



A New Perspective for Anglicanism: Mission in Northeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that Anglicans in North East Asia face a challenge to re-imagine their history in the light of the resources of the Anglican theological tradition. That history has been largely influenced by a narrative which has seen the Christian faith come from across the sea in the form of European missionaries in the Age of Discovery. But there is evidence of the presence of Christian faith long before this which came not through missionaries but through ordinary people who practised their faith. Anglicans can deploy a notion of *via media* which is not the assumption of a midpoint between contesting claims, but a method for sublating differing opinions by providing a new paradigm, integrating them into a new conceptual framework. Anglicans are thus called to aim for a church whose very mode of existence bears its message.

KEYWORDS: Japan, mission, Anglican, Age of Discovery, Asia, incarnation

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to enable us Christians of Northeast Asia who live in the tradition of Anglican theology to probe for those vital energies that we ought to be inheriting from this theology and search for the tasks that are before us in our here and now condition, those tasks of mission that will be conducive to the achievement of justice and peace. The tradition of Anglican theology which is herein assumed is that of incarnational theology and the *via media*. Incarnational theology is theology that is modelled on the manner in which God's spirit became flesh, in other words a theology based on the norm that ideas or modes of thought should be given concrete form in social and political reality. What is more, the incarnational theology envisaged here is a theology

that is true to the here and now condition. This also means that a community standing in this theology, while being independent, self-determining and free from all centralized political frameworks, will not have any centralizing political structure of its own. Also, if we adopt this understanding, one can say that incarnational theology is a theology of escape from authoritarianism and a counterforce to fundamentalism, that is to say, a theological posture which does not make itself absolute, but contributes to present-day change and also is engaged in self-transformation.

Turning to the *via media*, we do not construe this as 'centrist' or 'moderate'. Construing the *via media* as centrist or moderate only highlights one certain aspect of the spirit of *via media* – that of mediating or bringing compromise to the conflict between Roman Catholicism and Puritanism. From what Tsukada Osamu says, though, the *via media* is that spirit of the English reformation which aimed, 'while clearing away the degeneration and distortions of the medieval church, to inherit and maintain the basic faith and life of the primitive church which had been passed on through that history'. It is 'the way to realize that true church of Christ which is an extension of Christ's incarnation', and the church of the *via media* is a church of expectancy, one already realized in the world, but at the same time not perfectly realized in any church in our world. Thus, the *via media* is not by any means the assumption of a midpoint between contesting claims, but a method for sublating differing opinions by providing a new paradigm, integrating them into a new conceptual framework.¹

Venturing to 'recover the dynamism of the *via media* which had its inception with Hooker', Renta Nishihara has gone beyond its interpretation as a compromise or centrist path and attempted its reinterpretation as 'a pilgrim theology of non-permanency, a theology that is not closed'. That is, Nishihara does not understand the spirit of *via media* as a spirit of compromise which takes the path of moderation between two parties that are in a horizontal relationship; instead, he replaces this image with a time axis, creating a new interpretation where the *via media* spirit is creating an on-the-way theology, a theology of journey for the road to the final objective.² Also, Yang Guen-seok, having first posited that the

1. Tsukada Osamu, *Ingurando no Shuukyō (The Religion of England)* (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 2004), pp. 4-5, 502.

2. Renta Nishihara, *Richaado Fukkaa – Sono Shingaku to Gendai-teki Imi (Richard Hooker – His Theology and its Present-day Meaning)* (Tokyo: Seikokai Shuppan, 1995), p. 143. According to Tsukada, 'on-the-way-ness' would mean being in the progressive ('ing') form. Tsukada, *Ingurando no Shuukyō*, p. 6.

SungKongHoe (Anglican Church) – which exists in Korean society as a minority both in numerical and cultural terms – envisages the ecumenical spirit with which it lives amid Korea's religious and cultural diversity in terms of 'unity in diversity', goes on to point out that the maturity it shows in living amid these tensions is in itself the spirit of *via media*.³

It seems fitting to agree to these various reinterpretations of *via media*. It is clear that in the theology of the seventeenth-century Church of England, the intention was to establish a settlement for the conflict between Roman Catholicism and Puritanism. In other words, in the context where the *via media* was to be found, there were 'isms' from two extremes in existence, and one can assume that the *via media* spirit which contributed to their settlement involved the presentation of a way that rejected these 'isms'. If so, one may assume that the *via media* spirit involved the rejection of two fundamentalisms, and aimed for an alternative to reduction into bipolar modes of thought. Therefore, we wish to understand what is produced by the *via media* spirit as something that is neither Roman Catholicism nor Puritanism, what one might call the proposal of a 'third way' that sublates thesis and antithesis.⁴ If Anglican theology is a 'third theology' that is not shackled by existing binary oppositions, we should then refer to this phenomenon not as Anglicanism, but 'the Anglican Way'.⁵ Not only is this theology an on-the-road theology, it is most definitely the route itself and is always in the process of change. Therefore, we do not need to detect its completed form in the history of the Church of England. Rather, it must be the case that one can find Anglican ways of life in various contexts in the here and now. Of course, this must point to the self-determined lifestyles of people who acknowledge themselves to be Anglicans. Simultaneously, this term also refers to the ways of life of Christians living the here and now whether

3. Jeremiah Guen Seok Yang, 'The Anglican Contribution in Korea over the Next Decade', in Andrew Wingate (ed.), *Anglicanism: A Global Communion* (London: Mowbray, 1998), p. 409.

