

The American Southern Presbyterian Missionaries in Modern Korea: A Question of Cultural Imperialism

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ABSTRACT:

Japan ruled Korea as a colony from 1910 to 1945. During this turbulent period, many Western Protestant missionaries entered Korea and began missionary work. The academic world argues that Koreans came to serve two kinds of foreign masters who entered the Korean Peninsula: Japanese imperialist invaders and Western Protestant missionaries. These missionaries divided each region of Korea and carried out missionary work to pass on their beliefs to the Koreans. Japan's colonial rule over Korea and the missionaries' religious ministry are often understood and interpreted through a framework of "cultural imperialism" of "domination and obedience," although their ideologies and purposes were different. This study attempts to argue that while this interpretation is not entirely wrong, neither can it be regarded as fully justified. This is because the division of the missionaries' work had its own reasons and generally has produced a good result. We will prove our argument by highlighting the example of the Gwangju ministry of the American Southern Presbyterian missionaries.

Keywords: Cultural imperialism, Korean independence, master, missionary, servant

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INTRODUCTION

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when China, Russia, and Japan competed over Korean domination, Korea became a golden fishing ground for Western Protestant missions. Although there were some Protestant believers in northern Korea, actual Protestant missions began when Horace G. Underwood (1859–1916) of the Northern Presbyterian Church (USA) and Henry G. Appenzeller (1858–1902) of the United States Methodist Church entered Korea on Easter Sunday in 1885. Some Koreans responded exclusively to the missionaries, but gradually came to accept their work. Political factors were at play in the background. The United States, Canada, and Australia had no intentions to invade and colonize Korea

directly. In particular, the Protestant denominations of these countries prohibited missionaries from engaging in Korean politics. Early missionaries started medical and educational ministry as a point of contact for spreading the Gospel. Trust between the Koreans and the missionaries grew as diseases that could not be cured with oriental medicine were cured by the medical missionaries' surgery. Horace N. Allen (1858–1932), a medical missionary from the American Northern Presbyterian Church, treated the queen's nephew, Min Young-ik with surgery. Soon Allen was appointed by King Gojong as his primary physician. In addition, Gojong accepted Allen's petition to set up Gwanghae-won, Korea's first modern hospital in Seoul to take care of Koreans, on 25 February, 1885 (Kim 1992:67).

The first Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries in Korea discussed the division of mission territory in 1888. The intention was to prevent unnecessary competition and the waste of financial expenditure to accomplish missions efficiently. On 17 September, 1909, at the YMCA Center in Seoul, four Presbyterian missions (USA Northern Presbyterian Church, Southern Presbyterian Church, Australia Presbyterian Church, Canada Presbyterian Church) and two Methodist missions (USA Northern and Southern Methodists) participated in “Comity Agreements” (Byun 2003, Lee 2011). In accordance with this agreement, each mission was appointed to its own area. The Northern Presbyterian Church was in charge of Pyong-yang, Pyeongan-do, Hwanghae-do, parts of Chungcheongbuk-do, and Gyeongsangbuk-do; The Southern Presbyterian Church covered Jeolla-do, parts of Chungcheongnam-do and Jeju-do; The Presbyterian Church in Canada covered Hamgyeong-do; and The Presbyterian Church of Australia was in charge of Busan and Gyeongnam. In addition, The Northern Methodist Mission was assigned to Pyongyang, Pyeongan-do, Hwanghae-do, Seoul, Incheon, Wonju, Gyeonggi-do, Chungbuk-do, Gangwon-do; and The Southern Methodist Mission was in charge of Hamnam-do, Wonsan, Seoul, Kaesong, Chuncheon, Gyeonggi-do, and some areas of Gangwon-do. Three cities, Seoul, Pyongyang, and Wonsan, were to be shared by both Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries because these cities had been ministered by those missionaries from the early pioneering days. Other denominations such as the Baptist, Holiness, Salvation Army, and the Anglican Church, did not participate in this agreement and freely chose their own mission territory.

Western missionaries were able to do their own missionary work more freely on Korean land, which became a Japanese colony from 1910. Missionaries, regardless of denomination, received tremendous financial support from their home country mission headquarters, churches, family, and friends. They invested enormous funds to establish churches, schools, and hospitals to carry out the Gospel ministry they wanted. The Japanese colonial government also tried to maintain good relations with the missionaries (Kim 2006:39–76). By avoiding conflict with missionaries from the United States, Canada, and Australia, which were very strong powers in the West, the Japanese government tried to cut off any pretext that would endanger its Korean rule. The colonial officials guaranteed the freedom of missionary work as a condition

