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Dissertation

THE LORD WILL PROVIDE:
JAMES A. HARDING, J. M. MCCALED, WILLIAM J. BISHOP,
AND THE EMERGENCE OF FAITH MISSIONS
IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST, 1892-1913

by

Shawn Z. Daggett

(B.S. Harding University, 1982; M.Th.,
Harding University Graduate School of Religion, 1986)

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APPROVED

by

First Reader _____

Dr. Dana L. Robert
Truman Collins Professor of World Christianity and History of Mission

Second Reader _____

Dr. Christopher Brown
Assistant Professor of Church History

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(Order No.)

Shawn Z. Daggett

Doctor of Theology

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Major Professor: Dana L. Robert, Truman Collins Professor of
World Christianity and History of Mission

ABSTRACT

By 1890 the Churches of Christ had earned the reputation of being “anti-missionary” because they opposed as unbiblical the American Christian Missionary Society. This thesis contends that James A. Harding reversed the anti-missionary trend of the Churches of Christ by appropriating faith missions as an alternative model for missionary support. He and his followers propagated and refined his teachings so that his “trust principles” embodied a missionary identity for the Churches of Christ in the twentieth century.

The method of investigation is historical, including use of archives and primary sources. The dissertation employs a “lived religion” approach to examining the exchange of ideas between a leader and two practitioners, along with their associates, in order to construct a history of the first decades of the foreign missionary enterprise of the

Churches of Christ. The first chapter establishes the social and religious context in which Harding formed his trust theory and examines his influence as a preacher, educator, and writer in helping the anti-missionary society churches to engage in global evangelism without compromising their commitment to congregational autonomy. The second chapter describes the work of the churches' first cross-cultural missionary, John Moody McCaleb, who popularized Harding's ideals through his prolific writing and extensive travel. The third chapter demonstrates that the tragic death of missionary William J. Bishop both challenged and validated the full implementation of Harding's concepts.

Social historians have contended that the Churches of Christ were primarily a product of the Age of Reason, but those judgments have failed to account for the pietistic missionaries that the movement increasingly produced in the early twentieth century. In contrast, this dissertation highlights the role that faith, holiness, and an otherworldly perspective played in the mobilization of its first generation of missionaries. One implication of this study is that the rationalistic paradigm associated with this religious group is insufficient; as such, a re-examination of the churches' overall history, in light of the spirituality of its faith-based missions, is imperative. In addition, by reconstructing how the trust theory took hold of and emboldened missionaries of the Churches of Christ, historians gain a positive rather than reactive framework through which to analyze the history of the movement.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Churches of Christ broke away from the Stone-Campbell movement for the ostensible reason that they opposed the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society (ACMS).¹ They resisted the ACMS with such a furious rhetoric, in fact, that the proponents of the society dubbed them “anti-missionary.” To some extent there was “some truth in the term . . . when applied to many churches” because they failed to produce foreign missionaries for nearly forty years.² Yet today, the Churches of Christ support more than one thousand missionaries in ninety-two foreign countries and understand their identity to be

¹ Determining which group broke off is a matter of perspective. Leaders of the Churches of Christ at the time held that they were maintaining a course of pure unadulterated New Testament Christianity and that the proponents of the missionary society were the “digressives” who were causing division and leaving the movement. Statistically speaking, the Disciples, numbering nearly a million in 1906, comprised the larger group while the Churches of Christ counted only 159,658. Thomas Henry Olbricht, “Churches of Christ” in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 214. The Churches of Christ split from the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches over several issues, including the matter of congregational autonomy. Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of the Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 9-15. For a discussion of other contributing factors to the schism see Henry E. Webb, “Geographical Factors in the 1906 Division,” *Discipliana* 66, no. 3 (2006): 75-81.

² J. N. Armstrong, “Anti-Missionary,” *The Way* 3, no. 31 (1901): 241. From the establishment of the ACMS in 1849 until 1887, the Churches of Christ opposed the missionary society but produced no missionaries of their own.

fundamentally mission-oriented.³ How did the Churches of Christ, who formerly fought against the ACMS, become a firmly established missionary movement by 1920? In this dissertation, I will argue that James A. Harding, known and revered as a saintly figure of deep spirituality, conceptualized missions in such a way as to lead the Churches of Christ to coalesce as a missionary church. Appealing to primitivist ideals and appropriating faith missions ideology, Harding and his followers embodied, propagated, and solidified his teachings so that his “trust” principles were woven into the fabric of the new missional identity of the Churches of Christ.

Becoming “Anti-Missionary”

The Churches of Christ emerged as a separate entity from the Disciples during a period of approximately forty-five years (1849-1897). In the years before the Civil War, Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, and Churches of Christ were terms used interchangeably for a loose fellowship of Christians who practiced congregational autonomy and strictly adhered to the Bible as the church’s only authority. In 1849 its mission activists sought to launch cooperative domestic and foreign missions by forming the American Christian Missionary Society and sending James T. Barclay to Jerusalem as its first missionary. In the ensuing years until 1861, resistance to the ACMS principally

³ Center for World Missions, “World Survey” (Searcy, Arkansas: Harding University, 1996), 1-6. According to Van Rheen, forty-six percent of the churches that he surveyed responded that their congregations show “high-interest” in missions. Only ten percent recorded “no interest.” Gailyn Van Rheen and Bob Waldron, *The Status of Missions in Churches of Christ: A Nationwide Survey of Churches of Christ* (Abilene: ACU Press, 2002), 9. The Churches of Christ support the seventh largest number of North American long-term foreign missionaries among Protestant and Evangelical sending agencies. John A. Siewert and Dotsey Welliver, *Mission Handbook: U.S. and Canadian Ministries Overseas, 2001-2003*, 18th ed. (Wheaton: EMIS, 2000), 52.

grew over concerns that the agency's bureaucratic control was unscriptural. Opponents were initially moderate in their criticisms, as both sides were committed to maintaining unity. Supporters of the ACMS contended that the missionary society was simply an expedient necessary to fulfill God's command to evangelize among the nations. Furthermore, they held that God had given Christians the freedom to organize themselves and that sending missionaries through a society was preferable to espousing doctrinal purity and sending none. Those who condemned the missionary society, however, argued that God had ordained individual congregations, not human organizations, to send and support missionaries.⁴

The unity desired by both sides of the society question began to crumble. Seeds of division were sown during the Civil War when the ACMS passed two resolutions, first in 1861 and again in 1863, that voiced loyal support of the Union cause.⁵ Until then, the Disciples, who were mostly anti-slavery but mixed on the issue of immediate abolition, had carefully avoided drastic pronouncements. While Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists all experienced divisions along the Mason-Dixon line, the Disciples, due mainly to the movement's lack of an "ecclesial structure beyond the local level," survived the war with its unity precariously preserved.⁶ The emergence of periodicals that circulated among members of the Stone-Campbell movement, with readerships limited sectionally

⁴ Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St. Louis: Bethany, 1975), 200-6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 206-7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 207; Willard L. Sperry, "Our Present Disunity," in *Religion and Our Divided Denominations*, ed. Willard L. Sperry (New York: Books for Libraries, 1971), 17.

during the war, hashed out differences and codified positions. After the Civil War, some church leaders used the periodicals to unleash strong rhetoric against both the missionary society and the habit of more prosperous churches of installing organs in their buildings. Supporters of the ACMS noted that anti-society diatribe was having a chilling effect on donations. Thus, to defend its existence, they launched a fierce counterattack of words which raged until both sides wearied and eventually became accustomed to existing as two separate entities.⁷ “When progressives and conservatives ceased to argue with each other, they no longer constituted one religious fellowship. Discord had turned into full-blown division.”⁸ By the 1890s the rupture was irreparable, and the movement was divided regionally North and South between pro and anti-missionary society sentiments and between instrumental and a cappella singing in worship.⁹

By the time the clash ended, the issues surrounding congregational autonomy and cooperative missions had driven a wedge between the Disciples of Christ and the Churches of Christ. In the fight, the former was defined as missionary, and the latter embarrassingly “anti-missionary.” In part, the label was well-deserved. The conflict had pushed the Churches of Christ to become increasingly leery of “missions” as tainted by

⁷ McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 218. Southern denominations also accused missions boards of being Yankee subversives. So this was a common theme among poor whites after the Civil War. Hardshell Baptists were similar. See below, pp. 268, 370.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ During a drawn-out process of separation culminating in 1927, a third group, the Christian Church, emerged in opposition to modernism, ecumenism, and open membership. Henry E. Webb, “Christian Churches/Churches of Christ” in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 185-6. The Christian Church, which uses instruments in worship, sought to remain non-denominational and to support its missionaries directly. Henry E. Webb, *In Search of Christian Unity: A History of the Restoration Movement* (Abilene: ACU Press, 2003), 279-306.

its association with the ACMS, and late into the 1880s they supported no foreign missionaries. The primary mark of identification, then, for the Churches of Christ was that they were *not* missionary.

These churches were, however, militantly evangelistic. From 1860 to 1900 both sides of the widening divide were growing rapidly within the United States. Itinerant evangelists held revivals, planted churches, and received new members by the thousands. Before the Civil War, the membership numbered 192,000. The number doubled by 1875, and at the turn of the century the total reached well over a million.¹⁰ Although they had no mission work overseas, the Churches of Christ were very active domestically. They were a missionary movement without a foreign mission. In their rejection of the missionary society model, the Churches of Christ were faced with the dilemma of acting on their convictions to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) without compromising what they believed to be a rational New Testament pattern of ecclesiology. After decades of voicing negative opposition, the Churches of Christ needed to take positive steps to initiate its missionary movement.

¹⁰ McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 235. Although the anti-missionary society Churches of Christ were far outnumbered by the wealthier and urban Disciples, they grew from 159,658 in 1906 to 317,937 just twenty years later. By 1936 the movement reported 433,714 members. Olbricht, "Churches of Christ," 215.

Becoming “Missionary”

The flow of missionaries from the Churches of Christ began at the dawn of the twentieth century.¹¹ A trickle at first, the number of missionary families gradually increased to about fifty by 1946. Missionary numbers surged into the hundreds after World War II and continued to increase through the mid-1960s.¹² Following the example of faith missionaries such as Hudson Taylor, the earliest of them rejected guaranteed salaries and claimed to rely on God alone for all their needs. How did the pious faith missions movement of the Churches of Christ begin? How did the Churches of Christ make a transition from an anti-missionary to a missionary stance? Why did they adopt faith missions as the predominant model of missionary support for the first generation of missionaries?

Moving Beyond the Borders

Given that the bulk of the earliest missionaries of Churches of Christ were educated or influenced by James A. Harding, the beginnings of their foreign missions can

¹¹ Around the turn of the century missionaries included those sent to Japan and South Africa: the McCalebs, Klingmans, Bishops, Snodgrasses, Alice Miller, W. K. Azbill, Calla J. Harrison, George T. Smith, Carrie Hostetter, C. G. Vincent, and John Sheriff. Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 3 (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1979), 320.

¹² James O. Baird, “Missionary Decline Summarized,” *Christian Chronicle* 40, no. 8 (1983): 14. In 1906 there were 12 missionary families of the Churches of Christ; in 1916, 16; 1926, 33; 1946, 46; 1953, 229; 1959, 704; 1967, 724; 1975, 800, 1978, 484; 1979, 427; 1981, 421; and in 1982, 374. According to Baird the number of missionaries in the 1970s declined for various reasons including an atmosphere of disengagement during the Vietnam War era, declining pool of funds, frustrations over results, and the fact that the children of the largest number of missionaries had reached high school or college age and the families preferred to repatriate in order to meet educational needs. Cf. Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 4 (Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, 1987), 202. According to a 1994 survey there were 1014 missionaries of the Churches of Christ. Siewert and Welliver, *Mission Handbook*, 125. The missionary society of the Disciples of Christ eventually merged with the United Church Board for World Ministries and together supports 126 missionaries.

be traced to the life, thought, and teaching of this Kentuckian who was born in the mid-1800s and who established his preaching and teaching career in the years immediately following the Civil War. Harding embodied the desire to re-establish the pristine New Testament church and emphasized that such a restoration required first and foremost holiness of life based upon absolute trust in God. Having discovered that his own convictions resonated with those of faith missions contemporaries such as George Müller, he appropriated their missions model to inspire students and mobilize the Churches of Christ to launch their first missionary endeavor. Harding, through his faith missions-based “trust” principles, helped the “non-missionary society” Churches of Christ to engage in global missions without compromising their commitment to congregational autonomy.

The first cross-cultural missionary of the Churches of Christ was John Moody McCaleb. As a prolific writer and extensive traveler, McCaleb rallied the churches to the cause of foreign missions, became their first homegrown missionary, and popularized Harding’s espousal of faith missions. The global commitment of the Churches of Christ to missions was further solidified and fortified by the sacrificial labors of a quiet disciple of Harding, William James Bishop. Bishop was the first to implement fully Harding’s ideals, and he willingly died for them.

Influenced significantly by Harding, McCaleb and Bishop reflected Harding’s faith model as seen by their means of support and strategies on the field. Both were missionaries to Japan, and their written reports and promotional visits to home churches intensified a sense of evangelistic urgency. McCaleb furthered the effort by endorsing the

church-sponsored model, which was a significant modification of Harding's faith support method; and he succeeded in making church sponsorship the primary means of raising support for missions in the Churches of Christ. Bishop also furthered Harding's ideals by establishing the self-sacrificial lifestyle as a worthy endeavor among faith missions advocates in the Churches of Christ. Indeed, he modeled this lifestyle, strenuously working in Japan until his physical body was exhausted.

This dissertation, therefore, will focus on the work of this missionary trio: Harding, the idealizer; McCaleb, the popularizer; and Bishop, the self-sacrificial implementer of the faith missions model. By so doing, this dissertation constructs the history of how the Churches of Christ moved beyond their opposition to the missionary society and launched a movement which created a self-sacrificial attitude and a thriving church-sponsored missionary enterprise.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it explores how Harding and his followers developed and disseminated the concept of independently supported mission work as an essential component of the identity of the Churches of Christ. Drawing on primitivist sensibilities, Harding promoted holiness of life and trust in God which led to congregational support of foreign missionaries. His "trust theory" as a modification of faith missions gained wide acceptance because it tied into church members' sense of being the true believers. Harding's trust theory was, therefore, compatible with the movement's goals of restoring the New Testament church. This new *modus operandi* became a constitutive element of the movement's self-understanding. Those churches and

missionaries who henceforth conducted their foreign work according to the direct-support model, especially as popularized by McCaleb, were gathered into the new fellowship. Those who financed missions in other ways were not. Ironically, in the struggle to move beyond their early opposition to mission societies, the Churches of Christ embraced missions at the core of their identity.¹³

Additionally, the reconstruction of this history is significant because it demonstrates how the adoption of faith missions terminology, in its modified form of “trust principles,” became a key to the progress of subsequent generations by creating institutions that served as a base from which missionaries could go to foreign fields. James A. Harding partnered with David Lipscomb to open the Nashville Bible School (NBS) and later opened the Potter Bible College (PBC) where many of the first missionaries were trained. James A. Harding, or one of the schools established in his tradition, trained approximately one third of the missionaries of the Churches of Christ.

¹³ There is a parallel between Harding and the holiness movements that emerged in this same time period. Such groups coalesced around individuals who were known for their piety and were sent out to do mission work. Harding’s model emphasizing spirituality and producing missionaries also bears some resemblance to Holiness and emerging Pentecostal off-shoots of the Methodist church. Healing or Faith homes along with Bible schools in the early twentieth century nurtured future missionaries and raised funds for missions. In the same way that Holiness missions broke off from their mother institutions over growing worldliness, the Churches of Christ followed a similar process and separated themselves from the upwardly mobile Disciples of Christ. Harding did not promote faith healing and speaking in tongues as his counterparts Parham, Baker, and Dake did, but he was indirectly influenced by the life and writing of George Müller, promoted premillennialism, and emphasized an active personal spirituality and reliance on God. James R. Goff, Jr., “Parham, Charles Fox,” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 660-1; Gary McGee, “Baker, Elizabeth V.,” in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Gary McGee (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 37; Gary McGee, “Dake, Vivian Adelbert,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 166. Cf. Thomas H. Nelson, *Life and Times of Vivian A. Dake: Organizer and Leader of Pentecost Bands* (Chicago: T. B. Arnold, 1894); Ida Dake Parson, *Kindling Watch-Fires: Being a Sketch of the Life of Rev. Vivian A. Dake* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1915).

Although there are a few exceptions, most of the movement's other missionaries attended one of the Christian colleges that were associated with the Churches of Christ and maintained similar goals and values as Harding's schools.¹⁴ An understanding of how these schools served as functional substitutes for the missionary societies is an extremely important component of the history of missions in the Churches of Christ.

There was a reciprocal relationship of influence that existed between Harding's Bible schools and the missionaries they sought to prepare.¹⁵ The schools left an indelible mark on their graduates as they launched into the mission field.¹⁶ The missionaries returned to the States and toured among schools and churches in order to recruit more missionaries and maintain an adequate support base. They brought with them a wealth of experiences that through "reverse mission" influenced the future course and emphases of the Churches of Christ. This history will be united, in part, by this motif of exchange

¹⁴ Alan Henderson, "A Historical Review of Missions and Missionary Training in the Churches of Christ," *Restoration Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (1993): 208; West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 4:274. According to George Benson, ninety percent of the missionaries from the Churches of Christ attended a Christian college. George S. Benson, "Development of Missionaries," in *A Missionary Pictorial* (Nashville: World Vision Publishing Company, 1968), 24; Van Tate, "Harding Alumni and Faculty Missionaries," *Reaching Out: A Mission/Prepare Report on World Evangelism Efforts by Harding University Faculty, Students and Alumni* (1986): 2, 14.

¹⁵ "Historical narratives, like fictional ones, establish interrelationships among actions recounted by using *ordering elements*." Thomas A. Tweed, "Introduction: Narrating U.S. Religious History," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 7. This is also the unifying theme of James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). Cf. Catherine L. Albanese, "Exchanging Selves, Exchanging Souls," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 203.

¹⁶ Schools in the Harding tradition were hardly producing their missionaries with "cookie cutter" uniformity. Important figures such as Dow Merritt made conscious decisions to abandon the pacifist convictions of his teacher J. N. Armstrong. Merritt, before working as a missionary to Zambia, served in the military as a medic aboard a ship during World War I. Dow Merritt, *The Dew Breakers* (Nashville: World Vision, 1971), 6. Hilton Merritt, "Dew Breakers II" (Lecture delivered at the World Missions Workshop, David Lipscomb University, Nashville, October 18, 2003).

among Harding, his students who became missionaries, foreign cultures, and returning missionaries who influenced the home churches.

The unique and identifying characteristics that Harding transmitted to his students included the following: dependence on God's providence; pietistic focus; non-participation in government; non-sectarian relationship with other religious groups; vocational ministry or self-support; and an educational model for training the future leaders of a particular country. James A. Harding also refused to own property, go into debt, or raise an endowment for a college. He refrained from involvement in politics and defended his convictions that Christians as citizens of heaven should not even vote. In full partnership with his wife, he modeled a strong reliance on God through his refusal of a guaranteed salary.¹⁷ Although the missionaries influenced by Harding did not always practice his principles to the same extremes, they generally reflected the world view and guiding principles of their teacher. Harding in his otherworldly, pacifist, non-sectarian, and faith perspectives cast a die for his disciples that would perpetuate these ideologies long after his death.

Moreover, this history is vital because the pietistic otherworldly spirituality of the early missionaries demonstrates that the stereotype of the Churches of Christ as a frontier religious movement dominated by rationalism and Baconian Common Sense is inadequate.¹⁸ Social historians have claimed that the Churches of Christ have been

¹⁷ James A. Harding and Lloyd S. White, *The Harding-White Discussion* (Cincinnati: R. L. Rowe, 1910), 15.

¹⁸ The Presbyterian church was also painted with broad strokes as stereotypically rational. Historians have since demonstrated that there were forces of piety and Calvinistic theology working

principally a rationalistic movement—strong on reason and weak on faith, church rather than Christ-centered.¹⁹ Hughes and Allen, for example, have written a history of Churches of Christ in a way to force the movement to be more conscious of its own tradition and have argued that the Churches of Christ were primarily a product of the Age of Reason. Although they willingly admit that at least one branch of the Restoration Movement emphasized holy living over the legal use of the Bible as a religious constitution, they paint a picture of a movement more prone to argument and interest in form than to pietistic grace-centered expressions of Christianity.²⁰ Such a characterization, however, insufficiently accounts for the thousands of missionaries that the movement has produced who have been very strong on faith, devotion, and

together in its missions movement and in its nineteenth century missions promoters such as A. T. Pierson. Pierson abandoned his secure salaried position as an ordained Presbyterian minister, practiced a life of complete dependence on God, emphasized evangelism among the urban poor, and through his premillennial and holiness interests rallied students to become missionaries. Among evangelicals of the period, he is especially important as one who integrated his radically heart-centered faith with his intellectually reasoned approach to the study of the scriptures. Robert writes, “The deep spirituality of Pierson’s intellect belies the stereotype of evangelicalism as a form of dry rationalism, and it underscores his continuity with the New School of Charles Finney, the Beecher family, and nineteenth-century revivalism.” Dana Robert, *Occupy Until I Come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 33.

¹⁹Allen and Hughes seek to discover the human origins of the Churches of Christ. They affirm that this religious movement has deep roots, among other sources, in the Age of Reason and trace its thought to Herbert of Cherbury, John Locke, and Francis Bacon. They state: “Thus, long before the Civil War, a thoroughly rational understanding of the Christian faith prevailed among Churches of Christ,” C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of the Churches of Christ* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1988), 8-9, 75-86; Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 11-13.

²⁰ “The Stone movement was restorationist, to be sure, but in the early years it focused more on holy and righteous living than on the forms and structures of the primitive church. Restoration for Stone and his colleagues meant first of all restoring the lifestyle of the first Christian communities.” Allen and Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots*, 103. In a subsequent work, Hughes maintains that there were two streams that constituted the movement, but the rationalistic fighting style effectively routed out and marginalized the otherworldly Spirit-led branch. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 168-191.

dedication, but weak in preparation, cultural training, and strategy.²¹ For the most part the missionaries of the movement have been pious individuals who have relied more on their relationship with God than on missionary science for their guidance. Although this group certainly did not reject science and reason, this history reveals that the Harding missionary entourage constituted a substantial grace-centered and Spirit-led branch within the Churches of Christ.²²

Finally, this history of the first two decades of missions of the Churches of Christ is important because it provides a case study of those theologically conservative churches that eventually surged in the number of missionaries sent during the decades before and especially after World War II.²³ Mission historians have noted that the number of missionaries from ecumenical Protestant churches declined rapidly after the mid-twentieth century, while missionaries from evangelical and independent conservative churches multiplied into the tens of thousands.²⁴ More recently the greatest increase of these missionaries belonged to conservative Christian groups such as the Churches of

²¹ Henderson and Reed point out the discrepancy between this theological emphasis and the movement's lack of strategy and planning in missions. Henderson, "Historical Review," 206; Grady Wood Reed, "Strategizing Church of Christ Missions in the Light of Varying Receptivity" (M.A. Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1971), 150-154.

²² Olbricht traces the roots of Christ-centered missions to the Harding tradition. Thomas Henry Olbricht, *Hearing God's Voice: My Life with Scripture in the Churches of Christ* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1996), 92-109.

²³ Levine underscores the importance of preserving such histories: "To teach a history that excludes large areas of American culture and ignores the experiences of significant segments of the American people, is to teach a history that fails to touch us, that fails to explain America to us or to anyone else." Lawrence Levine, "Clio, Canons, and Culture," *Journal of American History* 80 (1993): 867.

²⁴ Gerald H. Anderson, "American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission: 1886-1996," in *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction*, ed. F. J. Verstraelen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 376-420; Robert T. Coote, "Twentieth Century Shifts," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22, no. 4 (1998): 152-3;

Christ who were unaffiliated with missionary societies or denominational mission boards.²⁵ The history of missions of the Churches of Christ, therefore, is representative of the large number of conservative Christians who pushed forward in worldwide evangelism while mainstream Protestants were pulling out.²⁶ The initial mission work of the Churches of Christ especially coincided with an upsurge of missionary activity associated with the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM). Established in 1886, the SVM represented the most significant mobilization of missionaries in the history of American Protestant missions. Within its first five years, the SVM succeeded in sending more than three hundred students to the mission field. By 1898, its missionaries numbered over a thousand.²⁷ The birth of missions among the Churches of Christ, although not directly associated with the SVM, ran parallel with it and was illustrative of independent

²⁵ Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 184; Robert T. Coote, "The Uneven Growth of Conservative Evangelical Missions," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 6 (1982): 118-9. The most recent reports reveal that some of these groups have now become affiliated. Robert T. Coote, "Shifts in the North American Protestant Full-Time Missionary Community," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 29, no. 1 (2005): 12-13.

²⁶ This tendency is parallel to a theme which William Westfall discovered: "While American religious history has celebrated all those who have come to America seeking freedom, the religious journeys of Americans leaving the United States rarely appear (if at all) in the standard accounts of American religion." Westfall argues that the narratives recuperated from the "edges" rather than the "center" are the most enlightening. William Westfall, "Voices from the Attic: The Canadian Border and the Writing of American Religious History," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, ed. Thomas A. Tweed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 197. "Extending Westfall's insights, then, we might narrate a tale that attended more closely to the movements of migrant workers, missionaries, soldiers, diplomats, and tourists who temporarily or permanently crossed the national borders." Tweed, "Introduction," 236.

²⁷ Parker, *Kingdom of Character*, 13. The SVM accompanied the general interest of the United States in the world during the age of high imperialism. New missions fields opened as countries in Asia, Central America and other places became receptive to modernity and Western influence. Missions became the hallmark of evangelical identity in the late nineteenth century. Carpenter attributes the unearthing of this connection to Dana Robert's biography of A. T. Pierson. Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 35, 261.

conservative Christian movements that benefited from the widespread missionary enthusiasm generated in the late nineteenth century.

Methodology

In the writing of this thesis, I employed historical research including the taking of oral histories, archival usage, and consultation of primary sources. Secondary materials provide a historical backdrop for the narration of events derived from primary materials.

This research is organized into three chapters. The chapter dedicated to James A. Harding offers a sketch of his life and emphasizes the connection of his teaching and thought to foreign missions. It seeks to demonstrate that Harding appropriated George Müller's faith principles for the Churches of Christ and successfully transmitted them to his student missionaries. The next chapter is devoted to J. M. McCaleb as the promoter and popularizer of Harding's faith missions plan and is intended to illustrate how McCaleb reflected, exemplified, and in some ways modified Harding's plan. The third of these chapters presents a history of the life and work of William J. Bishop who was the first foreign missionary trained by Harding to implement fully Harding's "trust theory" in church planting.

The argument of this dissertation rests squarely on the conviction that there is a direct connection between belief and practice. This is a history of the beginning of missions of the Churches of Christ based on that connection in what is called "lived

religion.”²⁸ As Hall states, “The focus on lived religion . . . points us to religion as it is shaped and experienced in the interplay among venues of everyday experience . . . in the necessary and mutually transforming exchanges between religious authorities and the broader communities of practitioners, by real men and women in situations and relationships they have made and that have made them.”²⁹ This thesis builds, consequently, on the everyday experiences of men and women within the Churches of Christ in their interaction with Harding as an important spiritual and educational leader. It also illustrates how these men and women shaped the identity of their church.³⁰ Given that the Churches of Christ and their Spirit-led missionaries lack a structured, central hierarchy with its corresponding official documentation, a “lived religion” or “people’s history” approach will be both helpful and necessary. This dissertation, therefore, examines the exchange of ideas between a leader and two practitioners, along with their

²⁸ The beliefs of “Spirit-led” Harding missionaries are less documented than the “high theology” of those leaders who diffused their ideas through publishing papers among the Churches of Christ. I propose to construct a history of the movement by highlighting the actions of the missionaries it produced. As Hall proposes, “In their own way, historians of religion in America have begun to call for attention to the same matters, usually in the context of observing that, while we know a great deal about the history of theology and (say) church and state, we know next-to-nothing about religion as practiced and precious little about the everyday thinking and doing of lay men and women.” David D. Hall, “Introduction,” in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, ed. David D. Hall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), vii.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁰ Robert suggests that missionaries, especially women, influenced the churches that sent them by putting “a face on the foreign peoples and cultures for ordinary Americans” and, therefore, were “the chief means by which . . . American church women gained information on non-Western religions, cultures and women’s issues.” The stories of these “saints” also were especially effective in evoking the sacrificial piety so crucial to obtaining missionary volunteers.” She also states, “Many of the ways in which missionary women have influenced the world back home are also characteristic of missionary men.” Dana L. Robert, “The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home,” *Religion and American Culture* 12, no. 1 (2002), 60-3, 81.

associates, in order to construct a history of the first decades of its foreign missionary enterprise.

The final chapter of the dissertation includes a restatement of the problem and draws some conclusions concerning the implications of the early history of missionaries in the Harding tradition. The chapter also reviews and summarizes the contributions of Harding, McCaleb, and Bishop to the shaping of the identity of the Churches of Christ.

Limitations

There are at least two limitations that need to be successfully addressed in the writing of this paper. First, the Churches of Christ have not had a centralized sending agency such as a missionary society to keep records, data, and archives. The existing records of missionary work within the movement are generally preserved in newsletters and articles that could be open to the accusation of superficiality and biased reporting. In this project I address this problem by making use, where available, of personal interviews, letters to families, and correspondence between missionaries. Accounts from various missionaries who worked in the same areas may be cross-referenced and compared. The movement's de-centralization also means that published directories of missionaries are self-reported. The information offered on each family was voluntarily submitted and does not represent all that the Churches of Christ were doing in any

particular time period. In order to predict better the reliability of the data, multiple directories were cross-checked.³¹

Another theoretical problem to address is that of objectivity. Harding College (now Harding University) is an institution that protects and safeguards the respectability of its heritage. The biographies that have been written of its founders have the air of an official institutional history and tend to present the positive qualities of their subjects without extensive self-criticism. Measured statements concerning these men and women must be made with careful attention not to exaggerate or overstate conclusions.³²

Similarly, J. M. McCaleb as the father of missions of the Churches of Christ has been an icon to the movement because he used the movement's periodicals to promote himself and missions. The inclusion in this history of a contemporary of McCaleb, William J. Bishop, for whom archival materials are available, seeks to provide a balanced evaluation of McCaleb's contributions.

Definitions

There are several key terms that must be defined for the sake of this project. The first of these terms is "missions." Missiologists have typically differentiated between

³¹ These sources include directories such as Batsell Barrett Baxter, *Preachers of Today: A Book of Brief Biographical Sketches and Pictures of Living Gospel Preachers* (Nashville: Christian Press, 1952-1982); Charles R. Brewer, *A Missionary Pictorial* (Nashville: World Vision, 1964, 1966, 1968); Don Carlos Janes, "A Missionary Directory," *Missionary Messenger* 18, no. 12 (1941): 1126-32; Mac Lynn, *Churches of Christ Around the World: Exclusive of the United States and Her Territories* (Nashville: 21st Century Christian, 2003).

