

I conclude with seven one-sentence observations on culture: *one*, culture comes from the Latin word *cultura*, a word for farming that involves the complex process in which that which is given by nature is being intentionally interfered with in an attempt to create a better product. *Two*, we are all born into our culture; it is there waiting for us. *Three*, everyone's culture is in flux; we share in the changing process. *Four*, cultural groups are never homogeneous; we all differ from our closest kinsfolk. *Five*, no one finds it particularly easy to change culture; most of us are culturally a bit reactionary. *Six*, a dynamic culture grounded in dialogue and encounter is a liberating adventure. *Seven*, cultural debate and cultural evolution is reaching a new level of intensity in South Africa as well as in the United States.⁴¹ What will we look like in a hundred years' time? What will we feel like? How will successive generations react to the cocksure statements we make about truth, religious persuasion, and a notion of what is right and wrong?

South African culture, nation building, and value systems are still in the making. Few would deny this. Nation building is unfinished business. Change is the challenge of the day. This makes for a measure of tolerance and understanding in South Africa, amid even the most heated debates. Established nations that regard themselves as having run the race with the battle won, especially those within these nations who revel in the *status quo*, may find the challenges of change a little difficult to digest. Whatever the base from which we respond to change, this much is certain—times are a-changing. We would do well to explore and create models that have the potential to nourish us in our need to respond creatively rather to resist stubbornly. I am suggesting that Kuyperian thought, augmented with a sense of African belonging, may just be worth throwing into the stew.

⁴¹ James Moulder, "Moral Education in a Multicultural Environment," *Acta Academica* no. 24 (1992): 17.

Has Christianity Failed in Asia?

by SAMUEL HUGH MOFFETT

Dr. Samuel Hugh Moffett is Henry Luce Winter Professor of Ecumenics and Mission Emeritus. He delivered this address in Luce Library on April 21, 2005, on the occasion of the dedication of the "Moffett Korea Collection" of books, papers, and photographs.

I THANK YOU FOR ALL the kind words and for what you have done and are doing here in Special Collections. Our "Moffat" clan motto is a rather mournful *spero meliora*, "I hope for better things." Well, we mourn no more. What could we ever hope for better than this? It is a great honor.

And these are great days for mission—the Christian world mission. My subject title is "Has Christianity Failed in Asia?" which tilts the question a little toward the negative. But I am going to try to convince you that the answer is, "No, it has not failed." In fact I am much more pessimistic about the declining old Christendom of the West than I am about the vital new churches of what we condescendingly call "the third world." But it is also true that anyone who talks about Asia has a problem. Asia is so vast and varied that anything you say about one part of it is going to be false about another part.¹ Let me give you an example. Consider two famous authors who have written on that subject. One says Christianity has failed in Asia and the other says it has not. The first one is a highly respected Indian historian, K. M. Panikkar. About fifty years ago, he said emphatically, "the [Christian] attempt to convert Asia has failed."² But the second, an equally famous professor, Harvard's mercurial Harvey Cox, wrote more recently that Christianity in Asia not only is not failing, it is *succeeding* and succeeding spectacularly. He says it could "eventually become a major force in all of southeast Asia [and in] China, Mongolia and Siberia." "Nearly half the population [of South Korea]," he said, "is [already] churched."³

Who is right, Panikkar or Cox? Is Christianity dead in Asia, or is it about to explode across the continent like "fire from heaven," as Cox describes it? My thesis today is that Panikkar and Cox are both wrong but also both partly right, and I think Cox, the optimist, is more right than Panikkar. I believe that Asia is the greatest political, economic, and Christian challenge in the world today—a challenge, not a failure. Here is why I think so. Asia is not just

¹ My favorite verse on ambiguity in the use of the word "Asia" is Luke 6:16, referring to one of Paul's missions, "And the Holy Spirit forbade them to go into *Asia*!"

² K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953), 297.

³ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 220. It was Pentecostalism that impressed him most.

another continent; it is a supercontinent. It is *big*, so big that the United Nations divides it into four subcontinents: North, South, East, and West Asia.⁴ Europe by comparison is just a large, dumpy promontory dangling from the dominant land mass of Asia! And Asia is *crowded*. It holds nearly 60 percent of the world's people. Do you know what percentage of the world's population is in North America? Less than 6 percent!—6 percent compared with Asia's 60 percent. And Asia is *religious*. It is the birthplace of all the world's five largest religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, and Christianity. It surprises me that western Christians are still startled to be reminded that Christianity is by birth Asian, not western. Jesus Christ was born in Asia. That is the good news.