of prohibiting political activities for the independence of Korea. Academia argues that these two phenomena—Japanese rule and the emergence of missionaries—were alien to Korean society and culture. Koreans suddenly began to be dominated by the two foreign masters regardless of their will. Matsutani states: “Christian missionaries and Japanese colonizers, both of whom tried to inculcate new ideas and values in Korea. Though their ideologies and methods of propagation were different, both missionaries and Japanese tried to create new identities for Koreans, and Korean Christians had to configure their own identity, living among and having frequent intercourses with both foreign masters”(2012:5). Japan ruled through a politics of oppression by force, which led to a confusion of identity and the political and economic exploitation of Koreans. In addition to this imperialist rule, Western missionaries divided Korean districts and installed mission stations throughout Korea, which, when interpreted from a cultural anthropological perspective, can be seen as “cultural imperialism.” Gudova defines cultural imperialism as “subjugation of a cultural system both in its entirety and in its components (such as ‘geography,’ ‘state cultural policy,’ ‘visual epistemology,’ ‘communication’) to an imperial power, as well as the global transmission of this power” (2018:31). Looking at the divided ministries of the Korean missions, there were certain elements of cultural imperialism depending on the theological differences and human interests of each mission. Yeong has highlighted this problem very appropriately:

The progressive-minded Canadian mission jurisdiction exhibits an uncompromising and exclusive orientation as the ideological category is fixed. On the other hand, the American Northern Presbyterian Church, the Southern Presbyterian Church, and the Australian Presbyterian Church have become a group with strong conservative tendencies. By educating a theological ideology over a long period of time, this ideology dominates [the churches in particular region]... Also, the policy to divide the mission field accelerates regional color . . . The policy of division of the mission field becomes a form of self-sufficiency among large denominations between Presbyterians and Methodists, and small denominations such as Baptists and Holiness Churches are not

[sufficiently considered] in the process of consultation (2018).

In spite of these negative implications, this study opposes unconditional criticism of the mission field division ministry through the lens of cultural imperialism. The reason is that the division of the mission field has had a positive impact in modern Korean history. This will be clarified through our examination of the ministry of the American Southern Presbyterian Mission Station (ASPMS) in Gwangju, the subject of this study. Research on the ASPMS is ongoing. However, this study is the first work to deal with this subject from the perspective of cultural imperialism in Gwangju area. In this study we will review the brief history of the ASPMS in Korea. Then, we will look at the life and ministry of five missionaries—Eugene Bell, Clement Owen, Wiley Forsythe, Martin Swinehart, Elizabeth Shepping—who had an indelible influence in the Honam (Jeon-nam and Jeon-buk) region.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ASPMS IN KOREA

In 1892, the US Southern Presbyterian Denomination decided to send seven missionaries (William M. Junckin and his wife Mary Leiburn, William D. Reynolds and his wife Patsy Bolling, L. B. Tate and his sister Miss Matty Tate, and Miss Linney Davis) to Korea (Jeong 2020:27–48). On 18 October of the same year, Davis, the only single female missionary among the seven, was the first to arrive at Incheon Port. On 3 November, the remaining missionaries arrived in Korea, and the Korean mission of the American Southern Presbyterian Church began. Two years later, in March 1894, A. D. Drew joined this ministry. Eugene Bell and his wife came to Korea to reinforce the ministry of pioneering missionaries in 1895, W. B. Harrison in February 1896, Mattie Ingold in September 1897, and Clement Owen in November 1898. These missionaries were deployed in the Honam Province under “the Comity Agreements.” The missionaries began to establish the ASPMS in the major cities of south-western regions of Korea. Jeonju and Gunsan ASPMS was established in 1896, Mokpo ASPMS in 1898, Gwangju ASPMS in 1904, and Suncheon ASPMS in 1913 (Brown 1984: 37–50).

EUGENE BELL (1868–1925)

Bell laid the foundation for the Mokpo and Gwangju ASPMS. He was born in Scott's Station in Kentucky, US,

in 1868, graduated from Center College and Louisville Theological Seminary, and came to Seoul, Korea as a missionary on 9 April, 1895. During his stay in Seoul on 20 April, 1895, Bell wrote to his brother David about his first impressions of Korea: “These people are very ugly, dirty, and unattractive. And these are huge false talkers and thieves. Even our servants steal forks, spoons, food and everything.” In a letter to his mother on 3 July, 1898, three years after his arrival in Korea, his overall view of Koreans was still negative:

I think it is next to impossible to build a good house here with natives [Koreans] in less than a year. I have come to the conclusion that in the future when our Mission wishes to build any more houses they should ask for the money a year in advance so as to have plenty of time. The great trouble is no amount of extra pay seems to induce the people here to hurry any, but if you pay a Negro enough he will work himself to death for you, but it is different with these people.

