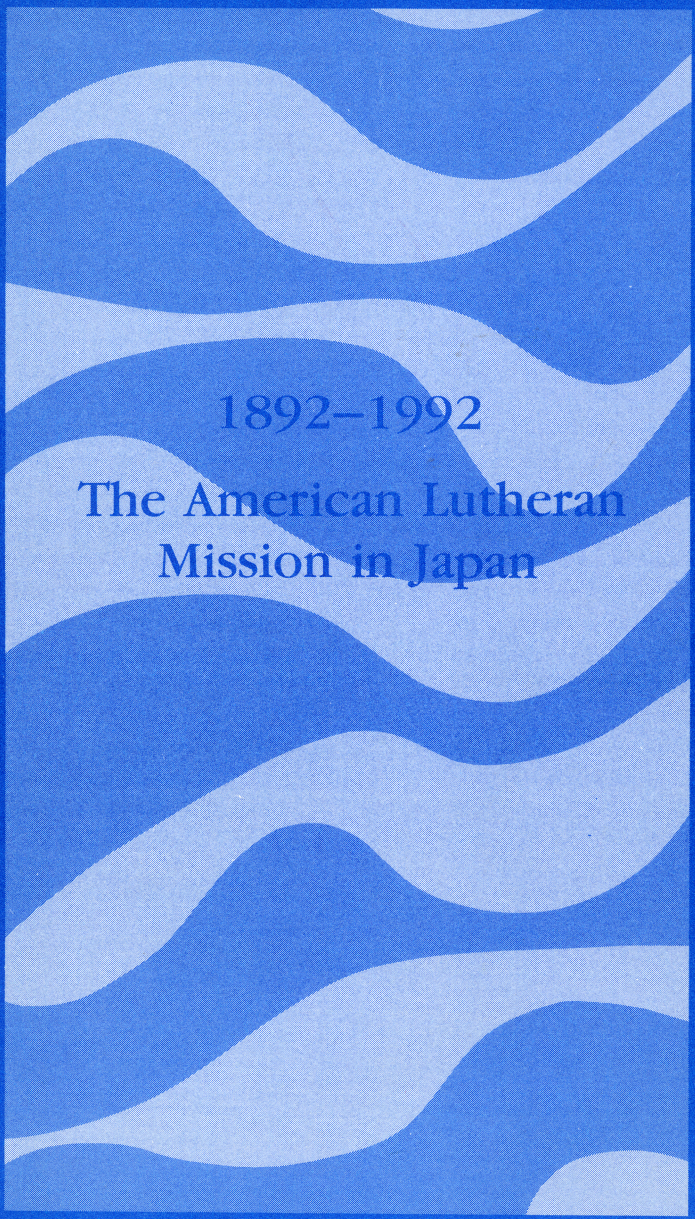
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Editor: **Ralph W. Klein**
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Editor of Book Reviews: **Jay C. Rochelle**
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Editor of Preaching Helps: **Robert H. Smith**
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

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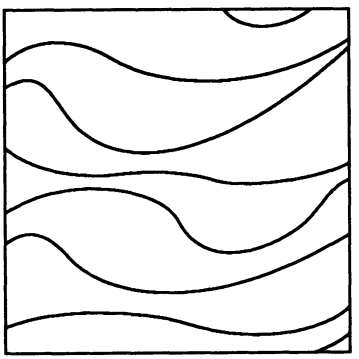
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1892-1992 The American Lutheran Mission in Japan

Christians today comprise about 1% of the population of Japan. Christian missions there began in 1549, with Protestants arriving in 1859 and Lutherans in 1892. Fifty years later the war-time government forcibly merged all Protestants into Kyodan (United Church of Christ).

Lutherans became independent again after World War II and were aided by a flood of missionaries from Europe and the United States, including some who moved from China to Japan after the People's Republic was formed. Today the small Lutheran community (about 30,000 members) consists of five churches:

Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church—its roots lie in the churches that became the ELCA or its predecessor bodies
Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church—its roots lie in Norwegian missionary work
West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church—ties with Norway
Japan Lutheran Church—LC–MS related
Japan Lutheran Brethren Church—its roots lie in the Lutheran Church of the Brethren (USA)

At the urging of **James A. Scherer**, who assembled the articles in this issue and who was a missionary to Japan, we pause to remember the deeds of the American pioneers and the achievements of the Japanese Lutheran Churches, to thank God for their faithful service, and to reclaim

and embrace our historic missionary heritage. In addition to those referred to in the articles, we make special mention of Chitose Kishi, the first president of the reconstituted Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary, and of J. M. T. Winther, who served in Japan as a missionary from 1898 to 1970.

James A. Scherer writes about James A. B. Scherer (no kin, 1870-1944), who began Lutheran missionary work in the Saga area in 1892 for the United Synod of the South (one of the synods that formed the ULCA in 1918). Assisted by Robert B. Peery, but without seminary training, Scherer stayed for four years before embarking on a series of other career lines. A prolific author, he also served as a seminary professor, as president of Newberry College, and as president of the college that became Caltech. Scherer was widely recognized in secular circles as an expert on Japan and warned of the dangers of Japanese military expansion on the Asian continent during the 30s, with little avail. He accused American commerce of complicity with Japan in her murderous onslaughts on the Asian mainland. Today he would surely recognize the need to protect Japan's peace constitution against the possibility that Japanese forces might be committed to foreign adventures.

William J. Danker tells the fascinating story of Henry Mizuno Shigetaro, who graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois, but whose mission career was derailed because of a dispute with the seminary president. Danker notes that Shigetaro's social standing (he was the son of a samurai) would have given a Missouri-sponsored mission access to almost every level of Japanese society. Though he did some initial missionary work on his own, Shigetaro eventually became a professor of German and joined the Roman Catholic Church. More than fifty years later, the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod sent Danker to Japan as their first missionary.

Kenneth Dale, who is nearing the end of a long and illustrious missionary career in Japan, notes seven trends that are changing the nature of cross-cultural mission, ranging from the rising economic, cultural, and educational standards of the developing countries, to the need to do social service as well as evangelism, and to the maturity and

independence of younger churches. Though missionaries face frustrations in daily life, severe identity problems, and a lack of self fulfillment, he adds that he would never choose another vocation.

Yoshiro Ishida rehearses the controversy in Japan at the turn of the century between Mashisha Uemura, an orthodox Presbyterian, and Danjo Ebina, a liberal or modernist Congregationalist. While Ebina questioned a number of classical doctrines, he was looking for a contextual theology, and he located the truth of Christianity in the person and religious experience of Christ. Experience served as the norm of his entire theology. He advocated an amalgamation of traditional religion with Christianity, and his own Christianity was characterized by traits of Confucianism.

David L. Vikner participated in the efforts toward Lutheran unity in Japan during the 50s and early 60s. He writes about the protracted discussions that took place involving the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and some ten overseas mission agencies, and of the reasons that led some churches to withdraw from the process. Four issues dominated the discussion: theology (especially the "liberal" trends in the JELC); church polity (fear of centralization); theological education (Which seminary would be dominant?); and relationships to the home mission boards. The next round of Lutheran merger negotiations will be between several autonomous Japanese churches.

We are also publishing an overview of essays published by the Japanese for this centennial and a list of celebrative events scheduled in the United States and Japan.

Time and energy fail to tell about all the heroes of the Lutheran churches in Japan. There have been many over the last century who through faith have done the missionary equivalent of conquering kingdoms, administering justice, shutting the mouths of lions, winning strength out of weakness, and of putting foreign armies to flight.

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of Japanese witnesses, let us observe this centennial by also laying aside every weight and the

sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the mission and ministry race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.



Ralph W. Klein
Race-runner

P. S. The letters we get are rare, but many of you send along greetings and wishes from time to time. Here are excerpts from one of the best:

> After 55 years out front [in ordained ministry], I am now in MASH—can't restore my hearing nor train my twisted pelvis to make my legs of equal length. All that probably brought on osteo-arthritis. Anyway, that took me out of the pulpits of churches as a substitute pastor about five years ago.
>
> And so as one of your first subscribers with slowing eyes and even slower brain, I must retire as a subscriber.
>
> How I just wait to "go home." I promise to be on hand when the gates swing open for "youse guys" who thru the years helped to light the way for so many of us.
>
> I am thankful to him who called me (in 1927 when I was fourteen) to serve him thru the years and who has offered me hope of finally seeing him face to face.
>
> In Christ,
>
> Arthur. . .
> Pastor emeritus

A Pioneer Lutheran Missionary in Japan: James A. B. Scherer

James A. Scherer[1]
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

James A. B. Scherer (1870-1944), commemorated as co-founder of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is currently observing its centennial anniversary (1893-1993), remains a puzzling and enigmatic figure. Nearly a half century after his death in 1944, he is still virtually unknown to the American church that sent him to Japan as its first missionary. He is equally shadowy to the Japanese church that he helped to found. In a sense, he has been virtually disowned by churches in both countries.

The reason may be that his remarkable gifts and unique contributions to both American and Japanese society in later years could not easily be contained within the confines of a typical ecclesiastical career. Scherer does not fit the usual pattern of an overseas missionary. When compared with others, he seems an unlikely pioneer missionary. And there was little in his background to predict the direction his future career would take. The common element in all phases of this man's remarkable and diverse career was his commitment to education and service to society, coupled with a deep love for his adopted country, Japan.

Scherer's seventy-four year career can be broken down into three major time periods, during which he undertook differing roles. During the first period (1870-1908) he appears as a third generation Lutheran clergy son, pioneer missionary, parish pastor, theological educator, and head of a Lutheran college. In the second period

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[1]The writer is no relative of James A. B. Scherer, but while himself serving as a Lutheran missionary in Japan in the North Kyushu District of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (1952-56) he was frequently asked about his relationship to the Lutheran pioneer. The present biographical essay is intended in part to satisfy the writer's own curiosity about the identity of his distinguished predecessor and near namesake.

(1908-31) he is transformed into a professional educator, prolific writer, scholar, legislator, head of a distinguished California technical institute, and museum director. During the final period (1931-44) he is seen as a world traveler, journalist, political pundit and analyst, and writer of many books about Japan. This final period is marked by frequent contacts with Japanese intellectual, governmental, and military elites, staunch commitment to Japanese democracy, and opposition to the growing threat of pre-World War II militarism.

The Japan missionary

James Augustin Brown Scherer, A.B., A.M., Ph. D., LL. D., was born in Salisbury, North Carolina on May 22, 1870, the youngest son of The Rev. Simeon Scherer and his third wife, Harriet Isabella Brown. Preparing for service as a Lutheran minister, young Scherer was following in the path trod by his grandfather Jacob, his father Simeon, his three older brothers, and numerous uncles who devoted their lives to pastorates and frontier missions.[2]

According to Robert B. Peery, Scherer's earliest missionary co-worker in Japan, who first met Scherer while both were students at Roanoke College from 1888 to 1890, Scherer was "one of the most brilliant men at college [with a] faculty of using his attainments for all they are worth, on short notice."[3] The young collegian excelled in English composition, won a medal in oratory, and graduated from Roanoke College with highest honors. Peery describes his colleague as "genial," "sunny," and of friendly disposition. He was "spiritually minded," preaching sermons of "no little dramatic power," a "Lutheran of the conservative type." Following graduation from college Scherer did not enter seminary but was licensed by the South West Virginia Synod in 1890 for mission work in Pulaski City, Virginia, where he was deemed to have carried on a successful pastorate. He continued his reading of theology on the side. In August 1891 Scherer signified to the mission board his willingness to go to a foreign field if called. In November 1891 he was recommended to the South Carolina Synod for examination and ordination on the basis of a call by the Board for Mission of the United Synod of the South (USS) to begin mission work in the "Empire of Japan." Scherer's ordination took place at St. John's Church, Charleston, SC, on November 22, 1891. After some months of itinerating among "some of the principal churches" of the USS to work up missionary interest, he sailed for Japan.[4]

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[2]Scherer's older brother, M. G. G. Scherer, was the last President of the United Synod South and first Secretary of the United Lutheran Church in America. Paul E. Scherer, noted radio preacher and professor of homiletics, was the son of M. G. G. Scherer and a nephew of James A. B. Scherer. Also related were Daniel S. Scherer, brother of James' grandfather Jacob, who worked as a pioneer missionary and church planter in central Illinois from 1832-52 and is considered the "patriarch of Illinois Lutheranism;" and an uncle, J. J. Scherer, who became President of the Virginia Synod and also headed Marion College. The family forebears came from the Palatinate and settled in North Carolina in the 1760s. Cf. *Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers:* North Carolina and Tennessee Synods, 1773-1965 (Columbia, SC: N.C. Synod of LCA, 1966), 182-85.

[3]This and succeeding comments are excerpted from R. B. Peery, *Lutherans in Japan* (Newberry, SC: Lutheran Publication Board of the United Synod, 1900), 73-77.

[4]The Board of Missions and Church Extension of the United Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South, as it was officially known, was at the time responsible for both home and foreign

On February 4, 1892, Scherer stepped off the steamship *Gaelic* in Yokohama with "a guitar in one hand and one of the new-fangled writing machines in the other, and the first pneumatic-tired bicycle ever to cross the Pacific Ocean down in the baggage room."[5] Finding bachelor accommodations in the Tsukiji section of Tokyo, where most foreigners resided,[6] Scherer spent mornings and evenings studying Japanese with his Japanese teacher, Yamanouchi Ryohei, going out afternoons to explore the sights of the capital. In November he was joined by Robert B. Peery,[7] his co-worker, who also studied Japanese with Yamanouchi. Together they made contact with other mission bodies, learned about methods used in the work of evangelization, and

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missions. Prior to beginning work in Japan, the Board of Missions of USS cooperated with the Board of Missions of the General Synod in supporting mission work in India. In April 1887, prior to the Second Convention of the USS (Savannah, GA, Nov. 24-29, 1887), the officers of the mission board "resolved... to obtain all desirable information in regard to establishing a Mission work of its own at some new point," and pointed to Japan as offering "peculiar advantages for such an undertaking." The Second Convention of the USS endorsed the actions of the mission board, authorized it "to take steps to begin a Mission in the Empire of Japan," to call, commission and send out one or more missionaries," and to apportion and raise $2000 annually among the synods belonging to the USS for the work of foreign missions. Cf. Minutes of the Second Convention, USS, 13-14. At the Third Convention of the USS (Wilmington, NC, Nov. 14-19, 1889) the mission board reported that "repeated efforts to secure a suitable missionary have failed." At the Fourth Convention of the USS (Knoxville, TN, June 22-27, 1892) the mission board could finally report its success, despite the withdrawal of an earlier candidate, in recruiting Scherer for the work in Japan. He was offered an annual salary of $750 ($1050 after his marriage), a one ton baggage allowance, necessary clothing, a good working library (to remain the property of the mission), and furniture for his Tokyo residence (also mission board property). Not only the selection of a missionary, but also the choice of a field of work in Japan was "beset by difficulties," the board noted, requiring the sending body to look to God for guidance and to "depend on our Missionary's intelligence and fidelity." Cf. Minutes of Fourth Convention, USS, 20-21.

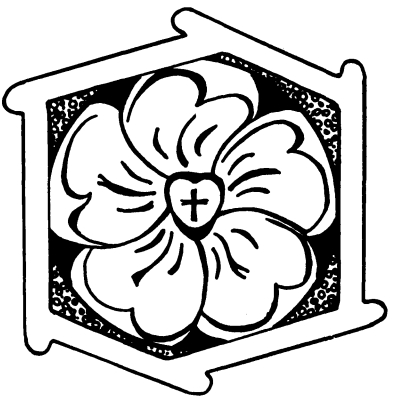
[5]James A. B. Scherer, *Japan Defies the World* (Indianapolis & New York: Bobbs Merrill Co., 1938). Scherer notes that the new Meiji constitution was only three years old at the time.

[6]James A. B. Scherer, *Japan—Whither? A Discussion of Japanese Problems* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1933), 88-89. Scherer reports: "I set up my bachelor establishment in a little bungalow in Tsukiji, here in Tokyo. In those days of extra-territoriality practically all the Tokyo foreigners resided in Tsukiji, so I bought some furniture and engaged as my one servant a bewhiskered little man of fifty [who] understood no word of English and I no word of Japanese...."

[7]Peery, Scherer's roommate at Roanoke College, was enrolled at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. In the Fall of 1891 he offered himself to the mission board of the USS for service in Japan following graduation from seminary. The Virginia Synod designated Peery as its missionary and offered to cover his full support while at the same time paying its apportioned share of the synod's mission budget. Peery, after ordination by the Virginia Synod, sailed from San Francisco and joined Scherer in Tokyo in November 1892. After four months of language study in Tokyo, Peery along with Yamanouchi joined Scherer in Saga on March 13, 1893. Cf. Minutes of Fourth Convention, USS, 21-22, and Minutes of Fifth Convention (Staunton, VA, Sept. 18-21, 1895), 21. In 1894 Peery came into conflict with the home board over his intention to marry, threatening to break his contract when the board asked him to remain at least three years in Japan

made inquiries about a possible Lutheran field of work.[8]

A breakthrough came when a young man from the University of Virginia, Dr. Bradbury, who had accepted a position as teacher of English in a government school in Saga, Kyushu, wrote to Scherer suggesting that he come to Kyushu to look it over as a possible field.[9] Scherer went to Saga and spent some time checking out the Saga location. With Peery's concurrence, he recommended Saga to the mission board. On New Year's Day, 1893, Scherer proceeded by rail to Saga via Hakata, leaving Peery to continue language study with Yamanouchi in Tokyo.[10] And so the new Lutheran mission effort in Japan was launched, under God's providential guidance, in the space of just over eleven months.



Arriving in Saga, Scherer took over the departing Bradbury's position as English teacher in the Imperial Government Middle School. He believed, probably correctly, that this position would grant him an entry into the community and also secure his legal right as a foreigner to reside in Saga.[11] Bradbury turned over to Scherer not only his English classes in the middle school, but several English Bible classes for both students and teachers which Scherer at first taught in his home. Scherer "gladly instructed them in the word of God."[12] He also delighted in setting English essay themes for some of the five hundred boys, ages sixteen to twenty—many of them sons of samurai and wealthy landed gentry — enrolled in the Saga school. From these students the foreign teacher learned lessons about heroes of Japanese history which made an indelible impression on him.[13]

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before returning home for his marriage. In 1895 the board expressed disapproval of Peery's unilateral return to Virginia to be married, and canceled his salary. Fortunately, a reconciliation took place, and on November 18, 1895, Peery arrived in Japan with his new wife, Lettie Rich, and an upgraded salary of $1050. Had the board not reinstated Peery, the mission in Japan would have been bereft of all missionaries due to Scherer's serious health problem in July 1896 and his removal, along with his wife Bessie, to Sapporo for health reasons. The Scherers left Japan for the U.S. on January 10, 1897. Cf. Minutes of Sixth Convention, USS (Newberry, SC, May 11-16, 1898), 18-21.

[8]Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, 20-21.

[9]Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, 21-23. The invitation apparently came prior to Peery's arrival, for when Peery reached Tokyo, Scherer had already returned from Saga.

[10]Scherer, *Japan Defies the World*, 62. Peery notes that it was "not thought best for us both to go together, as our sudden coming might arouse some opposition in the town" (*Lutherans in Japan*, 22).

[11]Peery observes that foreigners were not permitted to reside in the interior of Japan unless they were in Japanese employ, and needed to secure special passports (*Lutherans in Japan*, 29).

[12]Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, 23.

[13]Scherer, *Japan Defies the World*, 63ff., speaks especially about the Meiji Emperor;

Four decades later Scherer would be meeting many of these same students in Tokyo, only now as ranking officers of the imperial Japanese army and navy.

On March 13, 1893, accompanied by his teacher, Ryohei Yamanouchi, Peery left Tokyo for Saga to join his colleague. Scherer and Peery were fortunate to have the help of Yamanouchi, "a Christian of several years' standing, and of some experience in evangelistic work," who had served them as language teacher and assistant in Tokyo.[14] They employed Yamanouchi as their first "native helper" and his wife as their "Bible woman." It was Yamanouchi who helped the missionaries conduct their first public service of worship on Easter Day, April 2, 1893, and who assisted with the baptism of the first convert, Shimizu Tokumatsu, on March 26, 1893.[15] This beginning brought the missionaries great joy and encouragement. Some years later this same Ryohei Yamanouchi would become the first Japanese ordained Lutheran pastor.

The beginning in Saga was not without opposition. Peery notes that the twice weekly public preaching services held in the rented chapel were frequently interrupted by violent demonstrations on the street outside. "Sometimes stones and mud were thrown into the building, and everything possible was done to break up our meetings."[16] In time opposition subsided, and the missionaries were able to gain the trust of students who came to them for English Bible classes, disabusing them of many prejudices against Christianity. Yamanouchi helped Peery secure a residence permit by arranging for him to be the tutor of an English Night School which met three evenings a week in the chapel. Some of the students also came to preaching services. While few of them actually became Christians as a direct result of English teaching or English Bible classes, Peery felt that the educational activity was crucially important in establishing a favorable climate for the missionaries' evangelistic work. "Thus by providential leading and direction we were enabled to locate our mission, baptize our first convert, and begin the actual preaching of the Gospel within a very short time after coming to Japan."[17]

Scherer's actual missionary service in Japan was limited to four brief years (1892-96), the first of which was devoted to language study and general preparation in Tokyo. On July 5, 1894, Scherer married

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Prince Ito, the constitution builder; Prince Yamagata, the militarist; and Marquis Okuma of Saga, founder of Waseda University. He frequently reflects on topics such as "Nihon Seishin" (Japan spirit) and "Yamato Damashii" (the soul of Japan), and later writes books on the ideals of Japanese youth and Japanese morality. In 1894, one year after the beginning of Lutheran work in Saga, Japan resoundingly defeated poorly prepared China in the Sino-Japanese War, a fact widely heralded by some Japanese as propelling Japan into the ranks of major imperial powers.

[14]Yamanouchi Ryohei, an elder in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, was engaged as a "native helper" at a salary of 25 yen per month, and his wife as "Bible woman" for 6 yen per month. Cf. Minutes, Fifth Convention, USS, 21.

[15]Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, 24-27. The first chapel was a dilapidated building rented by the missionaries from a Japanese physician. The first convert was a 26 year-old carpenter related to a fishing community among whom Yamanouchi had been doing evangelistic work in Tokyo.

[16]Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, 26. Cries of "Drive out the Christians!" and "Kill the missionaries!" were heard. Parents threatened to kill their children who wanted to become Christians, and Yamanouchi's life was threatened. Local police intervened, however, to protect the foreigners, and after two years violent opposition ceased.

[17]Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, 31.

Educational activity was crucially important in establishing a favorable climate for the missionaries' evangelistic work.

Bessie Brown of New Concord, Ohio, then a Presbyterian missionary, in a service in Kobe, Japan. From this union were born two children, Isabel Brown and Paul Armand. In June 1896, Scherer was afflicted with a strange neurological illness that sapped his physical vigor. Hoping to recuperate his health, he and his wife Bessie spent the summer and fall of 1896 in Sapporo, Hokkaido, apparently without improvement. The Scherers then moved to Tokyo for further medical consultations. On the advice of physicians, Scherer submitted his resignation to the mission board, which it reluctantly accepted. On January 10, 1897, the Scherers left Tokyo, arriving in the US on February 10 for a visit with Bessie's Ohio family, a period of recuperation, and consideration of other ministry options.[18]

Meanwhile Peery, returning from America with his new bride, Lettie Rich, of Wytheville, Virginia, succeeded in expanding the work in Saga. Two additional preaching places were opened in the Saga area. On June 19, 1898, the Saga Lutheran congregation was formally organized with 60 members, provided with its own constitution and set on the road to self-support. The same year Missionary Charles L. Brown and his wife arrived from America as replacements for the Scherers. On June 29, 1899, the first two Japanese Lutheran pastors were ordained. Despite Scherer's departure, the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church had now been launched on a sturdy foundation.[19]

The remainder of Scherer's early career can be briefly told. While still in Japan, Scherer had in 1895 received the A.M. degree from Roanoke College. He began working on a long-distance post-graduate course leading to the doctorate at Pennsylvania College, then located in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. In 1897, while still recuperating from illness, he passed his doctoral exams and was granted the Ph. D. degree by Pennsylvania College.[20] After his return Scherer accepted a call to a joint pastorate at

---

[18]Scherer's letter of resignation, written to the head of the mission board on his behalf by his wife, and enclosing a Tokyo doctor's statement about Scherer's "head trouble... which entirely incapacitates him for work," are found in the Minutes of the Sixth Convention, USS, 20-21.