³² L. C. Sears, biographer of both Harding and Armstrong, indicated in a memo that he had destroyed the personal letters and archives of Armstrong. He may have done the same with Harding's materials. L. C. Sears, Searcy, Arkansas, in a letter to Clifton Ganus, Jr., Searcy, Arkansas, March 5, 1982, Transcript in the hand of Clifton Ganus, Jr.

“mission” (singular) and “missions” (plural) by stating that the former was the “work of God in reconciling sinful human kind” and the latter, “the plans of committed believers to accomplish the mission of God.”³³ Although “missions” has been argued to be the task of all Christians in all places, in the minds of the subjects of this study, the term was almost synonymous with “foreign missions” in which a person or persons leave home, enter into another culture, generally where the church is weak or not currently in existence, to engage primarily in evangelistic work; or to offer relief from suffering and engage in development or education, with the intent of offering holistic care. Generally speaking, the term “missions” possesses a certain understanding of going from a more privileged area of Christianity to one that is less privileged in some way. For the scope of this study, “missions” is used to represent those efforts of men and women to take the message of Christ through proclamation, evangelism, education, or medical work to areas outside of the United States.

The “Churches of Christ” have their origin in a unity or “restoration” movement that sought to return to the primitive roots of Christianity with the intent of finding common ground among Christians by following the positive pattern of churches described in the New Testament.³⁴ Members did not consider themselves to be a sect or denomination, but perceived themselves to be merely part of a fellowship created by God

³³ Gailyn Van Rheen, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 20. Bosch distinguishes between mission (God’s activity) and missions, the attempt of the church to participate in God’s actions to redeem the world. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 39.

³⁴ Among its members, the singular “Church of Christ” generally refers to one congregation while “Churches of Christ” is used to designate the entire movement.

consisting of all people everywhere whom God saved and redeemed. Although this restoration movement eventually split into various branches (Disciples of Christ, Christian Church, and the Churches of Christ), for the scope of this paper, I chose to follow that group of people that rejected the establishment of missionary societies as well as the use of instruments in worship and perceived themselves to be another movement over a period of time, culminating in a clear distinction by the U.S. government census of 1906.

The terms “faith” and “reason” will be used to represent two contrasting, although not mutually exclusive, orientations of Christians within the Churches of Christ.³⁵ “Reason,” “rationalistic approach,” or “scientific” will be used to refer to a characterization that Hughes and Allen attributed to the majority of movers within the Churches of Christ. Also referred to as “Baconian” or “Lockean” by Hughes and Allen, this approach is believed to have its cultural roots in an eighteenth century Scottish perspective and applies the scientific method of the day, which is to say the “inductive” method, to the interpretation of Scripture. According to Hughes, this “reasoned” emphasis on the correct biblical form and structure of the church led to a very combative and sectarian style of interpretation of Scriptures and interaction with others. “Faith,” “Spirit-led,” or “God-reliant” orientation, on the other hand, will be used to describe

³⁵ “Reason” is a well-established category in Hughes and Allen. As the Churches of Christ established their identity, it stood as a contender among the other competing influences of “holiness,” “freedom,” “pietism,” “moral purity,” “radical discipleship,” “grace,” and “faith.” Allen and Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots*, 77, 82, 85, 115, 103, 128, 138, 140-143. Although this polarization is not overtly recognized by Harding, McCaleb, and Bishop, this dissertation must address it in order to enter into conversation with the current state of scholarship and historiography of the movement.

those members and missionaries of the Churches of Christ who exemplified pietistic life styles, abundant grace, and an otherworldly perspective that placed greater or near total confidence in God’s working rather than in human initiative.³⁶ By the use of this terminology, this project helps redefine the categories of the history of the Churches of Christ and demonstrates that its earliest missions leaders maintained a commitment to a common sense approach to the interpretation of Scripture without disposing of their pietistic spirituality.

A final designation crucial to this dissertation is “faith missions.” Fiedler points out that this term did not originate with the faith missions themselves but with others who called them by that name. Those who adhered to the faith principle of relying on God through prayer as the means of financial support did not intend to imply that other missionaries did not have faith. According to Fiedler, “A faith mission is a mission which traces its origin or (more often) the origin of its principles directly or indirectly back to the China Inland Mission (CIM), which was founded by Hudson Taylor and his wife Maria in 1865—not simply as one new mission among others, but as the first mission of what turned out to be a completely new missionary movement.”³⁷ He further states that the primary characteristic of these missions is not “faith support” but their “interdenominational” nature. Fiedler’s definition strangely excludes two men who

³⁶ Hughes prefers to call this the “apocalyptic” world view. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 93. Although he properly defines this term, “apocalyptic” carries too many “end of time” connotations and overtones to be helpful to this research project.

³⁷ Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Irvine: Regnum, 1994), 11. Missions associated with William Taylor and his “Pauline” method of self-support were popular at the same time.

provided the inspiration for this movement. Both Anthony Norris Groves, the prime mover of the so-called “Plymouth Brethren,” and George Müller, founder of a large orphanage in Bristol, England, espoused “faith support” but were not “interdenominational” in the sense that Fiedler used. In fact, Fiedler places them in the category of non-denominational or non-church missions as he does the Churches of Christ.³⁸ For this reason Fiedler’s definition is not entirely adequate for this dissertation.

The term “faith missions” generally has had three other basic components. Geographically, it referred to those groups of missionaries who sought to penetrate the interior or inland regions of countries such as China and Africa. Whereas the denominational boards generally had worked among the coast, faith missions evangelized in territories virgin to the Christian message. Financially, “faith missions” held sacred the principle that missionaries were not to make appeals for funds but rely on their trust in God for their needs. Theologically, “faith missions” tended to be much more conservative in their view of the authority of Scripture. As fundamentalists, by the early twentieth century faith missions agencies had disassociated themselves from mainline denominations and their missionary societies because they considered them to be liberal.³⁹

³⁸ Fiedler writes, “The Brethren did not see themselves as a church but as a movement, trying to achieve ‘the unity of all believers’ from all denominations and beyond all denominations. Movements of this kind can be called non-denominational, although to the outsider they seem to behave quite like one.” *Ibid.*, 25, 116.

³⁹ Ralph R. Covell, “Faith Missions” in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. Scott A. Moreau, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 353-4.

In the presentation of this research “faith missions” and corollary terms such as “faith principles” or “trust theory” refer to foreign evangelism that depended on God through prayer without appeals to humans for financial support. The Churches of Christ, who preferred to use the terms “independent” or “living-link” missions, did not use the “faith missions” label. They were not interdenominational, nor did they concentrate primarily on the interior regions of countries. They were, however, conservative in their quest to re-establish the pristine church of the New Testament era and to rely solely on God for financial support.

Conclusion

In this dissertation I will seek to construct a history of the missionaries of Churches of Christ from 1892 through 1913 by examining the life, work, and thought of James A. Harding, J. M. McCaleb, and William J. Bishop. This period has been chosen because it begins early enough to summarize the history of the persons who provided the principles and inspiration of the missionary movement of the Churches of Christ and extends long enough to trace this ideal through its popularization and validation. This period of time also permits the writer to limit research findings to one country, Japan.

Although the writing of a complete history of the missions of the Churches of Christ would be fascinating, its breadth would be too overwhelming to cover in one volume. By choosing to write a history of the movement’s beginnings under the influence of Harding, an obvious and natural boundary can be drawn to limit the extent of this study and to portray an influential constituency in the Churches of Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

JAMES A. HARDING'S MISSIONARY INFLUENCE

Introduction

Emerging from the Civil War, the Churches of Christ were at an impasse. In their quest to return to “pristine Christianity” they were caught between conflicting principles.¹ They were evangelistic in nature and missionary in vision, but objected conscientiously to missionary societies. When James A. Harding rejected the practice of accepting a pre-arranged preacher’s salary and began to trust in God alone to provide for his needs, he helped the Churches of Christ to find a way forward and to engage in world evangelism through “faith missions.” Harding helped to shape the identity of this movement by resolving this deadlock and by serving as a mediating figure between the otherwise isolated Churches of Christ and the faith mission, holiness, and premillennial religious ideas of the last half of the nineteenth century.

Early in his evangelistic career, James A. Harding wrote, “God is the sender [sic], every Christian should go, and the Lord will provide.”² Harding’s words expressed a

¹ Fiedler categorizes the Churches of Christ together with the Brethren as “non-church” movements and states that the former “understood their fiercely congregational ecclesiology as a return to the tenets of the pristine church.” Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 116.

² James A. Harding, “The Lord’s Missionaries,” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 29 (1884): 458.

sentiment similar to a slogan attributed to the father of faith missions, Hudson Taylor: “God’s work done in God’s way will not lack God’s supply.”³ Harding’s phrase encapsulated his faith-propelled missions theology. He believed that if Christians would be willing to work hard, make unusual sacrifices, and trust completely in God rather than in money or in human beings that they could quickly “revolutionize the world.”⁴ Although his belief did not change the entire world, his teaching, coupled with his extraordinary example, provided the impulse to launch and sustain the earliest missionary efforts of the Churches of Christ.

Students who sat under his spiritual leadership at the Nashville Bible School (NBS) and Potter Bible College (PBC) uniformly testify, albeit in adulatory terms, that he led them to believe “they could turn the world upside down.”⁵ John T. Lewis recalled: “Brother J. Harding had more faith, I believe, in the Lord than any man I’ve ever met. He didn’t believe God Almighty would ever permit his children to want for a thing. He was a driving force in encouraging the student body to do that which possibly they thought was

³ Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 28.

⁴ James A. Harding, “Mission Work,” *The Way* 3, no. 13 (1901): 98. Harding’s posture toward the world was a cross between two of Marden’s categories. Although he is most quickly identified with the “anti-worldly” group, some of his comments reflected the sentiments of those who believed that the dissemination of the Word and God’s conquest of the intellect would bring about the conquest of culture. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, Second ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 125-38.

⁵ John T. Lewis, “100th Anniversary of James A. Harding, 1948,” p. 1, Archives, Brackett Library, Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas.

almost impossible. . . . He could come nearer to making me feel like I had to preach Christ, at the cost of everything, even life itself, than any man I ever saw.”⁶

Those who wrote articles as tributes to Harding on the occasion of his death indicate that his contagious trust in God and his inspirational speaking ability, rendered credible by his own daring life-style of financial sacrifice, motivated them to take greater risks for the sake of preaching Christ. His charisma and persuasiveness were such that “no young man or woman could be long in his presence and not come under the power and sway of this beautiful and sublime trust in God.”⁷

Harding’s persuasive influence over hundreds of students who became preachers and missionaries can be attributed to several factors. First, his “trust doctrine” provided a framework of theology that guided his students in the planting and maturing of churches, challenged them to take risks, and thrust them into the mission field. Second, through a disciplined life of Bible reading and prayer, he developed a personal spirituality that fueled his own inexhaustible desire to evangelize the world and set aflame the hearts of his students with the same intensely focused aspiration. Third, the acceptance of his otherworldly perspective and the belief in the imminent return of Christ demanded an urgent self-sacrificing response. Harding undergirded all three of these fundamental beliefs with his own admirable example and offered his students a believable model to emulate.

⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁷ M. C. Kurfees, “A Tribute to James A. Harding,” *Gospel Advocate* 64, no. 26 (1922): 611.

The story of Harding's life and accomplishments is well documented.⁸ However, the connection of his thought with the missionary movement that followed in the wake of his influence is yet to be explored.⁹ After a brief sketch of his life, this chapter will explore the origins of his thought and the relationship of his teaching, writing, and principles to the missionary efforts that he inspired.

Sketch of His Early Life

On April 16, 1848, James A. Harding was born into solidly religious, evangelical Kentucky amidst southerners who were moving irreversibly toward Civil War.¹⁰ While many prayed that secession could be avoided, others hoped that it would usher in a new era for a Southern nation.¹¹ The South was becoming increasingly defensive against its dominating northern brothers who condemned the practice of slavery and touted superiority in industry and commerce.¹² With the Mexican War just ended and the

⁸ See L. C. Sears, *The Eyes of Jehovah: The Life and Faith of James Alexander Harding* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1970). Unfortunately, Harding's biographer likely destroyed his personal correspondence and journals. L. C. Sears to Clifton Ganus, Jr., March 5, 1982. This research will be based primarily on Harding's published articles. There is a possibility that J. D. Bales salvaged some Harding personal materials. The Bales files were donated to the University of Arkansas Library at Fayetteville but are not yet available for viewing.

⁹ I am indebted to John Mark Hicks especially for his expertise as a reader of Harding in finding important connections among Harding, Müller, and Rogers. John Mark Hicks and Bobby Valentine, *Kingdom Come: Embracing the Spiritual Legacy of David Lipscomb and James Harding* (Abilene: Leafwood, 2005).

¹⁰ Avery O. Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1953), 397.

¹¹ Mary A. DeCredico, "Sectionalism and the Secession Crisis," in *A Companion to the American South*, ed. John B. Boles (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 235.

¹² Craven, *Growth of Southern Nationalism*, 396.

California Gold Rush about to begin, many southerners hoped that expansion into newly annexed territories would help them regain control of the congress.¹³

As a boy, James A. Harding witnessed his father grapple with the difficult question of slavery. At the time white clergymen were championing a biblical argument to defend slavery as a moral obligation. Slave owners developed an ethical code for treatment of slaves, initiated evangelism among blacks, and rationalized their growing separation from the perceived decadence of the North.¹⁴ Most southerners maintained “duelling [sic] loyalties.” They were Americans, of course, but they were also southerners and eventually thrust themselves into an endeavor that they believed would best preserve their interests.¹⁵

Harding’s parents, however, were among those southerners who were not in favor of slavery. Those Christians who had been converted during the Great Revival of the early 1800s, such as in the camp meetings at Gasper River and Cane Ridge, felt a strong sense of sin, individual faith, and equality among all believers.¹⁶ Their religion was experiential, emotional and otherworldly.¹⁷ In Harding’s Kentucky the poor, and not the

¹³ Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy & Society of the Slave South* (New York: Pantheon, 1965), 266.

¹⁴ Larry Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 362. The biblical defense of slavery originated, however, in Great Britain and New England.

¹⁵ David Morris Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper, 1976), 484.

¹⁶ John B. Boles, *Religion in Antebellum Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 25-6.

¹⁷ Samuel S. Hill, *Southern Churches in Crisis* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 116.

richer plantation owners, populated the churches, and “a religion that placed higher values on salvation and piety than on one’s worldly estate surely met the needs of most Kentuckians.”¹⁸ Evangelicals “among the plain folk” opposed “the hierarchical structure of their society and welcomed slaves into their churches.”¹⁹ Although inequalities persisted, blacks were treated more as equals in biracial churches than anywhere else.²⁰

The Harding family adhered to a religious movement born of a desire for unity, revival, and a purified church. Most denominations experienced some kind of division during the second half of the nineteenth century.²¹ While well-established churches buckled under the divisive forces of sectional differences, revival gave birth to new sentiments, initiatives, and theological emphases. In the wake of its newly created pluralism, some churches refused to adapt to such changes, and consequently, revival forced division.²² In Kentucky the Baptists and Methodists, who kept much closer ties with the average Kentuckian, were able to stretch and adapt to the changes created by the Great Revival. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, who were more stringent and

¹⁸ Boles, *Religion in Antebellum Kentucky*, 31.

¹⁹ Randy J. Sparks, “Religion in the Pre-Civil War South,” in *A Companion to the American South*, ed. John B. Boles (Malden: Blackwell, 2002), 165.

²⁰ John B. Boles, “The Discovery of Southern Religious History,” in *Interpreting Southern History: Historiographical Essays in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham*, ed. John B. Boles and Evelyn Thomas Nolen (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 9; McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 185. Blacks were generally seated separately but were admitted into the church and allowed to be baptized.

²¹ Marsden asserts that nearly every religious group was experiencing division at this time. “In almost every major American denomination, sometime between the 1870s and World War I, serious disagreements broke out between conservatives and liberals.” Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 95, 102.

²² Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 113.

inflexible in their ecclesiastical rules, could not bend, and in the consequent division new groups emerged. Two of them stand out: the Cumberland Presbyterians and the “Disciples” or “Churches of Christ” which were influenced by Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell.²³

Because of their religious experiences within this second group, Harding’s parents opposed slavery.²⁴ Indeed, his father, who had received a slave housekeeper as a wedding gift, followed Stone’s example and set her free. The woman, however, chose to stay with the family, and they began paying her for her work.²⁵ When James A. Harding was fourteen, his father purchased a lot, built a two-story brick house on it, later sold it, and received one hundred dollars and two slaves in exchange. Anti-slave importation legislation had rendered slaves quite valuable and, although his actions came at great cost to the family, he also released both slaves.²⁶ His father’s example of putting convictions of faith before financial interests made its mark on the young James. This lesson would later help James A. Harding to espouse faith missions over the monetary security of the missionary society for the support of overseas evangelists.

²³ Boles, *Religion in Antebellum Kentucky*, 32.

²⁴ McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 190. According to Sears both Stone and Campbell, along with many other religious and political leaders, were guests in the Harding home. Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 2-3.

²⁵ The founders of the Disciples all condemned slavery but were opposed to abolition. Stone freed his slaves and led attempts to “send free black slaves back to Africa.” McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 190-2.

²⁶ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 3. At the beginning of the century a good field hand was worth roughly two hundred dollars; by the Civil War, the same slave would bring two thousand dollars. Henry Steele Commager and Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Growth of the American Republic*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 599-601.

In 1861 when the nation was on the brink of civil war, James A. Harding was baptized at the age of thirteen during an evangelistic meeting conducted by both Moses E. Lard and his father, James W. Harding.²⁷ Harding's conversion in this meeting followed the religious tremors of another "comparatively quiet" revival that began in the North in the late 1850s with "spiritual stirrings" and "great urge for prayer." By 1859 this lay movement swept southward transforming Kentucky and Tennessee. It continued having an effect on both the North and the South during the Civil War, and churches added more than one million new members.²⁸ While delegates of the American Christian Missionary Society were voting in favor of a resolution in support of the Union, Harding was experiencing his first spiritual stirrings. For Harding, personal revival would always eclipse organizational agendas in the mission of God.

During this time Harding's father made a living at "merchandising," loved gardening, and began preaching during the summers. Of his father's two favorite occupations, gardening and preaching, James A. Harding chose the latter and avoided the former. Although he appreciated the discipline of hard work, he whose "special abomination was gardening" admitted to laboring in the garden only if his mother were with him knitting or such.²⁹ Years later he confessed that after thirty-two years of marriage he doubted if he had worked "thirty-two minutes in the garden in all that

²⁷ B. D. Srygley, "Life of J. A. Harding," in *Biographies and Sermons* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1961), 237.

²⁸ Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 114.

²⁹ James A. Harding, "Why I Became a Preacher," *Christian Leader and the Way* 20, no. 11 (1906): 8.

time.”³⁰ Ironically, what he lacked in cultivating vegetables, Harding made up for in planting churches. In his lifetime he is credited with the conversion of over 5,000 people and the establishment of at least fifteen congregations.³¹

At the age of sixteen he attended a preparatory school for two years and then attended Alexander Campbell’s Bethany College for another three years of study. When he entered the school at the close of the war in 1866, it was newly reorganized and funded by its first endowment. Campbell, the school’s founder, had died earlier that spring, and the fall session opened with the “announcement of the appointment of Dr. James T. Barclay as professor in Sciences.”³² Harding’s loyalty to the promotion of foreign missions and his identification of the limitations of human reason can be traced to these years at Bethany where he studied under Barclay, a former medical missionary to Jerusalem.³³ Barclay had actively participated in the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society, had become one of its twenty regional vice presidents, and served as its first missionary.³⁴ Exposure to Barclay and his missionary experiences doubtlessly impressed Harding. He found Barclay to be an amiable and admirable person, but noted

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Don Carlos Janes, “J. A. Harding,” *Gospel Herald* 2, no. 27 (1914): 1.

³² Lester G. McAllister, *Bethany: The First 150 Years* (Bethany: Bethany College Press, 1991), 122-4.

³³ Harding later stated that in those years, 1866-69, in the absence of Alexander Campbell, “There was practically no Bible teaching done there while I was there . . . the Bible teaching was gradually reduced to a merely nominal thing, and the college rapidly lost its influence for pure, apostolic Christianity. . . . It was ceasing to teach the Bible that ruined Bethany.” James A. Harding, “A Visit from Brother Daniel Sommer,” *The Way* 5, no. 13 (1903): 723.

³⁴ McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 176.

that Barclay's knowledge of the material had become outdated. Harding recalled, "Dr. J. T. Barclay was made Professor Natural Sciences in that institution. . . . He had been for fifteen years in Palestine; and much that he had been taught in his youth in this department, perhaps most of it, had long since been given up as false and worthless."³⁵ Barclay convinced Harding that although science sought to establish truth, this discipline of study was always retracting and modifying its theories and was not, therefore, as reliable as God's Word.

Such a discovery was an emerging component of fundamentalism. The threats of Darwinian evolution in the realm of science and of liberalism and higher criticism in the field of theology were common enemies that were drawing various branches of Christianity together. Harding pursued his education in a period characterized by a "tension between trust and distrust in the intellect"³⁶ and seemingly, a choice had to be made. Either Darwinism was irreconcilable with Christianity and needed to be branded as a new form of infidelity, or Christians had to redefine the relationship between faith and science. Harding, together with many other Christian leaders, chose to do both. He rejected Darwinism and higher criticism and began to subordinate science to religion and reason to faith. In the words of George Marsden, "Religion would no longer be seen as dependent on historical or scientific fact susceptible of objective inquiry."³⁷ For Harding and many of his contemporaries, "religion had to do with the spiritual, with the heart,

³⁵ James A. Harding, "The Theories of Men," *The Way* 2, no. 9 (1900): 130.

³⁶ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

with religious experience, and with moral sense or moral action” which were all areas “not open to scientific investigation.”³⁸ Although Harding never totally abandoned the Baconian Common Sense approach to Scripture in which his tradition originated, he was beginning to lay the foundations for his trust theory. Later in his life, Harding identified this experience as the moment he began to see that rational scientific truth was unreliable, in flux, and changeable and that God’s eternal moral mandates were immovable. He was, however, about to submit his own life to the test of empirical experimentation by trusting in God. In Harding’s mind, Barclay’s inadequacy as a teacher may have also symbolized the deficiency of the ACMS which had sent Barclay to Palestine. If Harding was learning to prefer faith to science, he may have also been acquiring a predilection for faith missions over society-supported missions.

Career as an Evangelist, 1874-1891

In his years of preaching Harding helped to shape the identity of the Churches of Christ and its missionary movement by mediating the religious trends of his day and offering his domestic mission work as a model for future foreign mission endeavors. In short, he was both a missions theorist and a missionary. He promoted early autonomy and independence for newly planted churches and substituted reliance on biblical truth for pastoral dependence. He emphasized faithfulness over success and in so doing provided a way for future missionaries to re-dimension the challenges and slowness of difficult fields. As a portal and gatekeeper for his movement, he filtered and appropriated post-

³⁸ Ibid.

conversional holiness emphasis on the transformation of new Christians and checked the increasing role of emotionalism in religion. The breadth of his preaching career etched his ideas and example into the character of the early mission efforts of his religious movement. After a succinct narration of Harding's beginnings as an evangelist and a summary of this career, this section will describe the context in which he operated and then describe how his preaching compared and contrasted with the ideas and personalities of the time.

Beginnings

As long as he could remember, James A. Harding had wanted to become a preacher. During his years at Bethany, and as the son of James W. Harding, he "could get an audience almost anywhere in that country for the asking."³⁹ After finishing at Bethany, he taught school for five years in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where he met and married Carrie Knight. They had three children, two of whom died before their mother did, August 14, 1876. Two years later, Harding married his second wife, Pattie Cobb. She became his lifetime partner, and together they parented six additional children, two of whom also died in childhood.⁴⁰

In 1874, forty years after George Müller established the Scriptural Knowledge Institute on faith principles and a decade after Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland

³⁹ Harding, "Why I Became a Preacher," 8.

⁴⁰ Harding was called home from an evangelistic meeting when his son Jesse fell sick and died July 20, 1891. Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 71. David Allen Harding died at the age of thirteen. James A. Harding, "David Allen Harding," *Christian Leader and the Way* 20, no. 34 (1906): 8-9.

Mission as the first “faith mission,” Harding reached a pivotal time in his life.⁴¹ He claimed that when he dedicated himself to full-time evangelistic meeting work in that year, he began to trust God to provide for his needs. Under circumstances that he believed to be divinely providential, he left the security of his teaching post and discovered adventurous faith as an itinerant preacher. His entering into this vocation resulted from an illness and the coercive persuasion of a friend. Due to a bout with malaria, Harding resigned from his teaching position in Hopkinsville and returned home to Winchester in order to recover. As soon as he was well, a preacher by the name of John Adams pleaded with him to come and preach a “protracted meeting.”⁴² The protracted meeting was a prevalent feature of the religious south in the nineteenth century. Its antecedent, the revival camp meeting, would last several days and was held in an outdoor location such as a shaded clearing protected by overhanging trees. The protracted meeting, however, generally took place in a building of some kind and continued through several weeks of preaching.⁴³ Concerning his start in revival preaching Harding recalled,

I told him I had no protracted meeting sermons, that I had never conducted a protracted meeting; that it would be better for him to get someone else. But he said he could not get anyone else, that I had been brought up in church and Sunday-school, that I had been to Bethany College, that I ought to be

⁴¹ See below, “The Influence of George Müller,” p. 86. Hudson Taylor “took the ‘faith principle’ of financing a mission, which assured its independence,” from George Müller (1805-98). Müller had founded several orphanages in Bristol on the basis of prayer and faith, claiming to make no appeals to humans for funds. He also created the Scriptural Knowledge Institute for the diffusion of evangelistic materials and for the training and sending of missionaries. “Müller, in turn had received the ‘faith principle’ from Anthony Norris Groves, the first Brethren missionary.” Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 55.

⁴² Harding, “Why I Became a Preacher,” 8.

⁴³ Conrad Ostwatt, “Camp Meetings” in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, ed. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 11.

killed if I could not preach and that I was to shut my mouth and get my horse and come on with him. . . . I doubt if I could have gone with a truer, bolder, kinder, better man.⁴⁴

Harding thus began a period of seventeen years during which he traveled holding evangelistic meetings.⁴⁵

During this period he averaged ten sermons per week, participated in more than forty debates, and held meetings in twenty-two states and two Canadian provinces. He preached more than three hundred protracted meetings that were generally about three weeks long. Similar to other “faith oriented” religious leaders of his day, Harding believed in being sensitive to God’s leading.⁴⁶ He refused to pre-plan the length of these meetings, but continued each one until the number of conversions began to wane or he felt God’s leading to move on to the next requested location in queue.⁴⁷ This “step by step” following of God’s guidance became a hallmark of pioneer missionaries of his movement.

Unfortunately, like other southern revivalist preachers of his day, Harding set a poor example for heads of households because these meetings often kept him away from

⁴⁴ Harding, “Why I Became a Preacher,” 8.

⁴⁵ That Harding began as an itinerant preacher free from the security of a “pastor’s” position early in his life, distinguished him from contemporaries, such as A. T. Pierson, who more gradually came to the conclusion that they should reject the regular salary guaranteed to clergymen. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 176.

⁴⁶ Here he stood firmly in a larger tradition of people who sought to follow God “step by step.” George Müller and A. T. Pierson both called this “following God’s pillar of cloud and fire.” Arthur Tappan Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1899), 183-6; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 110, 141, 157.

⁴⁷ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 38.

home for three to four months at a time.⁴⁸ In his absence both his first and second wives were under financial stress. Carrie especially battled with her own frailty and the illnesses of their children. In these years, however, Harding's itinerancy increased his visibility among the Churches of Christ and provided him with a testing ground for his trust theory. As will be documented a little later in this paper, during this period Harding turned down well-paid secure preaching positions and traveled to both rich and poor congregations to hold evangelistic meetings without stipulating fees or salaries for his work. Concerning this work, H. Leo Boles said, "As an evangelist, he was enthusiastic and impressive. He had the power to stir men and move them to action. . . . He was a great teacher and a ready writer, but his greatest power seemed to be as a preacher in the pulpit."⁴⁹

Context of Preaching

When James A. Harding graduated from Bethany College in 1869, the South lay ravaged in the aftermath of the Civil War, and although the military conflict was over, the religious southerners were struggling to make sense of the ordeal. Its ministers had proclaimed the South to be the "bastion of orthodox Christianity" and suggested that God

⁴⁸ Heyrman, in her study of preachers to understand "the ways in which evangelicals 'struck at those hierarchies that lent stability to their daily lives,'" argues "evangelical conversion posed a threat to family stability," citing as examples problems of family strife, church discipline, and the example of preachers who were absent from their families for long periods of time. Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 26, 141.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 28.

intended to use the Civil War and Reconstruction to further purify God's people, "white southerners," for greater glory.⁵⁰

James A. Harding's rise in influence as a preacher in this period coincided with a surge in spiritual interest across the region. He addressed audiences who were looking to make sense of their recent trauma and who were also painfully aware that the established southern religious denominations needed to be purified. Harding's message capitalized on this consciousness in two ways: first he made an appeal for the return to the pristine Christianity of New Testament times in a way which later served as a blueprint for missionaries who followed in his steps; and second, he averred, in individualistic terms characteristic of the holiness movements of the day, that this purification could only truly take place through the life transformation of each member. This nurturing of personal spirituality later fueled the motivation of Harding's missionary movement.

The Prophetic, Non-Church, and Holiness Movements

In Harding's preaching there were traces of ideas originating from three important movements of the 1830s that converged to influence the revival of 1874. Edward Irving had initiated a "prophetic movement" that stimulated belief in the renewed existence of spiritual or charismatic gifts and challenged the prevailing optimistic view of the world associated with post-millennialism with an otherworldly and pessimistic pre-

⁵⁰ Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Donald G. Mathews, "Christianizing the South—Sketching a Synthesis," in *New Directions in American Religious History*, ed. Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 91; Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 36-40.

millennialism. Harding's preaching reflected a pessimistic view of the world but stopped short of Irving's belief in modern endowments to individuals by the Holy Spirit. The "non-church movement" epitomized by the Brethren to which John Nelson Darby, Anthony Norris Groves, and George Müller belonged also subscribed to a pre-millennial view of the church and of Christ's return and added the dimension of radical faith.⁵¹ Müller's founding of orphans homes and his promotion of missions, with his emphasis on prayerful reliance on God for every need, became the instigating basis for virtually every faith missions movement that followed—especially that of missionary to China, Hudson Taylor.⁵² Although Harding's first exposure to faith principles came through Samuel Rogers, he later came to appreciate the faith and ideas of Müller and Taylor.⁵³ Harding's preaching also reflected the influence of the "holiness movement" which arrived in the United States in 1835 and built upon the Wesleyan tradition of sanctification as an essential post-conversion experience. The movement was institutionalized by the yearly Keswick conference held in England beginning in 1875.⁵⁴

⁵¹ "The brethren did not see themselves as a church but as a movement, trying to achieve 'the unity of all believers' from all denominations and beyond all denominations. Movements of this kind can be call non-denominational, which means that they do not see themselves as a denomination, although to the outsider they seem to behave quite like one." Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 25.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 24-5; Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 354.