But I can not dodge the bad news. Of all the world's large continents, in the proportion of the number of Christians to the total population, Asia is the least Christian. Statistics from David Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia* show how geographically uneven is the spread of Christians around the world: Latin America is reported as being 92 percent Christian; Northern America, 84 percent (at this point you may recognize one of the problems of rating religions by the numbers!); Europe, including Russia, 76 percent; Africa, 50 percent; and Asia (including the Middle East), only 8 percent.⁵

So is Panikkar right after all? If ninety-two of every one hundred Asians have resisted the magnetism of Christianity around the world, has Christianity failed in Asia? Let me answer that question by choosing *East Asia* as a representative sampling of Asia as a whole. It is just one of the four regions into which the United Nations divides Asia geographically but is arguably the most globally significant and largest of the four. All but a sliver of East Asia is made up of four countries: China, Japan, and North and South Korea. We in the West should consider the future consequences of the fact that those four Asian countries, in only one section of Asia, have nearly as many people as all three of our proud western continents combined—Europe, North America, and Latin America. East Asia has a population of 1,460,000,000; our three western *continents* have 1,560,000,000. Furthermore, for all their obvious immense differences, those four Asian countries are united by the heri-

⁴ East Asia has more people than Africa and Latin America combined. China alone has more people than Europe and North America combined. India alone has more than all Africa.

⁵ David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Statistics in this lecture are taken from the *World Christian Encyclopedia*. For a fair and perceptive analysis of cliometrics, or "quantitative history," as "history by the numbers" is technically called, see Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 387-341. His critical assessment is that cliometrics is "now in the mainstream of historiography [and] the value of quantification within clear limits has been conceded."

tage of one common cultural foundation: the indelible effect of three thousand years of China's dominance on the rim of the eastern edge of Asia.

I am going to make a counter-claim. If we have *not* failed in historically strategic East Asia, who can say that Christianity is a failure in Asia? I will claim that despite the mistakes and failures of Christians in Asia, both by missionaries and national Christians, God has used "the weak to put to shame the strong," and Christians have expanded so fast in East Asia that the Churches there, far from hopeless, may change the religious history of the whole continent for the next century, and if that is true—it could change the history of the whole world.

China: Where Failure Now Looks Like Success

Let me start with China. With a population of 1,214,000,000, it has 4.5 times the number of people as the United States. But did not Christianity *fail* in China? It has never been a Christian country. (Today Christians make up 6.5 to 8 percent of the population.) Now it is a communist country. Does that not indicate failure? Five times in the long history of Christianity in East Asia, Christians opened the door to China, and five times China slammed the door shut against them.⁶ There is no time this hour to review that history. Yes, we failed, time after time—Nestorians, Roman Catholics, and finally Protestants—but Panikkar tends to remember only the times the door closed. He needs to be reminded that each time the door closed, Christians opened it again and came back stronger than before.

Let me tell you how I got caught in the *last* closing of that door when the Communists slammed it shut in 1951 and threw us missionaries out. I must confess that at the time, I came close to agreeing with Panikkar. I thought we had failed again. I reached China in 1947, just in time to see the end of 150 years of remarkable Christian progress in that huge country. For a time in the 1920s and early 1930s there were 8,000 Protestant missionaries in China. But the Chinese Roman Catholic community in 1949, on the eve of the revolution, was reported to be four times as large as that of the Protestants.⁷ Christians multiplied at all levels. It was said that in the "Who's Who in China" 25 percent of China's intellectual and political elite professed to be Christian. Missionaries were particularly admired for their medical work. By

⁶ These five periods can be broken down as follows: (1) Nestorian (635-907); (2) Nestorian II, Roman Catholic (1200-1368); (3) Roman Catholic II (1552-1773); (4) Protestant I, Roman Catholic III (1807-1949); and (5) the Communist Revolution (1949).

⁷ G. T. Brown, *Christianity and the People's Republic of China* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1996), 78. This is a revision of earlier, widely stated estimates of 700,000 Protestants and 3,000,000 Roman Catholics.