[19]Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, 55-77. The JELC traces its actual founding from the service held in Saga on Easter Day, April 2, 1893. Peery considered Scherer's most lasting contribution to have been his translation of Luther's Small Catechism. It was extensively used in the training of converts, and through it, said Peery, "Mr. Scherer will continue to work for the mission in Japan for many years to come" (76). Peery himself later made a Japanese translation of the Lutheran Common Service Book (1885) for use in Japanese Lutheran Congregations.

[20]His dissertation topic was quite likely "The Economic Causes in the American Civil War," for in 1914 he lectured on this topic under the Garton Foundation at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and in 1916 he published a book entitled *Cotton as a World Power: A Study in the Economic Interpretation of History*.

St. Matthew's and Mt. Lebanon, both near Cameron, South Carolina, serving there for one year. In 1898 he was called as pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Charleston, SC. He simultaneously accepted a call or invitation to become Professor of Church History at the Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary, then located in Charleston.[21] The former missionary remained in both positions from 1898 to 1904. In 1904 he was chosen as President of Newberry College, Newberry, S.C., and served in that capacity from 1904-1908. The University of South Carolina awarded him the LL.D. in 1905.

While we know little about Scherer's activities as pastor, seminary professor, and college president during this ten year span, there is mounting evidence of the literary productivity which was to become his hallmark in later years. Already in 1895 he published a pamphlet entitled, "The Conversion of Paul as Evidence for Christianity," conceivably the work for which Roanoke College awarded him an A. M. degree in 1895. In 1896, still in Japan, he authored "Southern Literature Since the War," one of several works that attest to his interest in general cultural history. In 1900, at the request of his friend Peery, he wrote an introduction for Peery's work, *Lutherans in Japan*, in which he reflects on the character and motives of a missionary.[22] In 1902 he published a substantive work on church history entitled *Four Princes*, or The Growth of the Christian Church Centered Around Four Types, namely St. Paul, Constantine, Bernard of Clairvaux and Luther.[23] Shortly after accepting the call to become President of Newberry College, [24] Scherer let fly with three books on Japanese history, culture and morality,[25] two of them of major proportions. He also published a collection of "kindred addresses and essays."[26] Significantly, three of these books were published in both American and British editions, and several underwent multiple printings. The former Japan missionary was fast becoming an established literary figure, whose books on Japan were opening up a new world for readers in America and Great Britain.

Educational developer and public policy maker

During the next segment of his life (1908-31), the former missionary's career underwent a dramatic transformation as Scherer

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[21]Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, 77.

[22]Cf. Peery, *Lutherans in Japan*, xi-xviii. Scherer, seeking to overcome popular objections to foreign missions, lists four motives: (1) the selfish motive of "policy," i.e., rewards and punishments; (2) the higher motive of "conviction"; (3) the soldier's motive—"duty"; and (4) the saint's motive—"love." Scherer, concerned that the Japanese church was beset by evil sectarian influences, and believing that the Lutheran church had a special calling to assist with the leavening influence of the Word of God, appealed to fellow Lutherans to heed this call of distress by supporting the Japan mission effort.

[23]*Four Princes* (Nashville: Methodist Episcopal Church South Publishing House, 1902; reprinted in 1906 by the Sunday School Times Press, Philadelphia). Conceivably this book had its origin in lectures delivered at the Lutheran seminary in Charleston.

[24]Scherer's Newberry College presidential inaugural address, delivered at the college on June 8, 1903, was published in 1904 as "The Building of a Man."

[25]*Japan Today* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Truebner; and Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott, 1904); *Young Japan* (London: K. Paul, Trench & Truebner; and Philadelphia and London: Lippincott, 1905), and *What is Japanese Morality?* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times, 1906).

[26]*The Holy Grail* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott, 1906).

moved from the world of the church into the secular world. The base of his operations shifted to California. From his new institutional base in the west, Scherer continued his interests in the Pacific Rim, especially Japan and its neighbors. He became the head of a technical school which he helped transform into an institution of world-class reputation. He involved himself in a number of civic and community causes, many of them related to America's role in World War I. He still found time to publish a half dozen books. Our information about him in this period comes mainly from *Who's Who*[27] and bibliographical sources.

In 1908, leaving Newberry, the Lutheran church college in South Carolina, Scherer became the head of the Throop College of Technology in Pasadena, California.[28] In the course of his presidency, he reorganized it into the California College of Technology, the forerunner of the prestigious "Caltech." In his new capacity he visited, in 1909, the leading technical schools of the world. In 1913 he secured an amendment to the California constitution exempting colleges from taxation. In 1914 he represented the State of California at the Anglo-American Exposition in London. In December of 1914 he founded the Pasadena chapter of the American Red Cross. In 1917 he was appointed to the California Council of Defense and represented California on the National Council of Defense. Also in defense-related capacities, in 1917 he became "chief of travel service, state councils section" and "special representative to the U.S. Shipping Board." At Throop College, in 1915, he delivered a public address on "The Moral Equivalent of War." In 1918, at the annual meeting of the National Educational Association, he addressed the assembly on "The Nation at War"; an expanded version of this talk appeared as a book later the same year.[29]

Despite his duties as head of Throop (Caltech) and his active immersion in wartime affairs in California and nationally, Scherer did not neglect his interests in the Japanese people. He became engrossed in the problems created by Japanese immigration to California, growing Japanese dominance of agricultural production in the state, and as a consequence racial hostility toward Japanese immigrants. In 1913 he attended sessions of the California legislature dealing with the Alien Land Law and wrote an essay on the process of "Law Making in California," which he condemned as racially discriminatory. Scherer's deep sense of obligation to Japan, coupled with a desire to combat "yellow journalism" and to promote inter-cultural understanding between California Americans and Asian immigrants, moved him to publish *The Japanese Crisis* (1916), a documentary study of Japanese immigration, agricultural competition, alien land laws, and racial discrimination.[30]

Leaving Caltech, Scherer relocated in San Francisco. He re-visited the Orient in 1923-24, gathering new material for his journalistic pursuits. He made at least six trips to China during his lifetime and seemed deeply disturbed by Japan's occupation of Korea and Manchuria and its territorial

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[27]Most helpful is *Who Was Who in America*, Vol. II (Chicago: A. N. Marquis, 1950), 470-71.

[28]Scherer's biographical sketch notes that he transferred his clergy membership from the South Carolina Synod to the California Synod in 1908. We lack any further evidence of church-related activities. Later references in *Who's Who* speak of him as an educator in the service of the imperial government of Japan.

[29]*The Nation at War* (New York: George H. Doran, 1918).

[30]*The Japanese Crisis* (New York: Frederick Stokes, 1916).

designs on China. His new findings and insights received public expression in *The Romance of Japan*,[31] a major work blending Japanese mythology, history, and tradition. The *London Times* reviewer wrote: "We know of no book that gives a more suggestive outline of the 'Seven Ages of Japan'

Despite his duties... and his active immersion in wartime affairs, Scherer did not neglect his interests in the Japanese people.

and a more thoughtful picture of the spiritual and aesthetic as well as social and political forces which still lie in the womb of the future, but cannot fail to influence immensely both the Western and the Eastern world."[32]

In 1926 Scherer went to Los Angeles to become director of the city's Southwest Museum, his last employed position and a post which he would occupy until 1931. He became affiliated with numerous California clubs, civic associations, and professional societies. In 1925 he published a book on the California gold rush,[33] followed in 1939 by a book on early inhabitants of San Francisco[34] and another in 1942 on the history of the state of California.[35] In 1931 he left California for an extended five year stay in Japan. This change of venue determined the focus of his work in the final years of his life.

Journalist, traveler, and pundit

In this final period of his career the ex-missionary draws on years of personal experience, scholarly study, and writing to unravel the enigma of Japan's imperial destiny and the threat of her war machine to world peace. Scherer, now in his sixties, spends five more years in the Japan he loves (1931-36), paralleling the five years he devoted to missionary service in his twenties (1892-97), but now with the perspective and breadth of vision bequeathed by maturity. His contacts are Tokyo intellectuals, academics, and civilian politicians. He is also honored at receptions organized by former students from Saga days, now residing in the capital and holding strategic positions in Japan's imperial army and navy, and government bureaucracy. With them he attempts to develop a dialogue on Japan's political development and warns of the dangers of Japanese military expansion on the Asian continent, but to little avail.

Scherer is present in Tokyo as civilian political leaders are assassinated and cabinets crumble. He sees a sinister military junta co-opting imperial authority while

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[31] *The Romance of Japan* (New York: George Doran, 1926, and London, 1927; republished by Garden City: Doubleday Doran, 1928, and Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1932).

[32] Cited by Hokuseido Press in publisher's promotional flier for the 1932 Tokyo edition, entitled *The Romance of Japan through the Ages.*

[33] *The First Forty-Niner and the Story of the Golden Tea Caddy* (New York: Minton, Balch, 1925).

[34] *The Lion of the Vigilantes* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1939).

[35] *Thirty First Star* (New York: G. B. Putnam, 1942).

quietly subverting Japan's constitution. He travels to Manchukuo and China for a first hand look at conditions. He maintains an almost unique posture as a friendly western interpreter of Japan's affairs, a role for which he wins an imperial decoration. He hobnobs with princes of the royal family. But in the end he ruefully concludes that "the Japanese people have been betrayed," and publishes his own journalistic "white paper" under the title *Japan Defies the World.*[36]

Scherer makes a symbolic protest against the system by returning his imperial decoration when Japan invades China in 1937. He has by this time returned to California to establish a new residence in Santa Monica. Convinced that war in the Pacific is inevitable, he turns his attention toward ways of guaranteeing peace and security in the Pacific in the post-war world.[37]

Scherer's opposition to Japanese militarism, his remarkable prescience about Japan's tragic destiny, and his near fatal certainty about a disastrous impending Pacific War—in sharp contrast to general complacency in the American foreign policy establishment—came about only by slow degrees. In 1933 his book, *Japan—Whither? A Discussion of Japanese Problems* is published by Hokuseido Press in Tokyo, with a special introduction by Prince Tokugawa Iyesato commending the volume.[38] In the same year he publishes another book about the Japanese puppet state in Manchuria, asking searching questions about Japan's ultimate intentions on the mainland.[39] In 1934 he publishes a study of Japan's foreign trade and imports,[40] showing an impressive grasp of the relationship between world trade and the roots of military expansionism. Two more books from this period are mainly of anecdotal interest: one dealing with figures from the Tokugawa Shogunate, and the other with three Meiji leaders.[41] It is most likely on account of these literary contributions that Scherer is decorated by the Emperor of Japan in 1937 with the Order of Sacred Treasure for "valuable services in the cause of international peace and friendship." It is not known whether he returned to Japan from California to receive the decoration.

We do know from his *curriculum vitae* that he returned the decoration to Japan, most likely because of Japan's invasion of China. For this 1937 event symbolized for him a crossing of the Rubicon between legitimate national interests and rapacious expansionism.

Japan Defies the World, published in the United States in 1937 after the author's departure from Tokyo, is Scherer's final indictment of Japanese militarism and a plea to the American people to take heed:

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[36]See note 5. Significantly, this book condemning Japanese militarism was never published in Japan.

[37]Appearing on Columbia University's Town Meeting of the Air, he presents an address, later published, on the subject, "Shall We Guarantee Peace in the Pacific?" (1941)

[38]See note 6. Scherer describes himself as "an American who has been a staunch friend of Japan for more than forty years." He deals with Japan's internal crises, the Manchurian problem, Japan's territorial designs on China, America's feelings about Japan, and ways of preserving peace in the Pacific.

[39]*Manchukuo Today: A Bird's Eye View* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1933). The book wins praise from Marshall Muto.

[40]*Japan's Advance* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1934).

[41]*Pilot and Shogun: A Story of Old Japan* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1935), the story of William Adams and Tokugawa Ieyasu; and *Three Meiji Leaders: Ito, Togo, Nogi* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1936).

> The Japanese people have been betrayed. They have been betrayed by their militarists—a small group within the military—who seized control of the government and ran away with the war machine. (11)

In support of this premise Scherer sets forth the outlines of a conspiracy hatched by fascist militarists to impose a totalitarian military dictatorship on the Japanese people. The plot involves a conspiracy between four big Japanese industrial families who monopolize Japan's economy and control its munitions industry—Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda—and a group of military "shoguns" dominated by General Jiro Minami, Japanese governor-general of Korea. Prince Konoye is Minami's dutiful messenger, hurrying to the Emperor's seaside resort at Hayama to get some new ordinance signed which will then be held in deep awe by people who have been taught for a generation to regard their Emperor as "the incarnate God who governs the universe."

> The militarists are simply greedy for more power, the big families for more wealth, so these two groups of gluttons try to gobble up China.
>
> I loved the old Japan but it is gone. Perhaps it will come back through revolution. Victory is the worst thing that could befall the Japanese people today, for it would not only confirm the tyranny of the totalitarian state, but might also mean its destruction by a menaced world. (14, 15)

Scherer is not willing to let the American government off the hook. Japan's "undeclared war" could not have been waged, he says, apart from military and industrial supplies provided to Japan by the U.S.: 75% of her petroleum and 50% of her iron and steel. "Japan got ready for war with our aid and carried it on with our aid" (pp. 15-16). America could have boycotted Japanese imports, above all her silk, and embargoed exports to Japan to thwart the militarists. He accuses American commerce of complicity with Japan "in her murderous onslaughts on the Asiatic mainland." To Scherer it seemed inconceivable that America should have done so much to aid Japan in developing her munitions industry while doing so little for China, which had no ships and was defenseless against Japan's strangulating blockade. Scherer's penetrating 1937 analysis raises embarrassing questions about America's Pacific policy before, during, and immediately after World War II.

Scherer's contributions to Japanese–American goodwill and understanding deserve to be rescued from oblivion.

These pre-war insights into Japanese culture and society, above all Japan's dangerous potential for military totalitarianism, undoubtedly have profound significance for the Christian witness in Japan today. Scherer was, without knowing it, a Japanese peace activist before his time. Better than American diplomats, he would have understood the revulsion and horror with which many Japanese still react today toward the prospect of reckless military

adventurism. He would have understood the need to protect Japan's peace constitution against the possibility that Japanese forces might be committed to foreign adventures with unforeseen consequences. He would have strongly supported activities of the Japan centennial committee to promote "pilgrimages" of reconciliation to other Asian countries which were victims of Japan's wartime aggression.

In short, Scherer's advocacy of democracy in Japan, and his warning against militarism, would undoubtedly still strike a responsive chord today in the hearts of many of Japan's peace activists. If for no other reason than this, his contributions to Japanese-American goodwill and understanding deserve to be rescued from oblivion during this centennial celebration.

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Henry Mizuno Shigetaro: Samurai Missionary without Support

William J. Danker
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Eight years before Lutheran pioneers James A. B. Scherer and Robert B. Peery sailed for Japan in 1892, Henry Mizuno Shigetaro, 16-year-old baptized Christian son of a samurai, took ship in the opposite direction. In San Francisco, he was befriended, instructed, and confirmed in German by a Missouri Synod Lutheran pastor who guided him into the Synod's lengthy system of preparation for the Lutheran ministry. In 1893 the Missouri Synod in convention assembled formally resolved to open a mission field in Japan. The Japanese theological student, upon graduation from Concordia Seminary, Springfield, was expected to play a central role.[1]

But the resolution was never carried out. Why not? Who was Mizuno Shigetaro? Why did the Synod fail to support him as a missionary to Japan? These questions first came to my attention in 1954 while I was privileged to serve as the Missouri Synod's first missionary to Japan, having arrived in 1948 to lead the first new Lutheran mission to enter Japan since 1903. Ten more new groups followed. Had the Missouri Synod backed Mizuno with the expected human and financial resources I might never have seen Japan.

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[1]The Missouri Synod's 1893 resolution was completely unaware of any Lutheran mission work in Japan. The United Synod, South, probably did not know of Missouri's interest nor of Mizuno's presence in Japan until the late nineties. In 1899 Dr. Rufus B. Peery of the United Synod of the South wrote to a Japanese gentleman teaching in a Tokyo University whose name was Mizuno and who had studied in a Missouri Synod seminary in America. Peery received no reply. Rufus B. Peery, *Lutherans in Japan* (Newberry, S.C., 1900), x. The reason Mizuno did not answer Peery's letter was that he had accepted a teaching post as lecturer in German language and literature at St. Paul's College (Rikkyo) in Tokyo. F. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making: The Missionary Enterprise Among*

Mizuno Shigetaro was born in Meiji 1 (1868), the first-born son of a high-ranking samurai in Okayama. Four years later his father died, and the family moved to Tokyo. At age 6 he was baptized in a Presbyterian church.

German was a required subject in Japan's high schools. In 1884, at 16, he won a handsome prize in a German essay contest sponsored by a San Francisco German language newspaper. This award enabled him to travel abroad for study, the coveted objective of ambitious youth in the Meiji era.

In San Francisco, Shigetaro visited the various churches in the city. In making the rounds he worshiped at St. Paulus Lutheran Church, shepherded by Pastor J. M. Buehler, Missouri Synod pioneer of West Coast Lutheranism. An elder of the church, who remained his friend for decades until contact with Mizuno was lost, received young Shigetaro very kindly and after the service introduced him to Pastor Buehler. Not to be outdone by his elder, the Rev. Mr. Buehler invited Mizuno to his dwelling. Young Mizuno felt at home at St. Paulus because he could communicate so well in German. He became a communicant member.

In the course of confirmation instruction Pastor Buehler found Shigetaro to be both highly gifted and a sincere Christian. Buehler persuaded Mizuno to enroll in Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, in 1887. He proved to be such an outstanding student that upon completion of the two-year pre-seminary course, the faculty advised him to transfer to the Missouri Synod's longer classical German *Gymnasium* at Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he entered in 1889. Here he continued the fine record he had begun at Springfield. Henry Steger was his very close friend. Among Americans Mizuno was generally known as Henry.[2] In his second year at Ft. Wayne, highly respected Professor August Crull chose Mizuno's German composition as the best and read it to the whole class. But in his third year at Ft. Wayne Shigetaro may have gone into depression. He lost heart, and his conduct was such that on June 27, 1892, the faculty dismissed him. It had been eight years since he was separated from home and mother. His fortunes were at a low ebb.

Mizuno wandered to Chicago. Here the Rev. August Reinke, first Missouri Synod missionary to deaf-mutes, took the lonely youth under his wing. With Pastor Reinke's help, Mizuno was admitted to Concordia Seminary, Springfield, in September 1892 for the regular three years of the ministerial curriculum proper. Here he again got down to serious academic work. For his private morning devotion he read his Greek New Testament. He continued his study of Hebrew and had at least a working knowledge.

His grades were among the highest in his class. His Springfield classmate William Gieselmann testified that Mizuno's class work was very good. He often studied past midnight. The Missouri Synod system of schools preparing men for the ministry was made to order for Mizuno's linguistic talents. In the 1890s the German language dominated in classroom, corridor and cam-

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Missouri Synod Lutherans 1846-1963 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 211. I have made liberal use of Dr. Lueking's wide-ranging, insightful analysis of the Missouri Synod mission enterprise between 1846 and 1963, especially matters relating to Mizuno in Chapter X.

[2]Henry Steger, "Henry Shigetaro Mizuno." Unpublished paper supplied by Prof. E. C. Zimmermann, deceased, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Mizuno File, Concordia Historical Institute (hereafter CHI), St. Louis, MO.

pus. Shigetaro mastered German so thoroughly that he could help his German-American fellow students with their class work and compositions. However, he had little use for English at that time. Upon returning to Japan, he wrote Henry Steger that his neglect of English had been a mistake.

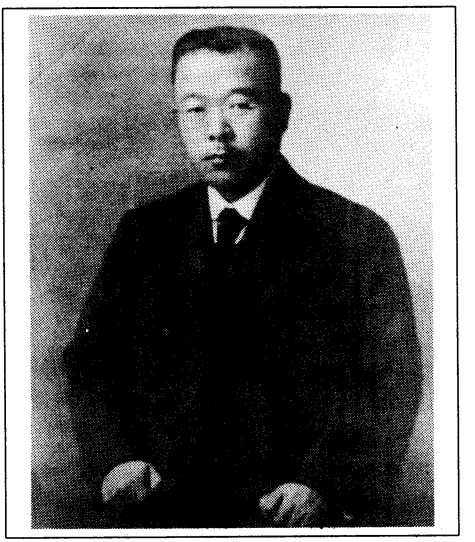
Some were not too sure that he could be used with blessing in Japan. According to a report in 1954 by the Rev. Prof. E. C. Zimmermann, they felt that he was "too careless with his language at times."[3]

Was Mizuno's heart in Japan mission work? Henry Steger, his closest friend, roommate, and daily host during four long summer vacations testifies:

> I have absolutely no doubt as to his sincerity, and that is the impression the student body and the faculty had of him. Especially during his last year his favorite topic of conversation was his return to his homeland as a Christian and, particularly, a Lutheran missionary. It was almost a foregone conclusion that after graduation the Missouri Synod would enter Japan.[4]

Toward the end of 1894 Shigetaro's mother became seriously ill. She pleaded with her only son to return to Japan as soon as possible. She wanted to see him and talk with him once more. Her doctor warned that Shigetaro should come no later than spring. Two soldiers in the extended family had died in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. All looked to Shigetaro for support and guidance.

Mizuno wished to return not as a student with incomplete courses, but as a called servant of the Word. Thus he offered himself to the Mission Board for service in Japan.[5] President Pieper's letter of Jan. 3, 1895, to Henry Schwan, the President of the Missouri Synod, endorsing Mizuno's missionary service in Japan, is remarkable in



Henry Mizuno Shigetaro
1868–1933

[3]E. C. Zimmermann, unpublished notes relating to Henry Mizuno. Mizuno File, CHI. Zimmermann does not describe the nature of Mizuno's bad language. Colloquial Japanese speaks freely about sexual or other anatomical matters, but it contains no counterpart of Western blasphemy and profanity. If Mizuno used coarse German profanity, he may have learned it from fellow-students of theology in America.

[4]Steger, Mizuno File, CHI. Two decades before Mizuno journeyed to America, Niijima Jo (1843-1990), son of a high ranking samurai, at the risk of his life, secretly left Japan aboard an American ship. He made his way to Boston, was baptized, studied at Amherst College and Andover Theological Seminary, and returned to Japan in 1874. With funds he had raised in America, Niijima founded a Christian college for Western learning and pastoral training—the famed Doshisha in Kyoto, now a great university. The Niijima story may well have inspired Mizuno. Alphaeus Sherburne Hardy, *Life and Letters of Joseph Hardy Neesima* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1892).

[5]Mizuno Letter to Mission Board, Dec. 15, 1894. Mizuno File, CHI.

Mizuno was threatened by a do-little mission board on one flank and an offended Teutonic theological seminary president on the other.

the light of later events. He praises Mizuno for a blameless, irreproachable Christian life and for "holy earnestness" in his studies. He concedes that "like almost all Orientals Mizuno is inclined to be somewhat phlegmatic," but recovers from this racist judgment to say that Mizuno's written German is "grammatically and stylistically [idiomatically] correct." Speaking for the entire faculty, President Pieper declares, "We can give him the grade of 'good' in all subjects." ("Good" seems to have been a high grade, if not the highest, at the Springfield seminary.)

But while he prepared for his final tests, certain events cast a shadow over all the promising plans of Mizuno, the seminary, and the Missouri Synod. Henry Steger believed that these events caused the Missouri Synod abruptly to drop its Japan mission plans.[6]

Steger recalled that Mizuno made a negative statement about President Reinhold Pieper, even as other students have often criticized their professors in the past. Mizuno's unfortunate remark was reported to Prof. Pieper by a fellow student.

What Mizuno said about the Professor is unknown, but President Pieper suspended him, even though graduation was close at hand. This drastic action caused a student uproar. Mizuno's whole class held a meeting, backed up Henry Shigetaro, and sent a committee to ask President Pieper for the tale-bearer's name. Pieper replied, "I'm not going to tell you who told me. But it was not so-and-so." However, this "so-and-so" was the prime suspect of the class. He was a known talebearer who frequented Prof. Pieper's home. He absented himself from the seminary while feelings of injustice ran high. Mizuno's classmates did not wait for him to return. They sent a delegation to the informer's hide-away and confronted him with the charge of "squealing." The man confessed.