⁵³ Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*, 15. For the beginning of Harding's "Faith Contract" with God and his belief in "special providence," see also James A. Harding, "Suffering for Christ," *The Way* 4, no. 2 (1902): 8-9; James A. Harding, "Ira C. Moore and Special Providence," *Christian Leader and the Way* 24, no. 5 (1910): 8-9. See below, pp. 77-91.

⁵⁴ Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 116.

Great Preachers of the 1874 Revival

Harding's career as an evangelist had its beginning during the same time as the second wave of the revival that began in the late 1850s and culminated in 1874. His preaching style would both reflect and interpret for his church tradition the theological emphases of the day and distinguish itself from some of his contemporary revivalists and leading evangelicals of the nineteenth century. While Charles Spurgeon built his Metropolitan Tabernacle, A. J. Gordon preached in Boston at the Clarendon St. Baptist Church and A. T. Pierson evangelized among the unchurched and poor in Detroit, Harding began his preaching primarily in the rural south.⁵⁵

One of the most influential figures in this revival, Dwight Lyman Moody, began his preaching tour in Great Britain in 1873 and within two and a half years had spoken to audiences totaling more than two million people. After his return to the United States, Moody labored in Chicago with similar results.⁵⁶ With the air of a "businessman" conducting a revival, Moody's preaching style shunned formality and controversy.⁵⁷ Making frequent use of the song-leading talents of Ira Sankey, he appealed both to the emotion and to the intellect.⁵⁸ Employing principles of small groups with larger audiences, Moody chose to use warm exhortation with supporting stories and illustrations rather than give technical explanations of the meaning of a biblical text. His lessons were

⁵⁵ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 46; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 91.

⁵⁶ Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 115.

⁵⁷ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 32-3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

designed to stir the sentiments of his audiences and were often filled with “personal testimony.”⁵⁹ His message was principally of the need for conversion and focused on sin, redemption and the transformational work of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁰ His view of the world reflected a pessimism characteristic of the premillennialists of the last quarter of the century without adhering to its rigid dispensationalism.⁶¹

Harding’s Preaching in Comparison to His Contemporaries

Harding’s tenderhearted story telling, restrained emotionalism, and reasoned appeal were similar in style to Moody’s. Harding also held to a non-dispensational premillennialism and called people to a post-conversion holiness of life. He even made effective use of talented song-leaders, like Leonard Daugherty, to soften the audience and prepare them for his sermons.⁶² Harding criticized, however, Moody’s inability to correct and confront his audience. After attending one of Moody’s meetings in Detroit in late 1884, he wrote that Moody was so powerful and successful because he stopped short of contradicting his public. Harding said of Moody, “He never speaks in a hesitating doubtful way: he is always bright, cherry [sic], bold, and vigorous. What he says, he says with emphasis, but *he is cautious what he says* [sic].”⁶³ In Harding’s view, Moody drew

⁵⁹ Ibid., 45.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 35.

⁶¹ Ibid., 38.

⁶² James A. Harding, “The Holy Spirit’s Work,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 18 (1883): 275; V. M. Metcalfe, “James A. Harding and His Work,” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 12 (1884): 184. Pierson also discovered the value of good song leading and selection. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 87-8.

⁶³ James A. Harding, “Mr. Moody’s Power,” *Gospel Advocate* 27, no. 12 (1885): 182.

large crowds mainly because he boldly preached what people already wanted to hear.

Harding indicted Moody especially for his tepid stance concerning baptism. He noted that Moody had himself been immersed but failed to tell his audiences that they needed to do the same.⁶⁴

Harding was, thus, skeptical of success. He absolutely rejected numerical responses as any measure of God's blessing.⁶⁵ Often he expressed, in fact, that those preachers experiencing great success were most likely compromising biblical teaching.⁶⁶ According to Harding, "No man can draw the great crowds of admiring followers, and at the same time be true to God."⁶⁷ Evangelistic meetings were not about numbers, conversions, or responses, but were meant faithfully to bring audiences to an understanding of God's truth as revealed in the Bible. His teaching in this regard prepared missionaries for the harsh realities of their work. Following his example, they were able to labor diligently in very difficult circumstances with little response.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ He was not alone in this conviction. George Müller also came to the conviction that "The standard of success is not to be a numerical or financial standard." Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 109.

⁶⁶ James A. Harding, "Would the Truth, if Faithfully Preached and Practiced by Christians, Convert the World?" *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 19 (1884): 298; James A. Harding, "Success, Happiness, Wisdom," *Christian Leader and the Way* 20, no. 25 (1906): 8-9.

⁶⁷ Harding, "Moody's Power," 182.

⁶⁸ This theme appears in early mission reports. McCaleb, for example, wrote, "The Lord assures success on a basis that all can attain—faithfulness." John Moody McCaleb, "Report for December," *The Way* 3, no. 47 (1902): 375.

Keswick and Holiness

In his criticism Harding seemed to be unaware that D. L. Moody's meetings contributed significantly to the growing momentum of the holiness movement. The spiritual fervor generated by his preaching led, consequently, to the beginning of the annual Keswick conference in Great Britain with which Harding's own sentiments resonated.⁶⁹ Early Keswick leaders, such as Quakers Robert Pearsall Smith and his wife Hannah Whitall Smith, weary of finding "evangelicalism full of doom," claimed to have discovered "that it was really a fact that the Lord was both able and willing to deliver us out of every temptation if we would but trust Him to do it."⁷⁰ Hannah called it "the Christian's secret of a happy life" and in 1875 published a book by that name.⁷¹ The Smiths' teaching, though attacked and criticized as a form of "perfectionism," spread to England where their cooperation with Thomas Dundad Harford-Battersby culminated in the yearly meeting at Keswick. Holiness figures avowed that one could have "intimate companionship with Christ all day long, that God's will and your happiness were one, that the Holy Spirit and not yourself overcame your temptations; but you had to make a deliberate act of full surrender and enter a 'rest of faith.'"⁷²

⁶⁹ J. C. Pollock, *The Keswick Story: The Authorized History of the Keswick Convention* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 18.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 13. The Smiths believed that was not a new teaching and that the Wesleys' hymns were, in fact, filled with this secret. The Smiths' work built upon the revival of 1859 and William Edwin Boardman's *The Higher Christian Life*.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 26.

Harding's preaching, which aimed at a post-conversion experience of consecration, echoed broader holiness themes "such as 'surrender' or 'consecration,' and expressions such as 'the life of faith,' the 'Christ life,' the 'fullness of the Holy Spirit's power,' and 'proving God'" which were frequently being used.⁷³ He preached that the goal of trust in God at the innermost level was to be "unceasingly . . . conformed to the image of God's son."⁷⁴ This desire to "grow more and more into the likeness of Christ" was inseparably one with the Christian's will "to accomplish more and more continuously for his cause."⁷⁵ As his "absorbing passion" Harding's spirituality fueled his own evangelistic fervor and ignited the imaginations and desires of his students who became missionaries.⁷⁶

Keswick reciprocally interacted with missions. Missionaries were attracted to the movement, and its spirituality helped to generate missions interest. Joel Carpenter, who draws a very tight connection between holiness and missions, observes, "Responding to the call to missions, therefore, seemed to many to be the sign and seal of their full surrender. Because the missionary vocation was considered to demand the most radical self-denial and devotion to the evangelical cause, volunteering for missionary service seemed a sure indication that one was a fully consecrated, Spirit-filled Christian."⁷⁷ This

⁷³ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 80.

⁷⁴ James A. Harding, "Scraps," *The Way* 4, no. 17 (1902): 130.

⁷⁵ James A. Harding, "Scraps," *The Way* 5, no. 27 (1903): 945.

⁷⁶ James A. Harding, "Scraps," *The Way* 5, no. 14 (1903): 735-6.

⁷⁷ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 82.

was the effect of Harding's preaching. His dedication to holiness, both in sermon content and personal example, stimulated his students to become missionaries.

Harding's Purpose in Preaching

The purpose of preaching, according to Harding, was "to fill the people full of the truth, and then let the truth work in them to will and to do; for when the truth makes them free they will be free indeed."⁷⁸ He encouraged thorough Bible reading from "beginning to end," to furnish the reader with a full "appreciation of the plan of salvation" and to avoid the pitfalls of topical or concordance style reading.⁷⁹ To this end, the preacher, he believed, "should preach daily, and at the same time find four to six hours per day for the study of the Word."⁸⁰ Like Pierson and other contemporaries, he urged systematic yearly reading of the Bible—the Old Testament once, and the New Testament twice.⁸¹ In keeping with his holiness convictions, Harding's purpose in preaching aimed beyond

⁷⁸ James A. Harding, "About Protracted Meetings," *Gospel Advocate* 29, no. 37 (1887): 588.

⁷⁹ James A. Harding, "Regular Reading vs. Topical Study," *Gospel Advocate* 29, no. 31 (1887): 481; James A. Harding, "Two Dreadful Sins That Are Very Prevalent," *Gospel Advocate* 29, no. 42 (1887): 658. Pierson and others developed the habit of gathering "the teachings of the word of God, and then seeking to deduce some general law upon which the facts can be arranged . . . taking the hard facts of Scripture, carefully arranging and classifying them, and thus discovering the clear patterns which Scripture revealed." Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 56.

⁸⁰ James A. Harding, "The Baconian Rule," *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 21 (1884): 330; James A. Harding, "The Preacher and His Pay," *Gospel Advocate* 30, no. 3 (1888): 3.

⁸¹ The Niagara Network and Northfield conferences, American counter-parts to Keswick, focused on Bible study and the perspicuity of Scripture introduced by the Plymouth Brethren. Dana Robert, "Arthur Tappan Pierson and Forward Movements of Late-Nineteenth-Century Evangelicalism" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1984), 133, 209; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 133. So also Müller, James A. Harding, "The Higher Criticism," *The Way* 5, no. 1 (1903): 530; Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*. Janes estimated that in his lifetime Harding had been a daily Bible reader for thirty-two years and had read the Old Testament sixty times and the New some 130 times. James A. Harding, "The Bible," *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 42 (1883): 666; James A. Harding, "Scraps," *Gospel Advocate* 29, no. 8 (1887): 120; James A. Harding, "Scraps," *The Way* 3, no. 25 (1901); Janes, "Harding," 1.

initial conversions to include the working of God's Word in the human heart toward the transformation of life and habit. In contrasting the preaching of others with his own he wrote, "I have observed that those speakers as a rule secure the greatest number of accessions who dwell most upon escaping hell and getting into heaven, and least upon the importance of leading lives of absolute consecration to the Lord; in other words their converts are much more anxious to be saved than they are to follow Christ."⁸² By this, Harding meant that evangelistic meetings should not intend merely to save people, but to initiate a process by which they could become like Christ. Salvation was not to be viewed as a destination but as a beginning point.⁸³

Restrained Emotionalism

In a context of emotional intensity when Methodist pietism stressed the experiential and the spirit of Pentecostalism was fermenting, Harding followed the style of his predecessor George Müller in limiting the use of emotional appeals in reaction to current trends.⁸⁴ In the emotionally charged atmosphere of southern religion, preachers had to decide what use, if any, they would make of feelings in their discourses. "Most southerners guarded their emotions with care and subordinated them to the demands of kin and community. Evangelical preachers sometimes played on those pent up emotions, conjured up vivid pictures of fiery hell, grappled with the Devil incarnate, relied on

⁸² Harding, "About Protracted Meetings," 588.

⁸³ James A. Harding, "By Grace Through Faith," *The Way* 1, no. 2 (1899): 21.

⁸⁴ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 44; Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 123; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 262.

dreams and portents, and otherwise threatened to upset individuals, their families and their communities.”⁸⁵ Harding knew that such tactics could backfire, and although he initially made use of strong emotional appeals, he eventually rejected them.

Harding possessed the talent to stir the emotions of an audience as well as any preacher of his time and confessed that he had once taken advantage of such techniques to ready an audience for responding.⁸⁶ As his understanding of the Bible increased, however, he decided to abandon such methods. “Once when he was closing a sermon with the tears streaming down his face and the whole audience in tears, he suddenly stopped and dismissed the meeting with a prayer. ‘Brother Harding,’ exclaimed one of the elders, ‘why didn’t you give the invitation? I believe half the audience would have come right down.’ ‘That’s just the trouble,’ Harding replied, ‘I don’t want them to come when they are emotionally stirred. I want them to understand why they must come.’”⁸⁷

He noted that although he believed that an appeal to an audience’s understanding made him a better preacher as he reckoned effectiveness, he saw one-fifth as many responses as he had previously seen.⁸⁸ Nevertheless he resolved to focus on preaching without coercion or excessive emotionalism, placing full confidence in the Bible to do its work. He wanted his audience to have an intelligent faith. Although his approach was

⁸⁵ Heyrman, *Southern Cross*, 64; Sparks, “Pre-Civil War South,” 166.

⁸⁶ An observer at one of his meetings stated that Harding filled “his sermons with illustrations” and that it was “no uncommon thing for his eyes to fill up with tears while he [was] speaking.” Even with Harding’s “gift of tears,” he was identified as a “doctrinal preacher” who valued solid teaching over sentimental appeal. T. R. Burnett, “Brother Harding in Texas,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 32 (1899): 510.

⁸⁷ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 58.

⁸⁸ James A. Harding, “Scraps,” *Gospel Advocate* 29, no. 6 (1887): 88.

principally an appeal to the mind through reason, it was undergirded by a firm faith in God's ability to work through Scripture. Herein lies an important contribution Harding made in shaping the identity of both the Churches of Christ and its missionary movement. Although he prioritized faith over reason by asserting that God still worked in this world through special providence, his rational approach to Scripture guided and limited the role of human emotion.⁸⁹ His preaching demonstrated classic Christian sensibilities and prepared people for the harsh realities of the mission field.

Itinerancy Versus the Pastorate

Like others who sought to establish faith in God as the overriding principle of their Christian service, Harding chose to itinerate among a multitude of congregations rather than enter into a guaranteed salaried position with one church. In contrast with Müller and Pierson who gradually came to the decision to abandon the security of a fixed church income, Harding made this choice from the beginning of his preaching career. This decision became the model for the earliest missionaries of the Churches of Christ who would forego the secure support of missionary societies and rely on volunteer offerings.

As an evangelist, Harding attempted to plant congregations, remain with them long enough to render them self-sufficient, and then move on. In his opinion this could take anywhere from a few weeks to many years.⁹⁰ He taught that the New Testament

⁸⁹ "This relationship between heart and intellect almost always characterized the central individuals and groups in the emerging fundamentalist movement." Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 47.

⁹⁰ James A. Harding, "Questions and Answers," *Gospel Advocate* 27, no. 14 (1885): 218.

required elders to do the work of continued teaching which allowed preachers to establish new congregations.⁹¹ Evangelists were to press into new territory rather than enjoy the comfort of a guaranteed salary among the saved.⁹²

This conviction was sorely tested when one of the congregations that Harding admired most for its “biblical eldership” invited him to work with it indefinitely. After visiting with the Plum Street church in Detroit, he reflected on the experience in these words:

There are a few congregations, however, . . . in which the overseers [elders] really try to do their duty, according to the Scriptures: they preside at the meetings, lead in worship, and take the oversight of all that is done . . . [Detroit was the] first time in my life I found a people who seemed to think it was as proper for them to read, pray, teach, preside . . . as it was for the preacher to do these things. For days I was being continually astonished, almost shocked I may say, by their doing these things; sometimes my “ministerial dignity” was just a little ruffled, though upon reflection I was bound to admit that these people were acting just as they should do.⁹³

When this very same congregation offered Harding a job as their preacher with a fixed salary, he refused, stating, “I am working under a contract with the Lord, and that I am perfectly satisfied with it; I do not expect to make another. During the last twelve

⁹¹ The Restoration Movement held that churches needed to pattern themselves after the New Testament model of churches in the matter of selecting of a multiplicity of married mature Christian men with believing families to lead as elders in each congregation. They also argued that each elder had leadership authority only over the one church where he was appointed. H. Leo Boles, *The Eldership of the Churches of Christ* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1900); Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System, in Reference to the Union of Christians, and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity* (Bethany: A. Campbell, 1839), 85-88; Peter M. Morgan, “Elders, Eldership” in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 229.

⁹² James A. Harding, “The Evangelist and the Eldership,” *Gospel Advocate* 27, no. 8 (1885): 118; James A. Harding, “How Can We Do the Most Good? A Letter to Preachers,” *Gospel Advocate* 28, no. 27 (1886): 408.

⁹³ Harding, “Scraps,” February 23, 1887, 120.

years I have labored with many churches—some very rich, some very poor. Some of them have given me a fairly good support for the time that I labored with them; this much was a matter of debt, and not a gift at all. . . . But I have often turned from the rich and strong to preach to the poor and weak.”⁹⁴

Harding believed that role of the preacher was to assist and not to supplant, to preach the gospel and not to pastor a congregation.⁹⁵ Although his position ran contrary to the contemporary trend, he modeled this role of the preacher, and his life’s experience served as an example to the missionaries who were influenced by his teaching. What Harding was as an itinerant preacher, missionaries became to the churches they established.⁹⁶ Rejection of the pastoral model also required Harding to exercise a greater degree of faith because by his itinerancy he chose to preach for poor and rich churches alike regardless of their ability to pay.⁹⁷ As Dana Robert says of A. T. Pierson, “His own attempt to live without a stated salary put him on the same spiritual wavelength of risk-taking as the young missionaries.”⁹⁸ Ultimately, through his itinerancy, Harding demonstrated that the missionary society was no better in evangelizing among rural

⁹⁴ James A. Harding, “Scraps. Wealth and How to Use It,” *Gospel Advocate* 28, no. 43 (1886): 674.

⁹⁵ James A. Harding, “Bro. Allen on ‘Calling Preachers’ Again,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 19 (1883): 295; James A. Harding, “Evangelists,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 24 (1883): 371.

⁹⁶ As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, Harding promoted the self-sufficiency of new congregations in a way that ran parallel to three-selfs mission theorists. See below, p. 121.

⁹⁷ James A. Harding, “J. B. Briney on the Warpath,” *Gospel Advocate* 30, no. 6 (1888): 8-9; James A. Harding, “J. B. Briney’s Attack,” *Gospel Advocate* 30, no. 17 (1888): 8.

⁹⁸ Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 183.

congregations than the preacher who wholly depended on God's supply. In fact, Harding was experiencing great effectiveness while the ACMS's domestic plans were stalled.⁹⁹

Bible School Years 1891-1912

In the decade preceding Harding's emphasis shift from itinerant preacher to Christian educator, Protestant leaders were rising to meet the challenges of world evangelization and the urban unchurched masses by training male and female workers in Bible schools.¹⁰⁰ In 1882, A. B. Simpson, a major contributor to the mobilization of missionaries in this period, was the first to establish such a school, the Missionary Training Institute situated in New York City. Dwight L. Moody's Bible Institute in Chicago and A. J. Gordon's Boston Missionary Training School in Boston opened in 1886 and 1889 respectively.¹⁰¹ Over the next twenty years James A. Harding's schools would become like others of the Bible institute movement: "tightly knit, familial, and religiously intense places" for the training of "lay volunteers and full-time religious workers such as Evangelists, Sunday School superintendents and foreign missionaries."¹⁰² Extremely important to the history of missions of the Churches of Christ

⁹⁹ According to West, contributing churches were growing discontented because the ACMS had not been more effective in initiating home missions. Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1949), 220-5.

¹⁰⁰ Joel A. Carpenter, *Making Higher Education Christian* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 111; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 196-7.

¹⁰¹ Virginia Lieson Brereton, "The Bible Schools and Conservative Evangelical Higher Education, 1880-1940," in *Making Education Christian: The History and Mission of Evangelical Colleges in America*, ed. Joel A. Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shipps (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1987), 111. In Europe Grattan Guinness opened the earliest of these schools in 1873, the East London Training Institute. Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 37.

¹⁰² Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 16-7.

is an understanding that Harding's schools served as substitutes for governing denominational boards. Like the other agencies of the time, they "provided educational and other religious services, a support structure for fellowship and inspiration, and opportunities to participate in such 'Christian work' as evangelism and foreign missions."¹⁰³

The Nashville Bible School, 1891

James A. Harding's most influential work in the development and training of missionaries was through his teaching and administration of the Nashville Bible School (NBS) and Potter Bible College (PBC).¹⁰⁴ Together with David Lipscomb as a figurehead, Harding opened the NBS on October 5, 1891 with fifty-three students enrolled, twenty-four of whom had specific intentions of devoting themselves to preaching.¹⁰⁵ Nine years later the school had enrolled 424 students and could count 125 in the field preaching.¹⁰⁶

In July of 1898, the person Harding considered to be one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century, George Müller, died. In the following year A. T. Pierson

¹⁰³ Ibid., 17.

¹⁰⁴ According to Marsden preaching and Christian education often went hand in hand "as an answer to new industrial and urban problems." Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 14.

¹⁰⁵ James A. Harding, "Nashville Bible School," *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 24 (1892): 373. Harding did the main work and was considered by teachers and students alike to be the true "father" of the Bible School. J. N. Armstrong, "J. A. Harding and the Bible-School Work," *Christian Leader and the Way* 26, no. 26 (1912): 8.

¹⁰⁶ James A. Harding, "Scraps," *The Way* 2, no. 6 (1900): 81. Sears and Young have written more complete histories of these schools. Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*; M. Norvel Young, *A History of Christian Colleges* (Abilene: Old Paths Book Club, 1949).

published the authorized biography of Müller's life. Since Harding held Müller in such high esteem, the reading of Pierson's biography may have contributed to Harding's own articles on faith principles that appeared in this period and further strengthened Harding's resolve in his next bold step of faith.

Potter Bible College, 1901-1912

In the fall of 1899, Eldon S. Potter, a young Christian from a rather wealthy family in Bowling Green, Kentucky, died at the age of twenty-eight. His parents approached James A. Harding with the offer to provide some funds and property under the condition that he would open a school bearing the name of their son.¹⁰⁷ Harding quickly moved to take advantage of this opportunity. In his public announcement in the fall of 1901, Harding attempted to dispel any notions that the school's opening was due to a contentious division with the NBS. The existing school had outgrown its facility and the division of the work force would mean that "twice as much good may be done."¹⁰⁸ Harding hoped that "the work [would] continue to grow and the schools to multiply till Jesus come [sic]."¹⁰⁹ Privately, however, there may have been a disagreement with his partner, David Lipscomb, over the matter of incorporation of the Nashville Bible School.

¹⁰⁷ James A. Harding, "Eldon S. Potter," *The Way* 1, no. 11 (1899): 167; Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 190.

¹⁰⁸ James A. Harding, "The Bible College, Bowling Green, Ky.," *The Way* 3, no. 9 (1901): 8-9; James A. Harding, "Four Matters of Vast Importance," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 49 (1909): 8-9.

¹⁰⁹ James A. Harding, "The Bible Schools in General, the Odessa School in Particular," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 8 (1909): 8-9. Within a few years Harding's dream was fulfilled at a cost to his own school. With his blessing, his son-in-law, J. N. Armstrong took some of the best faculty with him to Odessa, Missouri, and began Western Bible and Literary College.

Lipscomb favored both incorporation and the endowment of the school. Harding objected to the school's being under a board that might try to control its teaching of the Bible. He also believed that raising an endowment was an act of distrust in God. Shortly after the Nashville school was incorporated, Harding moved north to open the new college in Bowling Green. Harding's departure over this controversy remains unproven. Statements by Lipscomb, Harding and Harding's son-in-law, J. N. Armstrong indicate that the move was not because of a disagreement but in order to take advantage of the Potters' generous offer. Relations between the two schools were always good, and the enrollment in both continued to grow through the years.¹¹⁰

The Missional Purpose of the NBS and PBC

Teaching the Bible and sending out preachers and missionaries, Harding believed, were most effectively and scripturally carried out within the family and through the churches. He wrote, "Every household should be a school, and every church a Bible College."¹¹¹ He praised the example of the Plum Street Church in Detroit, Michigan, because it trained and sent out its own members.¹¹² Since, however, most of the churches were not carrying out their duties in regard to missions, he deemed it necessary to establish Bible schools for the express purpose of training a work force to plant churches and evangelize to the "ends of the earth." He wrote concerning both the Nashville and

¹¹⁰ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 160-1.

¹¹¹ James A. Harding, "The Study of the Word," *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 27 (1883): 419.

¹¹² Harding, "Scraps," February 9, 1887, 88.

Potter schools: “Hundreds of workers are in the field who have been trained one year or more in these schools. They are leading thousands to Christ every year, and are planting many churches. The work is vast and marvelously fruitful. Let us put our lives wholly into the service of God, and so live that our own hearts will not condemn us.”¹¹³

J. N. Armstrong, Harding’s son-in-law and a teacher in both of these schools, later made plans to establish a new school that reflected the same purpose: “After these years of experience, I do not hesitate to say that there is no other work known to me for which I would rather sacrifice. I do not know of a work into which means can be put that will more directly, rapidly and lastingly build up the Kingdom of God than in a school like we desire to establish. I think I would rather beg for bread and do this work than to fare sumptuously every day, but be deprived of it.”¹¹⁴

Harding believed that his Bible school model would “be a great power for Christ” not only in the areas surrounding the schools but all around the world. He rejoiced that his former students had opened similar schools in Manitoba, Canada, Persia, and Japan, a fact which demonstrates his purpose to replicate this educational model.¹¹⁵

Urgency Versus Adequacy

Harding’s schools did not quite fit the mold of the Bible school movement.

Ideologically they were situated somewhere between the urgent premillennial practical

¹¹³ James A. Harding, “Scraps about Important Matters,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 35 (1904): 8-9.

¹¹⁴ J. N. Armstrong, “Southwestern Bible and Literary College,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 34 (1904): 9.

¹¹⁵ James A. Harding, “A Bible School at Bowling Green,” *The Way* 3, no. 8 (1901): 58.

emphasis of the Bible institute model and the advanced educational focus of the university or seminary. The NBS and PBC were both similar to the Bible school movement in their sense of urgency, emphasis on student spirituality, and attention to the development of holiness. Like the missionary training schools, Harding's schools aimed at the same level of training for every male and female student, lay worker, future missionary, or evangelist.¹¹⁶ His schools, however, were more rural than urban, and decidedly more southern than northern. Furthermore his movement totally disassociated itself from mainline Protestantism, and rather than being interdenominational, its founders sought to be undenominational.¹¹⁷ That is, they called people to abandon the practice of denominational line drawing. Graduates were also less involved with social justice issues.

Harding's schools mainly distinguished themselves in the way they handled the tension between urgency and adequacy in missionary preparation. Although Harding believed in the imminent Second Coming of Christ and felt the pressing urgency of preparing and sending men and women out as missionaries, the curriculum resembled that of a university more than the typical Bible institute. The institutes streamlined their

¹¹⁶ Lipscomb and Harding believed that educating women was just as important as educating men because they were the principle influence in the lives of children as parents and as public school teachers. The majority of teachers and members of the church were women. Nashville Bible School, "Catalogue of the Nashville Bible School, 1898," p. 14, Archives, Brackett Library, Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas.

¹¹⁷ See Fiedler's classifications on denominationalism. Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*. Harding's nondenominationalism looked more like parental patience toward other traditions. He believed there were Christians among the denominations "but if they remain faithful and diligent, God will be continually leading them out." James A. Harding, "Questions and Answers," *The Way* 4, no. 16 (1902): 122.

educational process to focus on Scripture and practical training.¹¹⁸ Harding's schools were certainly biblically centered but also included offerings in Greek classics, history, literature, music and the arts.¹¹⁹ While the typical Bible school cautiously taught the liberal arts, both the NBS and PBC intentionally wove Bible and liberal arts together.¹²⁰ The school's leaders required every student to take at least one Bible class every semester. They also held up the model of the Apostle Paul's tent making and insisted that secular learning was necessary to make a living in order to preach the gospel without reliance on others.¹²¹ Secular learning also provided tools to translate and, therefore, better understand the Scriptures. The study of Latin, given its difficulty, was regarded as a discipline that contributed to the character of the student and, as the basis of the English language, assisted the student in becoming a better communicator. Harding encouraged his pupils to know the classics in their original tongue and to master rhetoric and oratory in order to communicate the gospel better. He wrote, "We teach secular learning that we

¹¹⁸ A. T. Pierson, for example, made the "explosive suggestion that less educated men be sent as missionaries rather than relying on seminary-trained clergy." Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 130. According to Brereton, the Bible schools did not oppose longer training, "They simply wanted to provide shorter, more accessible avenues to Christian service." Brereton, "Bible Schools," 115.

¹¹⁹ "Fundamentalists' tendency to reduce the church's mission to evangelism and their premillennial urgency to get the job done predisposed them to favor the pragmatic, trade-school approach of Bible school training for their leaders over the more extensive and cosmopolitan approach of college and seminary education." "The older evangelical ideal of a liberal arts education still had influence within fundamentalism, however, and a number of institutions were available to serve the movement." Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 18, 21.

¹²⁰ Brereton, "Bible Schools," 119.

¹²¹ Potter Bible College, "Potter College: Announcement and Catalogue, 1905-1906," 1905, 10-11, Archives, Brackett Library, Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas.

may the more effectually teach the divine.”¹²² Harding, however, unequivocally shunned the intellectualism, endowed permanency, idealistic confidence in the power of the mind and the German modernist influences that were permeating well-established American universities.¹²³

Characteristics of Harding’s Bible Schools

There were three major characteristics of Harding’s schools. First, Harding attempted to render his schools distinctively non-institutional. Harding certainly was not the only educator who thought along these lines. Missionary promoters and trainers Pierson and Gordon “had little desire to create permanent institutions, for, like the early church, they believed that Jesus’ Second Coming was just around the corner.”¹²⁴ Harding’s rationale, however, was not only eschatological but also ecclesiological. In his mind only the church was authorized to do evangelistic work, and his schools were intended to be groups of Christians working together as a part of the church and not as its replacement. In responding to opponents, such as Daniel Sommer and H. H. Hawley, who condemned Harding’s Bible school work as no different than that of the missionary

¹²² Ibid., 10. One could also argue that economically challenged people seeking upward mobility would have particularly valued a broader more complete education. Leaders of the Restoration Movement also took stock in those historical and linguistic skills that enabled them to rediscover more accurately the nature of the primitive church.