Here Bell tells his mother about the Korean's laziness compared to black Americans. Bell presupposes that black Americans are generally lazy and that Koreans are even more lazy. His opinion shows the prejudices of white supremacy and racism. Bell clearly expresses his view that white people's culture is the best and most perfect and that black and Asian people should learn white culture and work harder. However, as Bell grew older and his missionary career developed, his white supremacist thinking gradually disappeared, and he transformed himself into a mature leader who understood the Koreans and Korean culture. Bell was in charge of the Gwangju ASPMS. As soon as he arrived at Gwangju in 1904, he worked hard to lay the foundations for a diverse mission ministry. His greatest contributions to Gwangju missionary work was probably the creation of a space for the Gwangju ASPMS and his guidelines for future missionary work.

Bell bought a hillside—currently, Yangrim-dong and Seo-dong of Gwangju Metropolitan City—, which at that time was a quiet wasteland. This area was far from the Korean resident and had large and spacious lands with a view of the city of Gwangju. Bell made it a safe place for missionaries to work efficiently. Trees and flowers were planted to create beautiful gardens. Soon churches, Bible

school, boys' school, girls' school, performance hall, and hospital were also built. A residential space for missionaries was added to the mission compound. Most of the missionaries hired native Koreans to help them by working as janitors, cleaners, cooks, and gardeners. Missionaries were able to avoid their hard work thanks to the cheap Korean labor. At the time, in terms of the level of the Korean economy, the mission compound was a place where only a few rich people or the Korean nobility could live (Ryu 2011:93-117). Bell, himself, hired Koreans to do several jobs. The Koreans employed by the missionaries to do annoying and humble chores were called 'servants.' It is a common logic of cultural imperialism theory to interpret the missionaries who make the Koreans work as 'masters' and sees the "missionary-Korean relationship" as a "master-servant relationship." If this logic is correct, the Korean servants were almost 'slaves' who longed only for the attention and consideration of the missionaries, while their subjectivity and personality were generally ignored. Of course, many Korean workers tried to approach the missionaries to seek various benefits. It was a privilege for Koreans to work in a mission compound and stay close to the missionaries at a time when they were extremely poor and had a difficult life. In order to continue to enjoy this privilege, it was necessary to have the wisdom to act in favor of the missionaries, who were their employers. In this respect, the relationship between the missionaries and Korean workers does somewhat resemble a "master-servant relationship." Bell made this mistake in his early ministry, but as time went on, he did not act toward the Koreans as a master and did not use distorted authority. He acknowledged and respected the Koreans' subjectivity and, as an 'employer,' he gave clear guidelines to his Korean employees when it came to personal affairs and gave praise or rebuke for their achievements. However, when dealing with Koreans in public missionary work, he served them as a 'mentor' rather than a 'master'.

As will be described later, in the mission compound built by Bell, there were not only middle-class American missionaries, but people from all walks of life from the United States lived and worked together beyond their own cultural ways of life. The missionaries living in this garden brought a new American culture that the people of Honam and Gwangju had never seen before. Even during the period of Japanese rule in Korea, this place suffered relatively little interference from Japan as a kind of

extraterritorial jurisdiction. When Koreans entered the area, it was a shelter or treatment space where they could receive protection and help from American missionaries.

Bell's main task was to take charge of the administration of the Gwangju Mission Station, caring for the churches in Gwangju and around Gwangju–Songjeong, Yeong-gwang, and Dam-yang. Bell divided missionary work into evangelism, education, and medical work, and made every effort to pursue these three areas in a balanced manner. Almost all Western pioneer missionaries sent to Korea also placed importance on these three areas, but their emphasis was different. Methodist missionaries worked harder on healing and schooling than on preaching the Gospel; Northern Presbyterian missionaries were engaged in education and healing activities within the scope of not interfering with the spread of the Gospel (Choi 2014:158). Bell's balanced ministry policy made Gwangju and Jeonnam the cradle of school education and hospital ministry that do not fall apart from the Gospel ministry.

Missionary John Talmage (1884–1964), who worked closely with Bell from 1910, was the most familiar with Korean culture and history in the Gwangju ASPMS (Jeong 2019, Seok et al., 2020:167-191). Although he fully understood the non-political position of Gwangju Station, his thought system was very much political. He did not hide his political views while serving as the principal of Sundam Bible School, the responsible pastor for over 30 churches in Dam-yang, and the principal of Gwangju Sung-il Boy's School. He preached to his disciples that Japanese rule over Korea was a barbaric violence and that Korea must be independent. He believed and taught that Koreans would be independent in the future because they had their own language and the strength to fight against foreign powers (Talmage 1947:5). *Han-geul*, the native Korean language, allowed the Koreans not only to communicate with each other but also to have the power of critical criticism. When this language is transformed into social criticism, it becomes a political ideology that unites Koreans and grows into resistance. From the mid-1930s, Japan forced Koreans to visit Japanese shrines in Korea to worship the Japanese Emperor. Korean Presbyterian leaders succumbed to this coercion and visited the shrines. They also made Korean Presbyterian Christians do the same. However, the Southern Presbyterian missionaries rejected this Emperor Worship and withdrew their membership from the Korean

Presbyterian Church. The missionaries from the Gwangju Mission Station, including Talmage, refused to visit the shrine and voluntarily closed the Sung-il Boy's School and Speer Girls' School, which were under their care. Many Korean pastors from the churches in Dam-yang and students of Sundam Bible School followed the way of Talmage, their spiritual mentor, and suffered severely in prison (Jeong 2020). Therefore, the thesis that missionaries forced Korean believers to lead them non-politically with their power and authority is not always justified.

