

Horace G. Underwood, "Address," Report of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the American Inter-Seminary Missionary Alliance (Pittsburgh: Murdoch, Kerr & Co., 1892), 53-54.

In 1891 four Southern Presbyterian (PCUS) seminary students, inspired by the H. G. Underwood, applied to their church's Executive Committee of Foreign Missions to be assigned to Korea. The committee at first declined to open a new mission, but the young men's persistence paid off with the support of John Underwood. In 1892 two couples, two single women, and one single man sailed to begin the PCUS mission in Korea. The seven pioneers were based in Seoul while learning the Korean language and customs. The PCUS mission was assigned to the Chulla region in southwestern Korea, and Reynolds made a trip to the province in the spring of 1894. But because of the Tonghak Uprising which led to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, they were unable to open a permanent station in Chulla until the end of 1895, when Lewis B. Tate and his sister Mattie moved to Chunju.

I want to say a few things in regard to the way in which God has been opening up Korea. ...

Every man in our theological seminaries, if he is true to his God, if he is true to his Savior, must be a foreign missionary. Every one of them must go to the foreign field. If they are not ready to go, there is something wrong in our churches, there is something wrong in our seminaries. Let us stare the question straight in the face, and let us not blink. I have seen it, and you have seen it. Some of them refuse to face the question of foreign missions--and why? Because they would have to answer the question, why don't I go? It hasn't been but a few years ago that I had to answer that question myself. Do you expect that God will open heaven? No, God today places the spectacle of a dying world before our eyes. Over one-half of the world still in utter darkness--calling to us to give to them the message of Christ Jesus.

Korea is the country that is nearest to my heart, but let us for one moment blot out the line between the home and the foreign field. In the United States we have one lay worker to every forty people, and we find only one missionary to every five hundred thousand in the foreign field. Let us realize the importance of the awful responsibility that rests upon us as Christians. Let us realize the awful responsibility or the awful privilege that is granted to us of giving the world the message of Christ. Let us not limit our efforts in this generation. It is possible that the world may be evangelized before the year 2000 rolls around. Let us be up and doing here at home and in the foreign field.

Shall a man to whom God has given the money pay more for his corner lot on which to build his palace than is given in one whole year to foreign missions? There is something wrong, O! yes. Will a man rob God? Yet they are robbing him--this whole nation. We want the members of our churches to realize the responsibility, nay the privilege, that has been given them. If the ministers will realize the responsibility, the church members will.

O! brothers, let us, each one of us, go down on our knees before our Master, before our God, and ask him to search our hearts. If there be any worldly way in us let us earnestly bow before God and ask God to show us what is right. Oftentimes when we are searching our hearts we do not know what is in them. When I was yet in college and not prepared to go out to the foreign field, I thought I had weighed the question carefully. I searched my

heart and it said, you have other work to do; you are not yet prepared for this work. I believed honestly before God that I was weighing that question fairly. One day I was sitting in my room and God certainly moved my heart and showed me that I was standing back, because I was afraid of the hardships. I didn't know it, but I tell it to you today, that if any of you are trying to push away something that God has called you to do and are trying to search your own hearts, God alone can search your hearts, and let us ask God to search them.

We had been told before we went out to work in other lands that Korea was a land into which it was almost death to go. It was the last country to break the seal. We were told how they had passed a law that it was death to any foreigner who was found on that coast, and naturally we expected that we would meet with hardships. We had no trouble in this way, but we were often hampered in our undertakings because we didn't have men enough. We found that the Roman Catholics had been before us and were already established there. Korea was opened to trade in 1882. The first missionary went out in the fall of 1884. During that time letter after letter had been sent by the Christians to send them the gospel, but the first missionary was not sent until the fall of 1884 and the first minister of the gospel until 1885. God in his providence knew that the awful plague would come to Korea in 1886. We knew that men were dying in that foreign city, but we did not realize the awful calamity. We saw where one hundred died in a day, and a few days after three hundred and fifty, and on until one thousand were dying daily in that one city of N-----, and going down to their graves without ever having heard the news that Christ died to save them. Without ever receiving the message which Christians refused to send to them. Upon whose shoulders does the blame of these souls that have passed into utter darkness rest? Our shoulders, and no one else's.