¹²³ Mark A. Noll, “The University Arrives in America, 1870-1930: Christian Traditionalism During the Academic Revolution,” in *Making Education Christian: The History and Mission of Evangelical Colleges in America*, ed. Joel A. Carpenter and Kenneth W. Shipps (Grand Rapids: Christian University Press, 1987), 99-100.

¹²⁴ Dana Robert, “The Crisis of Missions,” in *Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880-1980*, ed. Joel A. Carpenter and Wilbert Shenk (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 45.

societies, Harding replied, “It is not an incorporated or chartered institution, under the control of a board of trustees. I could not work as a teacher of the doctrine of Christ under such control. To my mind, such an institution is wrong to the same extent and in the same way that a missionary society is. . . . A Christian should not submit himself to be directed and controlled by any other authority than that of Christ, nor would he belong to any other institution for the advancement of the Lord’s cause than the church of God.”¹²⁵

By design both schools conferred no degrees and offered no titles. Harding believed that “it [was] vain to use empty titles” and rejected the notion of a charter.¹²⁶ In Harding’s words the formula was simple, “People come to be taught, and we teach them.”¹²⁷ Following this non-institutional design, the teachers of the school maintained control of the school. Harding’s convictions in this matter reflected the anti-institutional agenda common to post-Civil War religious movements. Division was no stranger to the American religious landscape. The “separatist impulse” was driven by sectionalism, the rejection of the alleged “liberal character of denominational mission boards,” and an aversion to a bureaucracy that tended to preclude adequate representation of poorer

¹²⁵ James A. Harding, “The Enemies of the Bible School,” *The Way* 1, no. 11 (1899): 163. Sommer led an anti-Bible school campaign, principally in the pages of the *Orthographic Review*, for twenty-eight years before conceding his case. Sears suggested that he attacked Harding so viciously because the Potters had first considered Sommer for the presidency of the PBC and chose Harding instead. Whatever his motivation, his criticisms effectively cut off almost all church-provided financial support from these early schools. James A. Harding, “The Sommers Against Bible Schools,” *The Way* 4, no. 23 (1902): 177-80; James A. Harding, “H. H. Hawley’s Five Questions,” *The Way* 4, no. 24 (1902): 185-7; L. C. Sears, *For Freedom: The Biography of John Nelson Armstrong* (Austin: Sweet, 1969), 63; Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 192.

¹²⁶ James A. Harding, “Nashville Bible School,” *Gospel Advocate* 36, no. 26 (1894): 405.

¹²⁷ James A. Harding, “Questions about the Bible School Answered,” *Gospel Advocate* 39, no. 14 (1897): 213.

southern churches.¹²⁸ In the case of leaders such as Harding, anti-institutionalism revealed a general disillusionment of the southern Churches of Christ over the American Christian Missionary Society's anti-slavery declarations, pro-Union resolutions, and perceived unscriptural control over the congregations.¹²⁹

The second characteristic of Harding's schools is that they were intended to be temporary, economical, and free from a dependence on money.¹³⁰ He considered the raising of large endowments an invitation to greed and corruption. Citing the example of Andover Theological Seminary which at that time had an endowment of two million dollars and only twenty-three students, Harding contended that "money alone [would] not make a grand school." He continued:

The school favors too strongly the doctrine of the destructive critics for its own welfare. . . . I have believed for years that it is unwise and wrong to charter and endow institutions of learning for teaching the religion of Christ; for as certain as the money is piled up in such an institution the money lovers will take possession of it sooner or later, and generally they do it pretty quickly. . . . It is a good thing for the income of such an institution to be small; for if it is great, it will surely attract the covetous, the selfish, and they will find place in it; and then in a little while the doctrine of the world . . . will be impressed upon the students of that school.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 28, 49. Robert argues that the increase of an independent spirit, especially in missions, is traceable to "new mission theories based on premillennialism." Robert, "Crisis of Missions," 31.

¹²⁹ McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 202-8.

¹³⁰ The NBS was incorporated and endowed and eventually became David Lipscomb College. The Potter Bible College outlived Harding's presidency by only one year but its teachers and graduates continued to open schools that lasted generally no more than five to ten years. Some of these schools included Western Bible and Literary College, Cordell Christian College, and Harper College. Lewis remembers that "It was the purpose of Brother Harding and David Lipscomb to establish a school in which the poorer class of boys and girls who were not able to attend college could attend and get their Bible training." Lewis, "James A. Harding," 3.

¹³¹ James A. Harding, "Ruined by Wealth," *The Way* 2, no. 9 (1900): 130. Although he was opposed to endowments, he certainly was aware of those who had them. He may have attacked such

Harding and his collaborators sought to offer the best education at the least possible amount of money.¹³² Beginning with the last two years he taught at the NBS, Harding himself refused any remuneration for teaching. He believed that he should not charge for the teaching of the Bible; additionally, he wanted to give an example of a life of faith.¹³³ In another defense of the NBS Harding penned these words: “The teaching in the Biblical Department has been made free. Of the income of the school not a cent goes to the teachers of this department. They give their work in the school gladly, in the Master’s name. . . . It seems that a teacher of the Bible should never charge anything for his services, whether he teaches with pen or tongue. We ought not to put a price on the gospel. We should be just as eager to take to the world ‘without money and without price’ as the apostles were in their days.”¹³⁴

Because of the school’s modest receipt of fees for room, board, and non-biblical classes, teachers were paid very small salaries. Harding, in fact, believed that the best teachers in history, such as Jesus, Paul and Socrates, were financially poor. Harding was convinced that a competent teacher “should make a financial sacrifice; but if he does it

schools in order to justify or draw attention to the intentional moneyless nature of his schools as a covert requesting of funds. McAllister suggests that after the Civil War, the smaller church-related schools had to fight to survive among the emerging larger universities. McAllister, *Bethany*, 119. See also Harding’s attack on the University of Chicago. James A. Harding, “Comments on the Preceding Article,” *The Way* 3, no. 27 (1901): 211.

¹³² Harding, “Scraps,” November 28, 1901, 273; James A. Harding, “Potter Bible College,” *The Way* 4, no. 12 (1902): 90.

¹³³ Harding, “Scraps,” October 23, 1902, 233. Harding told his students, “I’m going to show you how you can live without that.” Lewis, “James A. Harding,” 8.

¹³⁴ James A. Harding, “Scraps,” *The Way* 1, no. 10 (1899): 146.

for Christ's sake and the gospel's, he will receive a hundredfold reward, even in this life."¹³⁵ At the PBC salaries were never guaranteed. Teachers and their families were provided with homes, groceries and utilities, and space for gardens and chickens. In this communal arrangement reminiscent of southern utopianism, all money from tuition, fees, and profits from the farm went to pay operational expenses and the rest was divided among the teachers according to the size of their families.¹³⁶

The third characteristic of Harding's schools is that they were based on the fundamental belief of the priesthood of all believers. From its conception the NBS was to be different from any of its predecessors in the Restoration Movement. Franklin College had been for boys only, and Bethany College had specific classes that were required for those who wished to become preachers, but the NBS "would require all students alike to carry the courses in the Bible. It was not to make preachers, but to prepare men and women for fruitful Christian lives."¹³⁷ Although he was accused of having a "preacher factory," all of his students were given the same kind of training, male and female, future

¹³⁵ James A. Harding, "Which Class of Schools Is Better?" *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 49 (1904): 8.

¹³⁶ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 206. For examples of southern utopianism see W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *A Socialist Utopia in the New South: The Ruskin Colonies in Tennessee and Georgia, 1894-1901* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 13-15; Iaácov Oved, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes*, trans. Matayim shenot komunah be-Astsot-ha-Berit (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1988), 247, 275.

¹³⁷ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 140. An examination of the catalogues of the NBS and PBC verifies that during the years that Harding was at either, no special track for preachers existed. The year after Harding retired from its administration, the PBC added a special curriculum for preachers. Potter Bible College, "Potter College: Eleventh Annual Announcement, 1912," Archives, Brackett Library, Harding University, Searcy, Arkansas. Charles L. Loos promoted the integration of Bible study and a general curriculum. He feared that having separate programs for ministry would lead to the secularization of the colleges. McAllister, *Bethany*, 125.

preacher and church member.¹³⁸ Harding wrote: “Again and again I have seen young, ignorant, awkward boys develop into strong, cultivated, powerful, godly men; far more learned in the word of God than most Christians ever get to be. . . . Nor have our girls been one whit behind the boys in manifesting in their lives and characters the elevating and ennobling influence of such a course of study. . . . Of two things I am fully convinced: (1) boys and girls should be educated together; (2) the Bible ought to be taught as faithfully and diligently every day as any other study.”¹³⁹

The NBS and PBC were not established merely to make public speakers, though many became just that. All students, men and women were trained in the same way and with the same high degree of expectations. “Thorough Work” was the motto of the NBS and “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might” its slogan. Teachers did not accept “shabby work” from any student, and the school dismissed students for not doing their work well.¹⁴⁰ Harding’s urgent practical preparation merged with academic rigor struck a middle ground between the emphases of the Bible school movement, exemplified by the Moody Bible Institute, and the theological seminary of the day. The principle of the priesthood of all believers became an important foundation to the early missionary movement of the Churches of Christ—it was vocational, born of believers who were all viewed, and viewed themselves, equally as servants of God. Whether

¹³⁸ Harding, “Enemies of the Bible School,” 1163.

¹³⁹ Harding, “A Bible School at Bowling Green,” 57-8.

¹⁴⁰ J. N. Armstrong, “Some Features of the Bible School and Why You Should Attend It,” *The Way* 1, no. 10 (1899): 157.

unwittingly or consciously, in his schools Harding provided a reproducible model for church planting and educational missions.

Harding's Teaching Style and Influence

Students later remembered Harding as a teacher who maintained the highest expectations of himself and his students. In their tributes they recalled that “his steady and unflagging industry” were demonstrated as he arose early each morning to study Greek and expected students to prepare “with such thoroughness that they could take over class” in his absence.¹⁴¹ He required students to memorize one chapter of the Bible each day. By the time they graduated, they had memorized large portions of the New Testament.¹⁴² Rather than spending great detail in explaining what Scripture meant, he encouraged his students: “Go on, and learn more about what it says, and the chances are you will then know what it means.”¹⁴³

At the distance of years, former students remembered that they went into class tired but left energized. They claimed that Harding had a way of capitalizing on the spiritual desires and imaginations of the young people under his tutelage. Ernest C. Love, remembering such times, writes, “Every boy automatically stiffened his backbone and

¹⁴¹ Kurfees, “Tribute to Harding,” 611.

¹⁴² Lewis, “James A. Harding,” 2.

¹⁴³ Ernest C. Love, “The J. A. Harding I Knew,” *Gospel Advocate* 64, no. 28 (1922): 627. Such remembrances call into question whether Harding was thoroughly consistent in his justification for advanced studies as rendered in the school catalogues. See above, p. 59. Here his approach was similar to James Gray’s “synthetic” and “inductive method” of reading large portions in a single sitting. Gray, whose method was used in the Bible institutes, insisted, “if we get the facts, the interpretation will take care of itself, for the Bible is wonderfully self-interpretive.” Brereton, “Bible Schools,” 116.

tensed his nerves and was ready to do just anything that would win a soul or advance the kingdom of Christ. Nearly every boy left his classes saying in his heart: ‘Something’s got to be done.’ After all, that is the most important thing in life. Make a young man believe that a thing ought to be done, and he will do it. He’ll find a way or make one.”¹⁴⁴

Harding’s belief in the special providence of God specifically left a lasting impression on former students. They claimed to have witnessed in and out of the classroom “lessons of self-denial, humility and implicit confidence in the promises of God.”¹⁴⁵ Students who sat under him exaggeratedly recalled, “he was not afraid of God, or man, or of death.”¹⁴⁶ R. C. Bell, a student who went on to teach in similar Bible schools, remembers:

Now, after sixty years I can still see him before our class, popping his right fist into his left palm as he enlarged upon God’s special providence over his child, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or the efficacy of prayer. His abounding vitality, wholesome enthusiasm and intense earnestness were manifest in his entire bearing averring in “fullness of faith and good courage,” “I am a prince of the King of Kings.” And with his courtly manners, scholarly mien, masterful stance, Prince Albert coat, and full beard, he looked it. . . . Especially Harding’s magnetic, contagious faith in God as a real personal friend matched the wavelength of my spirit. I slowly imbibed his enthusiasm for God’s fatherly care of individual Christians, for Christ’s brotherly sympathy and fellowship with them, and for the empowering of Holy Spirit’s residence in them.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Love, “The Harding I Knew,” 627.

¹⁴⁵ N. O. Ray quoted in J. N. Armstrong, “What Do You Think of It?” *The Way* 3, no. 16 (1901): 127.

¹⁴⁶ Don Carlos Janes quoted in Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 261.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in Kenneth Wayne Greene, “James A. Harding,” *20th Century Christian* (1964): 15.

The Nashville and Potter schools graduated students that went out preaching and establishing churches in many sections “of the United States, in Canada, Germany, Japan and Persia.”¹⁴⁸ A roll call of foreign missionaries among their graduates included: Miss Carmie Hostetter, Japan; William J. Bishop, Japan; K. B. and I. E. Yohannan, Persia; Charles and Clemmie Klingman, Japan; C. G. and Hannah Vincent, Japan; Miss Tomie Yoshie, Japan; and O. H. and O. E. Tallman, Canada. Other graduates of these two schools established other schools such as Cordell Christian College and Thorp Springs Christian College which also graduated a substantial number of students who became missionaries. Still other graduates became evangelists among Native Americans.¹⁴⁹

As he grew older, the years of intense preaching and teaching activity whittled away at Harding’s vitality. In 1912, at the age of sixty-four, Harding was no longer able to maintain his duties as an editor, preacher, school administrator, and teacher. He retired from full-time school work and continued some writing and preaching. He gave up the presidency of PBC to George A. Klingman but the school closed within a year. Klingman ran into financial trouble by trying to guarantee the teachers definite salaries.¹⁵⁰ The attempt to build a securely-financed institution on Harding’s previously-laid foundations of faith failed. That same year Harding traveled to Oklahoma and spoke often in chapel at

¹⁴⁸ Harding, “Scraps,” June 1900, 81.

¹⁴⁹ Nashville Bible School, “Catalogue, 1898,” 34-40; Potter Bible College, “Eleventh Annual Announcement,” 26-32. The list of the names of those who became preachers, and influential leaders among the churches in the United States is far too long to list here.

¹⁵⁰ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 218. The transition from the prophetic leadership of the first generation to the structure of the second generation was a perilous one. Once Harding as a charismatic figure was gone, faculty and staff may have insisted on a more secure payment arrangement.

Cordell Christian College where his son-in-law was president.¹⁵¹ As he grew older and suffered from dementia, he spent his last years with his daughter, Sue, and his other son-in-law, Dr. Charlie Paine, in Atlanta, Georgia, until he died May 28, 1922.¹⁵²

The Nashville Bible School and Potter Bible College were essential to launching the earliest missions of the Churches of Christ because they served as functional substitutes for the missionary society. As men and women converged to study under Harding, they found a center for cooperative evangelistic efforts and training. They were challenged in word and by example to accept Harding's trust theory as a means of support. There, they were also inspired to respond to the urgent task of world evangelism. As products of Harding's faith perspectives, these schools paved a way forward in sending missionaries without a hierarchal structure.

Harding's Writing

The Christian movement had long depended on the publication of periodicals and the earliest missionaries in the Harding tradition found in Harding's writing an example that they could emulate. In their decision to forego the continual support and accountability requirements of missionary societies, they directly interfaced with the churches that supported them through articles published in the *Gospel Advocate*, *The Way*, *The Christian Leader and the Way*, and later, *Word and Work*. Harding's

¹⁵¹ J. N. Armstrong, "Cordell Christian College Notes," *Gospel Herald* 1, no. 8 (1912): 5; James A. Harding, "Untitled," *Gospel Herald* 1, no. 8 (1912): 4; Don W. Hockaday, "J. A. Harding," *Christian Leader* 36, no. 24 (1922): 3.

¹⁵² Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 249-67.

commitment to writing amid an active life of traveling, teaching, and preaching served as a pattern to those missionaries who trained in his shadow. His graduates learned to write frequently and in a similar style.¹⁵³ This writing and reporting proved to be an essential component of the faith missions equation.

Writing almost weekly for nearly thirty-five years, he published more than 1,300 articles. The increased frequency of “trust” articles during times of financial crisis seems to indicate that his declarations of faith may have been covert appeals for funds. The greater the current need, the more emphatically he seemed to expound on the virtues of depending on God. From his example, students learned that the “faith method” required a prolific writing schedule to publicize their work and maintain support in much the same way that Hudson Taylor and George Müller reported on theirs.¹⁵⁴

He also displayed both an irenic disposition and bold directness in clarity of expression. He entertained difficult questions, willingly printed opposing viewpoints, and addressed points of contention. Such issues included re-baptism, instrumental music in worship, and the role of missionary societies. Although open to the ideas of others, he retained the right to have the last word. In his argumentation he wielded the

¹⁵³ As J. N. Armstrong began to publish the *Gospel Herald*, he made specific mention of his intent to pattern his paper after the literary work of James A. Harding. J. N. Armstrong, “Relation to Other Journals,” *Gospel Herald* 1, no. 1 (1912): 4.

¹⁵⁴ In the narration of Müller’s work, A. T. Pierson attempted to persuade his readers to the contrary. He claimed that Müller did not make use of covert appeals. Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 161.

persuasiveness of Scripture. He quoted it frequently, argued for its importance as an infallible guide for the churches, and recycled favorite passages often.¹⁵⁵

Like his preaching, he personalized his writing through the frequent use of anecdotes.¹⁵⁶ His writing was often informational and rallied support for his educational efforts at the NBS and PBC.¹⁵⁷ His papers were filled with treatments on the role of the Holy Spirit, the function of baptism, and the identity of the church. More articles, however, appeared on “special providence” than any other topic.¹⁵⁸ His writing was personal and transparent in nature. He recognized when he made mistakes, pointed out when he had changed his mind, and admitted weaknesses. He publicly acknowledged, for example, that he had overlooked his responsibility to promote foreign missions and pledged to renew his efforts.¹⁵⁹ As his understanding of Scripture increased, he shared examples of his modified points of view.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Approximately one third of Harding’s articles were composed of Scripture quotations.

¹⁵⁶ For two examples see James A. Harding, “The Mt. Vernon Meeting and Other Things,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 29 (1904): 8-9; James A. Harding, “In Whom Shall We Trust?” *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 21 (1905): 8.

¹⁵⁷ Two of many such articles are Harding, “Nashville Bible School,” June 28, 1894, 405; and Harding, “Potter Bible College,” June 19, 1902, 90.

¹⁵⁸ Classic articles on this topic include James A. Harding, “Does God Work Miracles Now?” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 10 (1884): 154; James A. Harding, “In Whom Shall We Trust?” *The Way* 3, no. 3 (1901): 18-19; James A. Harding, “Asa the King, and the Eyes of Jehovah,” *The Way* 4, no. 11 (1902): 83; James A. Harding, “The Japan Missionaries and Special Providence,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 11 (1904): 8-9.

¹⁵⁹ James A. Harding, “Our Foreign Missionaries,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 48 (1905): 9.

¹⁶⁰ He changed his mind at the age of thirty-four on the practice of “extending the right hand of fellowship.” James A. Harding, “An Article Suggested by Brethren Cain, Hillyard and ‘A Well-Known Texas’ Preacher,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 21, no. 18 (1907): 8-9.

Having assigned a high value to the role of the Bible in the life of the Christian and church, “he believed it must be given to the world in every possible way.”¹⁶¹ Concerning this conviction Harding wrote, “No seed that was ever planted in any soil yields such great and glorious harvest as does the word of God rightly planted in young and guileless hearts. No other work is so honorable, so grand, so important, so far-reaching in its influence for good.”¹⁶² For Harding, publishing a weekly periodical contributed to the accomplishment of this worthy goal.

A brief review of the history of his writing provides a clearer understanding of his editorial convictions and philosophy. Harding’s first article appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* in May of 1881. In October of the following year the *Advocate* announced that Harding had become the head of the “Kentucky Contributions and Correspondence” column. He then served as associate editor from December of 1884 through March of 1890, at which time his name was removed from the masthead. During the next decade, Harding’s energies were nearly fully devoted to the administration of the NBS. Only twelve articles, in fact, appeared by his hand during the 1890s and five of them promoted or reported on the work of the school.

By January of 1899, Harding purposed in his heart to edit and distribute his own paper in order to provide, in printed form, the lessons that he was giving at the NBS. In the opening issue he wrote, “In our work at the Bible School many lessons come before us that we would like to give to the public. . . . I have studied the Bible more within the

¹⁶¹ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 167.

¹⁶² Quoted in *Ibid.*

last eight years than in all my life beside, I believe, and under much more favorable circumstances; and I ought to be able to do much more good with the pen now than then.”¹⁶³ As both his evangelistic and educational work sought to serve many rather than one single church, so he hoped that his new paper would reach a large audience.¹⁶⁴

Even in his decision not to sell space for printed advertisements, Harding desired to demonstrate an abiding trust in God’s special providence. He believed, in fact, that God furnished the funds to produce the paper in response to prayer. Harding wrote, “When I wrote the last word for the first issue I was still without a dollar for its publication. While I was sitting pondering and praying, a sister ran into my room. She was glowing with joy. She said, ‘I have one hundred dollars to give you for *The Way*.’ That sister was my wife. She had just received a bequest from her father’s estate, and she gave me this much of it for our paper, God’s paper, for we intended to devote the paper and all the proceeds of it to the cause of God.”¹⁶⁵

The paper, which began with seven subscribers, prospered, and its readership increased to two thousand paid subscriptions within the first six months. At its peak, the paper drew more than five thousand subscribers. As revenues increased, Harding enlarged the paper and increased the frequency of its publication.¹⁶⁶ Harding assured his

¹⁶³ James A. Harding, “Introduction,” *The Way* 1, no. 1 (1899): 5.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁶⁵ Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*, 25.

¹⁶⁶ The paper became a weekly beginning April 4, 1901 and was enlarged to sixteen pages January 8, 1903.

readers that he intended to funnel all income from the paper back into its enhancement.¹⁶⁷ Like his itinerant preaching and his faith based schools, Harding's publishing was just one more avenue to demonstrate disinterest in money and to exercise dependence on God. His trust theory articles also prepared donors to respond generously to the faith missionaries that were beginning to go overseas.

Like missionaries who wore many hats and wore themselves to exhaustion, by 1903 Harding's duties were beginning to wear on him. Potter Bible College had begun two years earlier, and Harding was not only looking after the college and the paper but was also attending to the boarding department, dining room, kitchen, horses, carriages, and facilities. He had traveled and preached to churches in both the North and the South and sought a way to reach Christians in both regions. Taking these realities into consideration, Harding agreed to merge *The Way* with *The Christian Leader* to become one of its contributing editors. His burdens were decreased and the area of his influence through a greatly increased readership was expanded.¹⁶⁸ Upon his retirement from PBC, James A. Harding transferred his attention from *The Christian Leader and the Way* to *The Gospel Herald*, a new paper edited by his son-in-law, J. N. Armstrong, and contributed articles from 1912 to 1915.

¹⁶⁷ Harding, "Scraps," February 23, 1899, 17.

¹⁶⁸ Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*, 26.

Major Influences in the Development of Harding's Thought

James A. Harding attributed both his love for the Bible and his desire to preach to his father's influence. About the time that James A. was born, his father began to preach and held several protracted meetings each summer. Harding noted how he "was richly endowed in evangelistic power and often led from fifty to a hundred people into Christ in one such meeting."¹⁶⁹ When Harding was very young, his father gave him a Bible with pictures. He loved to look at the pictures as his father told him the stories. Later James A. was old enough to pass the stories on to the younger children.¹⁷⁰

Harding acquired his desire to show kindness and to demonstrate a warm demeanor toward students, churches, and opponents from a preacher in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, named V. M. Metcalfe. According to Harding, Metcalfe never forgot to preach wherever he went. He recalled, "He did not wait for opportunities; he made them. And he did it with such gentle courtesy, such unfailing good humor, such artless inability to take a rebuff, that he rarely, if ever, failed to win the good will of his auditors before he began to preach."¹⁷¹

In obtaining instruction in the content and meaning of the Bible, the most influential men in Harding's life beyond his own father were Alexander Campbell, Benjamin Franklin (not the statesmen, but rather the editor of the *American Christian Review* and an influential leader in the Restoration Movement), J. W. McGarvey, and

¹⁶⁹ Harding, "Why I Became a Preacher," 8.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 8.

David Lipscomb.¹⁷² The papers of Franklin and Lipscomb were standard reading material in the Harding household, and Harding read them regularly. He recalled: “How much I am indebted to *The American Christian Review*, which I read from the time I was ten years of age till Benjamin Franklin, its founder and editor, died, that is, about eighteen years, and to *The Gospel Advocate*, which I have read for thirty-three or thirty-four years, I do not know. But I am sure that the influence of those papers upon me for good have been very great.”¹⁷³ Concerning Lipscomb, Harding wrote, “In my judgment, since Campbell died, no man among us has been so powerful with the pen.”¹⁷⁴

As an adult, and after having entered into the ministries of itinerant preaching and writing, Harding discovered that the principles and thoughts of faith missionaries, such as Hudson Taylor, resonated with his own convictions. He read of his work and adopted a schedule of publishing reports similar to those of Taylor and to other faith pioneers. Impressed with Taylor and the work of the China Inland Mission, Harding praised him with these words: “Yes, and if I understand the matter, the China Inland Mission makes its requests ‘known unto God’ (Phil. 4:6), not unto men; and those who go out under its encouragement go looking to God alone for guidance and support, without any promise of salary. In these respects they are right. Blessed is the man whose God is Jehovah, who looks to, depends upon, and is devoted to Jehovah. He will be guided and blessed at all

¹⁷² Ibid., 9.

¹⁷³ James A. Harding, “H. V. Bethel’s Letter,” *The Way* 4, no. 40 (1903): 338.

¹⁷⁴ James A. Harding, “The Bible School Reunion at Nashville,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 20, no. 22 (1906): 8-9.

times and in all places; for there is nothing too hard for Jehovah. Blessed is the man who trusts in him.”¹⁷⁵ As will be demonstrated in successive chapters, Harding transmitted this exposure and admiration to those missionaries who trained under him. They too looked to Taylor and identified themselves, at least in sentiment, with his movement.

The faith principle that he identified in the work of Hudson Taylor was the “doctrine that above all others [was] most delightful to” Harding — “the doctrine of God’s love and care for those who live for him.”¹⁷⁶ The two men who influenced him the most in the adoption of this “most delightful” doctrine and putting into practice its fuller implications were Samuel Rogers and George Müller.¹⁷⁷ As noted above, the origin of these ideas in Harding is difficult to establish. However, Harding evidently read Rogers’ autobiography early enough to suggest that Rogers awakened and helped Harding to form ideas of radical faith and reliance on God while he was quite young. On the other hand, exposure to Müller came ten years after Harding had already begun to live out these faith principles and therefore had the effect of strengthening and confirming his convictions. Harding’s teaching and practice reflected Müller’s views concerning apostolic church organization and worship, the return of Christ, and personal spiritual development. Müller’s world view was a good fit for Harding who unashamedly held him up as a

¹⁷⁵ Harding, “Scraps,” September 26, 1901, 202.

¹⁷⁶ Harding, “Scraps,” November 13, 1902, 257.

¹⁷⁷ Harding, “Scraps,” September 26, 1901, 202.

model. In sum, the spiritual biographies of both Rogers and Müller significantly influenced Harding's methods.¹⁷⁸

The Influence of Samuel Rogers

Samuel Rogers (1789-1877) was an early circuit-riding preacher of the Restoration Movement who was converted by Barton W. Stone. Rogers' evangelistic work in Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana led to the conversion of more than 7,000 people, including Benjamin Franklin and others like him, who became significant leaders in the movement.¹⁷⁹ Harding's imprint on missionaries in the areas of "special providence," rejection of guaranteed salaries, and exclusive dependence on Scripture are traceable to the example of Rogers. In all of Harding's writings, only once does he mention Samuel Rogers, but in striking detail Harding's teachings reflect the truths Rogers came to understand as they unfolded in his autobiography. The one reference to Samuel Rogers occurred in an article in which Harding responded to the accusation that his "trust theory" would work only for Harding because he was so well known and often was invited to preach for the larger and wealthier congregations.¹⁸⁰ Harding argued that this simply was

¹⁷⁸ Müller had been greatly influenced by the biographies of Francke, Newton, and Whitefield. Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 137. For the influence of biography on spiritual formation see Richard Hutch, *The Meaning of Lives: Biography, Autobiography, and the Spiritual Quest* (Washington: Cassell, 1997), 97.

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Henry Olbricht, "Rogers, Samuel" in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 657; Samuel Rogers, *Autobiography of Elder Samuel Rogers*, ed. John I. Rogers, Fourth ed. (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1909), 143-4.

¹⁸⁰ Interestingly Harding's "trust theory" was thusly named by his opponents in much the same way that the title "faith missions" was not originally coined by its founders, such as Taylor Hudson, but by those whose attention was focused on but one of its "innovative concepts." Fiedler, *Story of Faith*

not the case, that he gave preference to preaching for the poorer congregations, that he received only enough to live on, and that smaller amounts of money came only at times when funds were truly necessary. Harding narrated an occasion in which he was away and his wife who was at home was short on cash. Completely penniless he had neither the money to return home nor to help her. He remembered: “You start for the train without money enough to pay your way to the next point (unless you borrow, or make your wants known, neither of which should be done;) [sic] upon reaching the station, where is also the post office, you receive a check for twenty-five dollars, and then, a letter from your wife saying, ‘I have received a few dollars on an old debt of yours, and have made a little money by sewing, and therefore, my dear, you need not be disturbed about me.’”¹⁸¹

Harding’s point was that God chose to provide for him a little at a time as he needed it and, by using the poorer churches, to supply only his needs and not his wants. Fearing, however, that he might be misunderstood, Harding wrote the following paragraph which revealed the literary influence that shaped his “trust theory”: “I am certain that my motives in writing this will be misconstrued, and that mercenary considerations will be attributed to me; but that in no wise moves me; if some young man by reading this has his heart stirred as mine was upon reading the biography of Samuel Rogers; if his attention is fixed by it upon the precious promises of our Lord, so that he

Missions, 11. “Trust theory” was not, of course, Harding’s way to refer to his perspective. He believed it to be much more than a theory.

