

Autumn  
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Sunday, 4:00 PM The Role of the American Missionary in Korea

Intro. Latest official count shows slightly over 600 Protestant missionaries, including their wives, in Korea, of whom ~~44%~~ 54% live in Seoul and 46% live outside Seoul. What are all these people up to, and what are they doing? Some of those civilians you see on the streets and in the shops and other public places in Seoul are missionaries. Nearly all of those you see bouncing around the country in jeeps and land rovers are missionaries. What are they doing? What is the role of the American Missionary, is the topic assigned for discussion this afternoon.

In brief they are literally doing everything. Everything from installing plumbing and doing delicate heart operations to conducting choirs and performing wedding ceremonies. The new recruit who comes to Korea the first time as a missionary has many motives and ambitions, but the one over-riding them all is a desire to make known to the people of Korea the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For some it is the desire to make Him known to those who have never yet had a chance to hear. For others, it is a desire to assist in the training of Korean Christians and especially their leaders in what it means to be a Christian and to take leadership in the church. For others, it is a desire to strengthen the organization of the church, to encourage its stewardship of possessions, and to promote the various programs of the church. For others it is service in the name of Christ, either as doctors or nurses treating the sick or as social workers, or directing orphanages, or in general relief in areas stricken by famine, drought, illness, fire or other catastrophe. For still others it is technical assistance, such as agriculture, or industry, or science teaching in universities. Yet no matter what the method, for the true missionary at heart, the motive is to make Christ and the life in Him known to the people of this land.

Missionaries come in all varieties. Usually they begin young, although occasionally an older person joins us. Some come for a two or three year short-term and make little effort to learn the Korean language. ~~Others~~ The majority come expecting to spend the rest of their lives here. They settle down to two or three years of language study, that which there is nothing more tedious. They study the history and culture of the land. They attempt to be as well informed as possible in order to fit into Korean society. The variety also extends to type of work. Within our own Southern Presbyterian Mission with about 70 missionaries, we have ordained ministers, doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, college teachers, teachers of missionary children, business men, secretaries. Among the ministers, are those engaged in theological education, college education, publication, industrial evangelism, audio-visual evangelism, rural evangelism. Doctors include surgeons, cancer specialists, TB specialists, leprosy specialists. Among our wives are nurses, trained religious education workers, therapists, anaesthetists, secretaries. All lead busy lives for there are innumerable outlets for every activity.

Perhaps it would be just as well to begin with myself, since that is the subject with which I am most familiar. I hope it will not sound like I am bragging... or that I am complaining for that matter. In addition to being a father of four children, I am engaged in the following kinds of work. My primary work is rural evangelism and at present I represent our mission in the promotion of that work over half of this province with a total population of about 1 and a half million. I work with three Presbyteries especially their evangelism committees, in starting new churches and helping to build them up; I am in direct charge of about 20 churches which I try to visit in the fall and spring. On these visits we visit in homes, examine the new converts, hold a preaching service and hold the sacraments, appoint the officers, discuss the problems of the

church, and so on. This is exhausting and a tour of three or four churches brings me home ready for a bath and bed. I also run the publication work of our mission, which involves operation of the mission press and publication of a magazine which goes out to all our churches. We also publish other materials. Handling the finances, hiring of personnel, purchase of equipment, examination of material for publication, handling of correspondence and so on are involved. At present, as a member of our station property committee, I have been supervising some construction and this year have remodeled one large house into a duplex, torn down an old house and replaced it with a small three-apartment building for single missionaries. I teach one hour a week at the local Bible Institute, and am currently helping to supervise the remodeling of that building. I also have charge of the station office and oversee the work of the cashier there. As a member of Presbytery and General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church I attend its meetings, which may total several weeks out of each year. Our mission also has its organization, its ad interim committee and other committees on which I take my share of work. I represent the mission on the board of three seminaries and one hospital, and am also a board member of one Bible Institute and one orphanage. There is a joint committee of the Korean Church and our mission, called the Department of Cooperative Work. It has four regional and four central meetings a year which I attend and here help work out joint plans and administration of finances of work over the entire country. In between times I try to keep some office hours during which time there is a more or less constant stream of callers including many friends and church workers who come for advice and consultation and help in all kinds of things. When there is disaster, I am called upon for relief aid. We have a church building program and a man in full-time employment who takes some steel forms we have and puts up a chapel in about a month's time...last year he built a dozen of them. In my spare time I am like most of you...I like to go hunting and read who-done-its. All this feverish activity should be evidence that not many missionaries are sitting around loafing...most of them put in something like 80 hour weeks. The work in which I am involved and which I have just described is typical of that of most missionaries...all of whom are deeply involved in the life of the church, the society and the community in which they live.