4. On this point, while Nishihara makes careful use of the term 'sublate', he seems rather to agree with Allchin's term 'integrate'. The 'third way' which this writer is proposing is offering an alternative within a 'new paradigm', one which allows for the possibility of active transformation.

5. The expression 'the Anglican Way' is one that can already be found here and there in the English-speaking world, but I want to call the reader's attention to the wealth of historic insight related to the term 'the Dao' (the Way) within the cultural sphere where Chinese characters are used. As a result, the Anglican Way is not treated as a mere methodology in this paper, but in terms of the image of a locus where numerous ways would draw together into a comprehensive worldview regarding values and their realization in society.

or not they are Anglicans, that is, lives that are faithful to the gospel of Christ in their respective settings. It also must mean involvement in the struggle toward forming a new human community.⁶

It goes without saying that the major issue for theological endeavour is the creation of this type of new community, the recovery of human nature and service to the cause of liberation. We are right in the midst of a process in which the *via media* spirit is developing and deepening in the midst of a variety of circumstances; to put this more concretely, we want to assume as our own task the creation of a new theology founded on the *via media* spirit in the context of Asia.

Breaking Away from the Age of Discovery-shaped View of History

Even as we realize that we are Northeast Asian Anglicans, we recognize that we are Northeast Asian Christians. This means that the urgent task before us is the establishment of an Asian historical consciousness that can form the foundation for this 'third theology' that we seek. This involves breaking away from the Age of Discovery-shaped view of history.⁷

It is said that Christianity in Japan began in 1549. After Franciscus de Xavier (1506–52) founded the Society of Jesus together with Ignatius Loyola and others, he set sail from Lisbon in 1541 with official approval from the Roman Catholic Church after a request from King John II of Portugal. Having rounded Africa and reached India, he carried out his activities from a base at Goa. In 1547, Xavier got information on Japan from the Japanese seafarer Yajirou whom he met in Goa and decided to go on mission to Japan. In 1549, he landed in Kagoshima together with his party. In the year when the Church of England created its Book of Common Prayer with the introduction provided by Cranmer, Japan (which was nearing the end of its Warring States period) saw the Roman Catholic missionaries arrive and begin the propagation of Christianity.

Yet, before Xavier and the others landed in Japan, one need not assume that there was no information at all to be found in Japan regarding Christianity. In 635, there are records showing how Nestorianism was introduced to (Tang era) China. Many say that Nestorianism did not have much influence in East Asia after this, but in Central Asia Nestorianism

6. For Yang Guen-seok, being a genuine Anglican in Korea means 'to be faithful to God while also being responsible to the people of Korea'. He says that this is in fact the responsibility which Korean Anglicans need to fulfil as a part of the Anglican Communion (Yang, 'The Anglican Contribution in Korea over the Next Decade').

7. Here, the Age of Discovery (or the era of the great voyages) is taken to be the age that was emblematic of Europe-focused Christianity, and the spirit linked to that age is described as the Age of Discovery-shaped view of history.

played an important role, so that at the end of the thirteenth century, at the request of Kublai Khan, Pope Nicholas IV was moved to send the Franciscan Giovanni di Monte Corvino (c. 1247–1328) to Central Asia.⁸ This means that from the beginning of the seventh century up to at least the beginning of the fourteenth, Nestorian Christianity had direct and indirect influence over parts of Central Asia and East Asia.

If this is the case, it definitely becomes possible to assume that the Korean peninsula and the Japanese islands, which had official relations with China at the time, might have felt some influence from this quarter.⁹

However, the work we are now engaged in is not to prove that there was Christianity in Japan before Xavier. We are trying to draw attention to the point that it may be necessary to rediscover the development of Christianity in Central Asia, particularly in the Mongol Empire (and this development has tended to be excluded from the framework of Christian history up until now) in order to eradicate the mental framework focused on mission by missionaries from Europe, the sense of history keyed on the Age of Exploration that still maintains its sway within us.

Mission Conducted by the Church?

This re-examination of history keyed to the Age of Exploration in which we are now engaged will include the question of who is the main actor

8. Wu Liming says that 'Nestorianism was suppressed together with Buddhism by Emperor Wuzong, a believer in Daoism, and completely disappeared from China by the tenth century' and that 'Nestorianism entered China again during the Yuan period when the Mongols ruled.' 'However, just as was the case during the Tang period, Nestorianism in China was mainly something for foreigners, and taking the wider view, it seems that it did not exert any important influence among Chinese' (*Christianity in Asia 1* [Singapore: Christian Council of Asia, 1979]), but this all has to do with the Han peoples and ignores the circumstances of Central Asia and peoples other than the Han. Yet, after this, Bar Sauma, who was appointed 'Circuit Superintendent Bishop' by Mar Denha, Patriarch of the Nestorians, and hailed from the Great City of the Yuan (that is, today's Beijing) was renowned as a Nestorian cleric in thirteenth-century Beijing. The Ongud royal family to which the Great Khan married his daughter were known as Nestorian believers, and King Georgis was to convert to Catholicism through Monte Corvino (in the 1290s). Egami Namio, *The Mongol Empire and Christianity* (San Paulo: 2000).