¹⁸¹ James A. Harding, “A Statement for My Critics,” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 7 (1884): 106.

may be induced to give himself wholly, body, soul and spirit to the grand work, I will have accomplished enough to counterbalance all such evil surmisings.”¹⁸²

One of Harding’s primary goals in life was to so teach, preach and depend on God that others would be stirred to trust in God’s providential care as he had been in reading Samuel Rogers’ autobiography. A brief review of Rogers’ autobiography will reveal that Harding gleaned from him experience that then spilled over into his own influence on the missionaries he trained.

First, Rogers opposed the deistic concept of a “closed” universe that limited and explained all life experiences to natural causes and natural law. He espoused, instead, an “open” universe in which God was very active and operated providentially in the best interests and welfare of those who loved God. This conviction, however, was not immediately clear to Rogers. Instead, it strengthened as he filtered his experience through a continual reading of the Bible. In chapter fourteen of his autobiography, for example, he recounted his call to preach in Virginia. He was convinced by others to work elsewhere, then encountered hardships, and had to return home where he took ill and became despondent about his faith. The account ended with his wife’s words of encouragement to remember the following important irrefutable facts: God’s salvation, God’s providence, and the certainty of God’s calling of Rogers to the ministry, especially when reminded of those brought to repentance through his preaching.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Rogers, *Autobiography*, 76-81.

In a subsequent chapter, Rogers reflected on the traumatic experience of being thrown from his horse and being seriously injured.

We trusted God for everything; we gave Him all the honor and all the praise. Whenever I arrived home, all would gather to hear of my stories, not to hear or see me in all this, but to hear the footsteps of God, and to see the work of his hand in all these things. If a great revival had occurred, we praised God for it with one heart and one voice. If affliction had befallen me, we saw, or thought we saw in it, the workings of a kind though mysterious providential hand. We saw God in everything; we saw Him everywhere; we saw Him in prosperity and in adversity, in sickness and in health, in life and in death. I would not say that my kindhearted and loving wife did not allow herself to utter a word of regret at my affliction; but she, and all my friends together saw, or thought they saw, the hand of God in the whole affair.¹⁸⁴

Reasoning from this experience, Rogers determined that perhaps they did go to extremes in tracing the hand of the Lord. Yet he concluded, “I believe we were nearer right than the majority of professors of religion are now in their attempts to ascribe everything to natural causes.”¹⁸⁵ Rogers thus eventually came to believe that God continued to provide daily bread as he also continued to care for the ravens. Furthermore, he rejected those who said that God “worked in Nature six days, and ceased forever from all care of the physical world” and that God had “worked a little while in the establishment of the Church and then ceased from His labors in that respect.”¹⁸⁶ Rogers affirmed that God still sustained life both temporally and spiritually. After having accepted this truth, and having lived by it, he noted that he and his family were always

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 94.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. Marsden demonstrates that in the 1800s this trend was on the rise and that fundamentalism was born from the efforts of anti-modernist Protestants and evangelicals who were responding to the threats and crises of their faith. Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 3-7.

¹⁸⁶ Rogers, *Autobiography*, 95.

cared for.¹⁸⁷ Samuel Rogers' perspective on God's care, therefore, made a significant impact on Harding's young mind, his way of life, and teaching.

Second, Harding derived his opposition to the "located preacher" from Rogers' semi-rejection of the search for guaranteed salaried positions with churches. Rogers wrote about preachers who were with or without a "situation" (secure financial position):

If you want a situation, go to work with such trust in God as will make you worthy of a place. I fear a great many look more to men for a position, than they do to God and hence, neither God nor men care to give them situations. Do not forget that God is the great Disposer. I would also say to our older preachers, who are literally nursing many of the large and strong churches to death, that if they would leave the home church to take care of itself about one Sunday in every month. . . . They can help other congregations and their own which would have to rely on its own resources.¹⁸⁸

Samuel Rogers modeled for Harding a life molded by growing trust in God. For Rogers the consequences of such trust included refusal of a located preaching position, seeking secure arrangements and salaries, and even the self-dependent use of strategy. He opposed evangelistic strategy because it negated trust in God and caused one to lose precious time considering what needed to be done instead of working. Speaking of the ministerial habit of pre-securing pay and possibly of the emerging plans of the American Christian Missionary Society to accelerate domestic evangelism in a systematic way, Rogers wrote: "But then we are such sticklers for plans and schemes, that nobody can go and do God's appointed work without having his commission made out, signed and countersigned, and sealed and delivered, according to the latest decision of the wise and

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 110.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 98-99.

prudent. So, while all this is being done, souls die, and churches dissolve. I care very little about plans, and shall never fight against them, nor shall I fight for them. . . . I have worked by or under plans and have worked without them.”¹⁸⁹

Third, Rogers influenced Harding in his attempt to make the Bible the only objective guide in decision-making and in the establishment of churches. In his early life Rogers gave heed to feelings, impressions, and circumstances in determining the guidance of God. His autobiography demonstrated how he became frustrated with the unreliability of such subjectivism and chose instead to focus his attention on revealed and written truth. On one occasion three godly men in whom Rogers had “implicit confidence, and whom [he] had believed God had certainly called to the ministry, were opposing their impressions to [his].” He queried, “If all of these impressions are from God . . . how is that they are contradictory?”¹⁹⁰ Rogers eventually concluded: “I was now ready to learn and embrace the truth. Certainly, I had been going on, heretofore, chiefly by the direction of blind impulse. Reason, judgment, and the Word of God had been thrown into the background. Dreams, visions, feelings, impulses and vain imaginings had been consulted and chiefly relied on, even in the most important undertakings. This I began to realize, and I prayed for a clearer light.”¹⁹¹ This conclusion made a profound impression on Harding who sought to maintain a healthy balance between a heartfelt approach to religion and an objective use of Scripture.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 98.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 76.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 80.

In preferring revealed objective truth to subjective experience, Rogers came to re-evaluate many of his pre-formed doctrinal stances. Rogers saw Scripture as the great liberator from all kinds of spiritual slavery, including that which he considered “denominational” doctrines. Rogers wrote of this discovery and its effect in the following words:

In spite of all efforts to the contrary, doubts, despondency and gloom, at intervals overcast my mind, oppressed my spirits, and almost drove me to despair. I found myself moving on to my work in a sort of mechanical way. . . . I knew not then that, in the volume of God’s inspiration, I might find a ready solution of every difficulty, if I would only examine it with an unprejudiced mind, reading it as I would read any other book, taking it for granted that its most obvious meaning was the true one. . . . I was like the old lady who was all day searching for her spectacles, and never found them until a friend showed them to her on her own forehead.¹⁹²

In relating his experience Rogers then urged his reader: “Young soldier of the Cross, see that you make no compromises with error and sectarianism. Unsheathe your sword, and never return it to the scabbard until the last captive to superstition and mysticism has been set free.”¹⁹³ Rogers’ experience proved to be formative for both himself and Harding as a younger reader. As will become more evident in a later section of this chapter, both Harding and Rogers placed a great deal of emphasis on daily Bible reading to effect a transformation within the Christian and to reveal God’s only source of guidance for the church.

Rogers said that he had always studied his Bible but did not see truth as he should have. He attributed his initial and persistent blindness to the fact that his “mind was

¹⁹² Ibid., 88.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 89.

preoccupied with certain mystical and deluding notions” that he never doubted because “they had the sanction of all the pious with whom [he] held intercourse.”¹⁹⁴ In other words, he felt compelled to defend the beliefs that others around him continued to hold. He admitted that he had recognized the discrepancy between his practice and God’s Word, but he thought it a matter of growing to understand the Scriptures better. “I failed,” he said, “because I was always trying to bring the Bible to my theory, instead of trying to square my theory with the Bible. . . . We were slaves to our religious experiences.”¹⁹⁵ After relating how he changed his view of baptism in light of Scripture, Rogers concluded, “I have adopted the faith that the Bible, in its plainest and most obvious meaning, is the Christian’s sole guide—feelings, impulses, dreams and vague impressions, all being counted as naught.”¹⁹⁶

These convictions, no doubt, influenced Harding as he called into biblical judgment many beliefs commonly held by leaders within his fellowship. Rogers and Harding, like many influenced by this philosophy, paradoxically embraced both a trust and distrust of the intellect. They were considered “anti-intellectual” but “stood in an intellectual tradition that had the highest regard for one’s understanding of true scientific

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 125.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 126. Here, Rogers’ discovery mirrored Müller’s who began to filter all tradition through the test of Scripture after becoming convinced that the Bible required him to be immersed as a believing adult. Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 66-68.

¹⁹⁶ Rogers, *Autobiography*, 130-1. These sentiments grew out of a much larger Scottish/Baconian Common Sense philosophy toward the interpretation of Scripture which was strongly at work in Alexander Campbell’s thinking. C. Leonard Allen, “Baconianism and the Bible in the Disciples of Christ: James S. Lamar and ‘The Organon of Scripture’,” *Church History* 55 (1986): 65-80; Allen and Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots*, 106.

method and proper rationality.”¹⁹⁷ Unwittingly, perhaps, they made use of Francis Bacon’s careful observation and classification of facts. “These principles were wedded to a ‘common sense’ philosophy that affirmed the ability to apprehend the facts clearly, whether the facts of nature or the even more certain facts of Scripture.”¹⁹⁸

“Special providence,” rejection of salaried preaching positions, and the primacy of Scripture were but three major influences that Rogers’ autobiography exerted on Harding. Other minor influences, too numerous to discuss in detail, included the importance of Christian liberality; the euthanasia of mission; the activity of the Holy Spirit; the education of women; non-sectarianism; the priority of faithfulness over success; and self-support as an expression of trust in God.¹⁹⁹ These ideas contributed to Harding’s mission theories and trickled down to the missionaries he trained.

¹⁹⁷ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 7.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. Such religious leaders were not unscientific inasmuch as they held to early nineteenth century views of science. They did, however, reject modern scientific theories that threatened the Christian faith.

¹⁹⁹ Rogers, *Autobiography*, 156. Although Rogers did not use the term “euthanasia of missions,” he did promote church planting that rendered newly formed groups self-reliant. He wrote, “After a child is born, it would be an extreme measure to keep a nurse by its side perpetually.” Rogers highly esteemed educated and intelligent women and vowed to give great attention to the education of his own daughters. He believed mothers, not fathers, were responsible for the inculcation of religious values in the lives of the greatest preachers of the world. His view of women, however, limited their activity to the home and rejected the women’s rights movement. He wrote, “My sisters, be content to stay at home and guide the house; and think not that you are in any mean business when you are only bringing up your children in the fear of the Lord. No: this is the noblest work in the world; and a mission a thousand times nobler than any known by those who are continually croaking about woman’s rights.” Roger’s view paralleled the earliest visions for the involvement of women in missions. Dana Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 2-3.

The Influence of George Müller

George Müller (1805-1898) was born in Germany and received his education at the University of Halle where he converted from his life of card playing and drinking to Bible study and prayer. His quest to become a missionary led him to England to work among the Jews under the aegis of the London Missionary Society. This plan, however, was interrupted when he fell seriously ill. Upon recovery he left the society convinced that God would provide for his needs. He married Mary Groves, sister of Anthony Norris Groves, a faith missionary to Baghdad. As pastor of Ebenezer Chapel, Müller rejected a fixed salary, preferring to receive freewill offerings for his support. He is best known for his life of prayer by which he sustained orphanages in Bristol without making direct appeals for financial help. At its height, the work housed more than 2,000 orphans in a five-building complex.²⁰⁰ A. T. Pierson claimed that “to the example of A. H. Francké in Halle, or George Müller in Bristol, may be more or less directly traced every form of ‘faith work,’ prevalent since.”²⁰¹ If A. T. Pierson’s assertion is true, then Harding brokered for his movement a powerful stream of influence that flowed not only to the Churches of Christ but to a majority of faith missionaries in service around the world. Although Harding’s notions of faith predate his contact with Müller, they certainly were encouraged, maintained, and broadened by his reading of Müller’s work.

If Harding only mentioned the less familiar Samuel Rogers once, he made frequent reference, on the contrary, to George Müller. He published articles by him and

²⁰⁰ Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 304.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 354.

mentioned him in both his writing and discussions so often that he rendered Müller a household name among readers and students.²⁰² In his discussion with L. S. White, Harding said, “I have kept pretty well informed concerning his [Müller’s] work for more than twenty years.”²⁰³ This would place Harding’s first contact with Müller no later than 1890.²⁰⁴ Harding’s first mention of Müller, however, appears six years earlier in an article in which he extols the courage of Müller who was “raised a paedobaptist, but was immersed after reading the Bible.”²⁰⁵ Harding was further impressed that Müller had “built up about him a congregation of immersed believers who take the Bible and the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice, refusing to be called by human names.”²⁰⁶ Harding was pleased to consider him a brother “whether he ever heard of Alexander Campbell or not.”²⁰⁷ After two decades of familiarity with Müller, Harding wrote that he believed him to be one of the two greatest men of the nineteenth century and “was, perhaps, as great in faith as Abraham.”²⁰⁸ All this proves that Harding’s trust ideas were

²⁰² Harding wrote about or published articles by George Müller no less than eleven times from 1884 to 1910. Both spellings, Mueller and Müller, are used in his writings.

²⁰³ Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*, 18.

²⁰⁴ Since Müller died in 1898, Harding was either referring to the work associated with Müller that continued after his death, or a period of twenty years counting backwards from 1898.

²⁰⁵ James A. Harding, “Denominationalism,” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 44 (1884): 698.

²⁰⁶ Harding was most likely referring to Müller’s leaving Ebenezer Chapel to begin a new work based on these convictions at Bethesda Chapel. Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 309-10.

²⁰⁷ Harding, “Denominationalism,” 698. Given this chronology, Harding’s “trust theory” was first inspired by Samuel Rogers and then intensified and affirmed in his reading of George Müller.

²⁰⁸ Harding wrote, “The two most remarkable men of the nineteenth century, I believe, were George Muller [sic], of Bristol, England, and Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, Virginia.” James A. Harding, “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 13 (1909): 8.

part of larger currents of the era. Through Müller, Harding also had a connection with the Plymouth Brethren who also sought to recapture primitive biblical Christianity.

Like many others, James A. Harding was particularly impressed that George Müller had supported ten thousand orphans in Bristol, England, during a period of sixty-three years, not through work or appeals for financial help, but through prayer and faith in God. Harding noted that Müller's expenditures in supporting Sunday Schools, publishing religious books and tracts, and contributing to missionaries totaled over 7.5 million dollars in his lifetime.²⁰⁹ Harding admired Müller because his purpose was not so much to care for orphans, although he did that admirably, but to demonstrate "that God always hears and answers the prayer of faith that comes from the heart of his dutiful child."²¹⁰

Harding dispensed to his readers and students his deep and abiding respect for George Müller, especially in the area of trust.²¹¹ He recounted the ways that Müller and his followers claimed God had provided for them: "Often there was not money on hand to pay the necessary expenses for another day. Mr. Muller [sic] would not borrow. They simply prayed to God, and not once did he fail to supply their needs. On a few occasions

Harding's connections to Alexander Campbell are well documented in other writings. See James A. Harding, "A Great Man and a Great Lesson," *Christian Leader and the Way* 24, no. 6 (1910): 8; Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 13.

²⁰⁹ Since this specific information can be traced to Pierson's biography of Müller, published in 1899, Harding probably had read it.

²¹⁰ Harding, "Great Man and a Great Lesson," 8.

²¹¹ Although Harding also shared Müller's premillennial views of the Second Coming, he never commented on Müller's eschatology. See below, p. 133.

in the sixty-three years a meal had to be postponed thirty or forty minutes.”²¹² In this regard, Harding considered Müller to be the standard to which he aspired. In his discussion with White, Harding had to admit that he had borrowed money in opening Potter Bible College but quickly added, “But, if our faith had been like that of George Muller [sic], we would not have had to borrow.”²¹³ At another point Harding wrote, “Had I been as persistent and liberal, as full of faith and good works as George Muller [sic] was, I could have done vastly more.”²¹⁴

Harding also appealed to Müller’s example of seeing Scripture as a means to joy and an “intimate experimental acquaintance with God.” With Harding and Müller, the Bible was to be studied not just as a collection of facts, but as a way of encountering God.²¹⁵ Harding pointed his readers to an article in which Müller held that “The Secret of Effectual Service to God” was “that you should seek, above all other things, to have your souls truly happy in God himself” and “this happiness is to be obtained through the study of the Holy Scriptures.”²¹⁶ Müller urged readers to study the Scriptures, not for the sake of others, but for themselves; to carry through with what they discovered; to remember

²¹² Harding, “Great Man and a Great Lesson,” 8.

²¹³ Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*, 26.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

²¹⁵ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 107. Both men were reflecting the attitude of many who perceived truth not as doctrinal but as personal.

²¹⁶ George Müller, “The Secret of Effectual Service to God,” *The Way* 4, no. 35 (1902): 278. Again, this was a specific theme of Keswick and the teaching of Robert Pearsall and Hannah Whitall Smith. Pollock, *Keswick Story*, 13. See above, p. 44.

that they were God's stewards; and to grow older in the ways of adversity.²¹⁷ Harding was specifically interested in Müller's view of Scripture as a spiritual discipline or means to life transformation. Bible study was not merely for the establishment of truth for the church but its priority was a measure of "the vigor of one's spiritual life."²¹⁸ In an article in which Harding persuasively argued for the reading of Scripture in the quest for spirituality he quoted Müller: "As the outward man is not fit to work for any length of time except it take food, and as this is one of the first things we do in the morning, so it should be with the inner man. Not prayer, but the Word of God; and here again, not the simple reading of the Word, so that it only passes through our minds just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what we read, pondering over it and applying it to our hearts."²¹⁹ Harding shared with Müller the conviction that "There is a tremendous purifying, sanctifying, energizing power in the Word of God. It is as superior to the word of man as God is superior to man."²²⁰

Both Müller and his brother-in-law, Anthony Groves, had rejected the London Missionary Society and had demonstrated that significant missions and benevolent work could be accomplished through the faith method. They offered a solution, perhaps the only known alternative to working with a denominational missions board, that was very attractive to Harding. When Harding discovered that they shared a similar ecclesiology

²¹⁷ Mueller, "Secret of Effectual Service to God," 279.

²¹⁸ James A. Harding, "A Busy Man and His Bible," *The Way* 2, no. 5 (1900): 79.

²¹⁹ James A. Harding, "George Mueller's Soul-Feasting," *The Way* 5, no. 12 (1903): 706.

²²⁰ Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*, 23.

and a commitment to undenominationalism, he promoted their faith missions model to encourage his own movement to produce and support missionaries.

Harding's Fundamental Principles

Alexander Campbell, J. W. McGarvey, Benjamin Franklin, and David Lipscomb all contributed to Harding's understanding of the content of Scripture. From Samuel Rogers, Harding acquired an unquenchable desire to seek God's guidance and to give greater importance to Scripture than to dreams, feelings, and impressions. George Müller's example of prayer-supported orphans' homes inspired Harding's vision of using his own security-less life of establishing Bible schools and preaching as a modern-day demonstration of God's active intervention. Müller also guided Harding into the use of Scripture as a spiritual discipline. A parallel can also be drawn between the way Müller spent the last phase of his life as an evangelist of his biblical system and the way Harding worked as a home missionary.²²¹

The legacy of faith of James A. Harding, as he attempted to shape the life and thought of missionaries who studied under him, consisted of several principles (gleaned from the above mentioned influences) that emerged gradually from his reading and life experiences. No one missionary alone embodied all of these, but all of his missionaries reflected several of these major emphases in his teaching and life. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to a description of the principles to which Harding gave the most emphasis and which had the longest lasting effect on the missionaries he trained.

²²¹ Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 245-63.

Trust in God, from Theory to Doctrine

Without a doubt the most prominent of Harding's personal characteristics and teachings was his trust in God. His students and co-workers unanimously attested to his faith being the most outstanding feature of his life.²²² As Harding's most distinctive teaching, his "trust theory" also drew the most fire from opponents. His stance on "Special Providence" was "one of the most hotly debated questions of his time, a doctrine for which he himself had been severely criticized."²²³ Some argued that difficulties in the life of the apostle Paul demonstrated that God provided no guarantees for his servants.²²⁴ Others argued that Harding was not consistent because he made money through his printing. Harding responded that subscriptions merely paid for the paper and ink of his publications.²²⁵ Other writers opposed Harding on the grounds that his trust system would function only for evangelists like himself who enjoyed a longstanding reputation among many churches that would be inclined to help him. Harding responded to these charges stating that when he began teaching and practicing his trust in God, he had no reputation.²²⁶ Others, particularly L. S. White, recognized that Harding's theory called into question the very hiring and locating of preachers by congregations and undermined

²²² Kurfees, "Tribute to Harding," 611; J. C. McQuiddy, "James A. Harding," *Gospel Advocate* 64, no. 25 (1922): 590. Notwithstanding the hagiographic nature of these testimonials, Harding did publish no less than seventy-five articles on "trust."

²²³ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 252.

²²⁴ Harding, "Scraps," May 14, 1903, 578.

²²⁵ Harding, "Scraps," January 1, 1900, 1.

²²⁶ Harding, "A Statement for My Critics," 106.

the attempts of many preachers and churches to procure more security for ministers.²²⁷

The tone and frequency of these objections to Harding's views indicate that he espoused a unique position in his fellowship and was establishing a new tradition. Those who studied under him or were influenced by him also held to his "trust theory" but none to the same radical degree.

Harding's teachings on trust in God were rooted in four fundamental beliefs. First, Harding believed that God's care was founded in his love. Quoting Richard Cecil, Harding wrote, "God denies a Christian nothing but with a design to give him something better" and added, "Of course; in the very nature of love, it could not be otherwise."²²⁸ Second, Harding's convictions rested on his belief that God's biblical promises in both the Old and New Testaments were still valid in his day. He had counted more than a thousand such passages and he argued that God "had not changed." God's "infinite love is just as tender, just as thoughtful, just as merciful and just as sure to help in due season as it ever was."²²⁹ Harding considered modern faith in God's promises a crucial matter and blamed the churches' lack of Bible reading for the prevalent disbelief.²³⁰ He wrote:

²²⁷ Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*.

²²⁸ James A. Harding, "The Love of God," *The Way* 2, no. 12 (1901): 182-3. One of Harding's favorite promises from Scripture was that "the eyes of Jehovah run to and from throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" 2 Chronicles 16:9. Harding, "Asa the King," 83.

²²⁹ James A. Harding, "Bro. Brill's Criticism and My Reply," *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 35 (1883): 547; Harding, "Scraps," April 20, 1887, 252; Harding, "Mission Work," 98.

²³⁰ Harding reflected sentiments common to the Plymouth Brethren especially as they were manifested in George Müller's teaching. The Brethren believed in the ruin of the church through its denominational corruption reversible only through Scripture. Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 261, 291-2; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 105-6.

A kind of semi-infidelity possesses many, which leads them to hold that Father, Son and Holy Spirit have taken no active, no practical interest in the affairs of either the world or the church since the apostolic age; that all promises of temporal protection, guidance and blessing ended with that period; that since then the world, the church and all they contain are subject to the fixed laws of mind and matter, and that these laws now operate (like a clock that has been wound up) without any oversight, attention or intervention on the part of any celestial being. And, by the way, this is one of the biggest, shrewdest and most effective of all the lies that Satan ever circulated. . . . The Devil's success in this particular, I believe, is owing to the fact that comparatively few people are in the habit of reading the Bible, from first to last, over and over again, continuously.²³¹

Third, Harding believed that the Holy Spirit personally lived in every Christian, convicted the heart of the unbeliever, and was the originator of continued miracles on earth. Concerning the connection between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and God's providence Harding wrote, "He dwells in us, and as long as he delights in us, all things work together for our good. The man in whom dwells the Holy Spirit prospers, and everything he does prospers."²³² Regarding the conversion of the unsaved, Harding stated that the Holy Spirit worked immediately in the heart in much the same way as the Spirit had in the life of Cornelius.²³³ In Harding's thought, the Holy Spirit not only worked through the external biblical word but also operated directly in the Christian heart. As the

²³¹ In a way, Harding's faith was sustained by his common sense approach to Scripture. James A. Harding, "What Does the Promise 'Lo, I am with you always,' Mean to the Modern Evangelist?" *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 33 (1904): 8. A. T. Pierson also fought against skepticism and the denial of the supernaturalism of "practical atheism." Arthur Tappan Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1912), 399; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 95-103. This so-called "infidelity" was a prevalent characteristic of the time. Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 20.

²³² James A. Harding, "The Holy Spirit and Holy Spirits," *Christian Leader and the Way* 22, no. 36 (1908): 8.

²³³ Harding, "The Holy Spirit's Work," 275. See also James A. Harding, "To Our Readers," *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 52 (1883): 819.

originator of miracles, the Holy Spirit, and not the individual, exercised the power to heal or perform miracles.²³⁴ Referring to Jesus' ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit, Harding wrote,

The Holy Spirit came to the earth to take his place as a comforter and guide of the disciples of the Lord. He has been on earth in the saints ever since. . . . Miracle-working powers among men ceased, as there was no further need of them; but the Holy Spirit is upon earth dwelling in the children of God, helping their infirmities and making intercessions. . . . I do not hesitate to say that this indwelling of the Spirit is an incomprehensible, miraculous thing necessary to the well-being of the Christian and the church; and that every Christian does receive the Spirit upon his baptism into Christ. That a divine person, the Holy Spirit of God, is upon earth dwelling in the saints, and that he has been here shortly after our Lord ascended to heaven, are startling facts well worthy of our meditations. The question is . . . whether he will, when we pray in harmony with his will, answer us in ways that are many times unexplainable by us, and where it is proper to call these answers miracles.²³⁵

Fourth, Harding believed that his own experience proved the validity of his trust theory.²³⁶ Giving no attention to a church's ability to pay for a meeting or not, traveling where he believed God was leading him, refusing to make his personal needs known to humans, Harding discovered in his own person God's faithful care. He wrote, "It is startling to receive, month after month, the supplies that you need, as you need them, and

²³⁴ This was a theme also evident in another of Harding's contemporaries, Andrew Murray. Andrew Murray, *God's Best Kept Secrets: An Inspirational Daily Devotional*, ed. Al Bryant (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1994), 262-3. Murray believed that when God redeemed the person, God also redeemed the body, and when the Holy Spirit came to dwell within, believing prayer could then bring about a slow healing. J. Du Plessis, *The Life of Andrew Murray of South Africa* (New York: Marshall Brothers, 1919), 330.

²³⁵ James A. Harding, "Thought on Miracles," *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 9 (1884): 131; James A. Harding, "The Begetting, the Birth, and the Blessings that Follow," *Christian Leader and the Way* 21, no. 12 (1907): 8-9.

²³⁶ Marsden affirms that in this period "experience" played an important epistemological role. "American evangelicals . . . could appeal to either or both . . . personal experience and the Bible." Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 73.

no more than you need, without being able by any possibility to see whence they would come!”²³⁷ His articles are filled with anecdotes that illustrated God’s providential care in his life.²³⁸

Missionary Implications of Harding’s Trust Theory

As founder of two Bible schools, writer, evangelist and promoter of missions, Harding’s teaching on trust in God had significant implications for missions. First, rejection of stipulated salaries encouraged missionaries to proceed to the field even without funds. Next, insistence on special providence tended to convince missionaries that God still miraculously supplied the needs of Christian workers. Also, modeling and promoting of volunteer poverty and simplicity readjusted the expectations that missionaries had concerning their financial needs. The resulting sacrificial lifestyle enhanced missionary credibility and prompted increased donor generosity. Indeed, Harding’s teaching among the churches on liberality in giving boosted the financial resources available for missions. In addition, in offering trust as a means of coping with adversity, Harding inoculated some missionaries against the devastating effects of tragedy and permitted the movement to plod forward in spite of major setbacks. Furthermore, by applying trust theory to church planting, Harding injected “three-selves” indigenous principles into early missionary thinking and created an awareness of the dangers of paternalism.

²³⁷ James A. Harding, “A Reply to Bro. Taylor’s Questions Concerning the Support of the Evangelist,” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 27 (1884): 427.

²³⁸ See, for example, James A. Harding, “Scraps,” *Gospel Advocate* 28, no. 26 (1886): 408.

Rejection of Stipulated or Guaranteed Salaries

Although Harding identified the beginning of his practice of trust in God in 1874 when he started to do evangelistic work among the churches full-time, his writings concerning trust were first manifested eight years later when he denounced the guaranteed salaries of preachers.²³⁹ In the first of these articles he lamented the self-indulgence and frivolous spending of Christians but attributed this selfishness to the poor example set for them by preachers: “We preachers are very greatly to blame for the absorbing selfishness of the great body of professed disciples. We have taught it to them; not in our words, indeed, but in a much more vigorous and effectual way. We have been loud and earnest in proclaiming to them that “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” but it has generally been we were the receivers and they the givers.”²⁴⁰

How had the preachers been the receivers? According to Harding, they had been eloquent in citing both Abraham and Paul as marvelous examples of faith, and yet when these same preachers were “called upon to preach the gospel to the poor, ignorant, lost souls about us, we have oftentimes refused to do it, unless our brethren would pay us well, claiming that we have as much right to demand a fixed salary as a prerequisite to the performance of our work, as they have.”²⁴¹ Quoting the proverb, “Like priest, like

²³⁹ This idea was not unique to Harding. It swept through the fundamentalist movement into the twentieth century and later, ironically, led to a prosperity gospel. Charles E. Hummel, *The Prosperity Gospel: Health and Wealth and the Faith Movement* (Downer’s Grove: Intervarsity, 1991); Richard G. Kyle, *Evangelicalism: An Americanized Christianity* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 287, 307; George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 80.