On 25 December, 1904, Bell started the Yangrim (Gwangju) Church from his house in Yangrim-dong. Currently, all three Presbyterian churches in Yangrim-dong are related to this church that began in the 1904 pioneering period. Why do the three churches use the same name, "Yangrim Church," but belong to different Presbyterian denominations (Habdong, Tonghab, and Gijang), although they have the same roots? The early Korean Presbyterian churches, founded by missionaries, formed a strong identity through unity and cooperation with each other. A Presbyterian seminary was established in Pyongyang, where all Korean Presbyterian minister candidates studied conservative Reformed theology. Bell boasted of this Presbyterian unity and cooperation as the conflict-free appearance of the Presbyterian Church in Korea:

There has never been friction between one Mission and another. There has never been friction between the native and foreign brethren... We are organized on the fundamental and historical doctrines of the Presbyterian and Reformed faith. We believe in union heartily. It would seem to be a crime to have done otherwise than has been done in Korea in having just one Presbyterian Church for the whole (Bell 1916:151).

Here, Bell refers to the Reformed faith, in a word, orthodox Calvinism. He followed Calvin's doctrine of predestination thoroughly and insisted on the complete inspiration and infallibility of the Bible (Choi 2014:154–156). The early Gwangju Presbyterian churches were established on the basis of Bell's theological orientation. Nevertheless, as the years passed, changes took place in the theology of the Korean Presbyterian Church. This

change was a major cause of the division in the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Chung 2016:14). The first division took place over the issue of Japanese Emperor worship. After liberation from Japan, in 1952, the Presbyterian pastors who kept their faith by rejecting the Japanese shrine worship formed a separate Koryo Presbyterian Church. The second division arose from the confrontation between conservative and liberal theologies. The Gijang Presbyterian Church, which embraced liberal theology, was formed in 1954. The third division was caused by the issue of accession to the World Council of Churches (WCC). The side in favor of the WCC became Tonghab, and the opposition became Habdong. The Habdong chose to separate from the Tonghab in order to preserve the Reformed theology passed on by early missionaries like Bell. Ironically, the missionaries remained in the Tonghab. They argued that WCC liberal theology should not divide the Korean Presbyterian Church. In view of this, the division of the Presbyterian Church in Korea was a problem among Korean Presbyterian Church leaders. It was not related to the missionaries. The missionaries were willing to help the Presbyterians in the three Yangrim churches to build a separate church by donating land so that the Korean Christians in Yangrim-dong could freely live their lives of faith, rather than being ashamed and uncomfortable with each other (Chung 2016:15). Currently, these three churches show harmonious cooperation in pursuit of universal values rather than theology and faith issues. For example, on 26 September, 1998, the three churches held the "Sharing Love Yangrim Concert" at Honam Theological University in Yangrim-dong (Lee 2008:34).

CLEMENT OWEN (1867–1909)

Owen worked in almost 30 churches in the southern regions of Honam, including Hwasun and Jangheung. After graduating from Hampden Sidney College, Virginia as an honor student, he studied theology in Scotland for two years, then in the United States at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, and medicine at the University of Virginia. Evidently, he was an elite pastor and medical doctor. He arrived in Korea in November 1898 as an American Southern Presbyterian missionary. He worked with Bell for four years in Mokpo and opened the Gwangju Mission Station with Bell in the fall of 1904. In Korea, his aristocratic upper-class American style of life was preserved to some extent. Like other missionaries,

Owen hired Korean 'servants' to help him. His chef often prepared a Western-style dish with meat and tomatoes to suit his taste. When Korean servants made mistakes, they were mildly reprimanded and repented of their mistakes, but they were usually treated in a personal way. Owen was happy with the services of the Koreans who helped him and boasted in a letter of 2 March, 1909 that "our servants have been a great comfort to us and have been very faithful in rendering service." While working in Mokpo, he married a medical missionary, G. Whiting, from the American Northern Presbyterian Mission and started a missionary family. He consistently showed a very humble attitude in his ministry. He very much respected the Korean tutors who taught him Korean and tried not to commit any impoliteness toward them. In a letter to his sister on 27 February, 1909, he described his Korean tutor in this way: "I am thankful that I have such a congenial helper and co-worker... Mr. Pai who has rendered invaluable assistance. Since we have gotten a taste of translation work I hope that we can keep it up in such a way that we may be helpful to many." Owen never treated his Korean tutor as a 'servant,' working for money. The Korean was a real friend and co-worker for the Gospel ministry.

