churches of Korea*. ThD diss., Boston University, 1976.

Strong, Josiah. *Expansion under New-World Conditions*. New York: Baker and Taylor, 1900.

_____. *The new era; or, the coming kingdom*. New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1893.

_____. *Our Country, Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*. New York: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1885.

St. John, Burton, ed. *North American students and world advance; addresses delivered at the eighth international convention of the Student volunteer movement for foreign*

- missions, Des Moines, Iowa, December 31, 1919, to January 4, 1920. New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1920.
- Suggestions to Leaders of Classes: Korea in Transition. New York: Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, n.d.
- Sugirtharajah, R.S., ed. *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
- Swinehart, Lois Hawks. *Jane of the Orient*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1924.
- Taylor, Charles. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Tweed, Thomas A. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Twelfth Annual Report of the General Council to the General Assembly. Presbyterian Church in the United States, Dallas, Texas, April 27, 1961.
- Tyrrell, Ian R. *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Underwood, Elizabeth. *Challenged Identities: North American Missionaries in Korea, 1884-1934*. Seoul, Korea: Royal Asiatic Society-Korea Branch, 2003.
- Underwood, Horace G. *The Call of Korea*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1908.
- Underwood, Horace H., *Tragedy and Faith in Korea*. New York: Friendship Press, 1951.
- Underwood, Lillias H. *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots*, 2nd ed. Boston: American Tract Society, 1908.
- _____. *Underwood of Korea: Being an intimate record of the life and work of the Rev. H.G. Underwood, D.D., LL.D., for thirty one years a missionary of the Presbyterian board in Korea*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1918.
- United States. *Twelfth Census of the United States*, 1900.
- Voelkel, Harold. *Open Door to Korea*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958.
- Walls, Andrew F. *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the transmission and appropriation of faith*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002.
- _____. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the transmission of faith*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996.

Wasson, Alfred W. *Church Growth in Korea*. New York: International Missionary Council, 1934.

Wells, Kenneth M. *New God, New Nation: Protestants and self-reconstruction nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990.

Wuthnow, Robert. *Boundless Faith: The Global Outreach of American Churches*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009.

Yim, Louise. *My Forty-Year Fight for Korea*. New York: A.A. Wyn, 1951.

Yoo, David K. *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1910-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Yoo, David K. and Ruth H. Chung, eds. *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Yoo, Theodore Jun. *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910-1945*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Zhang, Kaiyuan, ed. *Eyewitnesses to Massacre: American Missionaries Bear Witness to Japanese Atrocities in Nanjing*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001.

Ziolkowski, Eric J., ed. *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993