9. The relationship between Nestorianism and Japan is often treated as a fable, and Japanese language books written on the relation between the two seldom maintain a high academic level. In reference to the point made by Oh Yun-dea that Nestorianism influenced Japanese Buddhism, Sawa Masahiko took the position that 'this is no more than a daring hypothesis' and would not give countenance to this idea. Sawa Masahiko, *History of Japanese Christianity* (Soufukuukan: 2004), p. 31.

in mission. The assumption here is that as we rebuild Christian history in terms of the Mission of God and minjung history [tr. note: the history of the people at the grassroots or the 'salt of the earth', in particular over against those in power], we can find new answers. For instance, in Korean Christian history, we can envision three epochal moments. The first is the baptism of Koreans arising from Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Korean incursions that began in 1592,¹⁰ the second the baptism in 1784 of Yi Sang-hun in Beijing and the start of the Catholic Church which derives from this, and the third the sailing forth of the Protestant Church, which originated with the arrival of the Presbyterian Underwood and the Methodist Appenzellers.

We may not be able to get the acceptance for this first moment from all historians. Even if 'mission coming from the church' can be found in the background of this event in the form of the Jesuit mission to Japan, the Jesuits of that day did not see Korea as an object for their activities; missionaries went to Korea as part of Konishi's army, and encountered Koreans who had been hauled away as prisoners. What remains in the historical records as a result of these events is the birth of what were probably the first Christian faith communities among Koreans, and the fact is that these flocks of Korean believers lived out their faith in a way that was worthy of praise, both in name and in substance.¹¹ The second

10. The commander in chief of the invasion army was the Christian lord Konishi Yukinaga, and many of the officers and men were Christians. At this time, Korean infants who were left on the battlefields separated from their families were given infant baptism by military commanders of Konishi's army. It is possible to consider this the first act of the story of Korean Christian history. J.G. Luis de Medina, *Origins of the Catholic Church of Korea* (Seoul: Published for the Royal Asiatic Society by Seoul Computer Press, 1986, Japanese translation, 1988).

11. Pedro Morejon who was head of the Amakusa residence of the Jesuits and in charge of instruction for women believers in Kyoto also had deep connections with the believers of 'Korea' living in Japan. In a letter addressed to Rome, he reported on a letter from Julia Ohta, an influential Korea-born believer, and added the following comments: 'one considerable wonder for which I cannot fully express my admiration is how God has made use of the means of the arrogant ambition of the lord of Japan, the Taikoh, to make war against Korea, choosing from that land those many people He had appointed for salvation from eternity, making some into excellent Christian believers and some into celebrated martyrs.... People from that land are blessed with great ability and wits, and have mild and attractive dispositions.... Vast is the number which were brought to Japan as prisoners from the war, but practically all or a large portion became Christians.' Luis de Medina, *Iezusu Kai-shi to Kirishitan Fukyou (The Jesuits and Christian Mission Work)* (Iwata: Shoten, 2003), p. 187. 'Practically all or a large portion' is probably an exaggeration, but it is a fact that the lists of Christian martyrs in various parts of Japan include people of 'Korea'.

event, the conversion of Yi Sung-hun, again is clearly not due to 'mission conducted by the church'. Rather, he was sent out as part of the organized efforts of one group of those seeking to draw from the Western Learning (Seohak), went calling on the missionaries on his own accord, sought their teaching and was baptized. After this, it was not until 1795 that a Chinese priest came to Korea at the request of Korean believers, and 1831 when a French priest arrived – 47 years after the baptism of Yi Sung-hun.¹² And what about the third event? Actually, this also originates from circumstances which cannot be conclusively called mission conducted by the church. In 1882, Yi Su-jeon, who came to Japan as a member of the 'progress party', came into contact with Christianity in Japan, was converted and afterwards established a Korean church which centred on Koreans studying in Japan. His situation was such that he could not return to his country, so in the cause of evangelization of his native land, he made approaches to G.W. Knox and Henry Loomis, missionaries who were dispatched by the US Presbyterian Church to Japan, and sent a missive to the US Presbyterian church advocating the dispatching of missionaries to Korea. In Japan, Yi Su-jeon proceeded with a Korean translation of the Bible which he then entrusted to American missionaries, even as he provided them instruction in the Korean language and orientation to Korean culture. Even though this effort was indirect in nature, it would be no exaggeration to call this event a form of self-activated evangelism by a Korean.¹³

These events were not started by the official church or by organizations such as missions agencies; these were conversions that arose from the disturbances of war, from being taken as prisoners, or conversions based on academic or political intentions, or conversion based on the passion of a Christian individual burning with love for his native land; these were events that were occasioned by a variety of factors, and it seems clear that the main actor here was not the church qua organization.

12. Sawa Masahiko, *Mikan Chousen Kirisuto-kyo Shi (Unfinished Christian History of Korea)* (Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan Shuppanyoku, 1991).

13. Yi Mahn-yol, *Hanguk Kidokyo Suyong Sa (Studies of the History of Reception of Christianity in Korea)* (Ture Shidae, 1998), pp. 95-141. Yi considers Yi Su-jeon to be 'the Macedonian of Korea' (p. 105, cf. Acts 16.9), but Yi Su-jeon's role was not merely that of an intermediary. Though TSUDA Sen, who also happened to be Yi Su-jeon's mentor, judged that it was still too early for the evangelism of Korea to begin, it was at this point that the timing was just about in line for involvement from the Japanese Christian world in the evangelization of Korea. However, Yi Su-jeon entrusted the evangelization of Korea not to the Japanese church he already knew, but to American missionaries; this was a judgment made not only in light of Christian mission, but with a view to the whole process of Korean modernization.