If Mizuno sinned with his mouth, so did Professor Pieper. Prof. Zimmermann concludes that Professor Pieper had stooped to a bald-faced lie.[7] There was guilt and blame enough to go around. The outraged students appealed to the faculty on behalf of Mizuno. On March 16, 1895, he received an Examination Certificate testifying that he had studied at the Springfield pre-seminary 1887-89, at the Fort Wayne *Gymnasium* 1889-92, and at Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield 1892-95, and had "zealously led" an honorable and inoffensive Christian life.

Mizuno had been examined on twelve subjects. Pieper graded him on three. Two of Pieper's were the lowest grades any professor awarded Mizuno. Four professors signed Mizuno's Examination Certificate. President Pieper did not.[8]

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[6]Mizuno File, CHI, St. Louis.

[7]Zimmermann, Notes, Mizuno File, CHI.

[8]Examinations–Zeugnis, Mizuno File, CHI.

Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, lists Henry Mizuno among its graduates in both its 50th and 100th anniversary books. Mizuno's was the only class in the previous history of the Springfield Seminary with which the faculty did not pose for the usual graduation picture.

Henry Steger describes Mizuno's poignant farewell:

> When the time for his departure had come, the entire student body accompanied him to the railroad station at midnight. As the train was approaching, tears were streaming down his cheeks, and he said to me, "Ich hätte nicht gedacht, dass der Abschied so schwer werden würde." (I never thought the parting would be so hard.)

Mizuno enjoyed solid support among both students and faculty, but he was threatened by a do-little mission board on one flank and an offended Teutonic theological seminary president on the other. When Mizuno left, he still had high hopes that the Missouri Synod would start work in Japan and that someone would soon be sent to assist him in establishing a mission. Tentatively, Carl Schroeder, Mizuno's classmate, had been chosen to accompany him. Because Schroeder had no immediate marriage prospects, he even arranged for his sister to keep house for him in Japan. At first a rather lively correspondence kept up. Mizuno often wrote Carl, pleading for support.

Schroeder urged him to begin preaching like the apostles and assured him that support would follow. Soon after his return Mizuno wrote one of his former seminary professors that he had already gathered 17 Japanese Protestants who were dissatisfied with the preaching in their respective congregations. Mizuno made valiant efforts against overwhelming odds to establish the mission single-handedly. He went back to Japan with only about 90 days' living allowance. A year and a half after his return, three Springfield professors were appalled to learn that Mizuno had been sick unto death for months on end. Frustrated by the mission board's unconscionable delays, three of them signed an urgent plea for action under date of Nov. 5, 1896. They wrote, in part: "Our dear, faithful Japanese alumnus lay there, cared for by only a few relatives, themselves beset with illness and grieving over two soldier sons of the household killed in the War [Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95]."

Recovering somewhat, Mizuno journeyed to Sendai, where friends wanted to hear him preach the pure gospel. Guided by Mizuno, they tried to gather a little flock hungry for salvation. He gladly accepted invitations to speak in towns and villages, but declared, "My headquarters is and remains in Tokyo."

On Sept. 1, 1896, in the presence of eight close friends, Mizuno baptized a young man whom he had instructed in the Christian faith. While Mizuno lay seriously ill, this youth read the Bible with tireless zeal.

Mizuno wrote, "I have decided to open a small private school. An acquaintance wants to sell an *old* six-room house. It will be dwelling, school and preaching place. My friends will contribute their mites to buy it. But we are still short $30. Can you raise $30? If you can't send the cash right away, just say 'Yes.' You can send the money later."

His Springfield faculty advocates pointed out,

> Mizuno is spreading the pure gospel and doing it successfully. Just picture his situation: no means, no money, amid a nation of heathen and unbelievers, living almost entirely from alms, and without a missionary companion. One can't help but admire his persistence, confidence and steadfastness.

> Doesn't this man deserve our financial support, all the more because he is one of us, flesh of our flesh? What a harvest field Japan offers for the pure doctrine, if only the Missouri Synod takes a firm grip.

The three seminary professors implored the Honorable Mission Board to do the following:

> 1. Take immediate aggressive steps to carry out the mission to Japan. 2. Speedily give Mizuno a synodical missionary appointment and salary, and send him a missionary coworker. 3. If the above is impossible—which would be most lamentable—at least send Mizuno the requested $30 from the mission treasury....
>
> With respectful greetings and high regards,
>
> J. S. Simon,
> J. Herzer,
> M. Luecke

The voice of Missouri's mission-minded pastors and people speaks through a letter dated Sept. 21, 1896, from a Pastor Reisinger of Springville, Erie County, N.Y. It is addressed to an unidentified "Herr Professor" at Concordia Seminary, Springfield. (Colleague Wilhelm Linss graciously deciphered the ancient script.) Reisinger is appalled by the deprivation in which Mizuno somehow exists in Japan. He is outraged by the Mission Board's irresponsibility, neglect, and "unheard-of hard-heartedness" toward Mizuno. "In the terrible time of waiting [for Board support which never came], Mizuno could have starved to death. This would have been on the conscience of the Board. What a cry of outrage and horror would sweep through the whole Synod, if people only knew how heartlessly he was treated.... I hope that the Board has learned its lesson and won't let it happen again." Reisinger implores the Board to send Mizuno a quick $200 for doctor bills, proper food, and decent clothing; to recognize and salary him as a missionary; and to send him a student co-worker from the seminary. "The Board should not be so fearful about where the money will come from. God is the treasurer, and he has enough in his treasury, namely in the hearts of a hundred thousand Christians."[9]

Some Missouri leaders declared they lacked a direct *Fingerzeig Gottes* (pointing finger of God) to launch the Japan mission. Pastor Reisinger stoutly maintained that Mizuno himself and the providence of God, which led him to the Lutheran Church, its seminary, and its faith, constituted a crystal clear *Fingerzeig* of God.

The pleas of Mizuno's professors and his ardent supporter, Pastor Reisinger, should have melted hearts of solid brass. But nothing happened. The attention of Missouri's leadership was elsewhere.

In spite of all, Mizuno pursued his mission, but lack of money hindered his attempts. He rented space for Sunday worship but lost the quarters and his credit, because he could not pay the rent on time.[10]

Mizuno's letters over the years plainly showed that he had not given up hope that the Missouri Synod would take hold of the work. In a letter to a Springfield seminary mentor which the professor read to his class, Mizuno wrote that he had been offered some very tempting teaching positions at illustrious Tokyo University, but, thinking of the purpose that brought him back to Japan, he would say with Jesus, "Get thee hence, Satan."[11]

In 1886, a year after his return, Mizuno married Nakamura Shigeki, daughter of a high-ranking samurai family in Okayama. She graduated from Baika, a mission school

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[9]Mizuno File, CHI.
[10]Mizuno file, CHI.
[11]Steger, Zimmermann Notes, CHI.

Mizuno was ridiculed for any individual missionary effort he made, chiefly because he had no official backing from abroad.

in Osaka. Her family was well-connected in both church and society. With a wife to support, Mizuno had to find a source of steady income. A traditional samurai was willing to fight, kill, and die for his lord. But he expected his lord, in turn, to support him. As time wore on, Mizuno must have been forced to conclude that official Missouri had abandoned him in Japan as a *ronin*, a masterless samurai without support.

In 1896 Mizuno began to teach German at the prestigious Second Higher School in Sendai, preferred by talented university-bound students. In 1899 Mizuno wrote Pastor Buehler in San Francisco that he was eking out a meager subsistence for himself, his wife, mother, and little daughter by supplementing his small salary with private instruction in German. In this letter to Buehler, Mizuno declared himself ready to do anything in his power to gain official recognition and financial assistance from the Missouri Synod. Mizuno added that he was ridiculed for any individual missionary effort he made, chiefly because he had no official backing from abroad.[12] He sent his children to Protestant Sunday Schools, first to the Congregational Bancho Church in Tokyo and later to an evangelical (Low Church) Anglican congregation.

In 1913, the Rev. Professor E. L. Arndt of the Missouri Synod's Concordia College, St. Paul, who opened an independent mission field in China, visited Mizuno in Tokyo. By 1913 Mizuno was 45 and had a growing family. He was involved in the founding of the excellent Sophia University by the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus. The Missouri Synod's opportunity had dwindled to the vanishing point. But, optimistically, Missionary Arndt still saw a glint of hope. He wrote in Missouri's official church periodical:

> Professor Mizuno has never denied his (Christian) faith.... He welcomed me warmly and it pleased him to be assured that in America he still had many friends. Would we still be able to win him as a missionary after he once began work there and was given almost no support? At the moment he was not prepared to answer. But we believe there would be a prospect of winning him, especially if we began with proper determination.[13]

In 1914, Prof. Mizuno became a Roman Catholic. He and his two sons were baptized in the Roman rite, the rest of his family about seven years later.

In 1921 Mission Director Friedrich Brand, the Missouri Synod's top world mission official, stopped in Tokyo for a week. He sought and received Professor Mizuno's help for inquiries with the Japanese government about evangelical missions on Pacific islands mandated to Japan after World War I. Dr. Brand reported,

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[12]Steger, p. 3, CHI.

[13]Rev. Prof. E. L. Arndt, *Missionsbriefe*, Vol. I, p. 75f. The date of the visit is taken from E. H. A. Arndt's thesis in the *Concordia Historical Quarterly*, Jan. 1933, p. 141.

> Throughout all these days and trips Mizuno was always gentlemanly. He controlled the German language very well and told me that he was a professor at a Roman Catholic institution in Tokyo.... I had a heart to heart talk with him, at which time he revealed that he now was a member of the Roman Catholic Church, largely because his teaching position with them required it.
>
> The man seemed bitter throughout the week, because of certain experiences, with which he claimed to have met in the United States and since he reached Tokyo. In so many words he declared that he had not been treated fairly by certain persons whom he named. I have no way of judging his statements and must refer them to God.
>
> Later I wrote to him from China, and again from the United States, trying to reach his conscience, but I received no answer.[14]

Recognizing the blame-the-victim syndrome, Dr. Dean Lueking declares, "The crowning irony was that 25 years later an official of the Synod would try to 'reach his conscience.' If denominations possessed consciences, it would have seemed that Mizuno would have been justified in reversing Brand's effort."[15]

Three years later, Professor Mizuno suffered his first stroke at age 57. After a second stroke he retired from teaching and became honorary professor (*meiyokyoju*) until his death in 1933. He rests in a Catholic cemetery at Fuchu.

In 1954, my sixth year of missionary service in Japan, I received a request for information about Professor Mizuno from Prof. E. C. Zimmermann. The trail led to Sophia University, where I discovered that Prof. Mizuno's older son Fukuichiro was then Professor of Biology. Tears filled his eyes when he told me how fondly his father had often spoken of "Concordia." He outlined for me a brief history of his father's life and family up to 1954. Professor Mizuno's wife died in 1944. The Mizuno home in Tokyo was destroyed in a World War II air raid on May 24, 1945. The family left Tokyo and moved about 60 miles south to the city of Numazu. But this dwelling, too, was devastated a short time later. Nearly all of Professor Mizuno's books, papers, and photos were burned. Their second son, Shojiro, died in 1940 on the battlefield in China. Their daughter Oyako married Koike Keikichi, engineer and Managing Director of Ono Construction Company.

> In Mizuno and his wife the gospel could have come to Japan with a Japanese face and a Japanese heart.

My colleague Professor Yoshiro Ishida kindly helped me with the Chinese characters in the Mizuno family history, pointing out the high samurai lineage of both Professor and Mrs. Mizuno Shigetaro and the distinction of their friends and associates. Six of seven such persons named in this brief document are described in articles under their own names in the nine-volume English *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, published in 1983, 50 years after the death of Professor Mizuno Shigetaro. Theirs is a

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[14]Zimmermann, Notes, p. 5, Mizuno File, CHI.

[15]Lueking, *Mission in the Making*, 211.

durable fame. They include: Abe Isoo (1865-1930), Christian minister, father of socialism; Doi Bansui (1871-1952), poet, teaching colleague; Natsume Soseki (1867-1916), novelist, boyhood schoolmate; Takayama Chogyu (1871-1901), literary critic, nationalist; Takegoshi Yosaburo (1865-1933), Taisho era democracy advocate; Uchimura Kanzo (1861-1930), church reformer, editor, Bible teacher.

In his own society Mizuno could echo William Butler Yeats: "Think where man's glory first begins and ends And say my glory was I had such friends." Through Mizuno and his wife a Missouri Synod-sponsored mission could have enjoyed access to many levels of society.[16]

By the 1890s monolithic Missouri had grown to be the largest single Lutheran church body in America. But it still had no world mission among people of non-Christian cultures. European mission circles criticized this deficiency, and voices at home deplored it in convention memorials and resolutions. Mission-minded persons in the Missouri Synod embarrassed its foot-dragging leadership by sending in numerous unsolicited offerings for overseas mission. A sizeable balance accumulated. Missouri was in the world mission market. Mizuno's re-entry into Concordia Seminary, Springfield, in 1892 was timely. In 1893, the Missouri Synod convention adopted a resolution to begin its foreign missions in Japan.[17]

Professor Herman Keinath of Concordia College, River Forest, Ill., put his finger on the real reason for abandoning Mizuno: "The project was not carried out, since within a year a much more inviting opportunity presented itself for mission work in India."[18]

Two controversial India missionaries dismissed by the Leipzig Mission Society of Germany appealed to the Missouri Synod to send them back to India and support them there as its missionaries. Missouri found their emphatic avowal of biblical inerrancy congenial, to put it mildly. They embraced them at once as persecuted *Glaubensbrüder*, brothers in faith and blood of whom Missourians could say from the heart, "This is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone." Rev. Fr. Zucker, himself a former dissident Leipzig missionary, was Missouri's Director of Missions at this time.[19] Ironically, Mizuno's letters also fully endorse Missouri's pure doctrine. His Springfield professors also spoke of him as "flesh of our flesh"—and with less ethnic overtones.

Director Zucker's sympathies were clear. So was his haste. Without submitting the matter to a general delegate synod, the Mission Board he chaired laid the India opportunity before a number of synodical districts in 1894, brought Naether and Mohn from Germany, and swiftly commissioned them on October 14, 1894. Mizuno had just begun his final seminary year. He was already a displaced person.

In 1896, a year after Mizuno returned to Japan empty-handed, an ambiguous resolution of Missouri's General Synod tabled the starting of a Japan mission "for the time

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[16]Professor Mizuno Fukuichiro, *A Brief History of Mizuno Shigetaro*, 1954. Unpublished ms. in both Japanese and English versions in files of William J. Danker.

[17]William J. Danker, "Into All the World," Chapter 7 in *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*, ed. Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 301-2. See also p. 294.

[18]Herman O. A. Keinath, *Documents Illustrating the History of the Lutheran Church in America with Special Emphasis on the Missouri Synod* (River Forest, IL: Concordia Teachers College, 1947), 72.

[19] Lueking, *Mission in the Making*, 203f.

being,"[20] but at the same time it authorized and directed the Mission Board and the Presidium of the Synod to secure reliable reports on mission prospects in Japan, and "if necessary to send a missionary and support this man and Mizuno with the necessary funds." In spite of its size and resources the Missouri Synod failed to send either the missionary companion or the funds. Missouri could have initiated missions in both India and Japan.

Missouri welcomed its fellow-German missionaries to India with open arms. But it failed to realize that, other things being equal, the people of Japan also prefer Christian representatives who are physically and culturally "bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh." In Mizuno and his wife the gospel could have come to Japan with a Japanese face and a Japanese heart. India proved no easier than the Japan mission field. It took five years before Naether and Mohn baptized their first convert. Mizuno did it in a year and a half, in spite of a long illness and no official support.

Few of Missouri's leaders seem to have understood what the Synod had—or what it lost—in this imperfect, yet brilliant and spirited son of a samurai, Mizuno Shigetaro. Missouri traded away and abandoned a loyal Japanese Lutheran trained entirely in Missouri's own schools in favor of two recent foundlings.

Among Mizuno's distinguished friends Uchimura Kanzo led an independent Christian reform movement which, to this day, regards the institutional church as unnecessary and at times a hindrance. Mizuno's son wrote that his father did not agree with Uchimura on his "non-church" principle of reform. But both Uchimura and Mizuno had a high appreciation of Martin Luther. Mizuno seems to have owned a set of Martin Luther's works, probably the St. Louis edition (23 vols., Concordia, 1881-1910).[21]

Professor Mizuno Shigetaro served the Christian movement in Japan for nearly forty years, but he also represents a tragic loss in Japan to Lutheranism and to all of Christianity, including Sophia University and the Roman Catholic Church. Professor Mizuno's language teaching career did not challenge his missionary and theological potential. His superb mastery of German equipped him to penetrate the gospel-centered thought and life of Martin Luther and his co-workers. Had he remained a Lutheran missionary, he could have made these treasures available to his nation, its intellectuals, writers, students, and the public already in the Meiji and Taisho eras. As his publications demonstrate, Mizuno had entrepreneurial and publishing talents. He could have spread the social and spiritual teachings of the Lutheran Reformation far and wide in a land undergoing a continual modern reformation of its own.

One is embarrassed to discover the short-sightedness, the banal and trivial matters that were allowed to trigger the tragic loss of a highly talented missionary in a strategic mission field a century ago.

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[20] Mizuno Shigetaro knew Missouri's doctrine well. In 1913, E.L. Arndt attended a Tokyo Protestant church with Mizuno, who testified that the sermon lacked both sin and grace. He observed that this was a common deficiency. E.L. Arndt, *Missionsbriefe*, Vol. I, No.9, p. 754. Tr. by E. C. Zimmermann.

[21] Mizuno Fukuichiro, *Brief History*.

Note: Thanks to my brother, Frederick Danker, for editorial suggestions.

The Contribution and Function of Missionaries

Kenneth Dale
ELCA missionary and theological educator
Japan Lutheran Theological College and Seminary, Tokyo

Address given at the ELCA Division for Global Mission Missionary Conference, Carthage College, July, 1991

It is a great privilege to be asked to represent the ELCA missionaries on this occasion, although my experience as a missionary is limited to only one country, Japan. The assignment given to me was "to challenge missionaries and staff to think in new ways about the future of cross-cultural mission, noting trends which you believe are changing the nature of global mission."

There are possibly two reasons why I was asked to fulfill this task. One is that I now stand at the brink of retirement, having just finished 40 years of work as a pastor, teacher, and counselor in Japan. I can speak from a few years of personal experience.

The other might be that I have had the privilege and responsibility of counseling with many missionaries of many denominations over the years, and have struggled considerably myself with my vocation as a missionary.

My presentation will consist of two parts. The first is a statement of trends and their implications for the changing function of missionaries. In the second part I will point to some unchanging difficulties which it seems to me are inherent in the functioning of missionaries, anywhere and at any time.

Trends which are changing the nature of cross-cultural mission

I will note seven trends—neither researched nor original, but simply observation from my perspective—and then state some possible implications of each of these trends.

1. The trend toward technological advances, especially in communication, transportation, storing, and transmitting of information through computers, is no doubt one of the most obvious revolutions of our time. We each have our own stories about the marvels of computerized information and

The mission of the church today should be not so much the growth of external expansion as the growth of internal change.

communication. Within the last couple of weeks I have been making telephone calls from our home in Tokyo to Istanbul, Johannesburg, Budapest, and Madrid. I cannot help but feel a thrill each time someone with a strange new accent picks up the phone at the other end of the line. The ends of the world are truly being tied together! I'm sure all of you have stood in front of the travel agent's desk in your own city, as I have in Tokyo, and marveled at the ability of that desk-top computer to make seat reservation 23 in the non-smoking section on Flight #6 of Blank Airways On July 3 from Podunk, or Lima, or Bombay, to Chicago.

What implication does this magic have for global mission? Technology makes the logistics of intercultural/international work easier and more efficient. It's easier for us in this decade than in any time previously in history to share among ourselves as world churches. Many positive things issue from this: the use of all types of mass media, computer links among theological schools around the globe (a project I recently heard about) and so on and on. You all have your own experiences of the "salvation" which technology offers.

But let me posit a warning thought: easier logistics for mission may be deceptive in leading us to think that the task of mission itself is easier, but it is not. Technology has not made the essential task of cross-cultural understanding and mission any simpler than it ever was. To the contrary, technology may be a negative factor because technology loses sight of that which is distinctively human, and in our work, is not this the most important element of all?

2. A trend following closely on the above is internationalization on every plane—in business, politics, education, cultural exchange, etc. In Japan "*kokusaida*" (internationalization) is a label stuck on innumerable activities these days. For example, some Japanese automobiles are now manufactured in U.S. plants by American laborers working under Japanese managers, and then transported to Japan, assembled and sold there. Or pick up any item of clothing in a department store and look at the manufacturer's label; it might well come from China, Mexico, Thailand, or Korea.

The Christian church has the right to be called the original international, intercultural organization, for it was such long before business and politics became that way. It is the church's essential nature to be universal. The church has expanded to world-wide dimensions ever since the first century. But what about the peculiar calling of the church in this age of internationalism? How should it continue to expand in this age? I suggest that the thrust of the gospel should be shaped by the image of leaven in the lump rather than by the image of the mustard seed becoming a great tree. I believe the mission of the church today should be not so much the growth of external expansion as the growth of internal change. For there is as much or more strife, anxiety, hatred, conflict, and emotional and social dis-ease in the world as ever. In fact

physical closeness has increased spiritual tensions and sickness.

The frontiers have changed. Should not the "kingdom of God" be interpreted as the effort toward healing individual and social wounds, the effort to create tolerance and love among the members of the new international society? Missionaries should function as peacemakers and healers at the social, family, and individual level. We should not see ourselves in the image of cowboys on the frontier but as doctors in a hospital.

3. A third obvious trend is the rising economic, cultural, and educational standards of the developing countries. As you might guess, we in Japan are acutely aware of the rising standards in Asia. I need not tell you that Japan today is a country of uncomfortable affluence. Recently I had the privilege of participating in the Conference of Lutheran Theological Educators in Bangkok. How impressed I was with the educational backgrounds and capability of the 20 theological educators, representing 12 Asian countries, who constituted that conference!

What are the implications of this new situation for us? I think fewer preachers and teachers are needed in world mission. Capable nationals can do the job as well or better than most of us. I do not suggest that world mission is at an end, but that the contribution of missionaries going abroad must be more than just doing pastoral work in some form or another. I believe that missionaries must make a unique contribution to the national church where they go. Each of us needs to ask ourselves, What is unique about my contribution that makes it worth leaving my country to live abroad, worth the tens of thousands of dollars it costs the ELCA to keep me there? What am I doing that a national could not do as well as I?

4. While the above is true, at the same time the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer around the world. Poverty and hunger are among the world's gravest problems. Poverty and hunger are caused by economic and social injustices, and these in turn are often caused by racial discrimination.

The implication of this state of society is that missionaries, whose task is to work for the realization of the kingdom of God on earth, must address these issues in their work. The Great Commission for the 21st century might be the words of Jesus to the man who inquired, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with the parable of the Good Samaritan and told him, "Go and do likewise"—binding up the wounds of those who suffer physically. This is a "*Go*" which is as important as the "*Go* therefore and make disciples of all nations."

We might also think of the Last Judgment scene in Matthew 28 as an appropriate image and command for our mission, viz. Jesus' word, "As you did it to the least of these you did it to me."

So we have been one-sided in seeing St. Matthew's "Go and make disciples" as the sole missionary mandate. Ultimately our mandate emanates equally from St. Matthew's Last Judgment scene or from St. Luke's "Go, and show compassion like the Good Samaritan."

5. Another trend with which we are all familiar is the trend toward maturity and independence of the so-called "younger churches." They are no longer reliant on financial and personnel assistance from the U.S. and Europe. They have grown in numbers, they have well-trained leadership, many of their countries have steadily growing economies. At the same time we see the decline of American predominance as a world economic and political leader. Ours is a completely different world from that of

William Carey, David Livingston, Ralph Hult, and such pioneer heroes.

If this is true, the implication is that basically we should all view ourselves as equal partners, equal members of the Body of Christ, all working interdependently. And if this is true, my proposition is that missionaries should function not so much as "ones sent" as "ones called," called and exchanged among countries on the basis of supply and demand, being called on the basis of particular skills to meet particular needs. This is a day for sharing resources world-wide.

There can be absolutely no superiority attitudes on the part of any missionary. Americans and Europeans must be on the receiving end as well as the giving end. This idea is not new; we have been talking about "mission from six continents to six continents" for some years now, but when we look at the difficulties and failures of some of the attempts to exchange work force or leadership between countries, we must admit that we have a long way to go before this ideal is realized.