We reached there in 1884 and in 1885 we gathered together in a watch night, ten of us in all, men and their wives, and two serving men, twelve in all. There we were alone, the burden was almost greater than we could stand, but God has said, "Lo! I am with you even unto the end," and we knew that God was on our side. Nothing had been said about what we would pray for, but the one burden of our hearts was that we might see one soul saved during the coming year. We hadn't been there a year yet; was it possible? God did bless it wonderfully, and on the 11th day of July 1886, we baptized our first convert. You will see that it was God's doing. That man had been reading some books, and one of these books was "Foreign Lands and Religion." He read that the religion of Christ prevailed in all foreign countries and he thought it very strange that all foreign nations were Christian nations, and he wondered if all Christiana were as good as those he has seen. He had seen them and knew personally something of their lives. He came to our room and said, "Let us become acquainted." I said, "What is your name and what do you want?" He said, "I would like very much to learn English and find out something about this Christian religion." He didn't dare say more. He came back again and, finding no one there but our Korean attendant, carried off two books which were lying on the table. One was a translation of the gospel according to St. Luke and the other St. Matthew. He slipped these books in his sleeve and went home and sat up all night long reading them. He came back the next morning. All fear had gone, and he said, "I have read this, I want you to tell me more; it is good." We sat down and talked about Christ and what Christ had done, and I referred to several places in the books he had read, and he said, "O! I remember," and turned to the very passages. God led that man, step by step. We used to take the Bible, and we would have little Bible reading together. He came around our English services, and when the meeting was over, he said, "I couldn't understand anything, but I felt something that was

there." He had felt the presence of God's spirit in that meeting. On the 11th day of July, 1886, he was baptized. At the close of the year 1886 we again met together, and the burden of our prayers was that we might bring more souls to Christ during the coming year. We couldn't have expected that we could do much in two years; but God heard our prayers, and in September, 1887, we were permitted to organize the first church with twenty-three members, and by 1888 we numbered, converts, with missionaries and teachers, over one hundred. This is the way in which God has been using us; this is the way God has been working through us, and we come here to tell you that the door is wide open today. Wherever we go in this country we have it still thrown up in our faces that Korea is not open to missionaries—"O! Government opposition!" I want to tell you that I have been North, South, East and West, all over the country preaching, and on only one occasion have I met with any government opposition. I will tell you. Back in 1887 the king of Korea forbade all foreigners to preach there, and he sent for the American minister and asked him to use every effort to stop us. They told us that we had to stop, but we told them that our mouths could not be shut, that we had a message of undying love to men, and that we must give it. Opposition stopped right there.

On one occasion they had me arrested and thrown into jail on a slight pretense. As soon as Mr. S-----, one of the most influential men there heard of it, he came to me and asked me to excuse them. He then went and ordered my release.

On another occasion in the government school there was a man, a Christian, and he read and preached the Gospel to the students until they got a little church. Some of the other students went to the president and said, "We can't study with Christians." The president said, "Your teacher is a Christian; is he any the worse for it?" They said, "No." The president then said, "Well, gentlemen, if you can't study with Christians you are at perfect liberty to leave the school."

On another occasion we were going to take it trip through the country preaching, and we were warned not to go, and one of our friends told us, "You will have to suffer for it." I said, "I can't stand back; we have to go; we have a message to give, and we must give it." After we came back we heard there had been a great deal of hard feeling brought about by our trip. A few days after this two large red cards were brought in. Two of the highest officials in the land called upon us. One was a member of the ---- family, and the other was a member of the C----- family. They said they were sorry that, we had taken the trip to the country as it caused hard feeling. After talking awhile they asked us if we would take charge of the R----- C----- U-----.

I bring these facts home to you today to show that Korea is open to the Gospel. I want to call your attention to the number that are there--twenty-one Protestant English missionaries, men and their wives. There is not another country where there is as great a need of workers as there is in Korea, where the people are more ready for the Gospel than they are in Korea. There are three hundred and fifty cities in Korea with populations from ten thousand to one hundred thousand. God is saying to the Church today, be up and doing; the doorways stand open. The world is calling for the Gospel; the Christian church at home is holding it back. Upon our shoulders rests this awful responsibility. O! if we would but realize that before the year 2000 rolls around we might win the world for Christ.

There is a social upheaval going on in Korea today. Men are losing their faith in the old religions. They are coming to us to learn of Christ. O! I could tell you place after place where they are asking us for the Gospel. O! We bring it home today, and we want you to remember it.

What we want now is men. One gentleman said: "Mr. Underwood, I tell you what I will do. I will agree to support three missionaries in Korea. You get the men." I accepted the offer, but where are the men? We want the men. We can't find the men. This responsibility rests upon each one of us, and especially on the ministers. If every minister would preach one sermon each year on the subject of foreign missions; if he would preach his first sermon on going into a new church on this subject--preach a thrilling sermon--great good might be done. Let us, each one of us, realize the burden resting upon us. Let us take on us this great responsibility, and realize that we can lead every soul upon this broad earth to Christ before the year 2000 rolls around.

(Transcribed by Sung-Deuk Oak)