We need to give consideration to the same question in the context of Japan. In other words, church organization after the 1587 order expelling the Christian Fathers is in gradual transition to a lay community, and after the 1614 Edict of Persecution against the Christians, what was left in Japan was in actuality a faith community of laity with no direction from clergy.¹⁴ It is said that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, believers amounted to about 3 per cent of the population of that time, but when one considers that at this time there were very few clergy (or missionaries), surely it is clear that the laity handled the important work. They continued to bear up even after the beginning of fierce persecution due to the promulgation of bans on Christianity. They next become an underground church even as they produced many martyrs, passing on the faith in secret from parent to child, and to grandchildren. But through their own original organization and movement—which was not the church—they created their own original faith and culture, which they would then pass on.¹⁵

With the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the Roman Catholic Church once again sent missionaries to Japan, they came to know of the existence of believers who had remained hidden over the last 250 years. This is the 'discovery' of the Japanese *Kirishitan* (Christian) by B.J. Petijean in 1865. The Catholic missionaries saw a necessity to judge whether the *Kirishitan* were Catholic, but due to the long years as a hidden faith, few if any of them had maintained intact the doctrine and worship left to them by the missionaries. The novelist Mihara Makoto dealt with this

14. In the preceding pattern of *Kirishitan* studies, it was said (for instance by Ebisawa Arimichi) that the work of lay communities (*confraria*) was characteristic of the hidden *Kirishitan*, but through an analysis of the *confraternita* which developed in Italy in the thirteenth century, and then assigning this to be the product of 'a more popularized (i.e. *minjung*-based) Christianity', Kawamura has indicated that Japan accepted this popularized Christianity and transformed this into a more Japanese *konfurariya*. It appears that underlying the organization of *kirishitan* lay groups, one can find the know-how developed in Italian city states to create private democratic organizations for piety. Kawamura Shinzou, *Kirishitan Shinto Soshiki no Tanjou to Hen'you* (*Making Christian Lay Communities in the 'Christian Century' in Japan*) (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 2003).

15. Ohashi, who is trying to re-evaluate the hidden *Kirishitan* from the viewpoint of *minjung* history, sets his sights on the social attributes of *Kirishitan* groups and points out that 'Christian *minjung*' played an important role in *minjung* history, in its movement toward the dismantling of the shogunate state. It is important that Ohashi understands the *Kirishitan* to be 'one of the elements of Japanese culture that bloomed into the modern Japanese isles'. Ohashi Yukiyasu, *Kirishitan Minshuushi no Kenkyuu* (*The Study of Kirishitan Minjung History*) (Tokyo: Tokyodo Shuppan, 2001).

question in *Nanjira Kirishitan ni Arazu* (Ye Are Not Christians).¹⁶ While maintaining the historical facts such as the encounter between the Christian minjung (people of the grassroots) who had preserved the hidden faith over those many years and the French father, as well as how, from this encounter, a 'Christian resurrection' issued in a quite similar way in Imamura of Chikugo, Mihara brings out very important issues regarding the minjung and religion in Japan, and in particular regarding the relationship between Christianity and the minjung.¹⁷

Seeking Traces of the 'Mission of God'

It is no easy task to give proof that traces of Christianity were recorded in Japan prior to Xavier. However, before going forward with a historical approach on the basis of mission conducted by the church, mission carried out by missionaries, we must consider a number of points.

First, the propagation of Christianity, or the story of world mission as we have learned it to this point is through and through the story of the Christian church of Europe, and has as its context one historical view, which can be called the Age of Discovery-shaped view of history.¹⁸ Certainly, the story of men coming over the great oceans from the port of Lisbon with Bible in hand, brimming with faith and courage is a moving,

16. *Nanjira Kirishitan ni Arazu – Chikugo Imamura Kirishitan Oboegaki* (Ye are not Christians – Memorandum on the Kirishitan of Imamura of Chikugo) (Tokyo: Keisou Shuppan Saabisu Sentaa, 1987). While Mihara grounds his work in primary source materials, as a writer he makes use of his imagination as he writes this work. In his novel, the reason these Japanese farmers are judged not to be Christians by the French father is that the words used in bestowing baptism were imperfect—at some point in their transmission of the faith, the Latin 'ego te' corresponding to 'I ... to thee' went missing.

17. In fact, the *kakure* (hidden) *Kirishitan* faith that continues even today is a unofficial Buddhist-style or Shinto-style faith of ancestral worship, no longer related to Christianity, but definitely of profound interest as a case of mass indigenization and transformation of religion (regarding this point, see Miyazaki Kentarou, *Kakure Kirishitan no Shinkou Sekai* [The Faith World of the Kakure Kirishitan] [Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1996]). There are cases of this sort of transformation other than the *kakure Kirishitan*; on this score, see Mark Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study in Indigenous Movements* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).