6. There is an underlying trend toward a pluralistic way of thinking as world cultures grow closer with more and more interchange. We have noted that technology and the growth of third world cultures bring us together and make us more equal. This means that we move from conquest to co-existence, and in the state of co-existence in close proximity there must be racial, cultural, political, and, yes, religious tolerance. It is impossible to live harmoniously in this world if we hold a narrow, monolithic outlook on life.

An implication of the above is that the missionary contribution should be to reconcile peoples and create understanding rather than criticize other traditions and point to their falsehoods. The missionary should not be a judge, but rather one who humbly seeks to discover and stand in awe of the working of the Holy Spirit in the human heart as people search for truth and for God throughout a diversity of cultures.

On this point I would like to quote some reflections from my friend and colleague, David Lindell, who has been a Lutheran missionary in India for his entire career:

> I felt at home in India from the moment I landed. I felt I belonged. I wanted to let the country and the people soak into me, to become a part of what was going on.... On reflection, I am not sure that God brought me here to change India, but rather to let India change me. To be a missionary is essentially to be a pilgrim, to be open to see what God is doing in the lives of people here and there in the world, to try to understand the meaning of faith in a context and culture completely alien to one's own. I think I have begun to see a glimmer of light.

I will let those impressive words stand without further comment.

7. A final trend is concern for the environment and ecology. It is reflected in the theme of the 1991 Global Mission Events: "Come Holy Spirit, Renew the Whole Creation." There is currently a great effort to prick the conscience of industrialized nations and of all of us individually to recognize our responsibility to exercise greater care for the earth, the air, the water, the trees in this world given us by the Creator. We are called to account for our misuse and abuse and over-use of natural resources through our careless pollution and waste of energy, and our greedy consumption.

Does not this current emphasis challenge us to reconsider our theological emphasis as well, to reconsider our almost exclusive focus on the Second Article of the Apostle's Creed—which we must admit is

the traditional Lutheran approach—and to give more credence to the First and Third Articles? We have too long neglected the fundamental concepts of God as Creator of the physical universe, and the Holy Spirit as one who works in nature and in all human history. A too exclusive focus on christology and soteriology can put up needlessly high barriers when we try to introduce non-Christians to our God. Is it not quite legitimate to start from common ground of the universal creative power of God, or from the message of the Holy Spirit as God's unlimited presence in the world?

Some unchanging difficulties inherent in the functioning of missionaries

I have a thesis for this part of my presentation. It is that the missionary vocation is a near-impossible vocation! I only hope that what I have to say will not discourage anyone from entering or continuing the missionary vocation.

1. The missionary inevitably experiences enormous daily life frustrations. By definition a missionary is one who goes to live and work in an unfamiliar situation, a foreign culture. This inevitably means that the missionary is a "square peg in a round hole." If we draw a diagram of a square in a circle, there are areas "out of joint." A poignant section from the report of one of the Japan short-termers illustrates what I mean:

> Imagine that you are a baseball player. You always go to the same park and you always play with the same people. Baseball is the only game you know. One day, however, you go to a different park. The game there is football. You say to yourself, "I don't know the rules, but there are two teams and one ball, just like baseball. It can't be too difficult." You begin to play and someone tells you, "Go on that direction!" "No problem," you think. As time passes, though, you manage to throw the ball to a member of the wrong team, drop the ball when you're supposed to catch, and you run in the wrong direction. Sometimes your team members, whose names you don't even know yet, become angry or disappointed, while you don't even realize you've made a mistake. Gradually you become more and more frustrated, and sometimes you even want to quit. Although you don't mean to, you can't seem to help making mistakes.... Time passes, and you learn more names and rules. You even begin to enjoy the game, even with the frequent mistakes. But alas, you glance at your watch and see that it's time to go home.

This is a graphic description of what we call "culture shock," which includes not only the loneliness of separation from family, friends, and all that is familiar but also the intangible experience of not "feeling at home," not understanding the cues of the new culture—cues governing the physical and interpersonal system in which we live our daily life.

For instance, when we were at a restaurant in Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco a couple of weeks ago, I asked the waiter where the restroom was, and he replied, "Down the stairs, 1-2-5." I was a bit puzzled by this unknown cue, so on my way I asked another waiter the same question and got exactly the same answer: "Down the stairs, 1-2-5." I went down the stairs and came to a door, which wouldn't open. What to do? Finally I noticed a set of numbered buttons under the knob. Using a bit of imagination I tried pressing 1, 2, and 5. Presto! The door opened. When the cues for everyday living are all different all at once, it makes for a disorienting, unnerving experience!

And then there is the communication gap which is inevitable when working in a foreign language. I have heard the desper-

> The missionary is one who is sent and at the same time one who is called.... these are two quite different postures.

ate frustration of more than a few missionaries saying, "My language is relatively good, but I'm never really sure I'm getting through. Too often in meetings I don't really know what's going on. Can it be right to have to live with this constant uncertainly and frustration the rest of my life?"

2. The missionary inevitably experiences a severe identity problem. A missionary of the ELCA in the 1990s is at the same time one who is sent and one who is called. This sounds harmless enough, but "when the rubber hits the road" this dual role often puts the missionary in a perplexing double bind. Imagine the figure of a person standing with one foot on one sphere which we will call the "sending church" and the other foot on another sphere which we will call the "receiving church."

Things go smoothly as long as the person can maintain balance and be free-standing, but the problem is that both those spheres lay claim to this person. Missionaries are people who in so many ways stand in the middle, with one foot in our native country and culture and the other foot in an adopted country and culture. And we belong equally to both at the same time!

We are official members of our home church, the ELCA. We are called by that church to serve in its world mission program. We are salaried by that church. We are morally and legally accountable to that church. But at the same time we are official members of the body to which we have been sent, in our case the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are also called by this church to serve in its mission program, and we are given particular assignments to parishes and institutions by this church. And although we are not salaried by this church, for the foregoing reasons we are held morally and legally accountable to it.

One of our fellow missionaries at school was called to an ELCA post in the Chicago headquarters and felt called to accept that post. However, our school president said, "No!" He made a very strong appeal to the ELCA, insisting that this professor belonged to our school, which had trained him for many years for this teaching position. Where does the missionary's loyalty lie?

In my own case, I am at retirement age, and having served the Division of Global Mission for 40 years I am entitled to six months termination leave. But when I discussed that with my colleagues at our seminary in Japan, they said, "The rule here is to continue to teach until age 70; you can't quit now, nor take six months off now, because just two years ago you had your sabbatical according to our rules." So which set of rules am I obliged to observe?

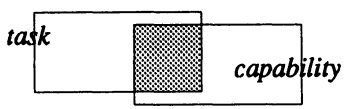
If you are an ordained person, what title do you use, "Missionary" or "Pastor"? One of our colleagues who left Japan a few years ago made an issue of the confusion over which term should be used for expatriate ordained people. Some nationals call them "pastors," and others call them "missionaries." He urged us to be in constant dialogue as to the symbolic meaning of these terms, for as "missionary" we are identified with the sending church, offering new stimulus from overseas, while as "pastor" we are

identified with our national co-workers, perhaps doing essentially the same task in the same way as they are.

That identification with nationals is psychologically important, but at the same time does it not limit us? To be a missionary is to be sent from one country to another in order to make some kind of unique contribution, in order to fulfill a vision which the sending church has which the receiving church might not have. If we completely identify as pastor, professor, etc., has not the unique reason of our going overseas been lost?

This leads me to ask, Is there such a thing as a missionary staying overseas too long? We might think of the missionary career as having thee stages: (1) curiosity and fascination with the new country and culture; (2) a kind of dialogic tension between missionary and national which makes for creative change; (3) identification in feeling, thinking, and methodology of work to the extent that creative change might not be forthcoming. I will simply leave the question with all of us—myself, of course, included: is it possible for a missionary to stay too long?

3. Missionaries often experience an unfortunate lack of self-fulfillment, and with this a lack of self-esteem, because they are unable to exercise their full natural capacities. Imagine two rectangles, partly overlapping. The left one will represent the mission task; the right one will represent the missionary's capabilities. The two elements overlap to some extent, like this:

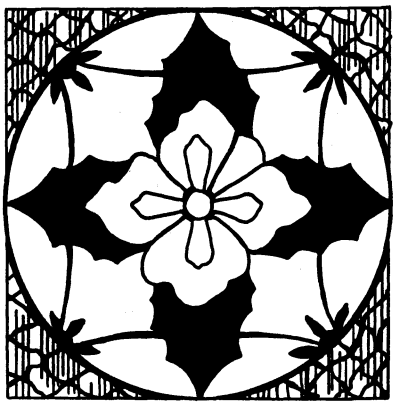


The overlapping area is the area of fulfillment, but the blank area on the left indicates the unfinished task, and the blank area on the right indicates the missionary's unfulfilled potential. Unfortunately, the overlapping area of fulfillment is often relatively small, and the sense of frustration over the unfinished task is great, as is also the sense of not being able to work at full capacity because of cultural and language barriers.

Perhaps the greatest source of that inevitable personal frustration lies in the very nature of our calling. For the missionary is one who is sent and at the same time one who is called. But these are two quite different postures. As people who are sent by a "home church," we are full of enthusiasm to win the world for Christ by the most efficient means. We have native abilities, good education; we are leaders, conquerors. We have a relatively great capacity to teach, to help, and to give.

But when we arrive at our assigned post overseas we suddenly become one called by that national church to come and help them. We find ourselves to be foreign guests in a strange country. The national church gives us guidance and directions as to what they want us to do and how to do it. In Christian humility, we make ourselves subservient to that church. So we are put in the position of playing second fiddle, whereas we had had visions of ourselves conducting the orchestra—and maybe we had training to be a conductor rather than to be a fiddler. So we are unable to exercise our full potential.

Missionaries are sometimes seen as symbols of the global nature of the church in the world. This sounds great in theory, but try acting like a symbol! For anyone who has a normal degree of ambition and initiative, there is not much satisfaction of accomplishment in standing as a symbol of internationalism if you are unable to plan a program, exercise your skills to carry it out, or to see the fruits of your effort.



This anomaly of the dual nature of our work seems to me one of the main sources of built-in frustration in the missionary vocation. Some pious people back home talk about "the missionary sacrifice," and we usually hasten to assure them that there really is no sacrifice in missionary service; it's all blessing! Indeed we have left home and friends and comforts, but we soon find a new home, make new friends, and find comforts different from what we were used to. Although there is great need for adjustment to a new and strange physical environment, most missionaries would not say they are making a material sacrifice.

Yet there is sacrifice, there is struggle in being a missionary. It is the inner psychological conflict of being involved in the work and yet remaining a guest, of being a part and yet not being a part. There is the conflict of hearing and not fully understanding, speaking and not being fully understood. The missionary remains an in-between person, a person hanging between two worlds. Being a missionary is not easy.

Let me end on a personal note. In spite of all this, if I had it to do all over again I would never choose another vocation. For to me this is the most challenging, stimulating, exciting work in the world! In spite of all the obstacles, in the larger view we see that our ultimate responsibility is neither toward the sending church nor toward the receiving church but toward God, whose presence and power we have experienced personally. Why do we go overseas? Basically for the same reason we go anywhere on the Lord's business: because the love of Christ constrains us. We go to the far corners of the earth because we are on the front lines of kingdom-building, participating there in the divine act of restoring the kingdom of this world to be the kingdom of our God and of his Christ.

It has been a great privilege to be involved in and supported by the ELCA-DGM and its predecessor bodies for these 40 years of service in Japan. On behalf of my wife and myself, accept our hearty Thank You!

The Role of Liberal Theology in Japan at the Turn of This Century

Yoshiro Ishida
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The Ebina-Uemura controversy

The time when Protestant Christianity was introduced into Japan (1859) coincided with an historically eventful period in which the whole nation was involved in the immense task of modernization. The term "the *Meiji* Restoration" is commonly applied to the period of social and political revolution that began before 1868. The first converts to Protestantism were mostly ambitious, patriotic youth of the Tokugawa feudal warriors. While confronted with difficulties in embracing Christianity fully, they seemed to consider their membership as a part of their assuming the multitude of pressing responsibilities arising from the country's emergence as a modern nation. Their profession of Christianity demonstrated in various ways a deep insight into the radical renovation of human life which was required in the building of the new nation.

At the turn of this century an extended controversy centering around the person and work of Christ took place between Masahisa Uemura, a Presbyterian in the Reformed tradition, and Danjo Ebina, a liberal Congregationalist. This debate between orthodox and modernist Christians drew the attention of the entire church in Japan.

The controversy was occasioned by the "Forward Evangelism Campaign" of 1901-1904 under the motto of "Our Country for Christ." This nationwide campaign was planned not only to commemorate a quarter century of Protestant mission work in Japan, but also to take the opportunity to break through the accelerating socio-political pressure upon the Christian church. Uemura, championing what was characterized as "Evangelicalism," which has since informed the mainline Protestant thought in Japan, used his periodical, *Fukuin Shinpo* (The Evangelist), to begin arguing against Ebina's

view. Ebina expressed his position on Evangelicalism in the editorial of *Shinjin* (The New Person), Ebina's journal. The controversy was carried on primarily through these two famous periodicals. Later, Ebina's senior colleague, Kozaki, recalled Ebina in his debate with Uemura by saying:

> The publication of *Shinjin* was started around 1899 and lasted for about twenty years. It enjoyed popularity and the reason for that was that Ebina advocated what was termed a new, liberal theology and editorialized it. The new theology at that time was a strong feature in Japanese nationalism and ethnocentrism.... Ebina's position was not that of extremism but represented liberalism within the church.[1]

Defender or searcher for the truth

Ebina's primary question concerned the incarnation and christology. God, to Ebina, was eternal, unchangeable—and it would be, therefore, an incredible alternative and even a contradiction if this eternal God became a human being: "If it were ever possible for the divine to become the human, the divine, as having become the human, can no longer be divine."[2] If the divine incarnation implied that the second person of God became human, the belief in the Trinity could be nothing other than a belief in Tritheism, argued Ebina.

Uemura, in response, confirmed that his position was simply the repeated statement of the historically inherited Christian faith:

> I suggest that you come equipped with Arianism, Sabellianism, Unitarianism, or Ritschlianism or with whatever new theory you might have.... If and when you publicly argue against the traditional Christian faith, that is the time also for me to engage myself in controversy with you who openly profess the contra-Christian faith.[3]

Ebina claimed that any dispute on faith should not be just a formalistic one as expressed in the "historically inherited faith," but "contextual" in defining the content of such faith itself. Christian history teaches, in his view, that any creed is the consequence of a complicated process of disputes and that the same creed could serve in exploring some unknown elements of Christian faith from time to time in accordance with changes of the historical situation. To do theology in the framework of "the historically inherited faith" was not satisfying to the mind of Ebina. "We ought to invite people not to appreciate what the creedal statement contains but to make an alternative decision as to whether they accept the statement or not."[4] He therefore characterized Uemura's approach only as "a historical review of the creed."

Ebina pointed out that the difference between Uemura and himself was between a "defender" of the truth and a "searcher" for the truth.[5] In fact Ebina did not mind being called Unitarian, deist, Shintoist, a propagandist of Japanese nationalism, or

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[1] Wataru Saba, *Uemura Masahisa to Sono Jidai* (Masahisa Uemura and His Times) (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 1937), Vol. V: 249-50.

[2] Ebina, *Shinjin* (The New Person) II: 3 (October 1, 1901).

[3] Uemura, *Fukuin Shinpo* (The Evangelist), No. 328 (October 9, 1901).

[4] Ebina, "Uemura shi no Tosho o Yomu" (Upon Reading Mr. Uemura's Reply), *Shinjin* II: 4 (November 1, 1901).

[5] Ebina, "Maishu Shinshi Danpen Kisha no Koini Mukuyu" (To Respond to the Favorable Comments of the Writer of the *Maishu Shinshi*), *Shinjin* II: 4 (November 1, 1901).

even atheist: "Paul was not concerned about reputation." He wanted to be a sincere "searcher."

Religious experience

Ebina subsequently affirmed the divine sonship of Christ insofar as Jesus attained, in acting on behalf of humankind, the supreme religious experience of the Father-Son relationship. By contrast Uemura uncompromisingly affirmed the divine incarnation and the atoning work of Christ in accordance with the second article of the Apostles' Creed. As their debate advanced, Ebina's approach was consistently anti-propositional, anti-creedal, God-centered empiricism. He was labeled as representing a liberal-type theology which in substance took the form of Unitarianism, Universalism, and the new German theology.

Nevertheless, Ebina could not be confined to the strict line of liberalism; actually he identified himself neither with Unitarian nor the Universalist position, nor with literary, rationalistic liberalism. He located the truth of Christianity in the person and religious experience of Christ. Apart from the proper appropriation of religious experience, Ebina refused to accept any Christian tradition or doctrines: "It is by faith that we secure our salvation; that faith is not a belief in a certain truth but the belief and trust in a person."[6]

Christianity of Christ

Through a religious experience based on the "God-Son" relationship, ultimately realized by Jesus Christ, Ebina advocated the "Christianity of Christ" and not "Christianity founded by Christ." The ultimate religious experience for Ebina was a complete union with Christ, and accordingly with God: "Christians believe in Christ. To believe in Christ signifies nothing but union with His person and His spirit."[7] This experience-centered thought pattern echoed the Confucian discipline in which Ebina was brought up. The God to whom he made his total commitment was the God of mercy, the Father. Anyone, without relying on intellectual consent, could believe in God if one could overcome "ego-centric individualism," asserted Ebina. At this point, his opponent Uemura was led to admit: "Mr. Danjo Ebina is really a religious person; his spiritual life is incomparable even among the orthodox Christians."[8]

The objectivity of faith

With his empirical approach, Ebina was not, however, unaware of the objectivity of faith. Interestingly enough, Ebina dealt with it when he referred to Martin Luther's position versus the mystics:

> It is needless to say how subjective Luther was when he discussed his encounter with God. But he could not agree with the position of the mystics. Luther did not discover the grace of God only subjectively. He well recognized grace in the historical person of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Therefore, Luther did not disregard any objective, historical event, and in this he was different from the mystics.[9]

Ebina admitted that the grace of God which was subjectively discovered had to

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[6] Ebina, "Kirisutokyoteki Fukkatsu no Naiyo" (The Content of the Christian Resurrection), *Shinjin*, xxxiv.

[7] Ebina, *Shinjin* II: 7 (February, 1902).

[8] Uemura, *Fukuin Shinpo*, No. 341 (January 8, 1902).

[9] Ebina, *Shinjin* II: 4.

be objectified by being based on historical reality. He in fact regarded Luther's christology highly because of its emphasis on the objective grace of God in the historical person of Jesus Christ. Ebina added, nevertheless, that such an objectified view of faith was possible simply because Luther was completely united with Christ in his faith and not mechanically attached to Christ. Ebina then affirmed: "Luther found himself as the hands and feet of Christ. Luther identified himself with Christ. Luther had the same deep sympathy as Christ had."[10] Ebina therefore integrated the objectivity of his faith into his subjective experience fostered by God's grace.

Educative and soteriological elements of sin

Another area in which Uemura challenged Ebina was Ebina's view of sin:

> As I carefully read Mr. Ebina's statement, it is not clear as to whether he has the idea of sin and guilt at all. I cannot find in him the faith in Christ who saves humans from sin. I wonder whether his appreciation of the atonement is hidden behind his thought. I indeed question Ebina's idea of sin. Otherwise, what is the significance of salvation? What is the difference of such salvation from the attaining of Buddhahood in Buddhism?[11]

Ebina defended himself by contending that opponents such as Uemura lacked a due sense of God's forgiveness and grace and remained in trembling agony under the wrath of God over sin. In what was widely known as his "second religious experience" of 1878,[12] Ebina came to confront the agony of sin through his physical and mental exhaustion and his critical eye disease. He recalled: "It was at that time I was crucified with Christ, through which all of my desires were destroyed."[13]

Ebina linked this "second religious experience" to his "first experience" of a conversion event, in which he totally committed himself to God the Father: "I offered up the seat of sin—self—on the cross of Christ and had the awareness of being raised again in Christ's God-centeredness."[14] Ebina considered sin was destroyed in his awakened experience as the "child of God," through killing his ego-centrism, that is, the "desire for fame," "desire for knowledge," "desire for power," etc. Sin was the already destroyed ego-centrism of the person who was now living a God-centered life. It is through such a view of sin, therefore, that Ebina looked at the role of Jesus as the savior.

Ebina applied the "principle of historical relativity" to the existing dogmatic formulations of the church. Furthermore, Ebina claimed that what one believed had to be authenticated by what he experienced, and his experience served as a norm of his entire theology. Although he defined his empiricism as christocentric, in terms of possessing the "consciousness of Christ," his position led to the widening of the cleavage between him and his orthodox opponent, Uemura. However, of more significance was the fact that this confrontation with Uemura occurred at a time of an urgent need

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[10] Ebina, *Shinjin* II: 4.

[11] Uemura, *Fukuin Shinpo*, No. 341 (January 8, 1902).

[12] Cf. Akio Dohi, "Danjo Ebina," in *Doshisha no Shisoka tachi* (Thinkers from Doshisha), ed. Yoichi Wada (Tokyo, 1965), 91.

[13] Ebina, *Kirisutokyo Shinron* (A New Christianity), 7.

[14] Ebina, *Shinjin* II: 9 (April 1, 1902).

for indigenizing Christianity among the Japanese in the midst of the Forward Evangelism Campaign at the turn of this century.

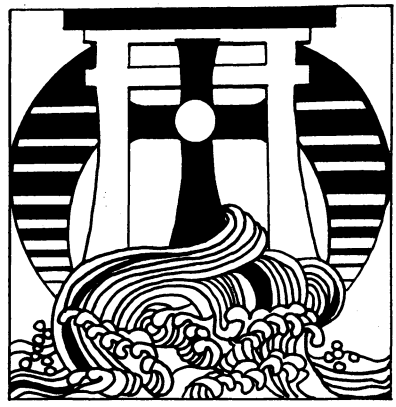
Efforts towards indigenization

Added to Ebina's empirical approach were his scientific outlook and rational mind: "Unless Christianity revises its position, the securing of a deep rootage in Japan, where science is considered to be of great importance, will be difficult...."[15] Here we observe the process of Ebina's accommodation of Christianity to the dominant currents of the day as observed among liberal theologians.

According to Watase, the biographer of Ebina, the term *jinkakushugi* (personalism or "characterology") could well be considered Ebina's contribution toward Christianity in Japan.[16] Ebina asserted that one's personality as God's child had to grow to be a son of God under the impact and leadership of Christ who died on the cross. Through this process of individuation he attempted to awaken the sense of individuality among the Japanese, the sense that had been submerged into the whole, as in the Buddhist concept of cyclical disinterestedness.

Ebina's self-realization was closely related to his self-consciousness which was formed in response to the personal manifestation of the divinity:

> As it is "I" who talks to God, it is "I" to whom God speaks.... It expresses the eternity of myself. When our breathing stops, our bodies perish. But the being within myself remains unchanged eternally. Though not knowing what form it will take after death, "myself" will be alive forever. I believe that the whole of Christianity is summarized in two things: the fellowship between "i" and "I" and the eternal life of the beloved "i."[17]



In the course of self-realization, there was no need for a remedy for sin viewed as gap between God and humanity. Ebina's fundamental trust in his own being as the possessor of the nature and substance of the divine, his view of sin as serving as a part of the educative process, and his appreciation of the instructive guidance of Christ as the perfect example, led him to hope for the perfection or completion of the search already started within himself. He called self-realization the full consciousness of the "immanence of God" in himself.[18]

Ebina described his self-realization in the context of the completion of Confucian disciplines in Christianity:

> Confucianism and Christianity should not look at each other as heresies. Just as Moses was to Christianity, Confu-

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[15] Ebina, *Kirisutokyo Daikan* (A Comprehensive View of Christianity) (Tokyo: Seishin Sha, 1930), 192-3.

[16] Ebina, *Kirisutokyo no Hongi* (The Essence of Christianity), 95.

[17] Ebina, *Nihon Kokumin to Kirisutokyo* (The Japanese Nation and Christianity), 176-7.

[18] Cf. *Kirisutokyo Daikan*, 123.