An increasing number of missionaries are in institutional work, especially in hospitals and colleges. Some of you have visited the Presbyterian Medical Center in Chunju, where Drs. Crane, Seel, and Sick along with lab technician Patton, and Nurse Keller and scores of Korean counterparts carry on one of the most remarkable programs in the country. With limited equipment, and inadequate space and funds, they are daily performing medical miracles which would rate headlines in our own land. This is the only really modern hospital in the province ~~opexa~~ and it attempts to provide all the major services. I think I would rather be seriously ill ~~or need~~ in need of major surgery right there in Chunju than any place in the United States, because I have every confidence in the professional ability of that staff. With a limited budget from our mission, the hospital is able to treat about one-third of the patients free, about one-third at a fraction of actual cost, and about one-third at full cost. These missionaries give of themselves tirelessly, often working not only all day but well into the night or in the middle of the night. One doctor was doing heart surgery recently and saw that his patient was about to bleed to death for lack of blood transfusion. Since the supply was gone, he turned the operation over to an assistant and ran down stairs to have a pint of his own blood drawn, and rushed back to complete the operation. Often the illness or disease has gone on so long that it is extremely difficult to cure and we see grotesque cases waiting to be treated. The beds are almost always all full, and there are often many on cots in the hall. Sometimes 200 pass through the clinic in one day. All are given such attention as they need. Yet



even in the midst of care of medical needs, concern for spiritual need is never overlooked. All the staff are active Christians making their witness wherever possible, and three full time evangelists are employed on the staff. These visit and comfort the patients and have been instrumental in winning hundreds to Christ. Often these converts return to unchurched villages and are instrumental in starting new churches.

Missionaries also try to be as much a part of the life of the Korean church as possible. Most of them are active in their attendance at a local church, and some are officers in these churches. We try to attend their weddings and funerals and various social functions. The Koreans are frequent visitors in our homes and ~~xxx~~ we in theirs. Unquestionably there is a culture barrier and a language barrier and a racial barrier which can never be fully surmounted. But where there is a willingness and an attitude of kindness and love, we do feel that we can be accepted as fellow Christians. ~~The~~ Our oneness of faith in Jesus Christ is ~~ofxxx~~ the great single common denominator which brings us together.

Does all this tell you anything about the role of the missionary? I hope so. In my own mind I believe that essentially the missionary must be himself and not try to act out a part simply because some professional missionary executive tells him that is how he must act. If a missionary is himself, frankly doing those things which is his talent and delight, doing it with all his might for the good of the Koreans with whom he associates and not for personal gain, prestige, or favor, and all with the purpose for making the Gospel of Christ known both by deed and by word...then he is fulfilling his role.

What does the missionary get out of this? What compensation is there?

Well, it is not always that the missionary can say he is satisfied, that ~~he~~ is pleased with results, that he is accomplishing something. There are times of deep frustration and discouragement. I suppose these must hit God's servants anytime. But there are moments of great pleasure and satisfaction. Some of these come to me personally as I look back upon 19 years of work in Chunju. I have seen the number of Presbyterian churches grow from about 200 to about 600 in this period. I have had the pleasure of baptizing hundreds of people into the church. I have ~~seen~~ recently participated in the ordination of a young minister whom I had baptized years ago. I have seen weak little country churches where sometimes only three or four would show up when I visited, suddenly take on life so that now they are healthy self-supporting churches. I have seen Christian young people whom I knew get married, start raising a family and establish strong Christian homes. I see Presbyteries and other church groups moving out now on their own to do work which missionaries used to have to do. The discouragements and the dark places are still there, but God gives us the moments of brightness and as we look back we can see that truly He has accomplished great things in this land. Someday the missionary task in this land will be over, but it is still far from done, and will certainly continue the rest of my life.