²⁴⁰ James A. Harding, “The Great Need of Ministry,” *Gospel Advocate* 24, no. 47 (1882): 742.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

people,” Harding pleaded with preachers to set the proper example by displaying “a hearty, loving trustfulness in God.”²⁴² He called them to emulate the earliest disciples who “imbibed his spirit of unselfishness and self-sacrifice to such a degree that no preacher among them waited to have his salary guaranteed by the church before entering upon his work.”²⁴³

One month later Harding more fully articulated his position on trust in a second article. He was not totally opposed to churches providing pay for preachers. He said if a “congregation proposes to give a man a definite sum of money in consideration of his performing his duty diligently to God in the discharge of his proper work as a preacher, I see no reason why he should not receive it.”²⁴⁴ Harding did object, however, to making “the performance of his duty conditional upon their promise to pay.”²⁴⁵ Citing Matthew 6:33, Harding began to hold himself up as an example of one who refused pre-arranged payment in exchange for preaching. He wrote, “So perfectly do these promises seem to me, I have been disinclined to make engagements either with churches or with individuals for my support, especially as those engaging one generally desire to direct him with regard to times and places in his work.”²⁴⁶

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ James A. Harding, “Bro. Metcalf’s Question Answered,” *Gospel Advocate* 24, no. 51 (1882): 806.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

Harding's opposition to dependence on a stipulated salary influenced the raising of funds by foreign missionaries in several ways. First, Harding came to understand that the trusting servant of God never made financial needs known to others. Early in his preaching career a wealthy member of his congregation, a banker in Hopkinsville, approached Harding and said, "I cannot preach, but I can make money; that is my gift; you can preach, but evangelizing as you do and where you do, you will not receive much money. So just let me know when you need any money, and I will be glad to let you have it."²⁴⁷ Not long after this generous offer, Harding needed twenty-five dollars and, not seeing any other way to obtain it, he asked to borrow the money from his banker friend, promising to repay it within six months. His friend offered him fifty dollars instead, but Harding insisted that he needed only twenty-five dollars. The banker quickly wrote him a check but refused his note, and said, "if it suits you to hand it back, all right; if not, all right. But if you need more be sure to let me know. It gives me more pleasure to let you have it, than it does you to receive it."²⁴⁸ Numerous times Harding returned to his friend who very gladly extended help each time. After awhile, however, the words of Philippians 4:6 ("Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God") began to draw his attention. Harding began to understand that God wanted believers "to look to [God] as their patron, and not to anyone else."²⁴⁹ Harding reasoned:

²⁴⁷ Harding, "In Whom Shall We Trust?" April 1901, 18-19.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

If God cares for me, if I am not to love money, but am to be content with what I have, because he will not fail me, if the curse rests on him who trusts in man, but a blessing upon him who trusts in God, if he positively promises food and raiment to those who seek his kingdom and his righteousness, if he is readier to give to his faithful child than any earthly father ever was, (See Matt. 7:7-12), then I ought to go to God when I want money, and not to this dear brother. . . . So I resolved that I would never go to him any more for money and I never did. Sometimes the temptation to do so was very great, but I did not yield to it, and I got along just as well, met every obligation just as promptly, and had the consolation of knowing that I was trusting in God, not in man.²⁵⁰

The next time the banker saw Harding, he asked him why he never asked for help anymore. Harding responded that he been trusting in people rather than in God and hoped from that day forward to present his wants and needs to God alone. Harding diffused the “no appeals” principle until it became the expected standard of churches for missionaries.

This simple rule of making needs known to God alone resulted in the exclusion of several other practices. Harding rejected debt because borrowing money was another form of asking people rather than God for help.²⁵¹ He definitely believed that this principle was also contrary to the “mercenary spirit” that was becoming so prevalent in his day in which “fine congregations [were] bidding for preachers, and preachers accept[ed] the highest bid.”²⁵² According to Harding, the world was “continually losing confidence in the sincerity of the ministry, because it supposes it to be a mere profession

²⁵⁰ Ibid. This story is also told in Harding, “In Whom Shall We Trust?” May 1905, 8.

²⁵¹ James A. Harding, “Indebtedness,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 3 (1883): 38. He was not entirely consistent on this point. He had no objection to the use of credit for needs the Lord would approve. He also did borrow money that was once offered to him for construction of a building at PBC. He considered, however, these instances to be expressions of an incomplete faith in God. Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*, 26.

²⁵² James A. Harding, “Scraps, Mass Meeting,” *Gospel Advocate* 28, no. 46 (1886): 721.

based upon dollars and cents.”²⁵³ The rule also excluded begging and whining for money. Preachers were cheerfully and gratefully to give thanks to God but a “whining evangelist [was] a disgrace to himself, to the Church, and to God.”²⁵⁴ Implementing this principle, Harding also turned away any financial help that came from other fellowships.²⁵⁵

Harding’s trust theory also affected missionaries in another manner. He taught that evangelists should answer the call to preach for churches without waiting for a guarantee of funds or support.²⁵⁶ They were to show their trust in God by stepping out in faith. Harding was convinced that the evangelist who entered “diligently upon the work” had no need to worry about money, but the “evangelist who will not go into the field till a fund is raised for him, is not fit for the week.”²⁵⁷ In this case, faith was born out of reasoning over the Scriptures. Harding cited Paul as an evangelist already on the field to

²⁵³ Ibid.; James A. Harding, “The Sanctification Without Which No Man Shall See the Lord,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 22, no. 11 (1908): 8.

²⁵⁴ James A. Harding, “Cheerfulness in the Service of Christ,” *Gospel Advocate* 28, no. 13 (1886): 200; James A. Harding, “The Evangelist and His Support,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 22, no. 24 (1908): 8. In condemning begging, Harding effectively helped to create an atmosphere among the Churches of Christ that discouraged missionaries from asking for money. Some of William J. Bishop’s fundraising tactics backfired.

²⁵⁵ Harding, “Scraps,” August 11, 1886, 520. Harding did accept invitations to speak for denominational churches as long as they gave him complete freedom to address areas of belief and practice which he considered to be in error. Müller also refused monies from anyone of whom he had some misgivings. Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 82, 309-10.

²⁵⁶ Missionaries trained in the Harding tradition many times literally and publicly put this principle into practice. McCaleb, Bishop and Shewmaker were all examples. For an example, see James A. Harding, “A Peculiar Man and His Peculiar Ways,” *The Way* 4, no. 4 (1902): 27. John T. Lewis stated that at the NBS Harding’s students learned to say to congregations, “I don’t set any price on what I preach. I come, hold a meeting, and then you give me what you feel like you want to.” Lewis, “James A. Harding,” 10.

²⁵⁷ James A. Harding, “Co-operation,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 22 (1883): 346.

whom churches sent aid.²⁵⁸ Harding summarized his “go without guarantee” policy in these words: “I conclude, therefore, (1) that men who have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, and who have the ability to preach, should go about the work as the Lord opens up doors of utterance to them; and (2) that the churches and individual Christians should minister to the needs of such men. It is also evident that the overruling providence of him who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies will be round about all who are faithfully working for him, causing all things to work together for their good.”²⁵⁹

A third way in which Harding’s principle of going without guaranteed support affected missions was that it gave his students the freedom to follow God’s leading without regard to personal interest. Such a call, according to Harding, did not come by way of “some mysterious sound or apparition, but by the endowments with which God had blessed him and by the door of opportunity which he saw wide for the work.”²⁶⁰ Freedom from promised pay afforded the evangelist with the liberty to respond quickly to God’s call to duty and demonstrate a truly converted lifestyle.²⁶¹ Failure, in fact, to preach out of a sense of calling was indeed a moral failure. Harding wrote:

The preacher should be impelled in his work by a sense of duty to God, and by a great love for man. He is not fit to preach the gospel of Christ, to teach the Bible lesson of self-sacrifice, of giving, who could deliberately say, “If my

²⁵⁸ James A. Harding, “Did the Ancient Christians Co-operate?” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 46 (1883): 730.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ So observed Kurfees in reflecting on Harding’s life of faith. Kurfees, “Tribute to Harding,” 611.

²⁶¹ Harding, “Metcalf’s Question,” 806; James A. Harding, “Bro. McQuiddy’s Second Article on Co-operation,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 29 (1883): 455.

brethren do not give me more than a mere support for preaching, I will quit it. I can make more at law, or at other pursuits, and I will do it." Such a man evidently has too poor a conception of the value of a soul, and of the awfulness of eternity, to make an efficient worker as a preacher of Christ. He needs to be converted.²⁶²

Assured that his work contributed to God's plan, an evangelist could thus discount difficult circumstances in his ministry or the lack of response and concentrate on the freedom of simply delivering God's message.

Fourthly, this principle promoted vocational or self-supporting missionary work as an alternative means of support. An evangelist's first preference, according to Harding, was first and foremost to work full-time in preaching. He admitted, however, that God sometimes chose to require evangelists to "make tents" in order to support themselves: "I believe that he who can preach and teach should do it, cultivating and developing his gifts as he has opportunities, even if he has to support himself by laboring with his hands while doing so. But I believe he should give his whole time to the work till the supplies run out; then it will be time enough to divide the time with tent making. Indeed, I think we should resolutely determine to spend and be spent in the Master's service."²⁶³

In applying this concept to mission work Harding encouraged his students to believe that God stirred the hearts of Christians to support workers or when necessary provided means of self-support. In "one way or another," however, God "always cares for

²⁶² James A. Harding, "The Call to Preach," *Gospel Advocate* 24, no. 52 (1882): 824.

²⁶³ James A. Harding, "Bro. Jones' Defense of the Societies," *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 51 (1883): 810; James A. Harding, "Is It Proper to Devote One's Whole Time to Preaching?" *Gospel Advocate* 27, no. 31 (1885): 482; James A. Harding, "Should Business Men Preach the Gospel?" *Gospel Advocate* 27, no. 49 (1885): 775. The principle of self-support often began for Harding's students while they worked their way through school. Lewis, "James A. Harding," 6.

them; he never fails them.”²⁶⁴ Such confidence also allowed those who trained under him to take on any “honorable work.”²⁶⁵ Harding believed that most importantly the Christian “should always choose that work and that place at which he can do the most good, regardless of which promises the most money.”²⁶⁶ Harding was hardly alone in promoting secular employment as a means of support. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a “visionary leader from the Methodist holiness movement,” William Taylor, initiated self-supporting missions in India, Latin America and South Africa. These missionaries who followed the Pauline method of self-support were precursors to the first and second-generation missionaries who went out under Harding’s influence.²⁶⁷

The fifth manner in which Harding’s rejection of salaries influenced foreign missions was that this principle led him not only to reject the missionary society as a means of financial support, but also to denounce the church sponsorship model.²⁶⁸ Anti-missionary society feelings were strong among other faith missions figures such as Müller and his associate, Henry Craik, who established a new society because the “features of the existing societies seemed to them *extra*-scriptural, if not decidedly anti-

²⁶⁴ Harding, “Mission Work,” 98.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 53. Fiedler called these “industrial missions.”

²⁶⁸ Harding’s first word on the matter rejected not so much the financial support as the direction or oversight of a foreign mission work by a church in the United States. James A. Harding, “Should the Congregation Select, Send Forth, Support and Direct the Preacher?” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 26 (1909): 8. His articles in 1909 and 1910 seem to represent a reversal from his earlier position in favor of the closeness that churches could experience with their missionaries under the “living link” or church sponsorship model. See Harding, “Scraps,” July 30, 1903, 753.

scriptural.”²⁶⁹ In the nineteenth century there were many religious groups who determined “to distance themselves from the secular world’s values and view reality was manifested not only in their militancy but also in their goal of living as ‘New Testament Christians.’”²⁷⁰ Harding’s contemporaries in the Churches of Christ rejected the missionary societies principally because the societies violated the New Testament pattern of congregational autonomy. Although Harding argued against the formation of missionary societies on this and similar grounds, his main objection was another.²⁷¹ The missionary societies were unscriptural, he said, because they guaranteed support to a missionary. Although churches were certainly doing right to provide a stable and sufficient financial support for missions, Harding believed that missionaries displayed a fundamental lack of trust in God when requiring this security.²⁷²

Harding sought to demonstrate that trust and not autonomy was the principle involved. When C. C. Klingman, for example, suggested that a church should oversee Tomie Yoshie’s work in Japan, he suggested that the Shelbyville, Tennessee church plan

²⁶⁹ Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 107.

²⁷⁰ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 69. “In upholding this ideal they were acting on an impulse—common to many revivalist movements—known as primitivism.”

²⁷¹ Harding opposed missionary societies because they had divided the church, discouraged personal involvement, and lacked biblical authority. James A. Harding, “Will We Divide?” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 1 (1884): 10; James A. Harding, “What Is It That Unites?” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 3 (1884): 42; Harding, “Scraps,” March 23, 1887, 216; James A. Harding, “Brother Frost’s Article,” *The Way* 3, no. 19 (1901): 148; James A. Harding, “Potter Bible College and the Missionary Society,” *The Way* 4, no. 28 (1902): 718; James A. Harding, “Brother Frost and the Missionary Societies,” *The Way* 4, no. 33 (1902): 258-60.

²⁷² James A. Harding, “Reflections: Suggested by Testimony from an Unexpected Source,” *The Way* 1, no. 2 (1899): 35; James A. Harding, “On God’s Care, Response to E. G. Sewell,” *The Way* 2, no. 9 (1900): 148-9.

to select, direct and support a missionary. Harding's response and rejection of the plan was direct and unequivocal: "we have no account in the Bible of any church entering into a contract with an evangelist to send him out, direct him or support him."²⁷³

In this development, Harding found himself not only in opposition to Klingman but also to others whom he influenced to become missionaries, including J. M. McCaleb and William J. Bishop. As leaders of holiness movements were prone to do, Harding allowed his extreme faith method and individualism to take precedence over communal discernment and congregational involvement. Ironically, the very ideology that initiated early missions efforts also tended to curb their support.

Special Providence and Modern Day Miracles

If Harding's call to abandon guaranteed salaries required sacrifice, his teaching on God's special providence provided his students with the inspiration necessary to make such sacrifices. For Harding, the key to dependence on God was to be released from "the fearful hold that mammon worship [had] on the minds and hearts of even the nominal members of the church" through a clear and thorough understanding of the entirety of Scripture on God's special providence.²⁷⁴ In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, fundamentalist leaders displayed a strong desire for "something supernatural" which

²⁷³ Harding, "Should the Congregation?" 8; James A. Harding, "Bro. C. C. Klingman's Suggestion," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 30 (1909): 8-9.

²⁷⁴ Harding, "Does God Work Miracles Now?" 154; James A. Harding, "Some Notable Cases of Special Providence," *The Way* 4, no. 14 (1902): 106.

revived “some of their inherited beliefs about the Holy Spirit’s power” to do miracles.²⁷⁵

Harding was no exception.

“Special Providence,” as a term inherited from Samuel Rogers, provided Harding with a category for God’s continued active intervention in response to prayer.²⁷⁶ Leaders of the Restoration Movement generally held that the ability of Christians to perform miracles had ceased with the death of the apostles. Some of Harding’s contemporaries had gone so far as to say “that all divine interventions had ceased.”²⁷⁷ Harding agreed that God no longer conferred miraculous gifts on Christians, but he was absolutely certain that God intervened in specific extraordinary ways in the best interests of faithful Christians who requested help.²⁷⁸ This activity Harding defined as “special providence.”

However, on the issue of the existence of miracles, Harding waffled. At times he seemed to affirm that miracles no longer existed and that God acted within natural laws in ways unexplainable to humans.²⁷⁹ He often cited biblical examples in which God acted in response to prayer without breaking natural law.²⁸⁰ At other times, Harding openly

²⁷⁵ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 115.

²⁷⁶ Harding’s first use of this term can be traced to 1884 although he claimed that he had practiced his belief in it since 1874. Harding, “Does God Work Miracles Now?” 154.

²⁷⁷ John T. Poe had written that God’s providential promises were to the apostles only. E. G. Sewell, “Take Therefore No Thought for the Morrow,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 40 (1900): 628.

²⁷⁸ James A. Harding, “Prayer for the Sick,” *The Way* 3, no. 6 (1901): 41-2.

²⁷⁹ This is the view McCaleb adopted from Harding. John Moody McCaleb, “Does God Care Especially for His Own?” *The Way* 5, no. 3 (1903): 569.

²⁸⁰ Acts 27; Mk. 12:12-26; and Gen. 26. Harding, “Prayer for the Sick,” 41-3; Harding, “Some Notable Cases,” 106-7.

affirmed that God still performed miracles.²⁸¹ He said that these actions, however, only seem miraculous to humans. From God's point of view, divine interventions are very natural.²⁸² What concerned Harding the most was not whether miracles existed or not. What mattered most is that God did indeed come to aid and rescue the righteous.²⁸³

According to Harding, the key to accessing God's special providence was to be found through prayer but only for those whom God favored. God was not a respecter of persons but God was a respecter of character. God's promises to assist and provide were limited and conditional. They were valid only for those whom God considered righteous. The children of God, therefore, were in a unique and favored position to receive special blessings, both temporal and spiritual. "In all ages [God] gives to . . . faithful followers whatever they need for the accomplishment of their work in his service."²⁸⁴ Such needs might include food, guidance, wisdom to guide one's speech, and protection from harm.²⁸⁵ Effective prayer, offered three to four times daily in order to align one's will with God's, was always accompanied by work and the firm conviction that God "blesses

²⁸¹ In answer to the question, "Are answers to prayer miraculous?" Harding wrote, "We must answer in the affirmative; for, in the nature of things, we can never by our unaided human powers discover the rule by which the heavenly Father works in such cases, if there be any fixed rule." Harding, "Does God Work Miracles Now?" 174.

²⁸² "So when God acts it looks miraculous to us, but to him it is natural; we move dirt with a shovel naturally, God moves mountains naturally (though it appears miraculous to us)." James A. Harding, "The Most Perfect of All Societies," *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 31 (1904): 8-9.

²⁸³ Harding, "Does God Work Miracles Now?" 154.

²⁸⁴ James A. Harding, "Scraps," *The Way* 3, no. 46 (1902): 361.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

those who love him.”²⁸⁶ Harding once recounted the story of a man who frequently asked God before a meeting to bless the preacher in speaking. After one such time Harding commented that God had answered that prayer. Harding wrote:

I told him I believed God had helped me in answer to the prayer, and that I had been providentially led to speak what I did speak and to leave out some things I had been accustomed to preach. When discussing that subject, he was incredulous. He did not believe God had anything to do with my leaving out what had been omitted. He seemed to think that prayer was a form which should be complied with but that we need not expect it to bring any blessing from God. Nor would it have brought anything from God but indignation and wrath, if none of us had believed any more than he did. We need not expect the prayer of doubt or of unbelief to be answered with a blessing. But when a man believes in God, and looks to him as a child to a father, believing that God will give him anything that is good for him, anything that can be given to him in righteousness, his prayers are listened to and his petitions are granted. God never withholds from such a man anything unless it be to give him something better.²⁸⁷

Opponents to special providence argued that such a belief would contribute to laziness; that if one believed God would provide, then no attempt would have to be made to work or provide for oneself.²⁸⁸ Harding responded that people of faith worked, not out of worry, but in order to be pleasing to God by being productive and by providing for the needs of others.²⁸⁹ He had never known anyone who believed in special providence to be prone to idleness.²⁹⁰ He held that the believer in God’s providence should work, but as a

²⁸⁶ James A. Harding, “Pray Ye to the Lord of Harvest,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 3 (1883): 38; Harding, “Scraps,” February 27, 1902, 369.

²⁸⁷ James A. Harding, “Praying for Rain,” *The Way* 3, no. 35 (1901): 276.

²⁸⁸ Harding, “Scraps,” June 12, 1902, 81.

²⁸⁹ James A. Harding, “Scraps,” *The Way* 4, no. 19 (1902): 145.

²⁹⁰ J. G. Allen, “James A. Harding As I Knew Him,” *Gospel Advocate* 64, no. 27 (1922): 617.

son or daughter would for a father and not as an employee in order to earn cash.²⁹¹

Harding reasoned that if his father, J. W. Harding, had been a millionaire, James A. would have still worked but would not “have been in mortal terror of going to the poor house.”²⁹² Christian farmers, for example, would not be inclined to give less effort to the cultivation of their crops because they depended on God. They should dispense more energy and care, “but the leading object of their farming should be to please God, not to make money; nor should making money ever be allowed to interfere with or prevent the performance of any duty to God.”²⁹³ Harding implored his readers: “Think of your farming as a God-honoring, rather than a money-making, business; and when you make money, remember that it belongs to Christ, and that you are to use every cent of it as he desires you to do. There is many a man in this country who would do more good in a year than he had done before in all of his life if he would follow this rule; and not only so, but he would live a far happier life than ever before.”²⁹⁴

Both evangelists and missionaries who trained in the Harding tradition adopted “special providence” as an essential belief of their world view which sustained and motivated them in mission and sacrificial living. J. M. McCaleb, J. N. Armstrong, William J. Bishop, and George S. Benson, who were missionaries to Japan or founders of

²⁹¹ James A. Harding, “Three Contradictory Theories,” *The Way* 3, no. 1 (1901): 4.

²⁹² James A. Harding, “Brother Cain’s Terror-Stricken Preacher,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 22, no. 30 (1908): 9.

²⁹³ Harding, “On God’s Care,” 149. See also James A. Harding, “On Seeking Food and Raiment,” *The Way* 2, no. 8 (1900): 114.

²⁹⁴ Harding, “On God’s Care,” 149.

Christian schools, frequently promoted and cited “special providence” as the element of faith most essential to their work.²⁹⁵ Harding often applauded mission work sustained and executed through “special providence” and believed that it served as a practical demonstration of its modern day validity.²⁹⁶ James A. Harding believed that trust in God was the fuel for missions, and Harding’s purpose in promoting the doctrine of “special providence” was to motivate Christians to work toward the salvation of the world. Conversely, Harding advocated that the rejection of this doctrine undermined the effectiveness of mission efforts. Harding said:

The chief hindrance to the conversion of the world, in so far as that conversion is dependent upon the church, is the unwillingness of the professed followers of Jesus to spend their time and money in the work. And this unwillingness is not because they do not want the world converted, but it is from the fear that if they spend their time and money for Jesus their supplies will run out and they, or their children, will come to want. If they believed with all their hearts that by such lives of self-denial and self-sacrifice they would more fully and satisfactorily provide for their own temporal wants, and those of their children, they would gladly devote time and money to the utmost extent to the work of saving the world and building up the church.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ J. N. Armstrong, “Trusting God for a Support,” *The Way* 4, no. 14 (1902): 111; George S. Benson, *Book of Sermons by George S. Benson* (Searcy: Harding Press, 1963), 140; William James Bishop, “Missionary Notes,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 23 (1899): 362; McCaleb, “Does God Care Especially for His Own?” 569.

²⁹⁶ Harding, “In Whom Shall We Trust?” April 1901, 18-19; James A. Harding, “McCaleb and His Trust in God,” *The Way* 4, no. 8 (1902): 58-60. Harding often spoke well of McCaleb for his implementation of trust and special providence in missions. Harding, “Peculiar Man,” 1902, 27; Harding, “In Whom Shall We Trust?” May 1905, 8.

²⁹⁷ James A. Harding, “If It Is Not So, Account for These Facts,” *The Way* 3, no. 42 (1902): 330. Harding, like Müller, did not believe that the conversion of the whole world was possible. Here he was merely referring to the savable part of the world. Harding, “Would the Truth, Convert the World?” 298. A. B. Simpson also believed this. William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 117.

Regarding the relationship of special providence and trust with missions and the salvation of the world, Harding also wrote: “The very prevalent misunderstanding of it is to-day [sic] the greatest hindrance in the world to the conversion of all those whom the truth, properly presented, would lead to Christ. Hence to shed light on the subject is to help, at the most important point, in the salvation of men; but to not observe it, to darken counsel with words, is to hold back men from the salvation Christ died to prepare for them.”²⁹⁸

Harding earnestly hoped and prayed that this “blessed doctrine” would move thousands to do more for the salvation of others. His very purpose in promoting the trust doctrine was to motivate Christians to participate in the salvation of the world.²⁹⁹

Simplicity of Lifestyle

Responding to the call to preach without a guaranteed salary was not the only implication of Harding’s trust doctrine. Nor did Harding believe that God in special providence was obligated to supply a luxurious lifestyle. Integral to his view of trust was an intentionally sacrificial and simple lifestyle that sought to use goods and money in God’s service rather than accumulate them or employ them for oneself.

Incisive in the formulation of these ideas was an experience that occurred early in Harding’s adult life during the years of his first marriage with Carrie. He and his wife were struggling financially and took on boarders for five dollars a week. He was

²⁹⁸ James A. Harding, “What Is It to Trust God—Who Does It?” *The Way* 4, no. 18 (1902): 137.

²⁹⁹ Harding, “Scraps,” August 21, 1902, 161.

occasionally in the habit, however, of indulging himself by smoking cigars. One morning following the purchase of some cigars, a little girl in rags knocked on their door to ask for help. "My mother sent me to ask if you would give me money to buy some shoes," she pleaded as she raised up one shoeless foot. Taking note of her poverty, and moved with compassion at the thought of her exposure to the imminent cold of winter, Harding reached into his billfold to give her something but found it empty. He apologized, "I'm sorry I can't help you but I don't have any money I can give you right now." With disappointment on her face, she left. Feeling shame on his own face, he watched her go. As he turned to re-enter the house, Carrie made one simple statement that kept her husband in line and brought him back onto the narrow path: "Mr. Harding, if you had not bought all those cigars yesterday, you would have had the money for that child's shoes." With his heart ripped apart by this little girl asking for help and feeling overwhelmed with guilt for having spent money on cigars that could have helped her, he determined never to smoke again.³⁰⁰ The experience contributed to the formulation of a fundamental belief: the Christian should live simply, not accumulate wealth, nor use possessions for self.

Harding referred to his own example to argue that God furnished what was necessary and nothing more. He lived with very little indeed, but if had he required more, he was sure that God would have provided it. Reflecting on his last ten years of travel and preaching, he wrote:

³⁰⁰ Love, "The Harding I Knew," 627. This story is also told by Sears. Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 18.

It is not necessary for a man to be carrying money about in his pockets that he has no need for; the Father furnishes it as it is needed. He always sends a sufficiency too, and sends it by the time is [sic] is needed, though sometimes my faith almost gives way. It is hard to wait patiently and undoubtingly when you are hundreds of miles from home, without a dollar, preaching in a little log school-house back in the woods among a half dozen or so of brethren every one of whom is poor. . . . Every real want has been supplied all through the years. . . . I have not made nine dollars in nine years. . . . The more a man does for God, the more of his time and energies and money he expends in his service the richer he is.³⁰¹

Harding unknowingly practiced enculturation. He became poor in order to reach the poor.

His commitment to a simple lifestyle also extended itself to limiting himself in the purchase of books and in not being extravagant in extending hospitality to others. Both, he considered, were a waste.³⁰² In offering hospitality, entertaining, he believed, was unnecessary. Hosts should be content to care “for their guests in the same plain, substantial, comfortable way in which they regularly care for themselves, and show their appreciation of them by their cordiality of their welcome and their delight in their company, instead of by their costly dinners and rich furnishings, they could easily entertain more and oftener than most.”³⁰³

The wealth of a person was not to be determined by the accumulation of—but by the use of—material possessions. “The things of this world are ours to use. He who uses the most of the goods of this world, therefore, is the richest man; not he who stores up the most of them, nor he who wastes the most of them. . . . He only needs to use judiciously

³⁰¹ Harding, “A Statement for My Critics,” 106.

³⁰² James A. Harding, “Is He a Believer?” *The Way* 3, no. 37 (1901): 290.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

that which comes into his hands, in supplying the wants of his family, and in ministering to the poor.”³⁰⁴ His maxim was, “No man has any more than he uses” and he demonstrated that a truly happy life consisted of righteousness; not by storing up for oneself but by using everything for “the poor, the sick, and the kingdom of God.”³⁰⁵

The rule of not accumulating money also applied to saving for retirement or for one’s own burial, and the purchase of life insurance.³⁰⁶ All funds were to be invested in the urgent task of caring for others and expanding the kingdom. This, Harding argued, was the best investment a Christian could make with available resources. Wittily Harding remarked that to set aside something for old age was indeed a “very proper thing to do,” providing that “one lays it by in the proper place and in the proper way.”³⁰⁷ For Harding, heaven was the only proper place for such treasures.³⁰⁸ The thought of buying life insurance was especially bothersome to Harding, who believed that every penny should be spent instead on missions.³⁰⁹ Spending more on missions than on self was hardly satisfactory if one still had more to give. Harding seemed to be echoing the words of

³⁰⁴ James A. Harding, “The Road to Wealth,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 26 (1883): 410.

³⁰⁵ Harding, “Success, Happiness, Wisdom,” 8; James A. Harding, “Reflections Suggested by My Trip to Odessa, Mo,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 22, no. 8 (1908): 8.

³⁰⁶ James A. Harding, “Who Is Right?” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 14 (1884): 218.

³⁰⁷ Harding, “Is He a Believer?” 290.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ Ironically, one of Harding’s students at PBC, Clinton Davidson, restructured Harding’s theology for the purpose of accumulating wealth. He believed that by employing godly principles and asking God’s help, any Christian could become successful. He, incidentally, acquired his wealth through the sale of life insurance. Clinton Davidson, *How I Discovered the Secret to Success in the Bible* (Westwood: F. H. Revell, 1961). When Davidson came to Potter Bible College he was so poor that Harding took him into his own home to share a room with his son, Paul. Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 203.

A. T. Pierson: “God estimates what we give by what we keep, for it is possible to bestow large sums and yet reserve so much larger amounts that no self-denial is possible. Such giving to the Lord costs us nothing.”³¹⁰ If a person were to spend only one hundred dollars on life insurance and yet give five hundred a year for “the cause of Christ, it would not be right.” Trusting Christians “ought to spend all for saving” people. Harding asked, “Can you spare one hundred dollars a year for insurance? Then you can spare that sum for the building up of God’s kingdom, and leave it to him to insure you. This is trusting God for the future.”³¹¹

Undoubtedly, Harding’s world view was in part a function of the poverty of the rural South. However, even well-paid urbanites in the industrial North, such as A. T. Pierson, voluntarily refused inflated salaries, embraced simplicity, and rejected Western materialism. For both Müller and Pierson, the idealization of poverty was a relational skill. God wanted his people to preach the Gospel, and by jettisoning wealth, the evangelist was better able to relate to the people.³¹² Although Harding initiated his career in poverty, he could have used his talents as a well-educated preacher in high demand to accumulate wealth. Like other premillennialists of his day, Harding stressed that Christians had not time to accumulate possessions for themselves in view of the imminent return of Christ.³¹³

³¹⁰ Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 330.

³¹¹ James A. Harding, “Spending Money—Life Insurance,” *The Way* 4, no. 20 (1902): 155.

³¹² Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 175-6, 218.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 136. Harding refused a high paying secure ministerial position with the Plum Street church in Detroit. See above, p. 50.

In advocating a simple lifestyle, Harding intended to increase the amount of funds available for world evangelism, but he also taught missionaries to discover the blessings and freedoms that accompanied living with less material wealth.³¹⁴ Such blessings included avoiding the idolatry of the covetous life and evading the mesmerizing effect of earthly riches.³¹⁵ The missionary's life of simplicity was free from ephemeral distractions and thus capable of being more spiritually focused.³¹⁶

Liberality in Giving

No discussion of Harding's trust doctrine would be complete without a treatment of its implications for those who had the duty of supporting traveling evangelists and missionaries. Harding believed the topic was of infinite importance and its application the key to the building up of the kingdom.³¹⁷ Harding readily conceded that not all Christians would become "traveling evangelists" or missionaries but forcefully taught that "those who remain at home, and thus have opportunities to engage in secular callings" had the very specific duty to "supply the need of those who are engaged in the work of

³¹⁴ James A. Harding, "The Sanctification Without Which No Man Shall See the Lord," *The Way* 2, no. 2 (1900): 17; Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 232. According to Harding, accumulation of earthly riches was more of a curse than a blessing. God did, however, chose a few faithful people who could handle wealth. James A. Harding, "A Reply to O.H. on Special Providence," *The Way* 4, no. 51 (1903): 514.