> cianism is to be completed by Christianity. The traditional three-fold religion, composed of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism, has changed unaware of "Shinto-Buddhism-Christianity".... For the best in Confucianism can be found in Christianity and is being implemented.[19]

Ebina identified his selfhood as a Japanese with Confucian-oriented individuality. He could not envisage any separation between Confucianism and Christianity when the latter was planted among the Japanese, whose traditional spirit had been oriented by Confucianism itself. He saw Christianity, therefore, as the fulfillment of Confucianism from the standpoint of his own self-identity or self-realization.

It was basically through his absorbing and developing Confucianism in his Christian personhood that Ebina formed what was called "Shintoistic Christianity." He made a link to Shinto, which he called the "ethnic religion of the Japanese":

> Ethnic religion is the natural voice of the developments of that race, to which all of us, needless to say, must listen. However, we must recognize the fact that the character of any ethnic, religious moralism constitutes the principal elements of any world religion. Why should we not dare to confront a ethnic religion with a world religion? In any big country in the world people never fail to have a great religion, that is, Christianity.[20]

Ebina defined Christianity is both an ethnic and a world religion: "Christianity, developed from an ethnic into a world religion, contains unquestionably a specific, ethnic character. Due to its having both fundamental elements, ethnic and world, Christianity has become the religion for many nations."[21] Such a rationale led Ebina to claim the need for an accommodating adjustment of Shinto and Christianity. Strictly speaking, this approach was not the eclectic combination of both religions but the "adjustment of the universal and the particular.[22]

"We are allowed to see a religion like Shinto as part of Christianity. Why should we contrast it with Christianity for argument?" challenged Ebina.[23]

> Although there are four religions in Japan, namely, Shinto, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Christianity, only one God of the universe is being worshipped. It is like the various denominations in the West all worshipping the same heavenly Father. From God's side, all four religions, superior or inferior, are the same in enlightening humankind.[24]

Ebina was certainly in the stream of liberal theology, and he promoted a return to traditional Japanese religiosity and to an amalgamation of traditional religion with Christianity. Ebina stood in opposition to Uemura who consistently claimed to combine "fulfillment" and "confrontation" by placing an emphasis on redemption and the atonement of Jesus Christ.

In any event, a spirit of accommodation comprised Ebina's view of self-real-

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[19] Ebina, *Nihon Kokumin to Kirisutokyo no Enka* (The Affinity between the Japanese Nation and Christianity) (Tokyo, 1930), 107.

[20] Ebina, *Nihon Kokumin to Kirisutokyo no Enka*, 105.

[21] Ebina, *Nihon Kokumin to Kirisutokyo no Enka*, 106.

[22] Cf. Yoshitaka Kumano, *Nihon Kirisutokyo Shingaku Shiso Shi* (A History of Christian Theological Thought) (Tokyo: Shinkyo Shuppan Sha, 1968), 155.

[23] Ebina, *Nihon Kokumin to Kirisutokyo no Enka*, 106.

[24] Ebina, "Nihon Shukyo no Susei" (Trend of the Japanese Religions), *Rikugo Zasshi* (Tokyo, February 1986).

ization. This has often been called "individuality in Christian humanism." Through his advocacy of *jinkaku shugi* (personalism), Ebina provided a way of correlation with the forthcoming "*Taisho* democracy" which advocated respect for human personality during the period following the Meiji Era.[25] Ebina also made correlation with the traditional Japanese religious mind which was characterized by a "sympathetic response of the heart."[26]

Ebina's involvement in social and political matters was that of accommodation in contrast to Uemura's confrontation. Ebina expanded the significance of the gospel to a position of wide cultural and political engagement. In accord with the movement of *Jiyu Minken Undo* (People's Rights Movement) for which the Meiji government nationalized Shinto, he advocated a Shintoistic Christianity; he attempted to accommodate Japanese traditional morals within Christianity. Charles Germany has this to say: "His theology gave foundation to the affirmation of culture and for a position of Christian responsibility towards the issues of society."[27] Ebina was liberal with respect to Christian traditional views and conservative with respect to the religious moralism of the Japanese. In him the liberal and conservative positions, however, were not contradictory to each other, but rather formed a "logic of accommodation."[28]

Thus Ebina has been identified by many as an advocate of Japanese-style Christianity. He no doubt came up with the idea of "Shintoistic Christianity," but he maintained his faith within the Christian church. He had gone through good Confucian discipline, which he utilized as a bridge to Christianity. He located Christianity as a lineal extension of Confucianism. In him, Confucianism became a channel to approach Christianity, and his Christianity was consequently characterized by Confucianism. However, it was definitely clear that Confucianism itself did not dictate Ebina's decision to embrace the Christian faith. Ebina chose not Confucianism but Christianity in reference to his self-realized subjectivity. It was his self-realized subjectivity that made it possible for him to use the logic of accommodation in his "analogical" development experience from Confucianism to Christianity.

The emergence and the development of the Ebina-Uemura debate in the early period of Protestantism in Japan can still have extensive implications for theological currents in a country where Christianity continues to be a small minority religion and its promulgation, indigenization, enculturation, and contextualization are yet to be seen. Ebina's liberal theological position, though it has faded into obscurity, requires a renewed and careful investigation.

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[25] Cf. *Kindai Nihon to Kirisutokyo, Taisho-Showa Hen* (Modern Japan and Christianity, Taisho and Showa Period), ed. Yasushi Kuyama (Tokyo, Sobunsha, 1956), 103 ff.; also see Akio Dohi, 288.

[26] The term is used in Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1963), 5.

[27] C. H. Germany, *Protestant Theologies in Modern Japan: A History of Dominant Theological Currents from 1920-1960* (Tokyo: International Institute for the Study of Religions, 1965), 41.

[28] Cf. Kumano, *Nihon Kirisutokyo Shingaku Shiso Shi*, 155.

Post War Lutheran Unity in Japan

David L. Vikner
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The All Lutheran Free Conference (ALFC) held its first meeting in Tokyo in February, 1950. Participants included representatives from the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC), plus the two pre-war overseas mission agencies and the eight post-war missions from Norway and the United States. The ALFC met four times in 1950, twice in 1951, and thereafter once a year. At its eighth meeting, held at Nara, October 14-15, 1953, the ALFC took the following action:

> Voted that a committee consisting of two representatives from each of the groups in the All Lutheran Free Conference be asked to prepare a doctrinal basis and church organization plan, with the view of bringing about Lutheran unity in Japan.[1]

The Committee on Lutheran Unity (CLU) gathered for its first meeting at Kobe on January 28, 1954. It was a typical Lutheran beginning. Most of the day was spent in hearing and discussing two theological papers. These were "The Theological Implications of Lutheran Unity in Japan," by Paul Heerboth, LCMS missionary; and "The Practical Implications of Lutheran Unity in Japan," by Leif Salomonsen, Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS) missionary. Even at this early date differences surfaced on the matters of Bible and Word, the nature of the church, and the relationship between national church and districts. At the second meeting, April 21-22, 1954, papers on Word and Church were presented by Otto Theis, LCMS theologian, and Arne Gronning, Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) missionary. These papers were helpful contributions in the drafting of the committee's concluding documents.

At the third CLU meeting, May 12, 1954, Hajimi Inadomi, Chairman of the seven member JELC Commission on Lutheran Unity, presented from the JELC perspective seven principles for Lutheran union in Japan. These principles advocated (1) one national church and not a federation of autonomous districts, (2) one national ministerium, (3) ordination by the national church, (4) the placement of all Japanese pastors and evangelists by the national church, (5) the placement of missionaries

[1] ALFC Minutes, October 14-15, 1953.

by the national convention upon the recommendations of the districts, (6) budgets for both the national church and the districts, and (7) the drafting of a confessional statement as the basis for union. Following the discussion of these and other issues the committee decided to appoint two sub-committees to draft documents on the subjects of "Doctrinal Witness" and "Organizational Recommendations" for consideration, revision, and adoption as bases for the formation of one Lutheran Church in Japan.

Before the end of 1954 the initial drafts of the two documents were completed. For the next three years, after frequent meetings of the CLU and its sub-committees, with substantial counsel from supporting agencies overseas, the final drafts were approved at a meeting on March 7, 1957. A proposal was made that the name of the new Lutheran Church should be the same as that of the Lutheran Church of China, the Justification by Faith Church, in Chinese *Xin I Hue*. Using the same characters in Japanese the name would be *Shin Gi Kai*. On December 5, 1955, the committee rejected this proposal and recommended the name of the JELC, *Nippon Fukuin Ruteru Kyokai*. Luther would have preferred the Chinese name. At the November 28, 1956 meeting of the CLU, the Lutheran Brethren Mission and the LCMS announced their withdrawal from participation in the unity movement. The Lutheran Brethren were concerned that the organizational recommendations weakened the role of the mission agencies in the districts. The LCMS regarded the Doctrinal Witness as being an inadequate basis for organic union.

At the CLU's final meeting on March 7, 1957, Chitose Kishi, JELC President, was requested to convene the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) for the new Lutheran Church, meeting in Kobe, April 17, 1957. The CDC would be made up of three pastors and two laymen from the JELC, two missionaries from each of the mission agencies cooperating with the JELC, and from each body not cooperating with the JELC one Japanese church worker, one layman, and two missionaries.

Grist for the CDC were three statements drawn up by the CLU. These were called *Doctrinal Witness, Faith and Practice*, and *Organizational Recommendations*. Some of the members of the CLU were not satisfied to declare their unity on the basis of the Lutheran Confessions to which they all subscribed in one way or another. Following discussion, the committee decided to draft a doctrinal statement as "a simple witness to the fundamental Scriptural truths of Lutheranism." As may be expected in such a statement, attempts were made to accommodate the non-negotiable positions of some of the participants. The Holy Scriptures were declared to be "infallible" to satisfy some representatives from both Europe and America. To satisfy the NLM, a lay movement from Norway, attention was called to the gifts of grace from the Holy Spirit to all believers for daily living and specific ministries. The fifteen articles of the Witness were grouped under the Reformation slogans of *Sola Scriptura, Sola Fide*, and *Sola Gratia*.

The *Faith and Practice* statement was a warning against accommodating Christian faith and practice to those of other religious communities in Japan. A permanent faith and practice commission was recommended "to study the problem of developing a positive Christian tradition in Japan." The *Organizational Recommendations* affirmed that "the prime organizational unity of the Church is the local congregation." It provided for jurisdictional districts, a national ordained ministry, missionary organizations, financing channels, and district boundaries. It attempted to

protect the respective roles of the national church, the districts, and the mission agencies.[2] Given the differing viewpoints of the JELC and the mission agencies this was not an easy task. One of the Norwegian missionaries described the process as putting one table cloth over twelve tables.

The CDC began its work on June 6, 1957. Nine groups chose to participate in this next step towards Lutheran unity in Japan. These were the Augustana Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church (USA), the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Japan Lutheran Missionary Association (ULCA), the Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland, the Lutheran Free Church of Norway, the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, the Norwegian Missionary Society, and the Suomi Synod Mission (USA). Dr. Chitose Kishi was elected chairman of the committee, and a sub-committee of two Japanese pastors, two missionaries, and one Japanese laymen were selected to draft the initial constitution and bylaws. For the next four years, through a time-consuming process of draftings, revisions, negotiations, and consultations, a final draft of the constitution and by-laws for the new Lutheran Church in Japan was approved by the CDC on March 6-7, 1961.

As a member of the first drafting sub-committee, I have vivid memories of the struggles to agree upon concepts, terminology, and language. I discovered that the intricacies of the Japanese language were sometimes as puzzling to the Japanese pastors as to the missionaries. In its chapter on faith the constitution accepted the three historic creeds and the Lutheran Confessions. It further stated that "the JELC believes that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, given by the Holy Spirit, and are the only clear and perfect standard of faith and practice, according to which all doctrines and teachings are to be judged."[3] The structure of the new church followed closely the CLU organizational recommendations.

"The Convention to Declare Intention to Unite" was called to meet at the Kobe Bible Institute October 22-23, 1961. The following categories of delegates participated: from the JELC and its related mission agencies, 25; from the ELC-related Tokai Lutheran Church, 10; from the churches related to the three Norwegian missions, 12; and from the Suomi Synod, 2. Appropriately, the festive October meeting began with a worship service at which two pioneer missionaries preached, Dr. J. M. T. Winther and Dr. A. J. Stirewalt. After Bible study, speeches, and a panel discussion, the high point of the meeting was the presentation of the statement entitled "A Declaration of Intent for a United Lutheran Church in Japan." In the presence of one hundred colleagues, representatives of the five following agencies signed the declaration: the JELC, the Tokai Evangelical Lutheran Church, Japan Mission of the Suomi Synod, the Norwegian Missionary Society, and the Lutheran Free Church of Norway, Japan Mission.[4]

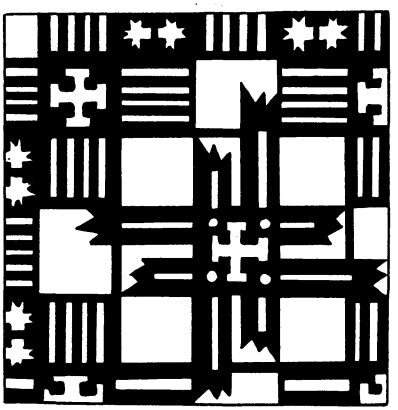
While the unity negotiations were under way from 1954 to 1961, all the churches and mission agencies were busily engaged in proclaiming the gospel, forming congregations, training leaders, and developing jurisdictions in their designated territories. Four overseas agencies were affiliated with the 11,000-member JELC. These were the Augustana Lutheran Church, the Danish

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[2] CLU Minutes, March 7, 1957, Three Statements: *Doctrinal Witness, Faith and Practice,* and *Organizational Recommendations.*

[3] JELC Constitution, Chapter II, Article 2

[4] "The Convention to Declare Intention to Unite" Minutes, October 22-23, 1961.



Missionary Society, the Evangelical Lutheran Association of Finland, the United Lutheran Church in America, and, after the formation of the LCA in 1962, the Suomi Synod. Under the initiative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Free Church from America (both later part of the ALC), the Tokai Evangelical Lutheran Church with 850 members was constituted in time to sign the "Declaration of Intent" in its own name. The two Norwegian-related Japanese churches were constituted after the "Declaration of Intent" assembly. The Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church, founded by the Lutheran Free Church of Norway and the Norwegian Missionary Society (Church of Norway), was constituted in November, 1961, and the West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, with Norwegian Lutheran Mission sponsorship, in the spring of 1962. At the time of their beginnings both of these churches had about 700 members each.

Thus, instead of ten foreign mission agencies, there were now four Japanese churches squarely facing the choice of joining or not joining a new Lutheran Church in Japan. The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Tokai Lutheran Church decided to join. At its constituting convention in 1961 the Kinki Lutheran Church "voiced its intention to join in the united church but deferred action on when it would do so." The West Japan Lutheran Church at its 1962 constituting convention "decided for the present simply to send observers to the united Church's constituting convention."[5]

Though the constituting convention for the united Lutheran Church in Japan was initially scheduled for Reformation Day, 1962, it did not occur until the following year. On May 3, 1963, representatives of the "old" JELC and the Tokai Evangelical Lutheran Church (ALC-related church) officially adopted the constitution of the "new" JELC, bringing into being a new church.

Why did things turn out as they did? Immediately after World War II there was one Lutheran Church and ten mission agencies in Japan. Now there are five Lutheran churches. The related mission agencies of all five of these churches were active in merger negotiations for longer or shorter periods of time. The Lutheran Brethren Mission and the Missouri Synod Mission dropped out midstream, forming two churches, the Lutheran Brethren Church of Japan and the Japan Lutheran Church (*Nippon Ruteru Kyodan*). For historical and theological reasons, the low church Lutheran Brethren people, both in Japan and elsewhere, were uneasy around mainline Lutherans, feeling more comfortable with the conservative evangelical community. The LCMS participated actively in the CLU from its first meeting in January of 1954 until November, 1956, when it withdrew. Since Dr. O. H. Theis, director of the LCMS theological training program in Japan, contributed substantially and wisely

[5] *Lutheran World Information*, 16/62,99.

If it had been possible for the first leaders to carry through the entire negotiation, it may have resulted in a wider union.

towards the drafting of the "Doctrinal Witness," many of the committee participants were surprised and disappointed when Missouri left. We were told that the Witness was "an inadequate basis for organic unity." A condition for LCMS participation seemed to be the acceptance by all parties of its explication of biblical revelation and the Lutheran Confessions. The Japan Lutheran community was caught in Missouri's swinging between "evangelical" and "scholastic" confessionalism, frequently represented by the changes in missionary personnel.[6] The real power in the merger negotiations was that of the LCMS, and not that of the Japan Lutheran Church, the LCMS-related church constituted in 1968.

The three Norwegian missions came out of three distinct traditions in Norway. The Norwegian Missionary Society, though an independent agency, is the official overseas mission arm of the Church of Norway. The Lutheran Free Church of Norway is an independent church that broke away from the state church in the nineteenth century, largely on the issues of church-state relationships and congregational autonomy. The Norwegian Lutheran Mission is a lay movement that grew out of mid-nineteenth century spiritual revivalism in Norway. Though their members remained in the Church of Norway, they established and maintained para-church, lay-led worship centers and developed an independent overseas mission agency, the Norwegian Lutheran Mission.

Though the three Norwegian missions occupied contiguous areas in central Japan and co-worked in many ways, they formed two churches. Missionaries of the Norwegian Missionary Society and the Lutheran Free Church of Norway were able to bridge their differences and form the Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Norwegian Lutheran Mission, holding to its uniqueness, established the West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Though there were certainly a variety of viewpoints on Lutheran unity held by members of the three Norwegian missions and the resulting two Japanese churches, it seems to me that there were four major reasons why these Lutheran colleagues chose not to join the united Lutheran Church in Japan after a long process of negotiation. These were in the areas of theology, church polity, the ministry, and home board relationships. Though all CLU participants affirmed the "Doctrinal Witness," the Norwegians continued to be uneasy about "liberal" trends in the old JELC, with its connections to the ULCA and National Council of Churches and its pursuit of contemporary theological thinking in Japan and elsewhere.

As far as church polity is concerned, positions in the merger negotiations ranged from a highly centralized national church to a federated church with autonomous synods. A compromise solution supported a

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[6] F. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 299.

national church structure with well defined roles for the synods and the national entity. The Norwegians and their Japanese colleagues felt that the proposed structure, as well as the centralized experience of the old JELC, jeopardized the freedom of their synods to preserve and communicate their unique insights and practices.

In the merger negotiations questions arose as to the training, ordination, and placement of pastors. Here again the Norwegians and their Japanese colleagues were not fully satisfied with the constitutional provisions in these ministry areas. Though both the Tokyo, JELC-related seminary and the Kobe, Norwegian-related seminary were endorsed, questions remained as to which school should be dominant in a small church. Though the constitution carefully defined the roles of the synods and the national church in the ordination and placement of pastors, the Norwegians and their Japanese colleagues feared the Japanese and the old JELC proclivity towards centralization. As member-supported mission agencies, the Norwegian missions were dependent upon their home bases for direction and support. My impression was that the Norwegian home boards supported their missionaries and Japan-related churches in their cautious approach to Lutheran unity in Japan.

I believe there was one other factor that inhibited a more comprehensive Lutheran union in Japan. The change in leadership from the participating groups over the years not only delayed the process, as new people had to catch up, but brought new questions and new concerns. If it had been possible for the first leaders to carry through the entire negotiation, it may have resulted in a wider union. I am thinking of people like Chitose Kishi, JELC; William Danker, LCMS; Olaf Hansen, ALC; Anders Hoaas, Norwegian Lutheran Mission; Sigurd Aske, Lutheran Free Church of Norway; Leif Salomonsen, Norwegian Missionary Society; and David Vikner, LCA. I will always admire the senior leadership of the old JELC for the gracious way in which they related to the post-war influx of new Lutheran mission agencies. These giants were Hajime Inadomi, Kiyoshi Hirai, and Chitose Kishi, all of whom "have finished the course." I regret that their dream of comprehensive Lutheran union in Japan was not achieved.

The next round of Lutheran merger negotiations will not be between one Japanese church and several overseas mission agencies, but between several autonomous Japanese churches. It will be a difficult task. Judging by experience, it is difficult for mission agencies to merge, and it is even a more difficult process for independent churches with their mission-ingrained biases and their unique developing traditions.

Information was gleaned from the following documents:

All Lutheran Free Conference Minutes, October 1965

Augustana Lutheran Mission Japan Minutes, 1954-60

Constitution Drafting Committee Minutes, June 1957

Committee on Lutheran Unity Minutes, January 1954-March 1957

Kenneth Dale, "United Lutheran Church in Japan Nearing Reality," Lutheran Companion, *April 28, 1961, p. 15*

Japan Lutheran Committee for Cooperative Mission Minutes, July 8-11, 1963

David L. Vikner, Letters to supporting congregations in the U.S.A., 1950-58

David L. Vikner, Monthly reports to the Augustana Lutheran Mission, Japan, 1957-58

JELC Centennial Digest

As part of the observance of its centennial, the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (1893-1993) is engaged in a five-year historical project of publishing centennial historical essays. The project is directed by Prof. Yoshikazu Tokuzen, Professor of the History of Christianity at the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Theological College and Seminary, Tokyo, together with an editorial board. Prof. Tokuzen is himself in the process of preparing a definitive history of the JELC. Contributions to the centennial project were solicited from scholars, pastors and lay persons.

We present here an overview of essays written for the centennial project, based on the first five numbers of *Hyakunen Shi Ronshu* (April 1989–October 1991). Five more numbers are projected before the centennial project is completed.

No. 1 (April 1989)

Prof. Mikio Sumiya, "Urban Mission in Japan"

Prof. Yoshikazu Tokuzen, "The American Lutheran Church at the Time of the Beginning of the Japan Mission, 1870-90"

Rev. Teiichi Maeda, "History of the JELC Book of Worship" (comments on the translation of the Common Service Book)

Prof. Keizo Nishi, "Christ for Your Neighbors" (a tribute to early ELC missionaries, especially Olaf Hansen)

Rev. Katsunari Kozai, "The JELC and Its Encounter with Social Issues"

No. 2 (October 1989)

Dr. David L. Vikner, "LCA in World Mission, 1842-1942" (translation by Nakazawa Shunsuke)

Prof. Nobuo Sakai, "Biography of Pastor Ryohei Yamanouchi" [first Japanese Lutheran Pastor] (first installment)

Prof. Yoshikazu Tokuzen, Moderator, "Forum on Church Architecture in Japan—Past and Present" (first installment)

Prof. Keizo Nishi, "In the Beginning Was the Word" (tribute to post-war ELC Japan missionaries)

Rev. Kiyoshi Shirakawa, book review of Nobuo Sakai, *Hakata Lutheran Church: 80 Year History* (1989)

Prof. Yoshikazu Tokuzen, Annotated Bibliography of the History of the JELC (English and Japanese sources included)

No. 3 (May 1990)

Dr. David L. Vikner, "LCA in World Mission, 1942-1882" (translated by Nakazawa Shunsuke)

Prof. Nobuo Sakai, "Biography of Pastor Ryohei Yamanouchi" (concluded)

Prof. Yoshikazu Tokuzen, Moderator, "Forum on Church Architecture in Japan" (concluded)

Prof. Keizo Nishi, "Youth and Student Evangelism: Work of the JELC Student Centers in Tokyo"

No. 4 (January 1991)

Rev. Shiro Aoyama, "Evangelism Through Literature" (by the former director of Seibunsha, Japan Lutheran Literature Society)
Rev. Tadao Nakao, "Dr. Kishi and I" (personal remembrance of the former head of the JELC by one of his baptized converts)
Rev. Seiko Kadowaki, "JELC Diakonic Work: Its History and Projects"

No. 5 (October 1991)

Prof. Keizo Nishi, "Celebrating Easter During Wartime" (recollection of two Easters during World War II)
Prof. Yoshikazu Tokuzen, "The Early Mission Board and Early Japan Missionaries" (incorporates letters of Bessie Brown, spouse of Rev. James A. B. Scherer, Lutheran missionary pioneer)
Prof. Yoshikazu Tokuzen, Moderator, "Forum on Post-War JELC: Life During and After World War II" (first installment)
Rev. Sachio Hoshiyama, "The Asmara Declaration: Birth of the JELC as a Self-supporting Church, 1969" (by a former president of the JELC in tribute to the leadership of another former president, Rev. Sueaki Utsumi)
Prof. Masami Ishii, "JELC Participation In and Withdrawal from the Kyodan [United Church of Christ in Japan], 1941-1947"

—Compiled by J. Scherer with assistance from Y. Ishida

Centennial Celebrations

Chicago Area

September 6-7, 1992

"A Century of Proclamation (1892-1992)." Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1100 East 55th St., Chicago, IL 60615.