1949, their 538 Christian hospitals were among the most progressive in the country. One estimate claims that four out of ten of the "qualified physicians" in China had probably been educated in mission-founded medical schools.⁸

Christians pioneered also in the struggle for women's rights. They led the opposition to foot-binding. But much more culturally transforming was Christian emphasis on education for women. The largest, best known, and most singularly feminine of the Christian colleges was Ginling College in Nanking, founded by Methodists in 1915.⁹ "The number of women in the Christian colleges quadrupled between 1920 and 1925."¹⁰ Three years later a Ginling graduate made history. Dr. Wu Yi-Fang, an earnest Christian, returned from graduate study in America with a doctorate in biology from the University of Michigan to become the first Chinese woman president of a college in Chinese history. The year was 1928.¹¹

China even had a Christian ruler, a general named Chiang Kai-shek, a Methodist, and many thought that his Christian wife was a greater influence globally than he was! Some began to think that the Christian General Chiang, the acknowledged Christian ruler of the largest country in the world, would be a second Emperor Constantine, a Constantine for the Christianizing of Asia. But as we all know, history's answer was "No!" In fact, in 1949, "the number of Christians [had] never reached more than 1% of the population."¹² The "golden age" of Christianity was gone, and looking like just another failure.

I found that out the hard way in the revolution. My timing could not have been worse. The year 1947 was not a good one for going to China as a missionary. The country was breaking up in civil war—Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists against Mao Tse-tung's Communists. I asked, "Who will win?" expecting the answer to be, "The Christian general." But to my surprise even some of my Christian friends said, "The communists." And they were right. Within a year and a half the communists captured the university where I was teaching and went on to take the rest of the country.

In Nanking, early in 1950—I had left Peking to teach at Nanking Seminary—Dr. Wu Yi-Fang of Ginling College, whom I mentioned above, sent

⁸ David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 52.

⁹ Jessie G. Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 132-138, 157, 508, 532. The first Chinese Christian college for women was the North China Union College for Women, which opened in 1904 with the unexpected support of the Empress Dowager, hitherto violently anti-Christian. A few years later it merged into a coeducational union with what became Yenching University.

¹⁰ Lutz, 137, citing *Handbook of Christian Colleges*, 1926.

¹¹ Archie R. Crouch, *Rising through the Dust* (New York: Friendship Press, 1978), 166-169.

¹² Lutz, 526.

me a message. "May I come and stay with you a few days?" Of course we said yes. She looked exhausted. "I just needed to get away from the pressures," she said, and for three days she cried and prayed with us. "But there are things I can't tell you," she said. We soon learned what she meant. The government launched a massive reconstruction of the country's educational system, and all private colleges were to reorganize under communist control—in particular the sixteen Protestant and three Roman Catholic colleges. A year later I was detained, given a people's trial, and deported. Not long after that, we heard that there was not a single "Christian" college left.

"When we get rid of you missionaries," the Communists boasted, "the Chinese church will wither away." And when I left China I was almost discouraged enough to believe them. Maybe Panikkar was right and Christianity *was* about to die in Asia. There were then between three and four million Christians in China, over three million Roman Catholics and about one million Protestants, and the persecutions began shortly after we were expelled. They escalated in 1966 into ten years of the horrors of what was politely called a "cultural revolution." For one dark period in those frightening days not one church was left open in all China, except perhaps a service in one of the foreign legations. I thought we had all failed—missions, missionaries, and all.

But Panikkar and I were both wrong. Today, after a half century or more of the red revolution, it is the communists who are withering away—no, not withering, that would be an exaggeration—but they *are* rapidly and radically changing course. Only with great difficulty are they hanging on to pure communist political power. And the Chinese Christians? There was no withering there! As government pressure softened in 1976, after the death of Mao Tse-tung (or Zedong), one visitor summarized the resilience of the persecuted Christians, "We are survivors. We were once bitten by the tiger. . . . Its claws left scars on our faces so we are not handsome." Another added, "We not only survived—look at us—we grew."¹³

That was thirty years ago. Yes, they grew and grew and grew. No one really knows how many Christians there are in China today. The government says about 15 or 20 million. But a more realistic figure, though it has to be an educated guess, is probably somewhere between 45 and 85 million people. That may be all right, but where else but in China do we accept margins of error of 40 million people? Nevertheless, even the *possibility* of growth from three or four million to a possible 85 million right through a revolution is not

¹³ Carl Lawrence, *The Church in China* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), 113, 115.

"withering away."¹⁴ It would mean that Christianity is on the verge of matching the 100 million claimed for Buddhism in China.