³¹⁵ James A. Harding, "Not Satisfied," *Gospel Advocate* 27, no. 18 (1885): 279; James A. Harding, "What God Does He Worship?" *Christian Leader and the Way* 20, no. 42 (1906): 8. He believed that the sin of covetousness "hurt the church more than any other." Harding, "Two Dreadful Sins," 658.

³¹⁶ James A. Harding, "Worldly Amusements," *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 20 (1885): 307.

³¹⁷ If properly understood, members of the church "would do as much for the poor and for building up the kingdom of God in one year as we now do in ten years, perhaps as much as we now do in twenty-five years." Harding, "On God's Care," 148. See also Harding, "Reflections: Suggested by Testimony," 35.

preaching.³¹⁸ Harding's writings supplied readers with at least three rationales for liberality in giving.³¹⁹

First, Harding argued that Christians were obligated to exceed Jewish giving in the Old Testament. If the Jews were required to give ten percent under Moses, Christians should give at least that much and perhaps more.³²⁰ He claimed that from age twenty-one, he himself had given no less than ten percent of his income and sometimes as much as half.³²¹ Second, Harding believed that showing trust in God in the matter of giving was a condition necessary to obtain God's blessings. Giving, as part of the trust equation, was a guarantee of special providence. When in his own family their income would hardly cover their needs, Harding would say to his wife, "Pattie, I believe we are not giving enough to the Lord."³²² By increasing their giving, Harding believed that God would more fully provide for his family's needs. Third, Harding reasoned that generous giving was a matter of salvation. On this point Harding quoted J. M. McCaleb, missionary to Japan: "We should give because we need the giving, because we cannot be saved without it, because our hearts are not right unless we do it, because we are worshipers of

³¹⁸ James A. Harding, "God's Warning to Ezekiel," *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 42 (1883): 666.

³¹⁹ Beyond the three that follow, Harding also taught giving out of duty and compassion. James A. Harding, "A Bible Reading on Giving," *The Way* 1, no. 1 (1899): 9.

³²⁰ James A. Harding, "The Churches and the Societies—A Contrast," *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 50 (1883): 794; James A. Harding, "The Tenth," *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 1 (1884): 10.

³²¹ Harding and White, *The Harding-White Discussion*, 25.

³²² James A. Harding, "Reflections Suggested by 'Simon'," *Gospel Advocate* 29, no. 34 (1887): 540; Harding, "A Bible Reading on Giving," 9-12; Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 233.

mammon instead of worshipers of God if we do not.”³²³ Harding’s reasoning was that the missionaries were carrying out the duty of every Christian. By contributing to their support, a Christian was a partner in the work.

Harding’s stressing liberality in giving was vital to the beginning of the missions movement of the Churches of Christ. His teachings on faith mobilized workers but his teaching on giving readied churches to sustain them. The combination of these two themes effectively created a missionary culture among receptive churches.

Faith as a Means of Coping with Adversity

Teachings on trust were not mere shallow and faint-hearted expressions of a carefree protected life for Harding. His convictions, created through exposure to the spirituality of others and Bible reading, were tested and strengthened by personal experiences of privation and bereavement.³²⁴ The authenticity of his example served to sustain and encourage future missionaries in the suffering they endured.

Harding asserted that adversity in the life of the Christian was always purposeful. God deprived evangelists and missionaries but only as chastisement or in order to try their faith.³²⁵ He thus offered this advice to discouraged missionaries: “When times

³²³ The quote originally appeared in McCaleb, “December Report,” February 1902, 375. In Harding’s own words, “Christians are in this world to save it, and unless one does his part he will surely lose his place in the kingdom of Jesus, and will be lost at last.” Harding, “Peculiar Man,” 1902, 28; Harding, “Scraps,” July 9, 1903, 706.

³²⁴ Although Harding drew from the spiritual trends of the day, it was in his best interest to attribute all his beliefs directly to his reading of the Bible.

³²⁵ Harding wrote that God might punish people for taking on debt. James A. Harding, “A Reply to My Accusers,” *The Way* 4, no. 34 (1902): 265. Chastisement might also come to cure an evangelist of

become hard and it seems as if God himself has forsaken you; when gloom settles over your home and your heart is sick, your wife discouraged, and your children hungry, say then to yourself; ‘God is trying my faith, and I will be true to him, and hold my integrity fast, [even] if I die of starvation. He will do what is best for me and if death is best, let it come. . . .’ A man would far better die than to sell out to Satan.”³²⁶

Notwithstanding the difficulties that the missionary of faith might face, Harding believed that no one could be better cared for than the one who totally depended on God.³²⁷ Harding also taught that persecutions, suffering, and endurance were the necessary and inevitable costs of being soldiers of Christ.³²⁸ Third, Harding taught that ultimately the hardships sent or allowed by God are good. Citing the text of Romans 8:28 Harding wrote concerning the evangelist in God’s care: “If God is with him, though he may have poverty, persecution, hatred, imprisonment and contempt, he may confidently believe that all of these are blessings, and that sooner or later he will plainly see that they are, and will greatly rejoice in them. There is no exception to this rule; it is as eternal and unchangeable as God himself.”³²⁹

ungratefulness. James A. Harding, “On Why Things Go Wrong for Evangelists,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 52 (1908): 8.

³²⁶ Harding, “Our Foreign Missionaries, November 1905,” 9. Harding wrote this on the occasion of R. L. Pruett’s defection to the Foreign Christian Missions Society because he was having difficulty paying his bills due to his wife’s illness with small pox.

³²⁷ “No man is so thoroughly protected, so fully insured, so certain to be cared for in every respect in the very best way as is the whole-hearted, thorough, self-sacrificing Christian.” Harding, “On Why Things Go Wrong,” 8.

³²⁸ Harding, “McCaleb and His Trust in God,” 59.

³²⁹ James A. Harding, “Scraps. For God Was With Him,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 5 (1904): 9.

Harding directed his readers to pray that God should “give us whatever is best for us, wealth or poverty, honor or humiliation, life or death; being sure that whatever he gives to his dutiful child will be a blessing.”³³⁰ On this point he frequently quoted Jesus’ promise of a hundredfold return for those who sacrificed home and family for the sake of the gospel (Mk. 10:29-30) and emphasized that God never failed to reward trusting, sacrificial children.³³¹ Harding’s teaching on adversity was preparatory for the intense difficulties that the earliest missionaries faced and was, therefore, an essential component to his trust theory.

Trust as a Total Framework for Church Planting

Harding’s legacy of trust provided more than just a means of support; it also furnished a plan for the formation of newly established churches with local leadership and a positive posture toward new converts. Harding was not unique in this regard. During the mid-1800s, Rufus Anderson, secretary of the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions, and Henry Venn, secretary of the Church Missionary Society in England, formulated strategies for mission churches to become self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating.³³² Anderson argued from the New Testament pattern that missionaries should preach, gather converts into churches, aid in the selection

³³⁰ Harding, “Scraps,” February 27, 1902, 370.

³³¹ Harding, “Preacher’s Pay and His Pay,” 3; Harding, “Scraps,” February 27, 1902, 370.

³³² Rufus Anderson and R. Pierce Beaver, *To Advance the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Rufus Anderson* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967); Wilbert R. Shenk, “Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn: A Special Relationship?” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 5 (1981): 168; Henry Venn and Max Alexander Cunningham Warren, *To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971).

of presbyters, and move on.³³³ Later Roland Allen, after serving as a missionary to China, appealed to the example of the Apostle Paul and insisted that the missionary was obliged to pass on the teachings of Christ and place complete confidence in the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the maturation of new converts. According to Allen, the successful missionary would hand over Christian teachings in an understandable and simple form and let go of them, trusting in both the inherent truth of the teachings and the Spirit's ability to guide new Christians in the application of these norms.³³⁴ John Nevius developed a plan that was implemented in Korea that promoted a volunteer local leadership, freed churches from dependence on foreign missionaries and enabled indigenous movements to thrive during persecution.³³⁵ These mission theorists, together with Harding, all believed, though to differing extents, that the result of mission should be autonomous self-reliant churches.

In Harding's missionary scheme, "trust" also referred to placing confidence in the portrayal of the church in the New Testament as a pattern and a plan for modern-day church planting. For Harding this issue pitted faith against modernist influences on religion. In Harding's thought, the establishment of a new fellowship of believers was based on a quintessential decision: should one follow human reason and accept denominational forms and practices, or should one trust implicitly in God's revelation in

³³³ Anderson and Beaver, *Advance the Gospel*, 11, 75.

³³⁴ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 49-61.

³³⁵ Jung Young Lee, "The American Missionary Movement in Korea," *Missiology* 11, no. October 1983 (1983): 394-5; John L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, Fourth ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958), 57.

the finest detail? Harding claimed the latter. One classic example that illustrates his firm convictions on this point involved the immersion of a woman with consumption. In a meeting in Mount Vernon, Texas, a sick woman requested baptism in her conversion to Christianity. Harding wrote that he could have reasoned that according to the denominational model employed by Methodists, sprinkling could have been the more fitting mode of baptism since full immersion might bring on chills and aggravate her weakened condition. He believed, however, that trusting obedience in the New Testament pattern of immersion took precedence over concern for her life. He immersed her, and she lived another year.³³⁶

In all matters of worship, music, conversion, the appointment of leadership, and Christian life Harding argued that he “would follow the apostolic example to a dot.”³³⁷ In considering each question or practice, Harding attempted to show that trust in God was really the point at which everything held together. Is the evangelist going to trust God and God’s plan or improvise? Harding wrote, “With us it is simply a question as to what is the Bible way. We are looking into its pages for guidance. May the Lord grant to us wisdom to understand; for in this day of intentions, innovations, and expediencies—this day of indifference to apostolic teaching and practice, it behooves all Bible men to stand

³³⁶ Harding, “Mt. Vernon,” 9. This principle was replicated in a similar incident in 1938 with a missionary in the Harding tradition. When Joyce Shewmaker suffered complications from pregnancy, doctors suggested saving her life by crushing the baby’s head. As an expression of faith, Joyce refused and both were spared. Charles Royce Webb, *Putting Out the Fleece* (Winona: J. C. Choate, 2002), 33.

³³⁷ James A. Harding, “Questions from F. M. Terry, Indiana, and S. G. Gaines, Texas,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 14 (1909): 8-9. Allen suggests that the Churches of Christ were heirs to “The Puritan movement, with its strong emphasis upon restoring forms and patterns.” Allen and Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots*, 7. Müller held to similar ideals. Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 308-9.

together with one heart and one soul in contending for the old paths, in which are prosperity and peace.”³³⁸

As a member of the Churches of Christ, Harding, for example, rejected the use of musical instruments in formal worship settings.³³⁹ Harding maintained that the difference between those who used it and did not was simple. Those who wanted to use the instrument were not trusting in God’s way but thought that they could improve upon God’s instructions. They believed “that the word of Christ must be supplemented by what we have learned from experience and observation, if we would have an up-to-date guide in our religion.”³⁴⁰ On the issue Harding concluded, “So you see the difference is not as to whether we shall use or not use an instrument, but as to whether God was competent to settle the question. We believe he was competent.”³⁴¹ Pitting trust against denominationalism was key to Harding’s faith missions model gaining wide acceptance among by churches that valued precise adherence to the New Testament pattern of church life.

³³⁸ James A. Harding, “Bro. Butler on the Proper Plan of Co-operation,” *Gospel Advocate* 26, no. 2 (1884): 26.

³³⁹ Non-instrumental or a cappella singing was a standard feature of the early Reformation and an icon of primitivism and simplicity in worship. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 48-9.

³⁴⁰ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 85.

³⁴¹ Ibid. In the case of the musical instrument Harding’s reasoning was fairly simple. He saw that God commanded its use in the Old Testament but did not in the New. He also observed that its use resulted in quarrels and division and the use of biblical language and example in every disputable matter best preserved Christian unity. He also argued that the use of the instrument derived more from following the customs and culture of humans rather than in trust of God’s plan. James A. Harding, “The Force of Custom,” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 48 (1883): 762; Harding, “What Is It That Unites?” 42.

Harding's approach to planting churches also required the evangelist to trust new Christians and the Holy Spirit to guide them.³⁴² Harding exercised an extensive trust in Christ-regenerated people. He empowered them to lead and entrusted them to their own study of the Word of God.³⁴³ In his church planting, he maintained that an evangelist should remain present only "until a congregation [was] sufficiently strengthened and established to meet together and to continue 'steadfastly in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.'" In his years as an evangelist he was able to plant several congregations and "left them after about a month's work." He claimed that these churches "continued to be very diligent in the Lord's service." According to his plan, a "diligent evangelist [could] develop a church enough to leave it, in from one to six months."³⁴⁴ Ideally such congregations demonstrated in practice the concept of the "priesthood of all believers." Instead of perpetuating the pastoral system of the church centered around one individual, Harding planted churches in which a large number of Christians led singing, read Scripture, offered prayer, served the Lord's supper, and made short talks.³⁴⁵ Shorter stays and immediate appointment of elders

³⁴² Again Harding's mission theory reflected the same ideas popularized by Roland Allen, John Nevius and others. See Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes Which Hinder It*, 4th ed. (London: World Dominion, 1960), Roland Allen and David MacDonald Paton, *The Ministry of the Spirit* (London: World Dominion Press, 1960), John L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, Fourth ed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958).

³⁴³ John T. Lewis said that Harding was in the habit of entrusting young men and women with important duties. Lewis, "James A. Harding," 8.

³⁴⁴ Harding, "Questions and Answers," April 8, 1885, 218.

³⁴⁵ Acts 2:42 was on this point his fundamental basis. He wrote, "There is no doubt in my mind but that the delivering of a discourse on Lord's day morning to the exclusion of a number of short speeches by different brethren is a great mistake, and one of the chief causes of the lack of spirituality that is so

seemed to work better for Harding in a domestic atmosphere of receptive revival than in tougher foreign mission fields.

In church planting, Harding gave great emphasis to trust in God's plan in the appointment of elders and to their role.³⁴⁶ While others taught the elders should not be officially appointed but that they eventually grew into this role, Harding insisted on the intentional and early selection, appointment, and "laying hands on" of elders as soon as men could be found who had "all the qualifications to a reasonable degree."³⁴⁷ While others delayed appointment and selection, Harding contended that a church was not truly a church until it had ordained elders. In contrast, those who followed Lipscomb founded churches that were rarely led by elders; instead, evangelists retained greater control. Others considered the appointment of elders risky, but for Harding it was a matter of trust in God and in God's plan. Harding wrote, "If we do not appoint, we do violence to apostolic teaching and practice; if we do appoint in any other way than by laying on hands, with fasting and prayer, we do it our way, not in God's way. Let us abide in Christ."³⁴⁸ The elders' role, and not the evangelists', was to lead the church. On this point

prevalent in the churches. As many of the brethren as possible should take part in the services." James A. Harding, "An Interesting Letter from C. E. J.," *The Way* 5, no. 12 (1903): 707. Contemporaries Pierson and Müller came to similar conclusions. Müller referred to this as "apostolic simplicity in worship" and the "exercise of spiritual gifts" by all. Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 308.

³⁴⁶ James A. Harding, "God's Way of Appointing Elders and Deacons," *Christian Leader and the Way* 20, no. 8 (1906): 8.

³⁴⁷ Love, "The Harding I Knew," 627. While his contemporaries, such as David Lipscomb, held that "the laying on of hands" was a New Testament convention limited to the first century, Harding insisted that this form together with fasting was universally essential.

³⁴⁸ Harding based his conclusions on a reading of Acts 6, 13; 1 Tim. 3, 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; and Tit. 1:5. James A. Harding, "Two Questions and Two Answers," *The Way* 5, no. 21 (1903): 849-52.

Harding wrote, “When churches are led by competent elderships, and the evangelists go about their own proper work, we may expect to see the great body of Christians far more pious, faithful and intelligent, and sinners will be turned to the Lord as was never done before.”³⁴⁹ Harding considered leadership by elders to be the greatest need of the churches.³⁵⁰ In Harding’s teaching and evangelistic work, both the appointment and role assignment of elders were part of a complete New Testament system held together by trust in God’s way and trust in those appointed.

As the first and foremost fundamental principle taught by James A. Harding, his trust theory was embraced by student missionaries in training for two basic reasons. For one, Harding modeled this principle for ten years before he began to teach it. As J. G. Allen wrote just after Harding’s death, “He was the most consistent man I ever heard preach. He literally practiced what he preached.”³⁵¹ Secondly, his trust theory was sorely needed as the only known functional alternative to the missionary society. At the turn of the century, members of the Churches of Christ believed that missionary societies were unscriptural, and yet their nagging consciences insisted that God required them to engage in worldwide missions. To both missionary and church, Harding articulated and modeled his trust theory as a way to send out and sustain missionaries without compromising their convictions on congregational autonomy.

³⁴⁹ James A. Harding, “Clippings and Comments,” *Gospel Advocate* 27, no. 16 (1885): 246.

³⁵⁰ James A. Harding, “Brother Tomson’s Bishop of the Bishops,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 22, no. 46 (1908): 8. Harding wrote more than twenty articles about elders and their function. Harding, “The Evangelist and the Eldership,” 118.

³⁵¹ Allen, “As I Knew Him,” 617.

Otherworldly Perspective, a Demand for Self-Sacrifice

Harding lived during a time when the relationship between Christianity and culture was being redefined. In a style similar to Jonathan Blanchard, president of Wheaton College and ally with D. L. Moody, he sought not so much the transformation of culture but separation from it.³⁵² Harding taught and lived a detachment from government, politics and culture, and maintained an otherworldly perspective that created an urgency in himself and his students to engage sacrificially in God's mission.³⁵³

Counter-Cultural Disposition

For Harding, participation in God's Kingdom did not allow for "dual citizenship" status. Those who belonged to God's rule were exclusively under divine direction and were not to become involved in worldly affairs.³⁵⁴ Harding's readers and students learned to take a cautious counter-cultural posture toward the world. Harding believed that God's rule was perfect and complete in creation, but that humans, in a treasonous act, gave themselves over to Satan's opposing order. Christ re-established God's rule in a newly

³⁵² Of the various postures toward culture described by Marsden, Harding's otherworldly perspective best fit into this picture. Rather than seeing the world as a place to be transformed and changed, it was a world to be rejected, for a kingdom order was going to be established. Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 32, 124-38. The resulting rejection by the world became a "badge of identity." Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 34, 118-9.

³⁵³ Hughes referred to this as an "apocalyptic worldview." Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 3. Hicks and Valentine referred to the same as a "transformational perspective," "apocalyptic vision," or "counter-cultural tradition." Hicks and Valentine, *Kingdom Come*, 25, 28, 179.

³⁵⁴ This stance also reflected the lower class status of this movement which correlated with less confidence in political activity. John J. Macionis, *Sociology*, Ninth ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2003), 281.

established kingdom and called his followers to a loyal and exclusive place in it. The world and its governments were enemies of the spiritual kingdom.³⁵⁵

Harding envisioned clear borders between God's kingdom and all other kingdoms, between God's family and other families, between the restored unified church and the denominations.³⁵⁶ While living on this earth, Christians were required to live beyond the borders of the kingdom, but to do so as foreigners. Maintaining their alien status on the earth, members of God's family were to resist the pressures placed upon them to accommodate and adapt. Calling readers to learn from the Jews who "began to mingle socially with the nations about them," Harding insisted, "We cannot associate intimately with those who habitually do wrong without having our consciences injured."³⁵⁷ This "force of custom" applied to tobacco, to the denominational "pastor system" and even the use of the musical instrument in worship. The kingdom is compromised, Harding reasoned, when "the great majority of people act from feeling

³⁵⁵ James A. Harding, "The Kingdom of Christ vs. the Kingdom of Satan," *The Way* 5, no. 26 (1903): 930. In the Churches of Christ David Lipscomb was the originator of this view. David Lipscomb, "God's Providence," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 37 (1900): 586; David Lipscomb, *Civil Government: Its Origin, Mission, and Destiny and the Christian's Relation to It* (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1913; reprint, from articles originally published in 1866). Harding also emphasized this perspective through the use of the family metaphor. James A. Harding, "For What Are We Here?" *The Way* 5, no. 33 (1903): 1041-3.

³⁵⁶ Harding maintained in fact that there should exist but one division, between God's kingdom and all other kingdoms. Harding, "Will We Divide?" 10. His position was reminiscent of other faith missions figures such as Hudson Taylor who saw a distinct line between those who believed in Christ and those who were eternally lost. Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 32. Carpenter stated that fundamentalists asked, "Should they stay in their denominations and 'strengthen the things which remain' (Rev. 3:2), or come out and be separate, to avoid being implicated in the 'evil deeds' of the modernists (II John 11)?" Harding was among those who had chosen the latter. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 43.

³⁵⁷ Harding, "Force of Custom," 762.

rather than from principle . . . and hence custom sways them first in one direction and then another.”³⁵⁸

In Harding’s otherworldly perspective, Christians were to cross the borders, but not as passively affected victims. If culture were to be transformed, this would happen not through legislation or voting, but through the changing of the human heart and bringing it into the kingdom of God. Harding believed in the world-wide prohibition of whiskey, but “to bring about this glorious result, the whole world must be leavened with the gospel truth.”³⁵⁹ Christians were also to protect their own kingdom borders by keeping non-kingdom people from leading in their worship or financing their preachers.³⁶⁰

Non-Participation in Government

At the age of sixteen, James A. Harding attempted to enlist in the Confederate Army together with his friend, but Harding was rejected because he was too young. When his friend was killed and his remains brought back to Winchester, Kentucky, the sight of his mangled body horrified James. This initial emotional response, together with

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ James A. Harding, “The Whiskey Traffic and an Inefficient Eldership,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 22, no. 50 (1908): 8-9.

³⁶⁰ Harding admitted his own inconsistency of having a non-Christian lady assist in the singing when he would not let a non-Christian lead prayer. He wrote, “By welcoming anybody and everybody to assist in our service in the Lord’s house, we break down the distinction between the church and the world, between Christianity and sectarianism.” James A. Harding, “Scraps. The Murray Meeting,” *Gospel Advocate* 28, no. 32 (1886): 504.

reflection upon the Scriptures, became a “conviction that war with its slaughter and hate is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ and no Christian could engage in it.”³⁶¹

As Harding’s thought matured, his opposition extended to all participation in government including the holding of political office and voting. If northern clergy had become active politically and made the Civil War a religious crusade, Harding made abstention from governmental affairs a mark of identity of his movement in the South.³⁶² He believed that it was nearly impossible for a Christian to serve in government and continue to maintain spiritual purity. Harding penned these words: “Can a man keep himself unspotted from the world, can he be wholly devoted to the Lord, as every Christian should be, and at the same time be actively engaged in politics? It may be possible, but it is certainly highly improbable that any given one will do it. I opine it is easier for an elephant to go through a needle’s eye than for a modern politician to be a sincere, faithful, humble Christian.”³⁶³

In his otherworldly perspective, Harding held that, “Christ came into this world to establish a kingdom which is antagonistic to all human authority, to all the governments of the earth. Its mission is to break down and destroy them all.”³⁶⁴ To assist in this

³⁶¹ Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 10.

³⁶² Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 36-9. As northern Disciples were drawn into support of military conflict, southern Disciples were driven away from the war as pacifists. McAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 202. Hill argues that Southern believers historically have seen their own region as a Zion, set apart from the secularizing currents of the rest of the country, and more pure, more godly. Thus, Southern believers have been “otherworldly.” Hill, *Southern Churches*.

³⁶³ James A. Harding, “‘Baptist Church,’ ‘Christian Church,’ Etc.,” *Gospel Advocate* 28, no. 30 (1886): 465-6; Harding, “Kingdom of Christ vs. Kingdom of Satan,” 931.

³⁶⁴ Harding, “Kingdom of Christ vs. Kingdom of Satan,” 930.

mission, Christians were to focus solely on their “business of serving Christ” and to make it their “ambition to so live and teach as to induce every one . . . to forsake the governments of this world and to devote himself wholly to the kingdom of Christ.”³⁶⁵

Toward human governments Harding held that a Christian’s only obligations were to pray, to obey their laws, and to pay taxes, but to do so with the mentality of a foreigner.³⁶⁶ He wrote, “Yes, we are to pay taxes. Any foreigner can do that. We are to submit to the civil authorities in as far as a foreigner, as subject of another power, can do it. We are to overcome by gentleness, by meekness, by teaching the doctrine of Christ and by living according to it. But let us have no part nor lot in Satan’s governments, the governments of this world.”³⁶⁷

Harding had to admit that he favored some of these governments more than others, but he insisted that such preferences were only to be manifest by prayer. He also despised certain governments, but his only action against them was to pray for their downfall. Prayerful favor of a nation was to be in direct proportion to its providing opportunity to the spread of the gospel. His sentiments found expression in these words:

I long for and pray for the purity and peace of this country, of Great Britain and of Germany, because they are the great Gospel circulators of the earth, because they take religious light and liberty wherever their flags float. I myself am striving to be simply a faithful citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and I favor these three earthly governments because of the liberty they furnish for the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus. I pray for their success; and for the change,

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 930-31.

³⁶⁶ He also held that a Christian was not obligated to vote. Harding, “Baptist Church,” 466.

³⁶⁷ Harding, “Kingdom of Christ vs. Kingdom of Satan,” 931.

or the downfall, of the Russian and the Turk, because they (the latter two) hinder the spread of the religion of Jesus.³⁶⁸

When missionaries that had been trained or influenced by Harding approached departure for foreign fields, they had already learned to see themselves as foreigners within their own country. They had already exited the borders of the kingdom. Since their home had become foreign, the foreign became home.³⁶⁹

An Imminent Return of Christ

In Harding's otherworldly perspective, non-kingdom people would not be ready for Jesus' Second Coming.³⁷⁰ The time of his return was unknown and would catch the ungodly unprepared as "a thief in the night." Those who belonged to Jesus' kingdom, however, would live each day in expectation of that return and be prepared for it even though they did not know when that return would be. In a style characteristic of premillennialists who saw prophetic significance in catastrophic events, such as the Civil

³⁶⁸ James A. Harding, "The Article from the American," *The Way* 5, no. 25 (1903): 915. Two generations later, George S. Benson, missionary to China who returned to be president of the college that bore Harding's name, became very politically active in order to insure the freest conditions worldwide in which the Gospel could be spread. Leslie Burke, "Introduction," in *Book of Sermons by George S. Benson* (Searcy: Harding Press, 1963), iii.

³⁶⁹ Andrew Walls refers to this characteristic of Christianity as the "pilgrim principle." Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996), 9.

³⁷⁰ Harding believed that Christ's reign had begun on the day of Pentecost but would be ultimately realized at his second coming when his saints would reign together with him. This complete reign would last for a thousand years and would terminate with the judgment of all the earth together with Satan. At this point time would end, the earth would be destroyed, a new heaven and earth would appear, and God the father would reign. Harding, "Scraps," May 22, 1902, 57. See also Harding, "Kingdom of Christ vs. Kingdom of Satan," 930-1.

War and World War I, Harding encouraged Christians to watch; “they are to read the signs of the times and be ready.”³⁷¹

Although Harding believed that ultimately the time of Jesus’ return was unknown, he urged readers to believe that it would be soon. “It is a notable fact,” he wrote, “that for the last fifty or sixty years many godly men have believed that the time of his coming is near. Surely we ought to watch, and be ready.”³⁷² This fact, Harding argued, created an undeniable urgency to preach, plant churches, and spread the kingdom at the cost of personal sacrifice. Desiring to portray graphically the urgency of the matter, he wrote, “At every tick of the clock souls are going to perdition, and the day will come when we will have to give an account to God for the way in which we used his time, his money, his talent, his strength, which he committed to us to be used for his kingdom, for saving men. . . . Here we are, laying up supplies for the bodily wants of ourselves, and of our children, for many years to come, while all about us people are being hurried into eternity unprepared.”³⁷³

Harding believed that Christ would return and reign together with his saints for a thousand years. He taught that the reign of Christ was initiated on Pentecost but would be more fully realized at the judgment day. His view of the world was decidedly pessimistic; consequently, he taught that the missionary’s mandate was to gather those who would be

³⁷¹ James A. Harding, “The Second Coming of Jesus—When Will it Be?” *The Way* 4, no. 26 (1902): 203; Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism 1875-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 105. Harding was making specific reference to the numerous earthquakes and volcano eruptions in the first half of 1902.

³⁷² Harding, “Second Coming,” 203.

³⁷³ Harding, “Life Insurance,” 155.

saved out of the denominations and out of the world.³⁷⁴ He published very little on premillennialism, but this was the “lens through which” he saw the church’s role in the world.³⁷⁵ In his tendency to be more literal in his interpretation of Scripture, Harding embodied the kind of premillennialism that was rapidly rising in popularity during the 1860s. Harding stopped short, however, of the dispensational premillennialism espoused by John Nelson Darby, W. E. Blackstone and C. I. Scofield who believed that Christ’s Kingdom “lay wholly in the future, was totally supernatural in origin, and discontinuous with the history of this era.”³⁷⁶ Although Harding had a negative view of denominational churches, he positively emphasized Christ’s rule and work in the purified church. In Harding’s view, Christ would return, raise the dead, and battle with Satan and his followers. Satan would be bound in chains, thrown into the abyss and confined for one thousand years. Harding wrote, “During this time, this thousand years, Christ and his saints reign; but the rest of the dead live not again till the thousand years have expired. This, the resurrection of the righteous, is the first resurrection; over these who come up at this resurrection ‘the second death hath [sic] power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years.’”³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Harding, “Kingdom of Christ vs. Kingdom of Satan,” 930-1.

³⁷⁵ Others such as A. T. Pierson, refrained from speaking much about their premillennialism because they did not want people to become distracted by the teaching, yet it “became the lens through which he interpreted world events.” Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 139.

³⁷⁶ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 51.

³⁷⁷ Harding, “Kingdom of Christ vs. Kingdom of Satan,” 930.

In summary then, Harding's otherworldly perspective affected missionaries in training in two very significant ways. First, his teaching established that only one real border existed, between the kingdom and the world, and that God's people had already crossed that border. Even before leaving the United States, Harding's students began to see themselves as foreigners in a land not their own. Second, belief in the imminent return of Christ required that all material resources be employed for the expansion of the spiritual kingdom and that missionaries rely unconditionally on God through faith. Convinced that "Christ's imminent return might cut short opportunity to save" those who were lost, Harding's missionaries, like other premillennialists, "were given a strong drive toward missionary activity."³⁷⁸ The missionary societies, with the security they offered, were also outside the borders of the kingdom.³⁷⁹ As a child of God, the missionary was to rely solely and completely on God.

Harding's influence at the Nashville Bible School and Potter Bible College created a stream of missionaries and preachers that imbibed his openness to dialogue in a kind-hearted spirit of correction. Those who accepted his teaching acquired a clear view of boundary lines for the kingdom and were motivated to preach, teach, and serve in ways to move people persuasively across those lines. By the mid-1890s graduates were beginning to answer calls to the mission fields of Japan, South Africa, and Persia.