18. Much of the world history that gets circulated in Japan is embellished by this view of Western European Christian history. One can point to an understanding that previous to Europe's Age of Discovery, the great sea routes had already been developed through the Islamic Age of Discovery of the eighth century and China's Age of Discovery in the tenth century (Miyazaki Masakatsu, *Jipangu Densetsu* [The Zipangu Legend] [Tokyo: Chuo Kouron Shinsha, 2000]). We need to be aware that the various stories that are told from the viewpoint of Western European Christianity act as an ideological device which has a major impact on us.

heroic tale, but these stories have meaning for development or expansion in the European church. What meaning should be assigned to this on the Asian side is quite another matter. The work of conveying Christianity may in itself be worthy of praise, but there needs to be some form of evaluation of the means used to convey the faith or the things that took place in relation to this process on the part of the recipient.¹⁹

What we now need to recognize is the propagation of Christianity, not by sea routes, but by land routes. Asia and Europe are definitely connected by land, and the land of Christ's birth and Northeast Asia were linked together by land routes. As one finds in the legend of St Thomas, the early church had an awareness of India. Before the coming of what we call the Age of Discovery, the Middle East and Asia were tied by the Silk Road, and no later than the sixth century, the eastern end of the Silk Road was neither China, nor Korea, but Japan. The Mongol empire, which unified Central Asia and extended its hegemony into Europe, accepted Nestorianism, and had negotiations with the Vatican. It is common knowledge that the Mongol empire tried to exert hegemony over Japan. It is quite true that Palestine and the continent of Europe which were bound together by the Mediterranean Sea were by no means remote from each other, based on convenience of access. In this sense, there is no question that Rome had a special geopolitical meaning in the earliest Christian era. However, when we examine the history of Christianity, one must recognize the need to examine not just that history that comes from Europe, keyed to the Age of Discovery, but also the possibility of a Eurasian sense of history centred on land routes.²⁰

19. This type of review is beyond the scope of this paper. However, there is one fact that deserves attention here, the fact that the proximate cause for Toyotomi Hideyoshi's suppression of the Christians could be found in the Jesuit possession of Nagasaki. The Japanese ruler took this involvement as a sign of Jesuitical territorial ambition, and it was only to be expected that the Christians who had taken these actions elicited a harsh reaction. For Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, the most dangerous element that was active domestically was the Ikkou Sect, an armed Buddhist group which had formed autonomous zones through insurrections, and one can easily imagine that they sensed the same sort of danger in the possession of Nagasaki by the Society of Jesus. However, it seems that the Jesuits of the day took lightly the issue of their possession of Nagasaki (Kawamura, *Kirishitan Shinto Soshiki no Tanjou to Hen'you*, p. 103). Hideyoshi's Edict of Persecution against the Christians declares that the missionaries aspire to reign over Japan. Even if this was a misconception, one cannot deny that the reason for this idea could be found on the side of the missionaries.

20. It is Sugiyama Masaaki who emphasizes the importance of the Eurasian landmass, and in particular the importance of the Mongol Empire in world history. Please refer to such works as *Mongoru Teikoku to Daigen Urusu (The Mongol Empire and the Dai-on Ullus)* (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppan-kai, 2004).

Second, although mission conducted by the church or mission conducted by missionaries – in other words, official missions conducted by church organizations – are one channel for the propagation of Christianity, they are not the only channel. Not only the Roman Catholic Church, conducting all its work based on the approval of the Supreme Pontiff of Rome, but most likely all churches have grown accustomed to thinking of missions work in the framework of the church, whether the work be that of a missions agency or some activity established by a church. For this reason, churches see the history of Christianity as focused on the story of the establishment and organizing of churches, or the expansion of the church, and so one can say that in regard to the work of Christianity in the present day church eyes only focus on the work of the churches. However, one needs to see the channels through which the teachings of Christ, the stories and values of the Bible, or Christian lifestyle are transmitted and received as being exceedingly diverse. One should assume that church or official institutions are not necessarily the channels through which this occurs. Rather, sometimes mission comes to the fore through events that are produced by a confluence of varied incidences of historic coincidence, political machination or the passion of individuals. We have no reason to hesitate in calling this ‘the mission of God’.

The five marks of mission in the worldwide Anglican Church as confirmed in the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) are, first, ‘To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom’, second, ‘to teach, baptise and nurture new believers’, third, ‘to respond to human need by loving service’, fourth, ‘to seek to transform unjust structures of society’, and fifth, ‘to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth’.²¹ Of these, the only one which would seem impossible to accomplish without the presence of the church would be the second, ‘to teach, baptize and nurture new believers’. But strictly speaking, those who look to become believers are born in a society, live in society, encounter God and are led to make the decision; though the church does play a part in this, it does not monopolize the whole process. Also, it is not only the church that spurs the spiritual growth of people brought into the church through baptism. We see these characteristics that the ACC has outlined as calling attention to the fact that the church needs to play an important role in this work of the mission of God, and would also understand that surely the church is not to take an exclusivist approach toward this, as if this role were one that only the church could fill.

21. ‘Mission in the Broken World’, ACC 8, 1990.

Producing definitions for mission over and over again does not by itself further mission. Yet what we need to be verifying at the present time is in fact that of God's own mission on this earth, and while the church should certainly see itself as in the first rank of those called to labour in the cause, it should by no means exclude other labourers; rather, we need to come into solidarity with all the efforts in which we can be fellow labourers, learn humbly, and march forward even as we proceed with such self-transformation as proves necessary. Therefore, the central concern of this paper in speaking to the topic of mission is the Gospel, and I would draw attention to the fact that the Gospel can be present in all realities, not just in the church. In that case, our attention is to be directed to the *minjung*, because the scene of action for God's own mission is always the scene of action of the *minjung*, since the story of the Bible, that Jesus came into the very midst of the *minjung* and declared the Kingdom of God, this story is the ground on which we take our stand.