Owen was greatly pleased to preach the Gospel traveling on a pony through the southern provinces of Honam, and the Koreans were very glad to associate with Owen when he visited the *Sarangbang*, a small traditional Korean room, where ordinary Koreans would enjoy small chats and friendship throughout an evening. Owen was loved by these Koreans for preaching the Gospel and curing diseases at the same time. He regularly read the Bible, prayed, and sang hymns, and continued to give Bible expositions to raise Korean believers in the Jeonnam region as Christian leaders. During the winter season, when he opened a Bible school, from all over the Jeonnam area his disciples gathered at a church in Gwangju to eat and stay together and study the Bible for nearly a month. He embraced them with deep fellowship, calling them all co-workers. In his letter on 27 February, 1909, he wrote:

I try to realize what a privilege it is to be among so many who are waiting and anxious to be taught... In our class at Kwangju I had a lot of pleasure but we were really embarrassed by the large numbers that we could not accommodate... As for sleeping room, there were so crowded that

they could not sleep well. It was reported that 17 men were staying in a room eight feet square... I do not suppose there was much sleeping done by any of them.

Owen considered Korean Christians working for the Gospel to be very valuable, boasting of being their friend and co-worker. He was impressed with how these precious people gathered together in the narrow and shabby Korean church building or auditorium. He planned to help them by constructing a large building with a chapel, an auditorium, a lounge, and a guest house, and he found a concrete way to put his plan into action. In his letter of March 1, 1909, he named the building "A Bible Hall in Memory of Grandpa Owen" and asked his relatives and friends in the United States to give free donations. However, Owen did not live to see the building being constructed; he died of acute pneumonia on 3 April, 1909. Owen lived a short and bold life to the age of 42. He poured all the pure passion of a life's golden age into the Korean people. Owen became the first missionary to be laid to rest at the Yangrim-dong missionary graveyard in Gwangju. When Owen's family sent donations in commemoration of his missionary work, the Gwangju missionary community built "the Owen Memorial Pavilion" and held a completion ceremony in 1912.

There is no trace of Owen joining the Korean independence movement. However, after he died, he indirectly participated in the intense sentiment for Korean independence through the Owen Memorial Pavilion. Students at Speer Girls' School performed an opera named *The Thirteen House* there in the early 1920s during the Japanese occupation (Chung 2016:18–19). *The Thirteen House* referred to the 13 provinces on the Korean Peninsula. Thirteen female students in small clothes appeared with flowers of hibiscus in their long loose hair. On their shoulders were clear strips with the names of the 13 Korean provinces. Wearing these belts, they came out and danced, explaining the specialties and pride of their provinces. At the end, the lights at the center of the stage went out. In the dark space, only the frame of the Korean Peninsula was lit. Students spun and shined in this space. The performance contained the anger and sentiment about what the country lost, but the students sent a strong message to the audience that one day the Korean Peninsula would surely recover. All of the Koreans who appreciated this, dreamed of the independence of their homeland, with

tears in their hearts. Thus, even after death, Owen planted the dream and hope of Korean independence in the hearts of Koreans. The Owen Memorial Pavilion has been continually used “as temporary chapel... winter Bible schools, revival meetings... annual missionary meetings... It [has also been] used for various performances, recitals, theater presentations” (Cha 2000:82). The city of Gwangju, which recognized the historical nature of the Owen Memorial Pavilion, designated the Pavilion as No. 26 Local Tangible Cultural Property in Gwangju in May 1998 (Chung 2016:19).

What are the characteristics of the Presbyterian Church in Gwangju established by Bell, Owen, Talmage and their Korean co-workers? The Hapdong, Tonghab, and Gijang Presbyterian churches in Gwangju hold worship services on Sundays and a regular Holy Communion service. In these churches the people of Gwangju experienced a new religion. Unlike Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shamanism, Christianity is a religion with a large number of gatherings. It is also strict with time. The churches offer early morning prayer gatherings every day, worship services on Wednesdays and Sundays, Friday all-night prayer meetings, and the like. In the early 1900s, this was good punctuality training. This means that Christians in Yangrim-dong, Gwangju, lived, worked, and were trained with the concept of time.