Sponsored by the Japan Centennial Committee of the Center for Global Missions of LSTC in Cooperation with the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Friends of Japan are invited to contribute gifts to the Chitose Kishi Memorial Scholarship Fund at the Japan Lutheran College and Seminary.

Sunday, September 6

3:00 p.m. Opening worship—Dr. Dean Lueking, Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, IL, preacher
4:00 p.m. Lecture: "The Mission of God in a Society Without God: A Japanese Lutheran View"—Dr. Naozumi Eto, Japan Lutheran Theological College and Seminary, Tokyo
6:00 p.m. Centennial Banquet: "Remembering the Past"—Dr. William E. Lesher, President of LSTC, Master of Ceremonies. Speakers include: Dr. James A. Scherer ("The Early Period"), Dr. Alice Marshall and the

Rev. Norman Lund ("The Middle Period"), and Ms. Kristine Stache and Mr. Charles Frederickson ("Recent Years")

Monday, September 7

8:30 a.m. Morning devotions—Ms. Ineko Inoue, JELC

9:00 a.m. Lecture: "Japan on the Present World Stage"—Dr. Laura Hein, Northwestern University, Evanston

10:30 a.m. Lecture: "Interdependent Mission"—Dr. Naozumi Eto, JLTC/S and Dr. Henry French, Division for Global Mission, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

1:30 p.m. Small group dialogue

3:00 p.m. Closing Eucharist service: "Praise for the Past, Faith for the Future"—Dr. Kenneth Dale, JLTC/S, preacher

March 31, 1993

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

9:00 a.m. Chapel service commemorating Japan Centennial—Dr. Henry French, ELCA-DGM, preacher

10:00 a.m. LSTC Community Forum—Dr. Yoshiro Ishida and former J-3 missionaries who were students of LSTC are among the participants

Twin Cities Area

September 10, 1992

"Reminiscence and Renaissance: Lutherans in Japan, 1892-1992." Luther-Northwestern Theological Seminary, 2481 Como Avenue West, St. Paul, MN 55105.

Sponsored by the Global Mission Institute in cooperation with the Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

10:00 a.m. Worship in Chapel of the Incarnation—Dr.Henry French, ELCA Division for Global Mission, preacher

11:00 a.m. Historic videos and movies—Campus Center

1:45 p.m. Lecture: "Japan's Role in the World"—Dr. Wesley Jacobson, University of Minnesota, St. Paul—Auditorium

3:15 p.m. Convocation lecture: "The Mission of God in a Society Without God: A Japanese Lutheran View"—Dr. Naozumi Eto, Japan Lutheran Theological College, Tokyo

4:30 p.m. Panel discussion, "The Role of the ELCA in Mission in Japan Toward the Second Century"—Participants include Dr. Naozumi Eto, Rev. Hiroshi Suzuki, Dr. Henry French, and Ms. Kelley Griffith Lewis

6:30 p.m. Centennial banquet—"Vignettes and Reminiscences," featuring former missionaries to Japan. Music: Ms. Michio Koizumi. Luther-Northwestern Dining Room

South-Eastern Area

ELCA synods and congregations in the south-eastern area (Region 9) are also making plans to commemorate the JELC centennial. These synods have had a particularly close relationship with the Lutheran missionary effort in Japan since its inception in 1892. During the first fifty years of the JELC, the majority of American Lutheran missionaries serving in Japan were recruited and sent by synods related to the old "United Synod of the South," one of the synods which united to form the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) in 1918.

The Rev. Shunsuke Nakagawa, a JELC pastor, served as "pastor in residence" in the South Carolina Synod from March through May, 1992. The Synod has a "Companion Synod" relationship with the JELC.

The South Carolina Synod will host a Global Mission Event on the campus of Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, in 1993. At that event the Japan mission centennial will be commemorated, and Japanese church visitors will be welcomed.

The Rev. Luther Kistler, a former ELCA missionary pastor in Japan, will lead a delegation of forty members from the Florida Synod of the ELCA on a tour of Japan from April 16-30, 1993. Other observances by congregations and synods of Region 9 are in various stages of preparation.

Celebrations in Japan

The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church has planned a number of celebrations at both the national and regional (district) levels, according to the JELC *Centennial News*. These centennial observances will provide occasions for church members to reflect on the second century of Lutheran evangelism in Japan, to examine the church's roots and look forward to the future, and to learn from brothers and sisters around the world, especially sister churches in Asia. Consideration is being given to the construction of a "centennial mission memorial sanctuary" in Tokyo. A JELC Church History Symposium is also underway (see previous article on JELC Centennial Digest).

In May, 1992, the Tokai District of the JELC undertook a "roots tour" of the United States, centering on the region of Minnesota. The Japan Lutheran Theological College and Seminary, in cooperation with the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, has announced plans for an Urban Evangelism Seminar to be held in Chicago from September 1-12, 1992. The seminar is open to Japanese clergy and laity as well as seminary students.

The JELC Centennial Anniversary Assembly, which is expected to bring together 3000 lay and clergy members of the JELC for three days of celebration, has been scheduled for Kumamoto from August 7-9, 1993. Kumamoto has been one of the major centers of Japanese Lutheranism since 1898. The JELC national assembly will commemorate the first worship service held by Lutherans in Japan on Easter Sunday, April 2, 1893, in Saga, Japan. The service was led by missionaries J. A. B. Scherer and R. B. Peery, with the assistance of Japanese evangelist Ryohei Yamanouchi.

Dates and locations for regional or district celebrations in Japan as reported by *Centennial News* are as follows:

Northern District (Sapporo, Hokkaido)—November 9, 1991
Tokai District—November 3, 1992
Eastern District—November 3, 1992
Kyushu District (Saga)—May 4-5, 1993
Western District—will support the national assembly (Kumamoto, August 7-9, 1993)
Kansai District—will support the national assembly (Kumamoto, August 7-9, 1993)

Response

Dear Mr. Klein,

I just finished reading the April 1992 edition of *Currents*, Volume 19, Number 2. I am deeply concerned by Jon Temme's article, "Pastoral Counseling: Under the Cross."

Temme's article, in my opinion, tends to stereotype CPE in general as training for amateur psychologists. His conclusion that "CPE buys into technocratic ideology and its values" does not consider the fact that in CPE, it is the pastor who reminds hospital personnel that the patient in room 505 has a name, a family, a church, and a faith. It is the hospital pastor (chaplain) that provides a prophetic voice proclaiming that the patient is not just another number. Chaplains, in many cases, do indeed write in the patient's chart, not to record "therapeutic interventions" as Temme states, but to remind the doctor that the patient is more than just broken or diseased body parts lying in a bed. Temme needs to realize that chaplains stand in the breach reminding modern technology that human life is sacred.

While I cannot speak for all CPE supervisors, I can say that my students do not approach patients wondering what the "right therapy" might be for a patient. My students are taught to ask theological questions, engage patients and families on a relationship level, and attempt to make a "pastoral diagnosis" so that appropriate ministry can be offered. "Faith conversations," as Temme calls it, are considered confidential and are not recorded in the chart. In CPE, the ministry of "Word and Sacrament" begins with the theology of the incarnation. Temme seems to draw the conclusion that CPE is void of Word and Sacrament which is, in my opinion, an erroneous generalization.

I direct your attention to page 115, column 2, paragraph one, regarding the student's remarks that he was not permitted to read scripture in a hospital. To a critical, objective reader this statement sounds like an excerpt taken out of context. Temme fails to consider the fact that the CPE supervisor in question may have another version of this account. Your reading audience should be able to hear both sides of this story and allowed to draw their own conclusions.

To allow such an article to be published without some critical reflection from CPE supervisors or an ACPE seminary representative is, in my opinion, irresponsible journalism. Temme clearly has a negative bias regarding the contribution CPE makes in the theological education of seminarians. It is unfortunate that the editors of *Currents* apparently failed to see the biases in the proof reading of his manuscript. It is even more unfortunate that Temme submits a critical article that has the distinct flavor of someone who has not enrolled in a CPE program. Regrettably, the article does not indicate how much CPE, if any, the author has had.

Finally, while I experience this article as a "cheap shot" at CPE, I do have a great deal of hope that Temme's article may be the spark that initiates more dialogue between CPE supervisors and seminary personnel.

With my warmest regards,

Reverend John Valentino
Supervisor for clinical pastoral education

Dear Editor:

I am glad for the opportunity to reply to concerns of Pastor Valentino expressed in response to my article, "Pastoral Counseling Under the Cross." I too share his hope that my article might be a "spark that initiates more dialogue between CPE supervisors and seminary personnel. Indeed, I hope such dialogue would include broader issues of what constitutes distinctly pastoral care from the doctrinal insight of evangelical catholicism.

I must begin by correcting Pastor Valentino's perception that my article bears a "clearly... negative bias" towards CPE. This judgment misinterprets the thrust of the article which sought to explore what makes counseling *distinctly pastoral under a theologia crucis.* I did not wish to take random pot-shots at anyone's ministry, but to explore the theology which undergirds care given in the name of Christ *crucified.*

Thus, I do not wish to negate the good that CPE brings to hospital settings as Pastor Valentino implies. In increasingly humanistic institutional settings, CPE students and supervisors no doubt do good. But is that good rooted in a spiritually-enriched humanistic approach? Or is it rooted in *The Good*, the Good News, communicated beyond human means and interventions through Word and Sacrament ministry in the name of Christ?

Pastor Valentino misses this thrust when he trivializes Word and Sacrament by equating it with incarnational theology. He says, "In CPE, the ministry of 'Word and Sacrament' begins with the theology of the incarnation." The catch-phrase of incarnational theology has been used to justify so much under the rubric of "being there" that it has lost most of its import. Poor theology and poor methodology can also "be there." But Word and Sacrament ministry is more than "being there"—it is Christ being there in means that are beyond human interventions.

This is my concern, in relationship to CPE or any other methodology. I want to bring a critical view, in the best sense of that word from the faith and theological stance of evangelical catholicism. To explore a methodology and issue from a doctrinal position is not a negative bias but a faith matter which goes beyond biases, seeking to open further dialogue and discussion. If those who advocate CPE's methods and theology regard criticism as a negative bias they obfuscate the truth that there clearly is a doctrinal stance which undergirds CPE. Like any other faith stance, it must be explored and subjected to ongoing re-formation and re-formulation.

Toward that end I encourage the dialogue for which both Pastor Valentino and I hope.

Yours truly,

Jon M. Temme

Book Reviews

Making Moral Decisions: A Christian Approach to Personal and Social Ethics. By Paul Jersild. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991. 128 pages. Paper. $8.95.

The way an individual thinks ethically depends largely on where one is standing. The same is true of a parish. Jersild's book addresses those decision-makers and offers them a helpful and complete process for getting there. Within the text, the first three chapters involve laying out what is necessary for making choices as an individual. Jersild's ideas are peppered with several well-constructed case studies to fill out his vision. One is quickly seduced by his method as one reacts and responds to the characters in each moral situation, discerning one's own ethical choices.

He suggests that before moral decision making happens, we must ask who we are in terms of our religious heritage and convictions. For Jersild, this includes being informed by the Bible as a resource to provide for an ethic of love toward our neighbor. This ethic is a response to God's love and offers us an imperative of care which sensitizes us to the condition of those in need. This imperative to love is rooted in the indicative of God's love. Morality is thus a constituting factor of our lives because we are beings-in-relation to our neighbor. Our decision-making process involves knowledge of the situation, application of this love ethic, a willingness to act on our beliefs, and the courage to be vulnerable, that is, to love our neighbor. Moral decisions thus provide for our self-identity.

In the next chapter, this process of decision making is tested more extensively with several more involved case studies about euthanasia, homosexuality, and ethics in the workplace. The final two chapters move the discussion from individual to corporate self-identity and ethical response. Jersild argues that the personal and social realm are interrelated and advocates for a church which gives space for all political and economic persuasions of decision-makers, whether liberal or conservative, Socialist or Republican, to share in the church's witness to society. He clearly realizes this is not an easy task and offers case studies proving his point. However, after showing conclusively how all people in the United States are guided by some form of ideological bias, his suggestion is to provide a process which allows for an atmosphere of give and take within the church community.

Jersild states that the church must be clear about its witness to the Word of God. This includes carrying out both prophetic ministry, which shows how the voices of the needy are not being heard, and an evangelical ministry, which provides for a community which is committed to moral teaching and nurture. On either the individual or social level, then, Jersild concludes that a moral Christian ethic involves both making clear within our community what our theological identity is and responding to the love of God and the needs of our neighbor. Within this process we must both educate ourselves and develop critical means of self-evaluation so that we might live responsibly in the world.

This book is a solid and useful presentation for those who want an introduction to a Christian approach toward ethical thinking. Again, the book is not concerned primarily with what decisions are best for any particular situation or topic, but about the process of decision making itself. It is written in a non-technical, easily accessible style which would serve well as a beginning, and relevant, textbook for a college or seminary course. It would also be useful in an adult forum or as a resource for any congregational committee responsible for making a major decision within a parish.

Eric Utto-Galarneau
East Boston, Massachusetts

Variety and Unity in New Testament Thought. By John Reumann. Oxford Bible Series. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. xiv and 330 pages. Cloth, $55.00; paper, $19.95.

The purpose of The Oxford Bible Series is to inform interested general readers about the methods and results of modern critical biblical studies. Earlier volumes discussed *The Gospels and Jesus* (Graham N. Stanton) and *Pauline Christianity* (John Ziesler). Now John Reumann gives us an eminently useful volume that concentrates on the last third of the New Testament canon often unknown even to otherwise committed and literate Christians.

Reumann divides his material into four sections, with major weight on the third. The first (1-34) discusses the factors raising the problem of theological unity in the New Testament, the canon, and solutions. The second (35-94) briefly discusses themes in Jesus' ministry, the witness of the four Gospels, and Pauline theology, with frequent references to the volumes by Stanton and Ziesler. Part three (95-247) discusses in greater depth the "many other voices of faith within the chorus of the New Testament canon": the Pauline school, 1 Peter, Hebrews, James, the Johannine letters and Revelation, and "two blunt apologists for early Christianity," Jude and 2 Peter. Throughout he stresses the specificity of each writer in order to discuss and issue of "The Oneness of the Many in New Testament Faith" in part four (277-92). Reumann ultimately sees the unity in the meaning of Christ, that has to be extended to meet new situations as the church develops. The NT is a Jesus book which chronicles the developing experience of faith in the early church. Jesus and faith are thus the keys to unity—and they call for response and interpretation still today.

This is popularization at its best, challenging the reader to think with the writer. Reumann knows the material relevant to the neglected books of the NT, identifies what is significant, and then presents it attractively. Reumann provides a useful bibliography that gives guidance for further study. I will use this book to orient seminary students to the challenges and delights of NT theology. Pastors and Associates in Ministry would find this an excellent book to review and renew their understanding of and enthusiasm for NT study. It is truly *multum in parvo*, a great deal in small compass.

Edgar Krentz
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives. Edited by Ronald E. Clements. Cambridge University Press, 1991. 448 pages. Paper. $18.95.

In this collection of essays eighteen authors present sociological, anthropological, and political perspectives on the faith and history of Israel. Mayes, for example, shows that the great Alt and Noth were heavily indebted to the sociology of Weber, while the sociology of Durkheim, which is marked by positivism, reductionism, relativism, and determinism, dominates contemporary discussions. He also points out that recent sociological theories allow more room for human freedom than does Durkheim and recognize that great women and men do make history—a point denied by some contemporary Old Testament scholars who find more resources for reconstructing Israel in archaeology than in the extant literary sources of the Bible. In another stimulating essay, Williamson shows that both Ezekiel and Second Isaiah had an inclusive definition of Israel and that this position was later affirmed also by the Chronicler. A more ethnic understanding of Israel is attributed to Ezra and results in part from his association with the Persian authorities, who used him to try to keep order in their empire. All the essays reflect the ferment and freshness of present Old Testament studies.

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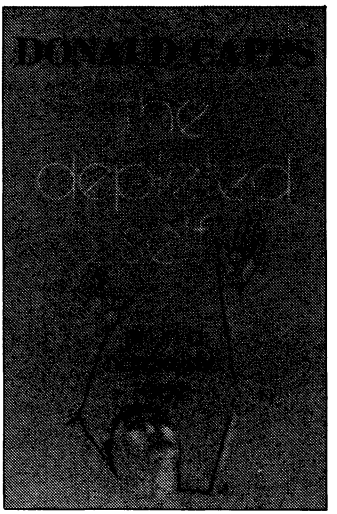
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Preaching Helps

First Sunday in Advent—Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, Series A

The Church as Song-Bird: From Dark Blue Advent to Bright Epiphany

The greeting card bore the slogan, "Faith is the bird that sings to the dawn while it is still dark." I am not acquainted with the author of that line (Kabir), but I like it and think it captures something of the spirit of Advent.

What does the bird know, chirping away in the pre-dawn hours? Why does it sing? Is it only habit? Perhaps. But in any case, it's a good habit and its song is most welcome.

Politicians and pollsters, economists and environmentalists, activists and editors and high-ranking pentagon officials all offer conflicting scenarios intended to alarm or comfort us, basing their prognostications on trends and studies and statistics. They sing their siren songs, whistle in the dark, or cry "Wolf!" And sometimes they just shriek and howl.

And the church, living in the same world, also raises its voice. That's the church's calling: lifting its voice in speech and song. But our song does not depend on knowing which way the wind is blowing (see Jn 3:8 and Eph 4:14). It's a matter of being filled with the Divine Wind, so that we can all together sing hymns and spiritual songs, making melody to the Lord with all our hearts (Eph 5:19).

The church can't help speaking out and singing out, because, like the early bird, it knows a secret: a new day is dawning. It's called "the secret or mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6:19). Pass it on.

Helping us to hear the mystery and learn the song are three wonderful folks. The author of the First Readings in this issue is Walter F. Taylor, Jr., Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, where he has taught since 1981. Walter has written *Ephesians* in the "Augsburg New Testament Commentary" (1985) and contributed four chapters to *Mission90 Bible Study and Witness: Witnesses to the Word* (1991). In addition he has written many articles and reviews and is in demand as a conference speaker. His current research is on ministry in the Pastoral Epistles, leadership in the early church, Revelation, and evangelism.

After graduating from the Iliff School of Theology in Denver, the Rev. Karen Parker served King of Glory Lutheran Church in Arvada, Colorado, for six years and has now been pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Englewood, Colorado for the past eight years. She is vice-chair of the Board for the Division for Higher Education and Schools (ELCA), and she is a hymn writer. Karen composed the hymn "Stirring Up the Nest," the theme song for the 20th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the ELCA (Anaheim, California, July 1990). As she worked on the lessons for Advent and Christmas, she composed two hymns included with these materials. She says you should feel free to use them.

The author of the Pastoral Reflections for Epiphany is the Rev. Patrick Cabello Hansel, who has been pastor at Fordham Lutheran Church, The Bronx, New York, for about two and a half years now. Previously he was the Director of the South Bronx Ministry Coalition. Fordham Lutheran is a multi-ethnic congregation in an extraordinarily diverse neighborhood. Patrick and his wife Luisa have a young daughter, Natashia, adopted in Chile in the summer of 1991. Patrick combines in his writing, as in his entire ministry, the gifts of the prophet, the poet, and the priest.

With many thanks to our trio of authors, I wish all of you

Good Singing!

Robert H. Smith
Editor of Preaching Helps

First Sunday in Advent November 29, 1992

Psalm 122
Isaiah 2:1-5
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:37-44
or Matthew 21:1-11

FIRST READING

The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which translates the Greek *parousia* ("being present"). The term refers to the being present of Jesus in his birth and also signifies his being present at the end of time. The word was also used for the procession of a king or of gods into a city.

I find, during this semi-penitential season, that many people are tired of the absolute chaos of the pre-Christmas period and long for reflection on what the season is really about.

Advent is a season of "already, not yet," and as such it has three time references. First, Advent prepares for the coming of the Christ as the Bethlehem baby, so it has a past focus. Second, Advent refers to Christ's coming to us in Word and sacraments, so it focuses on the present. And third, Advent is a time of sober preparation for the coming of Christ at the end of time, and so the focus is also on the future.

Our lessons center on two of the three time aspects. In Isaiah we have a vision of the ultimate future. "In days to come" universal harmony will prevail as swords are refashioned into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, "neither shall they learn war any more." In this vision of the future Isaiah once more clarifies God's will and purpose. Human sin will not derail God's plan, nor will Israel's stubbornness. Even that stiff-necked nation will become the vehicle for God's grace and wisdom to come to all people. God will bring about the harmony of which Isaiah writes.

Paul and Matthew call us to prepare for the end by how we live life in the present. The Romans passage utilizes traditional apocalyptic language. Believers are to recognize the time (*kairos*), namely, that it is the hour (*hōra*; NRSV's "moment" is an unfortunate translation) to wake from sleep. *Kairos* designates, of course, the moment of destiny, the pregnant time, the fulfilled time—which is in part what the Christmas for which we are preparing is all about. Further, "the night is far gone, the day is near," another indication that in this late letter Paul still expects the imminent return of Jesus. The verb for "is near" is *ēggiken*, which we will meet again in next Sunday's gospel. The result is that Christians, in the present, are to "live honorably as in the day," i.e., live in light of that new day which is coming. "Honorably" is better translated as "becomingly," living in a way fitting for the new day.

In Matthew the preparation for the end is similar but more pointed. In the Matthaean apocalypse, Jesus speaks of the coming of the Son of Man, what we usually call the second coming or *parousia*. The example of those who lived in the days of Noah highlights the inability to wake up, recognize the hour, and live in light of the coming crisis. The key is v. 42: "Keep awake" (or "watch," *grēgoreō*), the same verb used in Gethsemane (26:38, 40, 41), where the disciples are unable to watch at all. And why should we watch? "For you do not know on what day [cf. 'hour' in v. 44] your Lord is coming." Verse 36, by the way, is a needed corrective for those who seem to know more about the coming of the end than Jesus himself.

As we prepare to celebrate again a past event (the birth of Jesus), the lessons point us to the final end, in light of which we live in the present. WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

O You Who Have Come

O you who have come, who will come again,
Throughout Christendom we raise our "Amen."
We say, "Come, Lord Jesus, to rescue and save,
Come quickly among us, your presence we crave."

Awaken us, Lord, O call us to prayer.
May your holy word our hearts now prepare.
With great expectation, repentant we wait,
God's own incarnation of love celebrate.

O you who have come, who will come again,
Baptized, we become Christ's women and men.
Your advent among us in judgment, yet grace
Enables our witness of confidence and praise.

Tune: Lyons (*LBW* #252)
Text: karen parker

"The Russians are coming! The Russians are coming!" was the title of a cold war era movie. Although it was a comedy, the title triggered in frightened people a sense of urgency and danger in the face of an ominous arrival. How different it sounds in today's post-cold war environment, where on the day of this writing the Russian president is addressing a joint session of the United States Congress!

"Santa Claus is Coming to Town," we hear on radios everywhere. Children throughout the land are counting on it, and parents are getting as much motivational mileage as possible from the "promise/threat." In point of fact, Santa has been a fixture in many shopping malls since Halloween!

"My friend is coming out of the closet tonight, telling her parents that she is a lesbian," a young woman told me. "Needless to say, she is concerned about their reactions and feelings."

"No one is coming for the holidays, we'll be all alone," says a new resident of the area in a voice filled with deep sadness.

Comings of all types shape our lives. What images of coming fill your imagination?

"...so will be the coming of the Son of Man." And how will that be? We don't get a lot of details! What we are given is that the coming will happen in the midst of the ordinary experiences of life, that the timing is unknown and unexpected, and that we had better be awake and ready!

The coming is certain, the timing is not! For Day-Timer-directed, control-oriented people this is difficult! We are not comfortable with the unpredictable. If it's not scheduled, how will we have time for it? If we don't have it on our calendars, how will we be certain to be there? Today's texts remind us that we have no control over the timing, but we can be assured of the coming.