Of course, official mission by church organizations needs always to speak in concert with the story of the *minjung*, and surely we cannot speak the word of the Gospel as something that bears no reference to liberation of the *minjung*. We eagerly await an Asian theology that will be a new and fresh story, born out of a liberation of Christian history from the sense of history keyed to the Age of Exploration, a story in which the Gospel message is not a monologue by the church but seen in the midst of the Mission of God and of *minjung* history in Asia.

What Is Anglican Theology in Asia?

When we consider that the *via media* spirit which characterizes Anglican theology holds within itself the possibility of being realized in Asia as a 'third theology', there should be no problem in classifying the theology that will be born from the circumstances of Asia, the theology we are groping our way towards, as an 'Anglican theology in Asia'.

There are many proponents of an Asian theology, but we want to make this current effort making reference to Korea's *minjung* theology. The concept of *minjung* theology as 'de-theologizing' or 'anti-theology' was held in common by Ahn Byung-mu and Suh Nam-dong. The reason for our bringing up *minjung* theology at this point is that this theology is not a theology for academic research but a theology of the scene of action, theology 'in the event'. *Minjung* theology was a theology born out of the clash between an unconcerned church and the realities of poor people, of people suffering from injustice, of all the evils which deny the value of human beings. Suh Nam-dong clearly was conceptualizing a 'third theology' that was neither Catholic nor Protestant. For him, this

was both a 'third' option beyond the horizontal axis of left and right and a new theology set in a new time axis — a third age to follow the Catholic age and Protestant age. Suh Nam-dong points out that these types of tendencies had always existed, even before minjung theology, but according to him, the common characteristic of these tendencies was that they could be found within a framework critical of Christianity.

Post-Christianity is a major issue for secularization theology, and mission in a de-Christianizing world in fact means *missio dei* theology. Suh Nam-dong offers the following points as conditions for de-theologizing. First, we must be freed from a Constantinian view of history (this is in line with our effort to be freed from the Age of Discovery-shaped view of history). Second, we must free ourselves from written theology, theology of the head, and structure a narrative theology which has the minjung scene of action as the underpinning for its scheme. This means an inductive theology in contrast to the transcendental, deductive nature of traditional theology; this has also been addressed within a separate discussion, the one regarding 'priests for the *han* of the minjung'. Third, our theology must be a secular theology, a 'third theology' that overcomes the conflict between Catholic and Protestant.²²

For us, an Asian theology to be found in the event that provides proof of the gospel told among Asia's minjung, a story where the Age of Discovery-shaped view of history is overcome, a story not of the expansion of the European church, but of the encounter between the Asian minjung and the gospel — this is our 'third theology'. We believe that it is our mission as Asian Christians to grope our way towards this theology, and also one of the responsibilities we must fulfil as Asian Anglicans toward the Anglican Communion as a whole.

In our debate over theology in Asia, one characteristic we need to affirm is the point made by Aloysius Pieris that Asia has 'many poor and many religions'. I want to develop the understanding of the poverty spoken of here through fleshing it out with related ideas such as economic, political, cultural and religious alienation, repression, exploitation and discrimination. For this reason, Pyon Son-hwan mentioned as his model for Korean theology 'a pluralist, religious liberation theology based on a pluralist paradigm' in which the theologies of various religions, minjung theology and liberation theology are merged together.²³ This issue is

22. See Suh Nam-dong, *Minjung Sinhak-ui Tamgu* (In Search of Minjung Theology) (Seoul: Hangilsa, 1983).

23. See Kayama, 'Paradaimu Tenkan to shite no Minshuu Shingaku (Minjung Theology as Paradigm Shift)', *Kong-gong song ui Yunri wa Pyong-hwa* (Ethics and Peace of the Public) (Hanguk Shinhak Yong-gu So, 2005).

directly connected with a root issue: what is the gospel in our context? For us, the task of theology is searching out the answer to the question of why Jesus Christ is the gospel for Asia. Before this, however, surely we need to re-examine the very situation of Christianity in Asia.

We must take our stand in the reality of 'many poor and many religions' because Christianity feels its responsibility for the poverty of Asia. Asian poverty is a product of the Age of Discovery (that expression of Christian Europe's expansionism), a product of the colonialism of the European nations and of Japan which followed in their wake; dictatorships, which can be seen as the stepchild of colonialism, continued to produce further poverty, and now, globalization, a force which has enabled economic exploitation by core nations such as America and Japan, is forcing poverty on Asia and on the world. We cannot deny that when Europe initiated colonialist invasions against various areas of Asia, there were Christian missionaries among the vanguard. Also, surely we cannot deny that many of the dictatorships that arose in various Asian regions were pro-American and pro-Christian, that Christianity was transplanted and nurtured in Asia as an anti-Communist ideology.²⁴

Next, it is well known that the economic invasion of Asia was at the same time a cultural invasion, and that American mass culture, the cultural side of this economic domination spreading through Asia, was brimming over with a Christian bias that treated Asia with contempt and abominated Islam and Hinduism. Even put in less direct terms, it should be clear that the Christianity of Europe and America, and also the European and American-style Christianity that was transplanted into the region, are deeply involved in the poverty of Asia. Of course, one cannot disregard the fact that there are religious factors other than Christian ones involved in Asia's poverty. However, these have to do with the collusion of established religion with sources of money and power, and so there is no need to deny the liberating element to be found in the religiosity of the minjung; rather, these matters would in fact be issues to be examined from the standpoint of a comprehensive criticism of anti-minjung religion.