When worshipping at church on Sunday, they gather together in a place called a chapel, where there is no discrimination according to age, educational background, work, or class. They listen to the pastor's sermon and sing hymns together. During sacrament meeting, both bread and wine are shared. Here, the idea of equality, the unity of the community, and a sense of social belonging are formed. The politics of the church is Presbyterian. The elders are not self-selected nor appointed by the pastor but are elected by a group of baptized members. The important administration of the local church is carried out by an organization called the session, which consists of pastors and elders, in which agendas are decided according to democratic procedures. These procedures, directly and indirectly, are a great opportunity to awaken individuals' rights and obligations and to learn equality and nobility as a person. Negative criticism may be made about the existence of a single-rooted church into three churches at the entrance to Yangrim-dong. It is also true that instead of Christian unity and harmony, this gives the impression of division. However, if we consider this from the other

side, this is also a phenomenon that occurred during the process of learning Western culture. As the number of Christian believers in Yangrim-dong increased rapidly, a new space was needed for the Korean pastors who led them. In addition, different interpretations of Christianity were added, resulting in division. It cannot be said that this division arose because of the missionary governance as a form of cultural imperialism.

WILEY HAMILTON FORSYTHE (1873–1918)

Until the appearance of Western medical missionaries, all medical services in Korea were focused on oriental medicine which depended on acupuncture, moxibustion, and herbal medicine. Oriental medicine has the advantage of controlling the root of the disease even if it takes time, rather than producing a therapeutic effect in an instant by understanding the human body entirely. However, it is often effective to treat a disease with Western medicine, such as surgery, at the moment of absolute death. In particular, diseases such as tuberculosis or leprosy were recognized as incurable in Korea at the time, so most patients of these diseases were simply waiting for the day they would die. However, there was someone who delivered the news that modern medicine could heal this dark disease. This was Dr. Forsythe, a medical missionary from the American Southern Presbyterian Church.

Forsythe was a close friend of John Alexander (1875–1929), a medical doctor with enormous wealth and political power, and a member of the Kentucky upper-class in the United States. Alexander worked as a missionary in Gunsan City for about two months from December 1902. However, he hastily returned to his home due to his father's sudden death. After returning to Kentucky, he made a great contribution to the election of Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) as President of the United States. Meanwhile, in order to succeed in his Korean mission work, he asked his friend, Dr. Forsythe, to go to Korea. Thus, in 1904, Forsythe joined the Korean mission. Forsythe served two years in Jeonju (September 1904–April 1906) and another two years (April 1909–March 1911) in Mokpo (Seo 2020:32–46). During his ministry in Jeonju, he gathered beggars and orphans and operated the first orphanage in Jeonju. In 1905, he went to heal a *yangban* (nobleman) in Mangol, a small distance from Jeonju, and was hit by a sword in the head during an armed robbery. He returned to the United States to treat the aftereffects, and was given the title of saint from Jeonju

citizens for forgiving the Koreans who attacked him. After completing treatment in the United States, Forsythe was assigned to the Mokpo Mission Station. In April 1909, he heard that his fellow missionary Owen was dying of pneumonia, so he rushed to Gwangju to treat him. In Yeongsanpo, a suburb of Gwangju, he heard the groaning of a female Hansen patient abandoned by the road. Her body was buried in decaying blood pus, and the stench vibrated. Forsythe brought her to Gwangju *Jejung* Hospital on his own horse. At this time, Owen had already died, so Forsythe devoted himself to the treatment of the woman.

Jejung Hospital was the first modern hospital in Gwangju, founded on November 20, 1905 under the direction of Bell. However, Forsythe was unable to continue treating the Hansen patient at this hospital. The other patients in the hospital protested fiercely for fear of the spread of leprosy. Unavoidably, the patient was moved to a kiln near the hospital to continue treatment. The patient limped because it was difficult for her to walk; without hesitation, Forsythe supported her. Seeing this, the missionaries of the Gwangju Mission Station, the medical staff of *Jejung* Hospital, and many Koreans were greatly surprised and moved. Some exclaimed on Forsythe's appearance, "It is like seeing the Lord" (Seo 2020:67). At the time, none of the patient's parents, relatives, or friends took care of her, and even the hospital's medical staff were reluctant to treat such patients. However, due to Forsythe's selfless actions, a 'miracle' occurred in the Gwangju area. Robert Wilson, the director of *Jejung* Hospital at the time, and Heung-jong Choi, a Korean, were impressed and built the first residence and hospital exclusively for Hansen patients in Bongseon-dong, Gwangju City. Wilson was sponsored around the world to finance the hospital construction, and Choi donated his land.

In Forsythe's brief Korean ministry he never showed to Koreans the figure of a master. He was in a position to socialize with some of the wealthiest Americans, but he did not take a daunting stance by ignoring Koreans as servants. He forgave the Koreans who gave him fatal wounds and lived as a friend of orphans and beggars. Even the Hansen patient, who was despised by almost all those around her, was welcomed by Forsythe, perhaps for the first time in her entire life. Everyone who met Forsythe was moved. The title of 'saint' or 'little Jesus' always followed him. The Hansen patients in Bongseon-dong, Gwangju, made a 9-foot-tall stone monument

commemorating his life. This monument was installed in front of the Owen Memorial Pavilion and moved to Yeosu Aeyangwon in 1926. This showed the patients' devotion to imprint the spirit of Forsythe on their bodies by carrying the heavy stone to Yeosu without using other means of transportation (Seo 2020:46). Forsythe emphasized the need for rational and scientific medicine while respecting oriental medical treatment. In particular, he said that Western medicine would be of help in the treatment of tuberculosis and leprosy and encouraged patients with these diseases not to give up their lives (1913:773).