What is most important in this Advent season of preparation for Christ's coming—not once, not twice, but three times, past, present and future—is that we remember *who* it is who is coming. The world says Santa Claus is coming. We know it is Jesus Christ who came, comes, and will come again. Oh, come, oh, come Emmanuel! KP

Second Sunday in Advent December 6, 1992

Psalm 72:1-14 (15-19)
Isaiah 11:1-10
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

FIRST READING

The theme of judgment-salvation dominates the first lesson and the gospel. To understand the Isaiah text, we need to go to the preceding verses in which God acts as a divine forester who trims the dead wood from the people of Israel. "Look, the Sovereign, the Lord of hosts, will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the tallest trees will be cut down, and the lofty will be brought low. He will hack down the thickets of the forest with an ax, and Lebanon with its majestic trees

will fall" (10:33-34). The Lord judges his people. When the Assyrians carted off the people into exile far from their promised land, the fulfillment of the judgment could be seen. But that trumpet blast of judgment is not the end of this symphony, for immediately following the harsh judgment there is a small note, a single voice which raises a new song: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse." And through the leadership of that second David and perfect king, not only will Israel be restored but the creation itself will be transformed (vv. 6-9). Christians, of course, see that promise taken up in the Jesus story.

In the gospel for the day we have the same pattern. "Repent," says John the Baptist. Repent is a word of judgment, of condemnation. Why repent? Because God will zap you if you don't? No, says John; repent, reform your lives, "for the kingdom of heaven has come near." As in Advent One, the verb *ēggiken* is used ("has come near"). Scholars have debated as to exactly how near the kingdom is when that verb is used. The best I can do is to relate it to the birth of our first child. As his head crowned, every person in the delivery room was absolutely focused on the future event which was happening (and in that sense "here") but not yet fully here, either. Life was lived in light of the future, a future which was becoming present. So, says John, accept God's judgment on your lives so that you can be saved.

John's ministry in Matthew provides us two more insights. First, John points beyond himself (vv. 11-12). His ministry centers on the one to whom he witnesses. Second, John's task is to prepare his people by building the highway and making the paths straight (v. 3), even as the ancient Babylonians built great processional highways for their gods. Isa 40:3 picks up that image to talk of the great highway to be built through the desert so that God could lead the people home from exile. Our task as proclaimers is to build the highway through the wilderness, too, so that God will lead God's people home.

The Romans text outlines a wonderful goal for Bible study and proclamation: that "we might have hope" (v. 4). The harmony of v. 5 and the Isaiah quotation in v. 12 build on the first lesson. Harmony, though, is not merely wishful thinking. In writing to a congregation likely divided along Jewish-Christian and Gentile-Christian lines, Paul advises the Romans to welcome each other (the verb *proslambanō* has the active sense of "taking to oneself"). Why? Because Christ welcomed you. Finally, the string of Old Testament quotations reminds us that God is faithful to God's promises, an important theme for Advent. WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Paul's word picture in Romans of a God of encouragement contrasts sharply with John's harsh indictment of God's people, "You brood of vipers!"

Instruction, steadfastness, and the encouragement of the scripture give rise to hope, writes Paul. Then he goes on in verses 5 and 6 to voice a prayer which would make a beautiful benediction to any service. (Though I suggest it for today, think about it for a wedding benediction as well!) Verse 13 is another possible benediction.

A God who sticks with us, encourages, and engenders hope, also judges; that judgment is carried out with righteousness and faithfulness. We cannot ignore John's harsh words of judgment and, as baptized people of God, we must indeed "bear fruit worthy of repentance." The psalmist insists that God's intent is to bring justice to the poor and needy. The psalm addresses a variety of very contemporary justice issues including poverty, creation, oppression, and violence. Bearing fruit worthy of repentance means seeing ourselves as part of the problem and part of the solution to the problems of injustice to which the psalmist refers. This may be a good Sunday to consider using the psalm as a primary text.

A different focus, growing out of the Isaiah and John texts, would be to celebrate the sacrament of baptism or have a liturgy of baptismal renewal. In the gospel, John speaks of his baptism and points to the baptism of the Holy Spirit which will come with Jesus. The gifts of the spirit which are named and given in baptism come from the Isaiah text. Both baptism and baptismal renewal have in common with the season of Advent the emphasis on beginnings and the faithful life that grows out of this event/time. Christ comes to us in baptism, giving us new life. God's advent among us is a present reality as well as something to which we look forward with longing and hope.

The Advent season, in stark contrast to the tinsel and glitter of the world around us, reminds us of God's judgment. That theme is never a popular one. If it were not for the grace of God, our outlook would be one of dread. But the God of steadfastness and encouragement fills us with forgiveness, life, and hope!

O you who have come, who will come again,
Baptized, we become Christ's women and men.
Your advent among us in judgment, yet grace
Enables our witness of confidence and praise.
KP

Third Sunday in Advent
December 13,1992

Psalm 146
Isaiah 35:1-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

FIRST READING

Our first lesson is on patience—surely a virtue needed by children and children-at-heart by the time we arrive at Advent 3! We do not live in a patient society, and the moment we think we *are* patient we discover that being number 22 in the "express" check-out lane brings our *im*patience to the fore. The original readers of James expected Jesus and the end of the world at any time. When Jesus did not return (on their schedule!) they became weary and impatient. And so James advises them, "Be patient... until the coming [*parousia*] of the Lord." Patience is not the result of a heroic attempt to lower one's blood pressure. Rather, trust in God and confidence in the goodness of the life that God has given to us gives us strength to endure, even when the road ahead is unclear or we are discouraged. Patience is possible, because (a) "the coming of the Lord is near" (*ēggiken* once again), and (b) "you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful" (v. 11, which should be part of the pericope).

The other directive in James is "Strengthen your hearts." "Strengthen" (*stērizo*) has as its original sense "support, fix something so it stands upright." The word was applied to the staking of grapevines. I know a bit more about tomato vines. If they are not staked up, they will fall and run along the ground. The vine will get into other plants, and the tomatoes themselves will be more susceptible to bugs, disease, and rotting. So, "be staked up" during this Advent season of preparation, so that the center of all activities will be Christ, whose coming (both first and second) is surely near.

The Isaiah passage is written from the perspective of desert dwellers, for whom the vision of God's final triumph is best expressed in the language of v. 1 ("the desert shall... blossom"). As we have seen in previous weeks, the vision of the new exodus from exile includes a highway from which no one can go astray (v. 8), as God leads the people home. Another Advent theme is evident, too, that of judgment and grace. The previous chapter describes the doom of Edom, a doom with cosmic implications. Grace follows in chapter 35; redemption follows doom. The key, of course, is the presence of God (vv. 2, 4), who is the true source of hope. And the sign of God's presence is the opening of the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf.

It is exactly that sign that Jesus gives in Matthew to the disciples of John, when they ask if Jesus is "the one who is to come." Jesus does not answer directly but points to the results of his activity for the blind, the lame, the leper, the deaf, the dead, and the poor. And, as if that were not enough properly to identify Jesus, Jesus identifies John as the Elijah figure. The only one to come after Elijah, in Jewish eschatology, was the Messiah.

Our lessons underline the reality of God's presence as a redeeming force that transforms people beyond our wildest expectations. For that God we can wait patiently. WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

John's bottom line question is one of meaning. "Has my life been on target?" "Has my life mattered, made a difference?" "Are the things I've spent my life being and doing, the things I intended them to be?" "Has it been in vain?" They are questions not so different from our own., bottom-line questions common to churched and unchurched alike.

Jesus' answer gives an insight into what it means to be faithful. His response to John's disciples is a nine-word course on evangelical outreach: "Go and tell (John) what you hear and see." Jesus' words and actions matched; he walked the talk. That was one clue as to his identity, and a very important principle of outreach for us to emulate!

But on a far deeper level there is the congruence between what *Jesus did* and what John knew from the witness of scripture that the Messiah was expected to do. Our first lesson is one of the descriptive Isaiah passages about the coming Messiah with which John would have been familiar. (See also Isa 29:18-19 and 61:1.) From childhood John would have learned "when Messiah comes this will happen...." And when Jesus came, those were exactly the things he did! Congruence between activity and identity! Obviously, he was the Messiah. I have often wondered if Jesus rolled his eyes or showed some other visible sign of frustrated disbelief at John's question.

The mandate for us is clear: Tell the story! Make our actions congruent with the words we speak. Those actions will have to do with health and wholeness which is at the heart of the Greek word for salvation. The integrity of wholeness includes economic dimensions as well as physical, emotional, or spiritual health. "The poor have good news brought to them," Jesus says. Not *preached* to them, *brought* to them! What good news are we bringing to the poor of our communities? What is the good news those who are poor want and need to hear? What personal, congregational, and civic actions do we need to take to make the good news a reality for them? Some may find such "political" implications offensive, but Jesus recounted that blessing comes to those who take no offense at him.

Broadly speaking, Jesus' answer to John describes his mission as bringing vision, mobility, economic justice, and life itself. Since that was Jesus' identity and mission, it is clear that faithfulness implies having the same identity and mission. KP

Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 20, 1992

Psalm 24
Isaiah 7:10-14 (15-17)
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

FIRST READING

Rom 1:1-7 is a rich text. Paul is a slave of Christ Jesus. He is also an apostle whose task is to work the obedience of faith; obedience of faith, or "faithful obedience," is a consistent theme throughout Romans, a theme which often we have ignored. Vv. 2-4 are surely the reason, however, that the text is used in Advent. In establishing his credentials with the congregation/s in Rome, Paul outlines the gospel he represents. It is a gospel which God "promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures." The message about Jesus is not some Johnny-or-Jill-come-lately. What God is doing now is reflected in what God has previously done; in fact, what God is doing now was pre-promised by God. The promise contained in the scriptures refers to Jesus, whom Paul more closely identifies in vv. 3b-4 by means of a Jewish-Christian creed. Jesus is a descendant of David (see the other two lessons)—a fact never used again in the undisputed letters. Moreover, he has been declared or designated Son of God. Elsewhere in Paul we have a pre-existent christology (Gal 4:4, e.g.) Here we have a two-step christology: Jesus is born son of David but designated Son of God (Phil 2:5-11 has a similar pattern). Others argue that Jesus has always been Son of God, but at the resurrection he is designated Son of God with

power. Before the resurrection he is Son of God without power, a concept the proclaimer may want to develop.

In Isaiah 7 the topic of promise is present, as well. The question for Ahaz, as he faces potential removal from the throne, is this: Will he trust an unholy alliance to deliver him, or will he trust God's promise to the house of David? Usually humanity wants signs from God, but the last thing Ahaz wants is a sign. God gives him one anyway, the young woman (*almah*) who is standing in Ahaz's court as Isaiah speaks. She will bear a child, whose birth will be a sign that God indeed is present and active, whether or not Ahaz wants him to be. Further, before that child reaches the age of reason, Ahaz will be gone.

Isaiah 7 did not, in its original setting, predict the Messiah. But, as von Rad has shown in his *Old Testament Theology*, Israel and the church regularly took over the promises of God (even those that had been fulfilled) and saw in them new promises of God's activity. So in Matthew the quotation from Isa 7:14 is the centerpiece of a section devoted to names. The chapter opens with a genealogy (list of names), with David figuring prominently. In v. 20 Joseph is identified as the son of David. We have the name Jesus, a shortened form of Yehoshua/Joshua (have you ever called Jesus "Josh"?), which means "Yahweh saves/helps." That name is to be given, since this baby "will save his people from their sins" (v. 21). The child is also named Emmanuel, "God is with us"—the very message Ahaz did not want to hear. Do we want to hear that message, or would we prefer an absent God? (On the presence of Jesus see also 18:20 and 28:20.) Whatever our wishes, the promise is about to be fulfilled. WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

We Thank You, God, for Joseph

We thank you God for Joseph
and his parental care.
We pray with hope and passion
that parents everywhere
Will dare to dream with vision
and share their love and wisdom,
That as all children grow,
God's gracious love they'll know.

For Joseph's love and courage
to move against the grain:
To stand by his beloved
throughout her joy and pain.
The Holy Spirit's guidance
they followed in obedience.
Delighting in the Son
who is God's holy one.

For parents and for guardians
of children everywhere,
For some conceived and birthed them,
while others gave them care.
May your divine direction
provide each child's protection.
Give families strength to cope
with patience and with hope.

In you we hear the promise
of life and hope and joy.
O be the strength and comfort
of every girl and boy.
Whenever trust is broken
and words of hurt are spoken,
O Christ, who came a child,
their families reconcile.

For Joseph and for Mary
and other parents dear
who in our lives or memory
have made God's message clear;
who by their love and kindness
have walked God's way among us;
Our thanks for those who cared,
who cherished, nurtured, and shared.

Tune: *Bereden vag for herren* (*LBW* #26)
Text: karen parker

The best laid plans...! Here was this nice engaged couple, off to a wonderful relationship, when all of a sudden the bride-to-be is "found to be with child from the Holy Spirit." This was not their plan! Joseph was ready to break the engagement, though sensitively he planned to forsake the common practice of publicly humiliating his betrothed. But once again the Spirit intervened. Like another Joseph, whose life was shaped by dreams, this man was open to God's will and obedient to the vision. Time after time the Spirit nudged him, and Joseph responded with courage and insight. The rest is history. And theology. And christology....

We do not ordinarily come at the Christmas story from the perspective of Joseph. But in reading the texts for Advent 4 and the first Sunday after Christmas I was struck by Joseph's role. It seems to me that Matthew's way of presenting Joseph in the Advent/Christmas narratives opens for us a way to address the broad reality of family life. Joseph, and his impact on Jesus' life, has often been overlooked. And in the church, we have often failed to name with blessing the wide variety of family configurations which are the reality of life in today's world.

Abuse and brokenness are part of "traditional" as well as "non-traditional" families. Blessing and joy are components of all kinds of family life as well. I believe it is time to acknowledge and name what is the experience of many (including Jesus himself!) in the community of faith: family life that does not mean one father and one mother.

The hymn, "We Thank You God for Joseph," is an attempt to use the Joseph images from the Matthew texts for Advent/Christmas to speak about family life in many of its configurations, grateful for the blessings in all of them, yet without ignoring the pain. If it seems helpful, feel free to use it. (It works for both Advent Four and First after Christmas.) KP

The Nativity of Our Lord December 25, 1992

Psalm 96
Isaiah 9:2-7
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20

FIRST READING

In 2:1 Luke links Jesus with the emperor in Rome. Caesar Augustus, otherwise known as Octavian, defeated Mark Antony and Cleopatra following the assassination of Julius Caesar. As the one who ended civil war and who was the true founder of the Roman Empire, Augustus was hailed as savior. In the minds of many, his reign was the much-longed-for golden age, and he was the bringer of peace. Luke locates the real source of peace elsewhere (v. 14). Luke thus puts the birth of Jesus, the son of a small-town carpenter, into touch with the ruler of the world. The emperor's edict unwittingly assists God's plan.

In v. 6 Luke writes, "while they were there." All Christmas pageants notwithstanding, Luke pictures Mary and Joseph as being in Bethlehem for a period of time before the birth. When Jesus is born, Mary does two things. First, she "wrapped him in bands of cloth," a decided advantage in translation (NRSV) over swaddling cloths, which inevitably is read swaddling clothes. To swaddle is to wrap a newborn in strips of cloth. It is a sign of parental care. It may also, in this case, carry an oblique reference to the death of Jesus (cf. Lazarus, John 11:44). The second thing Mary does is to lay Jesus in a manger or trough. Luke probably had in mind a barn or stable, quite likely a cave (in any event, not the wooden stables of medieval European art). Luke likes the word "manger," (vv. 7, 12, and 16), even calling it a sign in v. 12. The background appears to be Isa 1:3, "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand." What Isaiah said is now (potentially) repealed. In Jesus, the baby in the manger, God's people *can* find God. And so the shepherds in v. 12 are sent to the manger.

Christmas pageants mislead us with regard to the shepherds, also. They do not symbolize gentleness but were considered to be dishonest and outside God's law. Bethlehem, of course, is the city of David, who was a shepherd, and it is natural that there would be shepherds there and that the connection would be drawn between them and the Messiah of the house of David. But most important is that they are outsiders. In Jesus the outsiders are brought in, just as later the adult Jesus will bring in tax collectors, sinners, children, Samaritans, and women.

The story ends with the angels departing and the shepherds going to see the baby. There is nothing in Luke to indicate worship of Jesus or even the bringing of gifts. The shepherds leave and return to their flocks, never to walk again on the Lukan stage. Jesus was not followed, when his ministry began, by a group of adoring believers who treasured the memories of marvels accompanying his birth. There is no memory in his adult story of the birth narrative. In a real way that fact speaks to the heart of the incarnation. To his Palestinian listeners, Jesus was another itinerant teacher, at least at the beginning of his ministry. The adult Jesus did not stride forth with trumpets sounding and angels singing a chorus. He came as a true human person, with hungry stomach and dirty feet, this Jesus wrapped in strips of cloth and laid in a manger. WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

O the delight of brightly wrapped Christmas gifts! At least for those who didn't have to wrap them. In the rare situations when I've had time to give to the task of gift-wrapping, I enjoy thinking about the person who will receive the present, envisioning how she or he will feel about the gift I have chosen. More often, the task of wrapping presents becomes just one more chore. However, I do love to receive carefully or cleverly or whimsically wrapped gifts!

Today we receive God's greatest gift, whimsically wrapped in the form of a babe in a manger. Who would have thought! Only God, the greatest Giver and the great Gift Wrapper who takes the time to think about the ones who will receive the gift.

And who are they?

"...Good news of great joy for *all the people*: to you is born... a Savior, who is the Messiah," the angel said.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all," according to Titus.

"For God so loved the *world* that God gave!

This gift is not given for the sake of the "churchy ones" but for the *world*! We "churchy ones" are part of that world, of course. We are Los Angeles, and Gaza, and Soweto, and Serbia and Croatia, even if we don't recognize it. Those of us who have heard the good news are called to share it with *all* people. We are called to search for gifts that fit: the justice and righteousness of which the prophet speaks, for instance. We cannot simply rip open these gifts for ourselves; we are called to help wrap God's great gift in ways that others can delight in opening as well. And we're called to wrap and give God's gracious gifts not as a chore, but with the joyous abandon we see in's God own giving.

We can never match God's generosity, of course, but in grace and love God comes wrapped in many ways, bringing the forgiveness we need. So on this holy day in bread and wine or wrapped in bands of cloth lying in a manger, we receive the gift of Jesus Christ! O the delight of the greatest Christmas gifts! KP

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
December 27, 1992

Psalm 116:10-17
Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31
1 John 1:1–2:2
John 21:20-25

The Day of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist, presents a challenge. The lessons have no particular connection with Christmas, nor are they probably connected with John the Son of Zebedee, Apostle and Evangelist! Regarding the latter, the Gospel of John does not identify its author, nor is it possible without serious argument to identify John and the beloved disciple. It was the last identification that led to the tradition that John the son of Zebedee was the author of the Gospel of John. The difficulties of linking the Fourth Gospel and the Letters of John with the same author, and especially with John, are even greater. In a sense, what we end up remembering on December 27 is the insightful witness of the Johannine school.

John 21 is an epilogue to the body of the Gospel. V. 20b, which identifies the beloved disciple, takes us back to 13:23-25. Vv. 21-23 provide a window into an early tradition that did not expect the beloved disciple to die, a tradition which the author (or editor) of our verses corrects. V. 24 connects the testimony "to these things" with that beloved disciple. Whether "these things" refers only to the immediate chapter or to the entirety of the (now edited) Fourth Gospel is unclear. Another possibility is that the editor understood the Beloved Disciple to be the source of the community's tradition, not of every written word of the Gospel.

The 1 John text is filled with exciting possibilities for proclamation—and may even relate to Christmas! The opening words of the Greek ("that which was from the beginning") are reminiscent of the beginnings of the Fourth Gospel and of Genesis. The anti-docetic thrust of "what we... touched with our hands" should not be lost in this era of New Age docetism. Jesus was a real person. The good news about him is to be declared, with the goal of fellowship (*koinōnia*). Fellowship moves in two directions: of Christians with each other and of Christians with the Father and the Son (vv. 4, 7). The message (*aggelia*) which Christians are to proclaim (*anaggelō*) is that "God is light and in him there is no darkness at all." In this definition by opposites, God is not defined so much in metaphysical terms as in terms of what God is for humanity: God is our light. That light is concentrated in Jesus, who is, in the Johannine witness, the light of the world (John 8:12; see 3:19). Fellowship with the light and fellowship with darkness are mutually exclusive (v. 6). Those who walk in darkness do not keep God's commandments (2:4), hate their brothers and sisters (2:9, 2:11, 4:20), and claim to be sinless (1:8). Thus believing in the light (God, Jesus) has immediate communal implications, a theme not without its applicability two days after Christmas. What creates the fellowship and makes it possible to walk in the light is the blood of Jesus (1:7, 9; 2:2). The Christmas baby will be the Passover lamb.

The first lesson provides the primordial basis ("in the beginning," "let there be light," "God separated the light from the darkness") underlying the other two lessons. WFT

First Sunday after Christmas December 27, 1992

Psalm 111
Isaiah 63:7-9
Galatians 4:4-7
Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

REFLECTIONS ON JOSEPH

Just when things were a tiny bit settled... Christmas wrappings out of the living room and into the trash; gifts put away or at least piled neatly under the tree rather than strewn around in the chaos of Christmas morning; the pressure of the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services behind us; some of the company gone; and yes, some of our neighbors already have their Christmas trees down, though ours barely got up....

We're back to Mary and Joseph again, and that first post-Christmas family is a tiny bit settled too.... At least they are out of the stable, and the magi have been gone for a while; signs of their wonderful gifts are all around, some clearly put to practical use, others visible on the shelf as an important reminder—something to do with a tree we're told; and with a bit of parenting experience under their belts, the newlyweds are no longer as nervous about the task....

But Joseph starts having those dreams again. Did we say settled?!! "For the safety of the child, get out of here." So they're on the road again. Obedient and courageous. And when yet another crisis arrives with another dream Joseph proves himself intuitive and resourceful as well....

We thank you, God, for Joseph,
and his parental care.
We pray with hope and passion
that parents everywhere
Will dare to dream with vision
and share their love and wisdom
That as all children grow,
God's gracious love they'll know. KP

Second Sunday after Christmas January 3, 1993

Psalm 147:12-20
Isaiah 61:10–62:3
Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18
John 1:1-18

FIRST READING

In John's Gospel, Jesus is called the Word. God did not send words, or orators, or television, but *the* Word. This Word is not merely a word that God spoke in response to humanity's sin. It is, rather, a word that existed even before the creation of the world. Jesus as God's Word is not an afterthought in God's redemptive scheme. He existed as God before this world was created and was the agent of creation (vv. 3, 10). God had spoken words, thousands of them, but now at Christmas he sent the one last Word. God in Jesus paid a personal visit to his world. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (v. 14). "Lived" translates *skēnoō*, which means to "pitch a tent" or "tabernacle." In the Old Testament the tabernacle was the portable tent which symbolized God's presence. As long as they had the tabernacle the people of Israel had the sense that God was with them. In Jesus, the Word tabernacles among us, dwells with us, and gives us the assurance of God's presence. Even more, it is Jesus, the only Son, "who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known." "Made him known" translates *exēgeomai*, "I lead out, explain, interpret." Jesus is the exegete of the Father! He leads out the meaning, the truth of the Father. Jesus as the living revelation of God is the climax of all the ways in which God had communicated with humanity. Jesus as Word also supersedes all other communications.

The Word, in addition, sheds God's light on our lives (v. 5). We prefer living in darkness, in the unlit corners and closets of our lives where the eyes of no one else can penetrate. Jesus is, as it were, a spotlight which shows our sin, but as the

light he also lights the path that we should walk and shows us the way to live.

The Ephesians pericope is comprised of the opening verses of two sections of a letter written in Paul's name to Christians in Asia Minor: the blessing of God (vv. 3-14) and the thanksgiving to God (vv. 15-23). Fundamental to the first section is the term blessing: "*Blessed* be the God... who has *blessed* us in Christ with every spiritual *blessing*." The spiritual blessings are "in the heavenly places," which indicates that the blessings cannot be taken away. The blessings are given "in Christ," a phrase which, in one form or another, appears thirty-five times in Ephesians. Just as the Word exegetes the Father in John 1, so in Ephesians God the Father does nothing except what is done in Christ. V. 4 points to the pre-creation electing activity of God and Christ, just as John points to the agency of the Word in creation. Our being destined as God's children (see John 1:12) has as its purpose our giving of praise for God's glorious grace in the beloved one, Jesus. With hearts enlightened by the birth of Jesus we realize the riches of the inheritance that is ours (v. 18). And in response, on this final Sunday of the Christmas cycle, we can only lift our own praise and thanksgiving to God. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God" (Isa 61:10). WFT

The Epiphany of Our Lord
January 6, 1993

Psalm 72
Isaiah 60:1-6
Ephesians 3:2-12
Matthew 2:1-12

For our parish, the celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany, or Three Kings Day, surpasses even Christmas Day in its joy. There is something to making a great celebration of giving and joy on a day when the world doesn't. (By January 6, Valentine's Day has taken over the store windows.) We do a Children's Parade, pass out chalk to each family for a house blessing, and as the perfect reminder of original sin—as if we needed it—we talk about "sharing" with the children, and then let them loose at a pinata! (Congregations may want to consider moving the feast to the closest Sunday, so that more of the parish community may join.)