Pieris gives three points as a new paradigm for Asian theology: (1) the authority of the poor; (2) an orientation toward liberation; (3) base human communities, pointing out that this authority of the poor is none other than a third dimension of authority to follow academic authority and

24. One personage that can be said to symbolize this is Macarthur, who after the conclusion of World War II had an immense impact on Northeast Asia as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and US Far East Commander-in-Chief.

pastoral authority.²⁵ Shouldn't our theology, and the church's objective, make some contribution to the formation of liberating base communities which accept the authority of the poor?

A Church to Serve the Gospel in Northeast Asia

As the main gospel issues in Northeast Asia, we bear in mind Christian Europe's expansionism, the colonialism of Europe, America and Japan, dictatorial polities and the globalization by which America and multi-national corporations are made to be the global standard. Asia's poverty is a complex product of these forces, and Asians can be said to be a complex mixture of victim (due to these forces) and also perpetrator.

*The Reconciliation of Northeast Asia and Democratization of Japan,
as a Macroscopic Issue*

In order to be freed from colonialism and to establish stability in the whole Asian region without reliance on the United States, reconciliation in Northeast Asia becomes a pressing issue. Macroscopically speaking, this certainly would be the good news, that is, the gospel for the whole Asian region. For this to be realized, the first condition would be engaging in the work of coming to terms with Japan's history of colonial domination. But Japan's colonial domination is only the beginning – the number of issues within Northeast Asia that have arisen from the end of the nineteenth century up to the present day which necessitate efforts under the title of reconciliation are simply too many to mention. However, as a minimum what needs to be established at this point is for the Japanese government to admit its past crimes to the countries against which it aggressed, make all necessary reparations and take a responsible posture toward the future (for instance, through re-examination of history education, preserving the peace constitution and the principle of demilitarization, etc.)²⁶

25. There are seven characteristics to the authority of the poor pointed out by Pieris. The first is 'this-worldly spirituality', which is characterized by the necessities of the lives of the poor. The second is 'faith in the God of our living', the third 'the cry for righteousness to the God of our living', and this is based not in a metaphysical concept of God but in the idea of 'the God who is concerned with this world'. The fourth is a cosmic 'God of our living' in whom the poor believe. The fifth is femininity. The sixth is ecological spirituality. The seventh is story as traditional religious narrative for the poor of Asia. See Kayama, 'Paradaimu Tenkan to shite no Minshuu Shingaku'.

26. This writer spoke on this point in the 11th International Symposium of the GaiKiKyou (the National Christian Liaison Council on the Alien Registration Law) in

We need to see this not as a foreign relations problem but as a domestic issue, that is, the task of the democratization of Japan. As the Nippon SeiKoKai (Anglican Church in Japan) takes the stance of being faithful to God and also responsible to the people of its land, we must become a church that takes responsibility for the whole of Japan.²⁷ In other words, through the working out of the gospel in Japanese society, the Nippon SeiKoKai is called to assume a certain responsibility toward all of North-east Asia, and the first task in this regard is none other than the democratic maturation of Japanese society. Asia's poverty is being exacerbated once again by those foreign, economic and educational policies that result from Japan's undemocratic politics. If, as the Liberal Democratic Party is now scheming, the peace constitution is revised and Japan further expands its military armaments, the whole Asian region will become more and more unstable; as a result America's global strategies will be strengthened, and Japan and South Korea will be incorporated even more firmly into its domain.

However, the proposition that the Nippon SeiKoKai, a miniscule religious body, should bear responsibility for reconciliation with Asia through the democratization of Japan may be too pretentious and much too unrealistic. Certainly, considered as a strategy for realistic politics this must be seen as foolishness. However, the history of salvation that we rely on begins from 'a wandering Aramean', and God's work is the establishment of a new tabernacle based on 'the stone which the builders rejected'. We do not wait eagerly for messianic politics; rather, we stand for a political messianism whose starting point is poverty, that is, the *minjung* must be the 'sitz im leben' of true evangelical authority, as Pieris points out.²⁸ We are well aware of the degeneration of religion

2005, in the main lecture he gave on '60 Years from War's End/Liberation, 40 Years from Establishment of Japanese-Korean Diplomatic Relations – Reconciliation and Coexistence in 21st Century East Asia', which bore in mind the Northeast Asia Common House concept.

27. Please refer to n. 6 of this paper. Tsukada explains that State Church means the church recognized officially and politically by the state as the church for its citizens, while the National Church is a self-reliant church of a nationality or ethnic group not related to the state, so that it is the church for those living in that certain area. Tsukada, *Ingurando no Shuukyō*, p. 607, ch. 13, n. 11. In order for the Anglican church to stand as a church that has dealt successfully with the modern nation-state, it is not the state-defined unit of national citizens that is important, but the local nature of the church as the church on the spot. In this regard, we need to bear in mind the inhabitants of the region known as Japan.

28. Aloysius Pieris, 'Interreligious Dialogue and Theology of Religions: An Asian Paradigm', *Horizons* 20.1 (1993), pp. 106-14, see Kayama, 'Paradaimu Tenkan to shite no Minshuu Shingaku'.

when it has become the majority in society, both in history and at the present time. Surely the basis for blessing in the gospel of Christ is that of being small and weak.