So, what of the future in China? There are still problems, the most pressing of which is the splintering of Chinese Christianity. Protestants and Roman Catholics are both split in two on the issue of legalized state control of religion. When the state is antireligious and all powerful and all too fond of the death penalty, the issue becomes explosive. For Protestants, a large group accepted a compromise. They called themselves the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. A smaller group resisted and, to escape persecution, went underground as independent house churches. For Catholics, the demand for state control meant renouncing the authority of the Pope. Many refused and were persecuted; but many also cut their ties with the Vatican and formed what was called the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. That was fifty years ago.

This is the situation today. China's Christians are still divided. But the Catholic/Protestant balance has been completely reversed. In 1949 there were three times as many Catholics as Protestants; today there are perhaps eight or nine times as many Protestants as Catholics. The independent, often charismatic, noncompromising Protestant house churches have far outstripped the growth of the government-regulated Three-Self Church. And on the Catholic side it is the compromising side, the state-regulated, "Pope-deserting" Catholic Patriotic Association that has grown faster, at least visibly, than the persecuted, papal loyalist *Roman Catholics*.

Be careful before you jump to judge one side right and one side wrong in either the Protestant schism or the Catholic. Even Peter and Paul were not above arguing now and then. And both sides can quote the Bible. The Protestant "Three-Self Church" chose the Biblical admonition, "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities" (Rom. 13:1), and its churches, though severely restricted, were allowed to remain open. The "house churches" chose a different text, "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:29), and for decades they refused to be governed by an atheistic regime.

The "mainline" Protestant "Three-Self Church" is to be commended for preserving a visible presence for Chinese Christianity through the long years of the revolution. It was right in thinking that Christians must not be afraid of social reform. But it ran a risk—too much dependence on government, and a tendency to emphasize political social action over faithfulness to the

¹⁴ A "doubly affiliated" deduction of 25 million people is checked against the listed total for Asia: 300 million (D. Barrett and T. M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends*, 383).

worship and doctrines and the counsel of God in His Word. The conservative house churches, which went underground, now represent the largest and fastest-growing religious movement in all China. But they, too, run a risk—the lack of an educated Christian leadership, and often too little opportunity or ability to effect wider reforms in China.

As for China's Catholics, it is quite possible that in the long run, the loyalist "Roman" Catholics, though they have been persecuted out of sight, may have the final advantage. The Communist-controlled, self-ordained bishops of the Catholic Patriotic Association are not recognized outside China, but the underground loyalists have a Pope known to all the world.

They may even have a "secret" cardinal. In 1979 the Pope, John Paul II secretly (*in pectore*) appointed a Chinese cardinal for the loyalists, Bishop Gong Pin-Mei (Ignatius Kung). Bishop Kung was an authentic Roman Catholic bishop, born in a five-generation Catholic family. He was bishop of Shanghai and was thrown into prison in 1955, to "wither away" for thirty years. When he was released (but still kept in house arrest), he did not know that for his last six years in prison he had been a "secret cardinal." It was kept a secret for another six years and not publicly announced until 1991.¹⁵ Cardinal Kung died not long ago in America. But there is a rumor even now that another "secret cardinal" for China may soon be announced.

Japan: The Church that Did Not Grow

The story of Christianity in Japan is a wake-up, cold shower of hard history that needs to be added to the story of Christianity in Asia. It is an antidote to premature Christian triumphalism, a more subdued story sandwiched in between two brighter stories of apparent triumph (Korea and China). It reminds us that Christianity is not always a success story as the world defines success. Time does not permit adequate treatment here, but let me just say that it does not lead us to much Christian boasting to learn that there were more professing Christians in Japan 350 years ago, in the early 1600s, than there are today. Japan's publicly reported Christian percentage of the total population is less than 2 percent (though others claim 3.6 percent), compared with about 7 or 8 percent in China, or as high as 30 percent or more in South Korea.

¹⁵ Richard C. Bush, Jr., *Religion in Communist China* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 123-126, 136-139, 146-149; *Catholic World News* (Jan. 22, 2001, (<http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=14718>) (accessed July 1, 2005) and "A Brief Biography of His Eminence Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-Mei (Gong)," (<http://www.cardinalkungfoundation.org/biography/>) (accessed July 1, 2005).

We do not have to go to Korea to sound triumphant about Korean Christianity. Here in America, mainline Protestantism is secularizing and declining all around us—Presbyterians have been losing members at the rate of 40,000 a year for thirty years. But right here in Princeton, put the point of a draftsman's compass in the middle of town, at Mercer and Nassau, and draw a circle with a 70-mile radius. In that circle you will find 700 Korean-American churches that were not here forty years ago.