Verse 3 of the Epiphany gospel says: "When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him" (NIV). On this Feast that celebrates the faith of astrologers, it is the custom of many congregations to announce from the pulpit the Movable Feasts of the Year: those Christian holidays whose dates still are picked by the movement of the heavenly bodies.

What if we also announced from the pulpit this day those things our congregation will do to disturb our local Herods, and all of our city or town with them? What if we announce that this year we intend to see that all hungry families in our community will eat? That all homeless families will be housed? That those with AIDS will receive mercy? That all non-church goers in our area will be sought out and welcomed? All sins will be forgiven?

Of course, if we're serious about this, it will surely disturb us as well!

Herod tells the magi in verse 8: "Go and make a *careful* search for the child." (NIV) His unintended macabre pun points out human sinfulness in its most chilling: Herod intends that there be no *care* exercised in the *carefulness* of the

search. Indeed *caring* is the last thing he is thinking about. What Herod wants is thoroughness, meticulousness, order. He wants no stone unturned. He wants the magi to do the preliminary intelligence work, so that his soldiers can later do the mopping up. To Herod, caring will never get in the way of preserving order.

Isn't that what we are often tempted to do? To sacrifice caring for the sake of order? We humans can be quite good at devising very careful, meticulous rules and procedures—even ones aimed at helping people—that either fall way short of caring, or turn outright demonic. It is easy to blame the bureaucratic mind for this way of thinking and acting, but all of us will, left to our own ways, trade real love in order to preserve our security.

The magi "Go back to their country by another route." An unknown, probably dangerous route. The only way for us to escape our careful uncaring is to follow another route: the route the little baby is already on: the dangerous, unknown route of the cross. A route that will disturb us, but disturb us into joy! PCH

The Baptism of Our Lord January 10, 1993

Psalm 45:7-9
Isaiah 42:1-7
Acts 10:34-38
Matthew 3:13-17

FIRST READING

"Then Jesus came" (Mt 3:13). Frequently we ignore the connectives such as "then," but that word connects the baptism of Jesus with the ministry of John as outlined in vv. 1-12 (the gospel for Advent Two). In addition, the verse immediately following our pericope (4:1) also begins with "then," and leads into the temptation of Jesus. We need to see the three stories as a unit: the Elijah figure points beyond himself to the Jesus whom he baptizes and whom God labels as Son; the temptation story shows that "Son" is an ambiguous title and must be tested.

John's objection to Jesus' request to be baptized (v. 14) reveals a theological problem for the early church: if Jesus was sinless, why was he baptized? Jesus' response is typical of Matthew: the baptism will fulfill all righteousness. Once the baptism has occurred, three dramatic elements are introduced. First, the heavens are opened. The passive verb is probably a "divine passive," indicating that God is the agent of the opening. When the heavens are opened, God is able to communicate with humanity; the barriers are down. Second, the Spirit of God descends like a dove and lands on Jesus. A common view in first-century Judaism was that, after the last prophet, the spirit of God, often symbolized as a dove, had withdrawn into heaven. Note, by the way, that the Spirit is not *called* a dove; it merely descends like one (contrast Lk 3:22). There is also a wordplay in v. 16: While Jesus comes *up* (*anabainō*) from the waters of baptism, the Spirit comes *down* ("descends," *katabainō*). Further, Jesus goes up the mountain to begin the Sermon on the Mount (5:1); he goes up to the mountain to pray (14:23), following which he and the frightened Peter go up from the water into the boat

(14:32); having gone up the mountain, Jesus healed people (15:29); and while going up to Jerusalem Jesus predicts his death, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over..." (20:17-18). Having been baptized, Jesus goes up, up to his ministry and up to his death. The shadow of the cross is present from the beginning of his public ministry.

The third dramatic element is the voice from heaven: the heavens have been opened, so God can speak as he did in olden times. In Matthew the voice is heard by all. What the voice says is reminiscent of Ps 2:7, a coronation psalm, which points to the adoption of Jesus as the Messiah or Son of God; Isa 42:1, the beginning of the first servant song, which indicates Jesus' messianic ministry; and Gen 22:2 (LXX), where Isaac is identified as the beloved, which would signal the sacrificial death of this son, too.

The first lesson is from the servant song of Isaiah 42. While scholars debate the original identity of the servant (the whole nation of Israel, a faithful remnant, a prophet, or a messianic figure), Matthew clearly identifies the servant with Jesus. The song outlines the servant's ministry of enlightenment, healing, and release (vv. 6-7), but above all of justice (vv. 1-4). WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

I must confess that it is quite easy for me to stop at John the Baptist and never get on to Jesus. It is not hard for me to find and condemn the injustice, the lack of love, the deceit. But I am not ever really sure of how to deal with the beginning of Jesus' adult ministry, where he appears so patient, almost passive as he waits for his power and his marching orders.

Jesus tells a shocked John, who knows holiness when he sees it, "Let it be so now: it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness" (v. 15, NIV). Let me let you take care of me now, so I can really take care of you, and all of mine, later. Let me let you give to me. This "letting" is so important to our development of leaders for the church.

This day is a wonderful day for baptizing new leaders who have been lifted up in our church, and confirming those who have either come back, or have prepared to go forward—leaders who are ready to take the water and Word and run with it.

It may also be a perfect day on which to say to all our leaders: don't do anything today—just receive. Don't worry about "helping" today—follow Jesus' example, and be helped. Be cleansed. Be refreshed. That's it. That's enough for today.

Jesus, though he hates injustice with a passion and can be extremely impatient with the disciples' fear and lack of faith, also knows it's possible to wait, to do nothing "for now," for God's time has moments when we wait as well as moments when we act quickly. Receiving "for now" lets us give later. When we are filled up with God's love—when we know that and trust that—we are able to give that love away without reserve.

A young woman in the first confirmation class I taught in the Bronx wrote this on her exam: "Baptism is when we become part of Jesus. It's when our lives are forgiven." For so many of us, baptism is "not only" the forgiveness of our sins (that would be miracle enough), but forgiveness of our whole lives: our broken dreams, our tragedies, our failures, our hurts, all of which can be forgiven and restored by the young man who comes to John today saying: "Let it be so for now."

Today, as Jesus comes up from the water—Did he gasp for air like we do when we bite off too much? Did he shake with the powerful realization of what a great calling he had received? — as he is about to just *begin* his ministry, he hears these words said about him: "This is my son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased" (v.17). If we and our leaders began each day hearing those words about ourselves—before we did or thought anything—might not our lives and our ministry be more peaceful and also more productive? Can we trust today that our lives are forgiven even before we try them on? PCH

Second Sunday after the Epiphany
January 17, 1993

Psalm 40:1-12
Isaiah 49:1-6
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-41

FIRST READING

An epiphany moment is the drawing back of the curtain of ignorance and darkness. The mystery is revealed, the unknown made known. During Epiphany season we look at who Jesus is, and we try to probe the mystery of the child whom the magi come to adore. The Epiphany season is one of those times when we have a sense of, "I think I've got it!" as we realize anew that Jesus is more than an historical figure or teacher. Jesus is Lord. Epiphany season is also a bridge between the birth of Jesus and his passion. In this season we move from the wonder of the adoration in Matthew 2 to the wonder of the transfiguration in Matthew 17, but when we arrive at Mt. Tabor (or wherever the transfiguration *did* take place) we will find that together with the shadow from the cloud that covers Jesus and the disciples is the shadow of the cross. A final overarching theme of Epiphany is evangelism, telling others who this Jesus is.

Our gospel lesson begins with the witness to Jesus by John the Baptist. While even more about the identity of Jesus can be culled from the passage, the three major ways in which Jesus is identified (or "epiphanied") is that he is Lamb of God, Son of God, and Messiah. The Baptist first identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God, a title probably originating in Jer 11:19 (used of the prophet) and Isa 53:7 (used of the suffering servant). Moreover, this lamb "takes away the sin of the world." How? Implicitly by his sacrificial death. The cross is ever present. Next, the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Son of God, in a section with obvious allusions to the Synoptic baptismal accounts. Language about Son takes us back to 1:18 and forward to the unity expressed between Jesus and the Father. Third, Andrew tells his brother, "'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed)" (in Greek, *christos*). It is of note that the author needs to translate the Hebrew term Messiah, as well as rabbi (v. 38). His audience does not know Hebrew. The motif of evangelism occurs in Andrew's witness to his brother Simon, as well as in the response of two of the Baptist's disciples, who follow Jesus when their teacher identifies him as the Lamb.

The second lesson is the salutation (vv. 1-3) and the thanksgiving (vv. 4-9) of our first letter from Paul to Corinth. The passage is evidence of the community that results from witness to Jesus. The church is defined in v. 2 as those sanctified, called to be saints, together with those everywhere who call on the name of the Lord Jesus. The church is thus grounded in Jesus, called to be holy (the root meaning of both sanctify and saint), and much larger than the local congregation only. In terms of Epiphany season, v. 7 is significant. Christians wait. The verb (*apekdechomai*) means to "wait eagerly." Here, Christians wait eagerly the revealing of Jesus, i.e., his second coming. Jesus is not only the one who has appeared at Christmas, he is also the one awaited in the future. The Jesus revealed in Epiphany has a future, as well as a present and a past. WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

A common Spanish expression is the simple word "¡Mira!" which means "Look!" "¡Mira—there's something on fire there!" "Mira—what I'm really saying is that we've got to do something about this problem!" ¡Mira—stop doing that!" "Look" doesn't mean just "see," but "Pay attention!" "Be ready!" "Concentrate!"

John the Baptist sees Jesus coming toward him and says, "¡Mira! Look! The Lamb of God!" Don't miss him! Don't let him get out of your sight! Pay attention to what he says and does, because this is the one I was talking about. The next day John says the same thing: "¡Mira—Look! The Lamb of God!"

Now that Jesus is baptized, John sees clearly that the hopeful waiting of God's people has now done its bit. It is time for waiting to leave. It is time to look, listen and act. *This* is the Lamb of

God who takes away the sin of the world. This is the one to follow. If last week was the time to sit back and receive the great gift of being God's child, this week is the week to stand up, *see*, and walk behind the real child of God.

This Lamb is going to do something special: *take away* the sin of the world. Not excuse, not cover it up, not bandage it, but take it and its effects away. This has to be the answer to the Psalmist for the day, who wails, "Troubles without number surround me," and "My sins have overtaken me." For the Psalmist and for the Lord, sin and its effects are intertwined. All the troubles we may have—health problems, money problems, problems with our family, with injustice, with fear and despair, problems with our lack of faith—all of them, whether the result of our sin, or our neighbor's sin, or the world's sin—all are going to be taken away.

What would the fullness of that "taking away" mean to my Bronx community? If all the sin was taken away, would the drug dealers leave with it? Or would their bodies be left, clean and swept houses we would have to help them quickly fill with love and hope? Would the schools *really* teach our children? Would the police *really* come when they are needed? Or would we need no police? Would fear be lifted from hearts, and people risk with imagination and hope?

It's tempting to set our eyes on the final fulfilling of that taking away, to that time when there is no need for temple in the city, because the Lamb is here—and in the *mean*time (pun intended) misplace our eyes, forget to "see" the one who is taking sin away now, bit by bit. Maybe the Lord won't take away the slumlord's threats this month, but he can give you power to stand up in court and tell the judge: ¡Mira! Look!—We want heat today! Maybe the Lord won't take away the lust in your heart, or the hatred, but hold on—¡Mira¡ Follow this Lamb, and he will make you whole day by day!

¡Mira! Look! This Lamb will not be stopped!
PCH

Third Sunday after the Epiphany
January 24, 1993

Psalm 27:1-9
Isaiah 9:1b-4 *or* Amos 3:1-8
1 Corinthians 1:10-17
Matthew 4:12-23

FIRST READING

The gospel lesson outlines the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Matthew has an extensive introduction that connects Jesus' ministry with the arrest of John who, of course, will be killed (v. 12). The connection reminds us that at the end of his ministry, Jesus also will die. The introduction also locates Jesus geographically. In doing so, Matthew uses his standard pattern of prophecy-fulfillment, in this case utilizing the first lesson for the day. One of our major concerns in the Epiphany season is the question, Who is Jesus? Jesus in this text is, first of all, the one who was promised. He is also, secondly, the light who shines in the darkness—the darkness especially of the Gentiles but finally of all people who live outside God's light. Contemporary study, by the way, has shown that "Galilee of the Gentiles" was indeed an area of mixed Jewish and Gentile population; that view is altering our understanding of the historical Jesus. V. 17 contains the same theme for the preaching of Jesus already listed in 3:2 for the Baptist (see Advent 2). The difference is that it is now the promised one who proclaims the message.

The second half of the gospel is a call narrative. It provides the third answer to our query about Jesus: Jesus is the one who calls with such authority that people respond by giving their all. Simon and Andrew are casting their circular net (*amphi-blēstron*, "that which is thrown around"); James and John are mending their nets (no indication of poverty; all fishers have to mend their nets). All four are going about their daily work when Jesus calls. All four have a great deal to give up: home, business, and family. All four respond

immediately (*eutheōs*). And what do they do? They follow Jesus. To follow (*akoloutheō*) means to walk the same road and early became a technical term for being a follower of Jesus. The narrative contains all that is necessary to be part of the Jesus movement: call and immediate response. This Jesus has the authority to command people's lives. The final verse summarizes the ministry of Jesus: wherever Jesus is, there is the kingdom.

The 1 Corinthians passage continues our Epiphany reading of that epistle. Immediately following the thanksgiving, Paul must deal with divisions. Their exact nature is unclear, but Paul has received a report (v. 11) that indicates that people baptized by a given missionary may have claimed a special relationship with that missionary (v. 12). The "Christ party" thinks it has a unique relationship with Jesus that is better than others have. Such rankings of Christians will be the topic in chapters 12 and 14, as well. Paul seems to denigrate baptism—or at least accurate record-keeping (vv. 14-16)! The point, of course, is that it does not make any difference who baptized someone. What is important is the baptism itself and the proclamation of the gospel, which is *not* to be announced "with eloquent wisdom," lest the cross be emptied of its power. Evangelism is obviously important for Paul, but he does not want people converted for the wrong reasons but for the right one: the scandalous cross of Jesus. WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Jesus hears John is in jail, and heads for "no-person's" land: a land trampled by armies, looked down on as less than pure, hopeless, where great wealth is concentrated in a few hands, and masses of people are struggling to survive. He tells everyone to repent! Everyone, rich or poor: this is it: time to get on the right road! No more domination of others into darkness. No more sitting around in darkness complaining how you've been broken. Begone darkness! Here is the light!

All of us are living in Zebulun and Napthali now—whether our communities be affluent or middle class or poor. All of our people are living on the edge of the promised land, not at all sure that the earth is firm (which may in part explain the mad rush to find security in material things). It may be harder to convince people that they are in darkness when things seem to be going well, but I'm not sure we act even when we know we're in trouble. The people in Zebulun and Napthali sure knew they were in trouble before the Lord got there, but they didn't know the way out.

Maybe they didn't know the way out because they were looking up to the "front" for salvation: salvation will come from Jerusalem, when the Messiah comes, or at least a great national leader. Salvation will come from Rome, when a "kinder, gentler" emperor will come to power. Salvation will come from our religious leaders, our teachers who will show us the way. Salvation will hop down out of heaven, and we won't have to do a thing but cheer.

Jesus, instead of looking at the front, the top, starts at the back: poor old Capernaum, dusty old Galilee. Jesus goes to the back pew of the church to start his preaching mission—back there where the "irregulars" come. Back there where the teenagers hang out and chew gum, waiting for something better to put in their mouths. Back where that family who isn't sure they'll be accepted are. Back where people think half of what is said on Sunday means nothing to them, because at least that much doesn't.

Jesus goes to the back pew, the back of the bus, the back of the yards, the far side of the neighborhood, the places where people are lost, the dark and dead places, and simply says to them, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!" Jesus does not waste pity on these "poor folks," because pity is not what they need. They have enough self pity, and if they are lucky enough to have even one drop of the paternal pity of the rich and famous, that's one drop too many. He doesn't say: "O, poor you" or "It's someone else's fault." He doesn't even say, "It's your fault." He says: "Repent! Turn Around! God's power is near!"

Compassion for the lost and broken, in us and around us, and challenge to the dominator, in us and over us, are important; but perhaps there is no better word we can speak to our people—especially those in the last pew, and in the last apartment on our list: You through the Holy Spirit have the power to turn around. You have been forgiven! Now start following! PCH

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
January 31, 1993

Psalm 1
Micah 6:1-8
1 Corinthians 1:26-31
Matthew 5:1-12

FIRST READING

The 1 Corinthians passage continues to deal with divisions. A basic cause of the difficulties is the evaluation by some in the community that they are better—much better—than others. While they emphasize their spiritual wisdom, Paul underlines the foolishness of the proclamation of the cross (vv. 18, 21, 25). While they boast of their knowledge, Paul boasts of God (v. 31). Paul reminds his readers, in fact, that, contrary to their exalted self-understanding, not many in the Corinthian Christian community "were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth" (v. 26). (The flip of that statement is that there *were* some in the Corinthian church who were wise, powerful, and noble. Recent researchers on the social level of early Christians have regularly argued for a higher placement on society's scales of many early Christians. A model of the early Pauline churches which sees in them a mixture of people from different strata is a corrective to the homogeneous-unit principle of evangelism.) The Corinthians have nothing about which to boast, save God's activity in Jesus. And who is Jesus, in this Epiphany text? He is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Today and for the next two Sundays the gospel is from the Sermon on the Mount. The overall theme of the Sermon is the greater righteousness to which Jesus calls his followers (5:20). Our passage contains the indicative. What follows is the imperative. The pattern is similar to what we see in Micah 6, the first lesson: vv. 3-5 in that passage are the indicative, with v. 8 the imperative. Verses 3-11 of Matthew 5 are usually labeled "the beatitudes," which comes from the Latin translation of the first word of those verses ("blessed," *makarios*). The beatitude identifies the person to be blessed, the condition or reason for the blessed state, and the blessing itself. Matthew uses the third person form (vv. 3-10) until vv. 11-12, where he uses the second person (also in Lk 6:20-23).

The lead and determinative beatitude is the first: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Luke has simply, "Blessed are you who are poor" (6:20). The concept of the poor refers certainly to the economically poor, the people of the land, whose poverty dictated a subsistence living that made it impossible to follow the niceties of the law as defined by religious leaders. In Judaism, the poor were not blessed. Nor, for that matter, are the poor blessed in this or any other society. Nor are the others listed in the beatitudes. Matthew's "in spirit" refers to people who humble themselves (cf. v. 5), those who hunger and thirst for a righteousness which they cannot produce on their own. And what is theirs? The kingdom, the royal rule of God. And how can the kingdom be theirs—and in the present? Jesus is speaking to those who are following him. In the activity of Jesus the eschatological activity of God is already present. His ministry is something new, which reverses the normal patterns of life. WFT

PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

Blessed are the losers. Wouldn't that be a great headline to see in the morning paper, or shouted out on the 11:00 o'clock news: Blessed are the losers!

I don't know about news in your neck of the woods, but in New York, the self proclaimed "media capital" of the world, the nightly news at 11:00 follows the same exact formula every single night: Woman shot in subway. Sex trial on Long Island. Fire kills tot. Guy stabbed in Brooklyn. Budget crisis. Political scandal. Ten year olds selling guns. Another guy stabbed. Big car wreck, the "exclusive" Accu-Weather forecast, five minutes of sports, and a final story about two seniors who fell in love at 85, or a retired cop who is teaching inner city kids how to better their lives through cribbage.

It's almost as if we can't get enough of the bad (out there, of course), and as if just a little good will make it all better. Of course, the only time my Bronx neighborhood makes the news is when someone loses tragically (we haven't yet written the right press release to get our "Bronx kids learn compassion and courage through dramatic arts" on the final spot!)

The message of course is clear: people who lose—their lives, their families, their homes, their jobs, their dignity—are "good news," at least for a day or two, till the next tragedy comes along. But "blessed"? Never!

Jesus sees through that_____(I'll leave it to you to provide the local judgment as to what noun can be appropriately used in your pulpit). Jesus says the lost, the poor, the grieving, the hopeless are blessed—not for a one minute shot at tragic fame, but for all time, because God's wonder-working power has come to this earth to turn it upside down and make it right. The losers are exactly the ones God's Lamb has come to gather.

Jesus' words—and what words!—change the passive to the active, the victims to heirs, the landless to landowners, the hungry to the stuffed, the persecuted to those who will rule with God. Then, as we all know, and which should scare the hell out of us, he begins to walk with all the losers, to cast his own lot completely on the side of poverty, sinfulness, and death, so that he may transform it.

"Blessed are the losers." Of course, that is not what is going to be hurled up at Jesus when he's on the cross. His enemies will not be able to see the blessedness before they kill him, and surely not after. We, who by a miracle of faith—God's faith, not ours—have been given this blessed vision of our Savior, crucified and risen, have the wonderful opportunity to be blessed as "God's losers" and be a blessing to the brokenness around us. PCH

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The Changing Face of Mission

Roger Fjeld
Wartburg Theological Seminary

This issue of *Currents* is dedicated to remembering the beginnings and celebrating the centennial of what is now the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church. The story is told by those who know it best. In these last pages of this centennial issue, I want to reflect more broadly on the remarkable evolution in what mission has meant and now means—on the changing face of mission.

One way to see the change is to note the evolution of language about the mission enterprise. In the early days of Protestant outreach to other parts of the world, it was common to call that work "foreign missions" and to think of the places of ministry as "mission fields." There was often a sense, on the part of the sending churches and organizations, of the cultural superiority of the sending culture, even when those on the receiving end belonged to old, rich cultures.

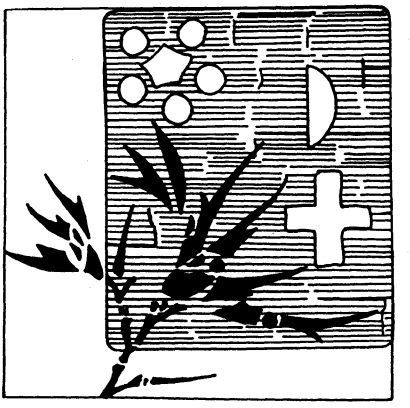
In our own lifetimes the language has gradually changed, often to talking about "world missions" or "global missions," mirroring a new appreciation for other people and cultures. At the same time those "mission fields" were becoming churches, with their own resources and leaders and with missionaries in new, more complementary roles. And now, more and more, we talk of "partner churches," seeing them as both sending and receiving in mission.

As relationships with these partners evolve, one of the exciting dimensions is the exchange of students and faculty in theological education. The seminaries which sponsor *Currents* are deeply involved in such exchanges. We've been privileged to welcome students from all over the world. Some are already leaders in their own churches, others are sent to prepare for leadership roles. They come with rich experience and insights; people equipped to teach even as they learn. Completing the exchange, some of our American students are now doing part of their studies in the seminaries of partner churches.

Faculty exchanges have been slower in coming, but now there are significant opportunities for interchange of faculty members in a variety of contexts and arrangements. Our seminaries have become sig-

nificant resources for our partner churches, and they have become significant resources for our seminaries and church.

Wartburg and LSTC are currently involved in an ambitious project called the Pilot Immersion Project for the Globalization of Theological Education. Sponsored by the Association of Theological Schools and supported in part by the Pew Charitable Trust through an organization known as Plowshares, the pilot project chose nine seminaries in the United States to test ways to broaden the global dimensions of North American theological education. Our faculties were "immersed" in three different contexts, one in Southern Africa, one in Latin America, and one in the Philippines and the Peoples Republic of China. Our goal is to change the way we teach and learn at our seminaries so that our graduates have a better understanding of the world in which we live and minister. The watchword, throughout, has been, "Think globally, act locally!" As the face of mission changes, this is the newest dimension: Christians learning to think of themselves as citizens of the world and conceiving mission accordingly.



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