MARTIN SWINEHART (1847–1957)

In the United States, Swinehart served as President of the Texas Railroad Company and chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce. He was a giant in the American civil engineering world at the time. He was also a politically influential upper-class figure who had relationships with US Presidents William Taft and Woodrow Wilson. He began his missionary activities in Gwangju from September 1911. The contributions of his Korean ministry were twofold. The first was his achievement in the history of modern Korean Christian architecture, and the other was his contribution to the spread of Gwangju Sunday Schools. After living in Korea for 20 years, he hand-designed or supervised the construction of countless buildings, including eleven Mission schools, five Mission hospitals, and the office building of the Christian Literature Society in Seoul, disseminating the American Christian building style in Korea (Cha 2012:102-103).

Swinehart's great interest and consideration for Sunday School students was his belief that the hope and future of Korea would come from them. He mentioned that during 1912, the number enrolled in Sunday School had reached 1,000, but the goal was 10,000 people because Korea was on the verge of transformation. In the next 10 years, he asserted, there would be a big change in life and attitudes if Christian leaders trained these children well. They would go out and lead the future Korean society (1913:214–216).

Swinehart also refrained from political activities in Korea in accordance with the policies of the US government and US mission headquarters. However, he indirectly participated in the Korean independence movement in Gwangju through his role in the construction of the Sung-il Boys' School and Speer Girls' School.

Korean teachers at these schools preached to students the pride of the Korean national identity whenever they had the opportunity. During daily chapel time, they often quoted the *Old Testament's* exodus story to teach that the Koreans should be liberated from Japanese imperial domination. When the national independence movement broke out in March 1919, Korean teachers and students from both schools responded with shouts of “Long live Korean independence” while walking around Gwangju city. Sung-il and Speer became the cradle of the Gwangju student movement (Chung 2016:16–17). At these Mission schools, many students received modern education. Traditionally, male Korean children of the nobility and rich studied Chinese classics at an educational institution called *Seodang* as a normal education. Boys from poor families could not even access this education. The educational environment for girls was worse. When a girl was born, she had no chance to be educated in the public sphere (Jeong 2020:119). Therefore, equal opportunities for education were lacking for girls. However, in the Mission schools built by Swinehart, missionaries and Korean teachers provided equal, democratic and broad educational opportunities to Korean boys and girls. They were trained in basic humanities and social sciences such as history, geography, mathematics, science, agriculture, and English to prepare them to become leaders of the future.

We believe that there is a problem with the theory that missionaries restricted Korean teachers and students from participating in Korean politics as ‘masters’ at their educational institutions. Even though the missionaries showed non-political attitudes and forbade Korean teachers and students to resist Japanese imperialism, the modern democratic education provided by these Mission schools already contained political elements. Missionaries taught Korean students the values of human dignity and equality, and that all nations should live fairly well, as the Bible says. There was already a political ideology in the content of this education, and this ideology helped the members of the two schools to act politically regardless of the interventions of the missionaries.

ELIZABETH SHEPPING (1880-1934)

Shepping was born an illegitimate child in Germany, immigrated to the United States, and lived in a slum in New York. Her mother treated Shepping, who was a Protestant, as a heretic, and did not care for her. With her

own efforts, Shepping graduated from the School of Nursing at St. Mark's Hospital in New York in 1901 and studied theology at the New York Biblical Seminary (Jeong 2020:108). Dr. Wilson also studied at this school, so they were alumni of the same seminary. Shepping had an unfortunate childhood and had never been loved by anyone. She overcame severe poverty, the stinging eyes of her illegitimate status, and the lonely days of playing alone without friends. She had no specific plans for the future. While she was working as an ordinary nurse without finding the purpose and meaning of life, she was invited to Forsythe's mission in Korea.

Shepping arrived in Korea in mid-March 1912 as a nurse missionary. At first, she was appointed to serve the Mokpo Station, but in August 1912, she was transferred to the Gwangju Station and started working at Gwangju *Jejung* Hospital (Yang 2012:339). In addition to working at the hospital, she was given the job of managing the Hansen's patient village in Bongseon-dong, Gwangju. As a result, she was able to work with Pastor Talmage and Dr. Wilson, who had joined the Gwangju Station two years earlier, and Heung-jong Choi, a Korean who had already participated in hospital ministry for four years. Shepping learned Korean from the Hansen patients and remembered the example of Forsythe in Gwangju in 1909 and tried to help them with their difficult lives. She sang that living with the Hansen patients was truly happy (Yang 2016:17). Shepping moved to the Gunsan Station in August 1914 where she began to train a few young girls to be nurses. She was ordered back to the Gwangju Station in 1919 and was able to serve the Gwangju Hansen patients. One of Shepping's achievements was the founding of Neel Bible School. Shepping rented a small room near the Gwangju Station in 1922 with her own money and opened a Bible school for women. In 1924, the Korean mission of the American Southern Presbyterian Church officially recognized this school as an educational institution for women in the Jeonam region and appointed Shepping as its first principal. The school was used to raise young women as pastors' spouses and local church evangelists, creating opportunities for them to work as leaders in the male-oriented Korean society. Shepping taught the students a number of skills, including sewing techniques. These skills allowed them to become self-reliant and avoid economic dependence on missionaries.