Speaking macroscopically, those forces that contribute to Japanese society taking a political posture that will bring less harm to Asia as a whole, and particularly to the minjung of Asia, are servants in the furthering of the gospel; conversely, if some group does not contribute to this, even if the group in question is a church organization, one must believe that it could not be a bearer of the gospel. Our job is to serve in the democratization and the maturing of the civic consciousness of Japanese society, and in order for us to rediscover minjung-like community, or to recreate it, we certainly would need to work on developing our own internal resources.

Aiming for a Church Whose Very Mode of Existence Bears a Message

We have no need in a non-Christian society to cling to a Church of England-style diocese-local church model. Surely the responsibility lies in our hands to create our own church models. What this writer is presenting is no more than a mental image, that of the regeneration of Christianity as minjung religion. I do not search for a religion of the word as exemplified by a logical and autonomous Protestantism, nor for authoritarian religion as exemplified in Catholicism and its context of tradition and massive organization; I want to search for a church whose very mode of existence bears its message. This is an image that also underlies the 'people's religion' of which Harvey Cox once spoke. Our work, though, is not to translate one narrative from New Mexico that is rooted in Catholic culture and then transplant it. Rather, what comes to this writer's mind is a picture of that *Kirishitan* belief which spread some three hundred years ago from one region in Kyushu to the minjung (people at the grassroots) throughout the land, hurdling over barriers of language and custom. In particular, over a roughly 250-year period of persecution, these people inherited the faith as secret ritual; it was only handed down privately within the family, it was never divulged to those outside the faith. This is the exact opposite of the concept of evangelism. Yet they were earnest and upright, and their way of life permeated far enough throughout the land to provide the core for the subsistence of a minjung community. Faith in times of persecution in fact has the meaning of martyrdom. Only volunteers for martyrdom would convert and only through them were the secret rites passed down. Thus, Christianity underwent a Japanese transformation through outside pressure; on the one hand, it became an element in those structural underpinnings that

firmed up support for the Tokugawa shogunate system in the form of an ethic of the law-abiding citizen, while on the other hand its existence as a latent minjung organization continued to be a constant object of fear for those in power. Learning from the lay organizations of medieval Italy, they devoted themselves to works of mercy and performed memorials for the dead with all solemnity. Believing in this Way, even feudal lords of high status would hurry to someone found dead on the street or to the memorial of a poor farmer; through such acts, those around them could perceive a certain liberation that broke through the feudal order of status, and so the *Kirishitan* spread among the minjung.²⁹

The context in which the early church lived was the world of Judaism, and one cannot deny that evangelism to the Gentiles depended on the networks of Judaism. Thus, the paradigm of an early religious grouping, embodied in activities based on a common religious world, may be very different from our reality in which we live among numerous existing religions and with worldviews that can even point one away from religion. In Japanese society we clearly have to live as members of a group quite different from the majority. What we may need to learn from the tradition of the early church is not its apostolic authoritarianism or its expansion of influence into gentile communities but rather the apocalyptic thought, mysticism and spiritualism to be found in the various documents that were written under persecution, for the religious sense of the minjung is in large measure mystical and spiritualist.

The issue for the Anglican Church in Japan is to bear responsibility together with other religions and movements for reconciliation and democratization and the realization of human rights and justice, and at the very least make our positions clear so that our very existence can bear our message.³⁰ Would this not also involve devoting ourselves (as the small group we are) to protection of the weak and memorializing of the dead, to living out a new theology from the wisdom of the minjung as we give weight to a minjung spirituality that does not rely on reason

29. These are characteristics of the initial *Kirishitan*; I realize that the *kakure* faith after the period of hiding became another form of ancestral worship, and in most all cases had no liberating element at all. However, and while this is a very rough-and-ready definition of issues, there is no doubt that it would be meaningful to rediscover the meaning of the *Kirishitan* life as minjung religion within Japanese minjung history and within Christian history.

30. It only stands to reason that holding fast to clear political positions such as opposition to state support for Yasukuni Shrine, opposition to the imposition of Kimigayo (the 'national anthem') and the Rising Sun flag, defence of the peace constitution and promotion of a basic law for foreign residents should be a real help in making clear the mission of this religious body known as the Nippon SeiKoKai.

or organization alone, and also presenting the vision of a new kind of community which has yet to be seen in our world?³¹

To make our positions clear means, in fact, defying the general public. We live as part of a general public that is exclusive and pursues selfish interests with no thought to community or society. The church – through its solidarity with minorities – bears meaning as it exists as a counter balance to the general public when that public functions as a group ego-based apparatus for oppression. What will show the church, while it clearly stakes out its position as a member of a dissimilar minority, to be a community whose very existence bears its message? Surely, it would be for the church itself to live out and demonstrate a new form of community experience, to live out and demonstrate a mature form of democracy and a high order of civic consciousness.³²

31. Cox states that 'the theology of the future should be a type of game' and criticized the state of affairs where theology was bucking for promotion among the sciences (H.G. Cox, *The Seduction of the Spirit: The Use and Misuse of People's Religion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973). Cox's use of the term 'game' is a criticism against scientism, but if this writer may put this in a different way, it can also be called a criticism against 'production nationalism' which is one of the doctrines of capitalism. Recent environmental thought holds this as its main theme. First generation minjung theology tried to point this out in their theme of 'de-theologisation'.

32. The Basic Christian Communities of South America, the Basic Human Communities of which Pieris speaks and the Sharing House movement of the Anglican Church of Korea, among other movements, give support to this vision.