What happened in Korea to produce such an explosion, spreading now not just in Korea but around the world? The growth is obvious. Korean Protestants grew faster than Catholics; and Presbyterians grew faster than Methodists, Pentecostals, and Baptists combined. When my father went to Korea 115 years ago, just six years after the first resident Protestant missionary arrived, there were fewer than 250 Protestant Christians in all Korea, north and south, and only two little Protestant congregations, one Presbyterian and two Methodist. Those 250, north and south, in 1890, grew to nearly 12,000,000 Protestants in the south alone today, not counting 2.5 million Catholics, and a half million in "marginal sects," such as the Unification Church.

More significant for the future of Christianity in Asia, those twelve million Protestants have sent out 12,000 missionaries around the world, and most significantly to the secularizing west, which once so recently sent missionaries to them. Their missionaries, I might add, are often making the same mistakes we did, but there is no stopping their enthusiasm for proclaiming Jesus Christ as Savior of the world.

But what was it that made them grow? The best answer I know was given by my father sixty years ago. To an inquiring committee from America, he simply said, "For the last fifty years we lifted up to this people the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit did the rest." Too simple, maybe, but I sincerely believe that if Christians do not begin there, they usually do not begin at all. However, there are other important reasons why the Korean church grew. I will mention first a nontheological reason. Christian missions to Korea came in with no imperialist, colonial baggage. It was an Asian colonialism (Japanese) that Korea resented, not the west. The American missionaries came as friends, not exploiters. A second nontheological reason is that the Protestants came at a time when Korea's religious and cultural heritage was crumbling. A 500-year-old Korean dynasty was tottering to its end. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shamanism had all failed them when the country was conquered by Japan. The apparent failure of their old traditions opened the way for them to look for hope to the new, enthusiastic faith brought by their friends, the missionaries.

But just as important, and probably even more immediately effective, was a third reason: the wise mission policy of those early missionaries. It is called the "Nevius Method," named for an 1850 graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, John Nevius, who went to China and reacted against the old methods of mission work there. We missionaries, he said, kept control of the Chinese church in missionary hands too long. His advice was, "Trust the Holy Spirit, and trust the converts the Spirit gives you. Let them evangelize their own country and build up a *Chinese* church."

His policy was not adopted by the Presbyterian missions in China, but in 1890, when Nevius brought the same message to a little band of pioneer missionaries in Korea, they listened, and it became a catalytic turning point in the subsequent history of Korean Christianity. The Presbyterian mission adopted the Nevius Method as its official policy. It is no coincidence that although Roman Catholic missions began a hundred years earlier, and Methodists at the same time as the Presbyterians, there are now twice as many Korean Presbyterians as Catholics, and five times as many Presbyterians as Methodists.

The Nevius Method is known today as the "Three-Self Method," which also has roots in the "three-self" mission strategies advocated by Henry Venn in England and Rufus Anderson in America. The first "self" is *self-government*, that is, turn over the church to Korean control as soon as there is a Korean ordained ministry and eldership to lead it. That was done in 1907, the year the first class graduated from the first Korean seminary. The second "self" is *self-support*. That was done even earlier, in the 1890s. The mission decided not to pay the salaries of Korean pastors or build Korean churches with foreign money. Instead, in faith, they entrusted the full responsibilities of Christian stewardship to their converts. Koreans have been "tithers" ever since. The third "self" is *self-propagation*, or lay evangelism. But that deserves to be another point by itself. I call it "the Korean Initiative."

So the fourth reason is *the Korean initiative*. Evangelism was emphasized as the responsibility of all Christians, not just Korean pastors and foreign missionaries. And oh how enthusiastically Koreans can evangelize! Korean Protestantism began not with foreign missionaries in Korea but with a Korean lay evangelist, Suh Sang-Yoon, even before the first missionaries arrived. He was converted in Manchuria by Scottish missionaries in 1876. He came back to Korea in 1883 and formed a little Christian community in his home village a whole year before the first American missionaries landed—Horace Allen, a Presbyterian doctor (1884); Horace Underwood, a Presbyterian minister (1885); and Henry G. Appenzeller, a Methodist minister (1884). But the Korean layman, Suh Sang-Yun, was first. As one missionary

remarked in admiration years ago, "the Korean Christians have always been one step ahead of the missionaries."