Another of Shepping's outstanding achievement was that in April 1923, she created the “Chosun Nursing

Society,” an organization for nurses in Korea, and was elected as its first president. Her books—*Nursing Textbook*, *Practical Nursing Studies*, *Nursing Guideline*, and the like—contributed greatly to the systematization of modern Korean nursing science (Yang 2012:350). Shepping did not directly participate in the Korean independence movement but showed deep affection and compassion for the Korean people and independence activists who complained about Japanese imperialism. When Heung-jong Choi, who worked with her for the Hansen patients in Gwangju, was arrested for being part of the independence movement and detained in a prison in Seoul, Shepping frequently visited the prison to provide Choi and other Korean independence fighters with new clothes and food. Later, Choi embarked on a non-violent protest against the Japanese Governor-General to improve the welfare of Hansen patients who wandered across the country. Shepping also actively participated in this protest. In 1933, the two walked from Gwangju to Seoul as group marching leaders. About 150 patients with leprosy, from the Gwangju area, followed the two leaders in a line (Seo 2020:96). While they were going to Seoul, Hansen patients from all over the country joined, and the number was about 500. Choi risked his death and demanded two things of the Governor-General who ruled Korea. One was to take care of Sorok Island, where the Hansen patients live, with better medical treatments. The second was to expand the cultural facilities on the Island so that the treated patients could walk on the path of rehabilitation. When the governor accepted the proposal, Choi and Shepping cheered with the patients. Shepping died after living a lifelong service following the path of Forsythe, her spiritual mentor. She died of overwork and malnutrition at 4 am on 26 June, 1934. During her time in Korea, “she raised 70 orphans, adopted 14 daughters and sons” (Yang 2019: 256).

Many scholars, when they discuss American missionaries, often say that the missionaries entered Korea as middle-class figures in American society and ruled the Korean people as noble masters. This does not apply at all to Shepping, who came to Korea after living in an American slum. She did not live as an aristocrat having raised her status in Korean society. Under the colonial rule of Japanese imperialism, she lived to improve the welfare of socially underprivileged Koreans—prostitutes, widows, orphans, and Hansen patients. She fought against the Japanese colonial government with Koreans when

necessary. It can be said that her actions were quite political enough. On one wall of her residence, she wrote, “Not Success, But Service,” and always checked whether she was serving the Koreans well.

CONCLUSION

The issue may be raised again as a conclusion of this study: was the division of mission territory in Korea a manifestation of ‘true’ cultural imperialism? Japan's domination of Korea was clearly as a “foreign master” of cultural imperialism, as most scholars have argued. Many missionaries in Gwangju ASPMS were those from high class cultural backgrounds in the United States. They came to Gwangju to work, following the policy of dividing the mission area. Without this policy, it seems likely that people like Owen, Forsythe, and Swineheart would have remained in Seoul, the capital city of Korea. This is because, for a long time in Korean society, the nation's elites in the capital have traditionally commanded all areas of politics, economy, society and culture. However, these missionaries often stopped visiting the capital and devoted their most valuable time to the Gwangju and Honam regions, narrowing the gap between the province and the capital, and opening up a new horizon of life and worldview for Honam people. They lived with an American framework of democracy and capitalist culture with freedom and equality as ethics and shared this cultural framework with Koreans in Honam Province. Outwardly, this process of sharing, as some scholars have argued, seems like a “master-servant relationship” in which missionaries command and Koreans obey. However, if we look at the true aspects of this culture, it appears not as a cultural imperialism of “domination-obedience” but a relationship between mutual understanding and service, that is, a “mentor-student” relationship based on Christian love. Here, ‘mentor’ means ‘shepherd’ as in the Gospel stories in the *New Testament*. The shepherd shows sacrifice and service to the sheep (student), so that in the end the shepherd becomes a true servant. Medical missionary Forsythe and nursing missionary Shepping showed this nakedly in their sacrificial lives. In this sense, it seems more academically appropriate to shed light on the life of missionaries who went to the Honam area according to the policy of the division of missions from the perspective of Christian spirituality rather than through the standard interpretation of cultural imperialism.

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