

THOUGHTS FROM THE NEW EDITOR

I am beginning to learn what commitment it requires not just to create an academic journal, but to continue its early promises and expectations every half a year. Naturally I am learning what a courageous undertaking the previous and founding editor did to encourage Asians to make an important contribution toward the missionary task in Asia and to provide the worldwide Christian community with a window to Asian missionary thinking. If the survival of a journal in its first three years is critical (as Koreans celebrate the first birthday of a child with exceptional excitement), we all owe a great debt to Dr. Wonsuk Ma for his pioneering work. However, the true extent of the impact of his work will not be known until eternity.

In connection with this, he and the leadership of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, together with the Doctor of Missiology Program Committee of the Asia Graduate School of Theology-Philippines treated the missionary community with an International Symposium on Asian Mission (Jan 28, 2002). In several ways, it was significant. First, a serious academic reflection on the theological assumptions and missionary practices is a rarity in this part of the world, in spite of numerous popular mission conferences. All 200 participants not only enjoyed with great challenges the sixteen well prepared presentations, but also expressed their strong desire for a continuing effort to shape our very foundations for missionary work in Asia through similar events. Secondly, the initial idea and funding for this gathering came from a group of Asian American Christians in the New York area. As Asia is awakened to the missionary call, this event demonstrated powerfully what important roles that Asian immigrants in the western world can play. In this editorial, we would like to accord deep appreciation to the leaders of the Mountain World Mission. Third, the make-up of the presenters also illustrates something important. Eight Asian missiologists, representing five nations, were joined by six non-Asian scholars, representing five countries including a Latin American nation, led by Dr. Paul E. Pierson, former dean of School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary. (We missed Dr. Andrew Walls as

his flight was delayed one day.) As Asian presenters were relatively unknown and still developing, the non-Asian counterparts played an important role to stand along with the new group of Asian missiologists, thus providing critical encouragement for us to become what we should be. Incidentally, there were eleven nations represented in this group, and we were particularly pleased to see two women presenters included. We again accord our appreciation to the organizers. The papers are now edited and in the near future we will see an important monograph. (I hope we will be able to publish some papers in this journal as well.) Without doubt, we would like to express our desire to see similar undertakings in the near future. Indeed, the Lord is preparing and using Asian churches for his mission, as the conference theme aptly reminded us: "Empowering the Asian Church for God's Mission."

The journal will continue to promote an exchange of views among missiologists not only in Asia but also outside of the region. It is encouraging to see that in the short three-year period, there has been a considerable flow of contributions among Asians. As an inexperienced editor, I will continually rely upon my able colleagues who serve as Editorial Board members. It is also comforting to know that the incumbent editor continues to render his valuable help as an Editorial Board member. Let us believe that God's favor for mission is on Asia, and we need to seize this rare opportunity.

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