A fifth reason for growth was *prayer*. A distinctive feature of Korean church life is the day-break prayer meeting. It takes spiritual discipline to get up at four or five in the morning for spiritual exercise, not physical exercise. One Presbyterian church in Seoul has four day-break prayer meetings for its congregation: at four, five, six, and seven o'clock every weekday morning. The six and seven o'clock meetings each draw an attendance of 5,000 people. I am not surprised that his Presbyterian congregation has 70,000 members—that is three times the size of our whole New Brunswick Presbytery!

A sixth reason was *Bible study*. The early missionaries translated the Bible into common, vernacular Korean using the Korean alphabet, so that everyone could read it. They did not use the difficult Chinese characters, which were taught only to sons of the elite by Confucian scholars. One of the requirements quickly established for full communicant membership in the church in those pioneer days was learning to read. "How can you be a Christian if you can't read the Bible?" That may explain why Korea today has a higher rate of literacy than the United States does!

A seventh reason is *revival*. The Presbyterian church in Korea was organized in the midst of a spiritual revival, explosive and spectacular, that swept through the peninsula from 1903 to 1907. It touched off massive ingatherings of church growth. It permanently stamped the church's character with a revivalistic fervor that has been compared to the revivals of John Wesley. Though the principal benefactors of the revival were the Presbyterians, it was ecumenical. The Koreans said to the missionaries, "Some of you go back to John Calvin, and some of you to John Wesley, but we can go back no further than 1907 when we first really knew the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁶

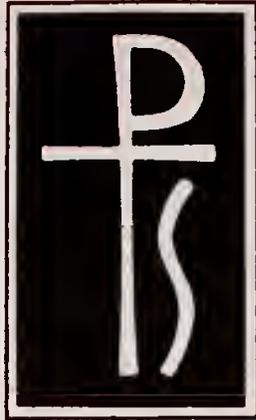
An eighth reason for growth was Korean Christianity's *refusal to polarize evangelism and social action*. It practiced both, because to Korean Christians both were gospel, good news. The early missionaries were anything but spiritually other-worldly. The first missionary, Dr. Allen, opened Korea's first modern hospital and then moved from the mission into diplomacy to become an early American minister (ambassador). The pioneers gave Korea its first schools for women, its first schools for the blind. Underwood imported kerosene, agricultural implements, and, a little later, his brother's new product, the Underwood typewriter. Moffett opened a timber concession on the Yalu River, managed by Christian Koreans. Foreign traders objected. "That wasn't missionary business," they said, "It was infringing on

the trader's profits." The missionaries replied, "We are not doing it for ourselves; we are teaching our converts modern techniques and business methods so they will be able to compete on a more equal footing with western traders as the West sweeps in on them." "Besides," they said, "no national problem or concern is out of bounds for Christian care and concern." Korea's Christians were taught both commandments: "Love God, and love your neighbor." It is no coincidence that the Republic of Korea's first president after independence from Japan was a Christian, a Methodist; and of the last two retired presidents, one is a Presbyterian elder, and the other a Roman Catholic, with a Methodist wife.

But I must not let myself be carried away with beating the success drums for Korean church growth. It speaks for itself. There is one reason for church growth that I do not brag about. It is *church schism*. One of the least pleasant facts of Korean church history is that one way the Korean church grows is by splitting. Where else in the world will you find a Jesus Presbyterian Church and a Christ Presbyterian Church where Jesus is not speaking to Christ? But by the grace of God, when a Korean Presbyterian church splits, in ten years each half seems to grow to be as large as the whole was before the split.

Let me close with seven lessons we can learn from the history of the church in Asia, beginning with this thesis: *the future of Christianity in the twenty-first century will be largely shaped by the rise of the third-world churches*. (1) Christians will lose if they depend too long on political power, whether national or foreign. (2) They will lose if they fail to be identified with, and appreciate, their own national cultural heritage, and also if they fail to bear a counter-cultural witness within that heritage. (3) They will lose if their enthusiasm for evangelism wanes and they do not share the Good News of Jesus Christ. (4) They will lose if they do not validate their spiritual message with social compassion and integrity. (5) They will lose if they fail to produce educated leadership for the nation and the church. (6) They will also lose, however, if they concentrate on social programs to the neglect of the personal and corporate disciplines and responsibilities of the Christian life within the congregation. (7) Finally, Christians will lose everything if they abandon their theological center: one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and one Savior, Jesus Christ; and one definitive, inspired rule of faith and practice, the Scriptures.

¹⁶ Moffett, *Christians of Korea* (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), 53ff.



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