³⁷⁸ Weber, *Shadow of the Second Coming*, 67.

³⁷⁹ Harding, "Scraps," April 10, 1902, 10.

Harding's Promotion of Missions

Harding perpetually promoted engaging in and supporting missions. He frequently invited missionaries to speak in chapel, made appeals for their support in his writing, and hosted them in his home.³⁸⁰ He recommended and raised funds for the Bishops, McCalebs, Klingmans, Tomie Yoshie, and Carmie Hostetter with whom he had a direct connection.³⁸¹ He did not receive and forward funds as did his counterparts, David Lipscomb and J. C. McQuiddy, but encouraged readers to send their funds directly to the missionaries they wished to support.³⁸² He was vocally supportive of foreign mission work, sought to raise the awareness of the need for domestic evangelism, and encouraged Christians to support traveling evangelists whom they knew personally.³⁸³ James A. Harding adamantly opposed the missionary societies and instead advocated missions that were undertaken under the “rule of faith.”³⁸⁴ He suggested that churches give generously to missions and become “living links” so that one church could take up the entire support of a missionary family and develop a close relationship with the

³⁸⁰ Bishop, Janes, and Vincent were all influenced by missionaries visiting either NBS or PBC. The Harding family hosted the McCalebs for one entire summer during their visit to the states. Harding, “Peculiar Man, 1902,” 27.

³⁸¹ James A. Harding, “W. J. Bishop and the Japan Mission,” *The Way* 1, no. 7 (1899): 128; Harding, “Scraps,” April 4, 1901, 2; Harding, “Scraps,” May 2, 1901, 33; Harding, “Scraps,” July 28, 1901, 129; James A. Harding, “How and When Shall We Send Bro. Charles Klingman and His Wife to Japan?” *Christian Leader and the Way* 22, no. 19 (1908): 8-9; James A. Harding, “Miss Yoshie and Missionary Work in Japan,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 18 (1909): 8.

³⁸² Harding, “Scraps,” January 1, 1900, 1.

³⁸³ Harding, “Scraps,” March 23, 1887, 216.

³⁸⁴ James A. Harding, “The Evangelist on ‘What of the Night?’” *Gospel Advocate* 25, no. 14 (1883): 211.

missionary.³⁸⁵ All the while, he taught future missionaries not to expect such support before committing to the Lord's work and departing for their chosen fields.

Conclusion

Harding shaped the identity of the Churches of Christ in the second half of the nineteenth century by appealing to the primitivist values of the movement and introducing his trust theory as a viable alternative for missionary support. Influenced by his leadership, the Churches of Christ emerged from four decades of opposition to foreign missionaries and embraced directly funded cross-cultural workers who sought to rely on God alone in faith. His band of missionaries and loyal students led a generation of faith missions that were Christ-centered, biblically based, undenominationally oriented, and piously developed.

As churches wrestled with the pressures of modernism in the last half of the nineteenth century, Harding informed the thinking of his religious movement by stressing trust in God above trust in the intellect. Harding effectively associated the American Christian Missionary Society with modernism, and, in contrast, aligned his support methods with loyal Biblicism. In wrestling with the challenges of modernism, his position was very similar to other conservative contemporaries such as Jonathan Blanchard of Wheaton who said, "We are not required to explain the universe but we are required to live in it according to the plan of God."³⁸⁶ That "plan," according to Harding,

³⁸⁵ Harding, "Scraps," July 30, 1903, 753. "Living Links" terminology was common to missionary movements of the day but is used here by Harding in a unique way.

³⁸⁶ Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 27.

was to fill the world with missionaries who looked to God as their only supplier. In Harding's exemplary life of faith, reason was a servant and not a master. He especially rejected its tyranny and influence as it induced preachers and missionaries to seek secure financial arrangements and seduced Christians into denominational worldliness.³⁸⁷ By prioritizing faith over reason, Harding increased the attractiveness of faith missions as a viable option to a religious body that had tired of the increasingly denominational nature of the American Christian Missionary Society.³⁸⁸ He effectively appealed to the highest values of his movement and prophetically led it to launch its first missionary endeavors. At the time Harding taught and evangelized, the only alternative known to him for the missionary society was the faith missions model. He merged this model with his own "trust theory" to enable the Churches of Christ to plow forward in their missionary endeavors.

In his life and thought, faith and trust motivated, sustained, and guided the evangelist. Harding did not deny the existence of physical needs but expressed confidence in God's promises to supply all that was good and advantageous for the Christian. His theology of trust invited all Christians, however, to refrain from the

³⁸⁷ James A. Harding, "Does Ignorance Excuse Them?" *Gospel Advocate* 24, no. 48 (1882): 758.

³⁸⁸ Harding was critical of those who denied God's active work in the modern age and abused reason in their use of Scripture, "Men talk wisely about advancing in the Christian life according to the dictates of 'sanctified common sense.' They tell us the Bible is not adapted to this age, or, at least, that the Bible does not propose to give rules for our guidance now, but rather to furnish principles from which we may deduce regulations to guide us in our work as Christians. . . . These false teachers do not hesitate to sneer at him and call him an old fogey. . . . They want the organ in the worship. . . . We are told to avoid such men. I for one don't want their friendship, and I don't fear their anger. Such men are evidently enemies to the cause of Christ, or they would not thus divide his people to gratify their own whims." Harding, "Theories of Men," 130.

accumulation of material goods. Those students who accepted his teaching and the missionary challenge left for foreign destinations without the safety net of a missionary society or the guarantee of a sponsoring church. He sought to ready his pupils for the adversities and privations they were certain to encounter. In Harding's thought, trust in God's way also furnished the direction necessary for church planting. Trust in God was most plainly manifested in a pietistic life style of Bible reading and prayer.

Harding promoted the gathering of believers into churches that patterned themselves after the structure and practice of New Testament churches. He also insisted that the church was indeed the only divinely-willed tool for evangelistic and missionary work. The church, however, was not the focus of God's work: it was the result of his gathering people who experienced salvation and holiness in Jesus. The church was not an end in itself but existed for the sole purpose of conducting Christ's mission on the earth. Church and mission were inseparable. Harding's Christ-centered message placed emphasis on entering into the reign of God through faith. That faith, however, also motivated the church to move into the world.

CHAPTER THREE

JOHN MOODY MCCALED: POPULARIZER OF THE PLAN

Introduction

Throughout J. M. McCaleb's first and second terms of mission work in Japan, he and James A. Harding effectively formed a partnership by which both were mutually benefited. Harding had provided a well-articulated and published ideology of faith, and McCaleb furnished the validating proof of Harding's ideas. Once McCaleb launched his mission work, financed by unsolicited gifts and characterized by complete trust in God, Harding no longer relied solely on the inspirational example of George Müller to illustrate his faith principle. McCaleb served as exhibit "A" for Harding. In return, McCaleb profited from the connection with Harding by receiving name recognition and Harding's personal recommendations. McCaleb's popularization of Harding's ideas led to their coming to dominate the ethos of the earliest missionary movement of the Churches of Christ.

The period in which McCaleb began his mission work was characterized by a transition from the traditional approach of the missionary societies of mainline Protestants to the faith-based missions becoming more common among the emerging Evangelical movement. In 1892 when the Churches of Christ were beginning to send their first missionaries without a missionary society, delegates from around the world

were gathering in England to celebrate the centennial of the Baptist Missionary Society, the first major Protestant society. At this conference, A. T. Pierson, American promoter of missions, delivered one of his most persuasive appeals using the same text from Isaiah 54:2-3 that William Carey had used a hundred years earlier.¹ While the Baptists celebrated the formation of their missionary society, others were creating organizations for independently funded missionaries. The same year, for example, differences between George Fisher and John Mott over premillennialism and faith missions led to Fisher's resignation from the YMCA and the establishment of the World's Gospel Mission. Fisher's new faith mission required each one of its missionaries to find funds individually without the aid of a denominational agency.² Fisher's departure is representative of those who marginalized themselves from denominational missionary societies in order to adopt "faith missions" as a means of financial support. Over the next two decades a wave of new American faith missions associations began sending missionaries out on the same basis.

From July 7 through August 1, 1886, just six years prior to McCaleb's departure, students and mission leaders from various denominations held a conference in Northfield, Massachusetts, to promote the evangelization of the world. Before the end of the meeting, one hundred students signed the missionary pledge in response to inspirational appeals by Charles Moody, A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, and others. The enthusiasm of the original "Mount Hermon One Hundred" led to intense recruiting among students and the birth of

¹ Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 214-5.

² *Ibid.*, 180-1.

the Student Volunteer Movement.³ Those students who pledged to become missionaries became known as “volunteers.” Incidentally, two of McCaleb’s female teammates were active in this movement, and consequently the term was applied to his whole group of those willing to serve as faith missionaries without the financial backing of a mission board.⁴

On April 12, 1892, the “Volunteers,” members of the first team of independently supported missionaries of the Churches of Christ, disembarked at Yokohama harbor and arranged for ground transportation to Tokyo, the future center of their missionary operations.⁵ Under a heavy rain, the five Americans, who had been confined to their berths on a ship battered by rough seas for several days, found it difficult even to stand.⁶ The sky was gloomy, but the prospects of this new venture were bright. As junior members of the team, John Moody McCaleb and his wife, Della, were hardly known to the churches that were sending them.⁷ During the next fifty years of missionary service, however, “J. M. McCaleb” became a household name synonymous with faith missions. By 1892, forty years of anti-missionary society rhetoric had created pressure among the Churches of Christ to produce and send out their own missionaries according to “the

³ Michael Parker, *The Kingdom of Character: The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (1886-1926)* (New York: American Society of Missiology and University Press of America, 1998), 8-9.

⁴ See below, p. 164.

⁵ John Moody McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 21 (1892): 336.

⁶ Della McCaleb, “Letter from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 27 (1892): 419.

⁷ When the McCalebs made the decision to go to Japan, David Lipscomb regretted that they were barely known. David Lipscomb, “Mission to Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 4 (1892): 123.

biblical plan.” Enthusiasm rallied behind McCaleb as the ideal candidate who went “forth like David of old, without the armour of Saul not depending upon any ‘society’ or organized ‘board’ unauthorized by the word of God, but he [went] trusting in the Lord of hosts and his church on earth to hold up his hands.”⁸

As the “father” of missions among the Churches of Christ, J. M. McCaleb stands as the most significant missionary in the James A. Harding tradition.⁹ There had been international travelers who had been exposed to the ideals of the Restoration Movement while in the United States and who returned to evangelize in their own countries. Jules and Anna de Launay began their work in France in 1886 and Azariah and Mary Paul in Turkey in 1889. In the same year, John B. Lerouet began work in British Guyana as a self-supporting missionary.¹⁰ Strother Cook, missionary to Lagos in 1884, left the Baptists three years later and joined the Churches of Christ.¹¹ McCaleb and his wife, however, were the first American cross-cultural missionaries of the non-society Churches of Christ.¹²

⁸ John D. Evans, “A Noble Sacrifice,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 8 (1892): 128.

⁹ Henderson, “Historical Review,” 204.

¹⁰ Phillip Wayne Elkins, *Church-Sponsored Missions: An Evaluation of Churches of Christ* (Austin: Firm Foundation, 1974), 94.

¹¹ Don Carlos Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, vol. 1 (Louisville: Janes Printing, 1943), 8.

¹² Hughes and Roberts refer to McCaleb as the first “career missionary” of the Churches of Christ. Richard T. Hughes and R. L. Roberts, *The Churches of Christ*, ed. Henry Warner Bowden, *Denominations in America*, vol. 10 (Westport: Greenwood, 2001), 256. Filbeck prefers to credit W. K. Azbill with the genius of initiating independently supported missions of the Restoration Movement. David Filbeck, *The First Fifty Years: A Brief History of the Direct-Support Missionary Movement* (Joplin: College Press, 1980), 107-8.

During the 1880s and 1890s, faith missions often drew to their numbers “rejects” from the more organized denominational societies. These were men and especially women who because of their poverty lacked the education necessary to qualify with mission boards.¹³ Such was sometimes the case with those who turned to the Churches of Christ to arrange for direct support.¹⁴ At other times, support seekers had been dismissed or voluntarily left their missions boards over doctrinal arguments. Eugene Snodgrass, for example, had been sent to Japan by the Foreign Christian Missionary Society in 1888 but was cut off because he had been arguing with another one of the society’s missionaries, George Smith, over the use of the organ in worship.¹⁵ Both were asked to resign in 1892 some time after the Volunteers had arrived. The Smiths returned to the States and the Snodgrass family made an appeal to the Churches of Christ for support.¹⁶ While other missionaries preceding or accompanying them had been rejected by mission boards or had “defected” out of theological convictions and turned to the autonomous Churches of Christ for support, the McCalebs were “born and raised” products of the anti-missionary

¹³ A. B. Simpson invited such “irregulars” to train at his school. Carpenter, *Making Higher Education Christian*, 114; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 205.

¹⁴ See below, p. 183.

¹⁵ Smith wanted to use the organ and Snodgrass refused. Drummond noted that too often missionaries controlled by denominational loyalties disrupted the spirit of harmony that would otherwise have continued among the Japanese. Richard Henry Drummond, *A History of Christianity in Japan* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 195.

¹⁶ John Moody McCaleb, “An Opening for Work Among Heathens,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 49 (1892): 779; John Moody McCaleb, “The Beginning,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 32 (1905): 1.

society congregations.¹⁷ Previous missionaries had been adopted, but the McCalebs were “biological” children of the movement.

Contributors heralded the McCalebs’ departure and work with great excitement because two of their own were proving that sufficient mission funds could be raised and maintained without the aid of an “unscriptural” human institution.¹⁸ When pro-missionary society columnists indicted the non-society churches stating, “Those who refuse to give the work their support do not generally do anything to rescue the perishing,” James Zachary could respond that “The church of Christ is making its own history” and listed J. M. McCaleb among the brightest intellects of the Bible College that would “never be induced to favor human society plans, instrumental music and other innovations.”¹⁹ Although McCaleb’s primary motivation in going to Japan was to evangelize and plant churches, a significant secondary purpose was to demonstrate that the “faith system” could adequately serve as a biblical alternative to the missionary society.

¹⁷ Originally sent out by the board he founded and organized, the Jamaica Christian Missionary Association, W. K. Azbill worked as a missionary in Jamaica beginning in 1882. He later served under the Christian Women’s Board of Missions but then led his missionary recruits to Japan independently in 1892. Azbill stayed in Japan only a few months before returning to the States to recruit more workers and raise more funds. McCaleb, “The Beginning,” 1. The other two members of the original “Volunteers,” Carne Hostetter and Lucia Scott, attended Hiram College in Ohio, had ties with churches which used the organ and were friendly toward missionary societies, worked independently for a brief time receiving some funds from the Endeavor Society, and then returned to work for the Foreign Christian Missionary Society. W. K. Azbill, “Astonishing!” *Gospel Advocate* 36, no. 15 (1894): 222; John Moody McCaleb, “Our Work in Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 36, no. 13 (1894): 198; John Moody McCaleb, “Information about the Volunteers,” *The Way* 4, no. 28 (1902): 231.

¹⁸ Lipscomb, “Mission to Japan,” February 1892, 73.

¹⁹ James W. Zachary, “Both Sides,” *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 13 (1893): 195.

Not only was McCaleb the first missionary of the non-society Churches of Christ, he also served one of the longest tenures. Della McCaleb returned to the U.S. in 1906 to educate their children, but J. M. McCaleb continued his missionary work in Tokyo without his family until he was forced to leave the country in 1941 at the beginning of World War II. His robust health permitted him to live long enough to perpetuate his beliefs and philosophy.²⁰ His vigor also afforded him the ability to travel extensively around the world to mission stations and fan the flame of his missionary enthusiasm among churches across the United States.

As the most prolific, well traveled, and outspoken pre-World World II missionary of the Churches of Christ, McCaleb also brought foreign missions into the vocabulary of the movement. McCaleb was an avid reader of A. T. Pierson and in some ways emulated his style.²¹ In the 1860s, Pierson had become aware of the importance of missions and through his literary and oratory skills he infused the missionary movement with enthusiasm.²² Pierson collected mission interest stories and statistics from all over the

²⁰ Although McCaleb occasionally suffered illness, he gave the appearance of being constantly fit and attributed his good health to his careful habits. Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 1:17; John Moody McCaleb, Nashville, in a letter to William James Bishop, Paris, Texas, January 13, 1911, William J. Bishop Papers, Special Collections, Brown Library, Abilene Christian University, Abilene (Unless otherwise noted, all archival materials relating to William and Clara Bishop are from this collection). He often implied that people became ill through their own bad habits. John Moody McCaleb, "Japan Letter," *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 41 (1904): 2. Whereas James A. Harding emphasized God's care even through times of want and suffering, overall McCaleb promoted God's protection from hardship and trial.

²¹ McCaleb's *Christ, the Light of the World* reflects a dependence on Pierson's *Crisis in Missions* and *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century*. McCaleb also referenced *The Missionary Review*, a journal that Pierson edited for many years. John Moody McCaleb, *Christ, the Light of the World: Ten Lectures Delivered at Foster Street Church of Christ, Nashville, Tenn. Sept. 5-14, 1910* (Nashville: McQuiddy, 1911), 32, 103, 115.

²² Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 47.

world and published them to promote of the cause. He wrote, “Facts are the fingers of God. To know the facts of modern missions is the necessary condition of intelligent interest. . . . A fire may be fanned with wind, but it must be fed with fuel; and facts are the fuel of this sacred flame, to be gathered, then kindled, by God’s Spirit, and then scattered as burning brands, to be as live coals elsewhere.”²³ Pierson pioneered the statistical promotion of missions and influenced McCaleb who imitated him.

When J. M. McCaleb finished his schooling at Lexington, the anti-missionary society churches were frustrated and ready: frustrated by their inability to produce a missionary, and ready for a champion of their cause. The world was an unknown and strange place especially to the poorer southern Churches of Christ, and McCaleb, who collected facts and anecdotes from cultures and religions from all over the world, was poised to provide the education that helped the churches believe they could participate in the missionary endeavor.

He embodied Harding’s basic principles and demonstrated their validity in a foreign context.²⁴ What Harding taught and lived in the U.S., McCaleb carried out on Japanese soil. Publishing sensational articles nearly every week in the churches’ papers; describing culture, poverty, and the “idolatrous” religious practices of the Japanese people; and traveling and advancing missions among the home churches, McCaleb was,

²³ Arthur Tappan Pierson, *The Crisis of Missions: The Voice Out of the Cloud* (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1886), 6.

²⁴ McCaleb published seven books, hundreds of articles in the *Gospel Advocate*, *Christian Leader and the Way*, *Word and Work*, and *Firm Foundation*, as well as publishing his own *Missionary Messenger*. He wrote 400 poems and composed the song “The Gospel Is for All.” Baxter, *Preachers of Today*, 216.

perhaps, more successful as a popularizer than as an executor of Harding's plan as a church planter.²⁵ At times he was so occupied with the promotion of missions that his work could not keep pace with his rhetoric.

McCaleb repeatedly claimed to perform his missionary duties without concern or appeals for funds. In reality, however, traveling, writing, and visiting American churches that funded his mission work also caused him to sacrifice the continuity necessary to establish a healthy and enduring work. His fifty years of Japanese missionary work were interrupted by a two-year visit to the States in 1899, a three-and-a-half year stay in 1909, and a yearlong world tour of mission stations in 1929.²⁶ Even while stationed in Japan, McCaleb was frequently visiting and participating in the work of others while his own work suffered.²⁷ One of McCaleb's greatest contributions, however, was to inspire other workers, both men and women, to join the ranks of missionaries not only in Japan, but in Africa, India, and China.²⁸ This chapter will survey McCaleb's life and early work, demonstrate how he popularized Harding's teachings, and examine how he moved beyond Harding in his missions philosophy to shape the identity of the Churches of Christ.

²⁵ "McCaleb's work was moderately successful when measured by the tangible results that survived World War II." Hughes and Roberts, *Churches of Christ*, 256.

²⁶ John Moody McCaleb, "Missionary Chronology," *Missionary Messenger* 3, no. 3 (1915): 1-2. McCaleb made briefer visits to the States in 1919, 1930, and 1936.

²⁷ This kind of visitation afforded McCaleb the opportunity to report a greater number of successes and baptisms and to distract his readers from the poor attendance and meager results of his own work.

²⁸ Hughes and Roberts, *Churches of Christ*, 256.

McCaleb's Life and Work

McCaleb's Childhood and Background

The hardships of McCaleb's childhood experiences predisposed him later to embrace Harding's otherworldly "trust" ideology and to become one of its most popular advocates. Born September 25, 1861, John Moody McCaleb was a child of the poor, war-ravaged South. His non-Christian father was a pacifist, and his mother a deeply spiritual and industrious disciplinarian.²⁹ McCaleb's earliest memory was of his mother who "with a flushed face bathed in tears" sometimes sat on the stairs of their home in Hickman County, Tennessee, mourning the loss of his "poor, dead father."³⁰ When McCaleb was just six months old, his father, who opposed the war and refused to serve on either side, was shot through the heart when he did not hear the warnings of a soldier on sentry duty shouting along the waters of a noisy stream.³¹ McCaleb later spoke of the Civil War as a "destructive fire" that "left my mother a widow with six fatherless boys," the oldest of whom was fifteen. "Hard times followed."³²

The privation of the following years was a cruel training ground for his later years of austere living conditions as a missionary. His mother, Lucy Jane McCaleb, clothed her

²⁹ McCaleb explained that his eldest brother had already been named for his father, "but when our father was killed I was not yet named, and our mother named me also for him whom I had never seen. When she would be asked why she had two of the boys by the same name, she would say she couldn't have too many named for as good a man as their father was." John Moody McCaleb, *Once Traveled Roads* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1934), 6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

³¹ B. D. Srygley, "Life of John Moody McCaleb," in *Biographies and Sermons* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1961), 292.

³² McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 9; John Moody McCaleb, *Memories of Early Days* (Tokyo: Kinkodo, n.d.), 37.

boys and earned a living by operating her spinning wheel and loom into the late hours of the night, while teaching them to read from the Bible.³³ Some of the children were shoeless each year until Christmas, but John Moody went barefoot both summer and winter until he was five years old. When his mother married J. N. Puckett, a member of the state legislature, conditions improved for the family, but due to the necessity of working on the farm, McCaleb was able to attend only “fragments of four terms of school” until he was twenty-one years old. The memory of his father’s convictions must have outweighed the benefits of being the stepson of a politician. McCaleb became a pacifist and adamantly opposed the involvement of Christians in government.³⁴

His mother taught him to work hard, use carpenter’s tools to make furniture, cook, sew, and to attend church regularly.³⁵ At the age of fourteen J. M. Morton baptized him during a meeting preached by J. M. Barnes at the Dunlap church.³⁶ Although he was a quiet boy, he began to speak and lead prayer at church. As he grew, he gave some thought to becoming a doctor but believed that the dissection of humans was wrong. He thought of becoming a farmer and later many times dreamed of creating a farm even in Japan, but for the sake of dedicating himself to preaching, he never did.³⁷ At the close of

³³ John Moody McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 26 (1892): 415; McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 9-10.

³⁴ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 12. Although McCaleb adhered to the non-involvement in Government ideology of his father and mentors Lipscomb and Harding, he did not express any particular judgment on his step-father’s political activity.

³⁵ Srygley, “Life of McCaleb,” 292.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 293.

³⁷ John Moody McCaleb, “Mine a Separated Life,” *Gospel Advocate* 82, no. 52 (1940): 1246.

his years as a missionary he looked back on his youth and wrote, “Really, I had never had any serious thoughts of going beyond the bounds of my own country. But God had a different plan for me, and in a smaller way had been giving me training in the lessons of separation, preparatory to the greater ones which were to follow.”³⁸

McCaleb’s poverty delayed his opportunity to get an education until he was an adult. At the age of eighteen, he had a strong desire to go to “Mars Hill College, near Florence, Alabama, conducted by T. B. Larimore. But in his bulletins [Larimore] would say, ‘Positively do not ask for credit,’ and as that was all [McCaleb] had to ask, [his] hope continued to be deferred and [his] heart sick till the school closed ‘indefinitely.’”³⁹ When McCaleb was twenty years old, his mother died. Shortly after, his older brothers married and he took the occasion to pursue an education that would expose him to the Harding tradition. Initially he spent his share of the family estate in a failed business venture but then settled on attending Carter’s Creek Academy. Arriving on a blistering cold January day, McCaleb was welcomed by the school’s administrator, William Anderson. Having been strongly influenced by the Harding tradition, Anderson exemplified the kind of spirituality, strong convictions, compassion for the poor, and unguarded generosity that were characteristic of James A. Harding.⁴⁰ Anderson convinced McCaleb to enroll in the school and offered him room and board. McCaleb felt

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 15.

⁴⁰ Anderson seems to have been strongly influenced by the teaching of James A. Harding though not formally. His behaviors and attitudes certainly reflected the teachings of Harding that were circulating in that area at that time through Harding’s preaching and writing. Anderson had already obtained his education by the time the NBS had opened, but later was accepted to be its principal. Ibid., 18-20.

that “in some respects Bro. [Anderson] stood nearer to [him] than any other living man.”⁴¹

Formal Education at the College of the Bible

In 1888 two events occurred in McCaleb’s life that helped to shape the course of his future. First, he enrolled in the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky, and second, he met James A. Harding. At the age of twenty-six, McCaleb boarded a train, exited Tennessee for the first time, and traveled toward Lexington—the first leg of a journey that would eventually take him to Japan and around the world.⁴² In his three and a half years at the College of the Bible, McCaleb studied under J. W. McGarvey in an atmosphere that galvanized him to missionary action and against the encroachment of the missionary societies.

After the Civil War, the development of cities and westward expansion created an ever-increasing demand for trained preachers among the Disciples. Schools such as Bethany College had liberal arts and sciences curriculums but were feeling pressure to open theological departments dedicated to ministerial preparation. J. W. McGarvey’s appointment to the faculty of the first of these schools for ministry, the College of the Bible, was both noteworthy and controversial. Most of the other schools among the

⁴¹ John Moody McCaleb, “Brother William Anderson,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 39 (1905): 3. On the occasion of Anderson’s death, McCaleb eulogized his being a “friend of the poor,” correcting others in a loving way, interpreting Jesus’ command literally not to take an oath in court proceedings, and exercising principles of trust.

⁴² Srygley, “Life of McCaleb,” 294. How ironic that the best-traveled missionary promoter of the Churches of Christ prior to World War II had never boarded a train before the age of twenty-six and had never planned to go outside the U. S.

Disciples were influenced by the arguments of Charles Loos who held that the education of ministers should remain integrated with the other undergraduate programs because “segregated schools for ministry would secularize the College.”⁴³ McGarvey, however, had been dissatisfied with the inadequacy of his theological studies at Bethany, and created a separate college to make them a priority.⁴⁴

McCaleb’s contact with McGarvey is of substantial significance in the history of missions of the Churches of Christ. As the most prominent teacher of the school, McGarvey also stood in the peculiar position of teaching against the use of musical instruments in worship but being decidedly in favor of missionary societies. He stood as a bridge between the poorer rural churches in the South and the wealthier urban pro-society churches in the North.⁴⁵ Had McCaleb studied elsewhere, he would have not been exposed to such a strong pro-missionary influence.

Students at the school hailed from Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Turkey, Armenia, Japan, and all over the United States. In fact, Eugene Snodgrass, one of the school’s graduates and missionary to Japan, had influenced one of his converts, K. Tanaka, to study at Lexington.⁴⁶ The school held missions meetings frequently when missionaries would return from foreign lands and give lectures. Teachers and students delivered sermons on world-wide evangelism so that “an enthusiasm was thus created for

⁴³ McAllister, *Bethany*, 125.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 3:318-9.

⁴⁶ McCaleb stated that Snodgrass was leaving for Japan about the time that he entered the school. McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 33.

preaching the gospel to every creature in a manner that [McCaleb] had not met before.”⁴⁷

The experience was incisive on McCaleb’s thinking. It rendered him sensitive to the invitation to go to Japan, and it provided a missions atmosphere that McCaleb sought to recreate later among non-society Bible schools.

As he imbibed the missionary spirit of the school, McCaleb grew in his resistance to the Foreign Christian Missionary Society. He perceived that it was excessive in its institutionalism and its increasing tendency to work in the place of, rather than through, the churches. McCaleb lamented that eight to twenty cents on the dollar was consumed by the organizational structure of such societies.⁴⁸ He also believed they exerted too much control over ministry and missionary appointments.⁴⁹ McCaleb’s perceptions were part of a general trend. “In the early days of the independent mission movement, for example, faith mission pioneers such as J. Hudson Taylor and H. Grattan Guinness argued that their missions made more efficient use of funds, cultivated greater spirituality among their missionaries, and were more aggressively evangelistic than the denominational mission societies.”⁵⁰ McCaleb found McGarvey’s arguments in favor of the missionary societies unconvincing and determined that “no organization outside the churches” was needed.⁵¹ He seemed to have had just enough firsthand exposure to the

⁴⁷ Ibid. McCaleb also participated in the planting of the Chestnut Street congregation in Lexington, Kentucky, a “mission church that we students had established.” McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 38.

⁴⁸ John Moody McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 17, no. 2 (1903): 9.

⁴⁹ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 34-5, 54-7, 80.

⁵⁰ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 55.

⁵¹ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 34.

Foreign Christian Missionary Society to develop a strong opposition to it. He was convinced that God intended the church to be the only missionary society necessary. Even though he opposed the missionary society, from this point forward his predominant position concerning missionary societies was that churches had no right to criticize them unless they were actively engaged in mission work themselves.⁵²

Schooling at Lexington provided McCaleb also with the advantage of learning to systematize and clarify his thoughts through writing. He excelled in his studies, and while at the college he wrote and published his first article on “Human Expediencies” that appeared in the *Gospel Advocate*. McCaleb wrote his next articles because he was beginning to see that as churches became wealthier, they sought to attain to the status and respectability of the well-established denominations around them. To this end, the Main Street Church in Lexington had installed a “great pipe organ” in its newly constructed building. Not long after, the Broadway congregation felt compelled to adopt the use of the organ for fear that the Main Street church would draw away all their young people. In response to this trend he composed five articles on “Pride, a Growing Evil.”⁵³ McCaleb considered the acquisition of writing skills one of the “chief advantages . . . derived from

⁵² John Moody McCaleb, “Japan Work,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 8 (1905): 1033.

⁵³ I. B. Grubbs, “J. M. McCaleb and Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 8 (1892): 123; McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 38.

[his] schools days at Lexington.”⁵⁴ Like other faith missionaries of his time, his ability to write later served him well as a missionary and promoter of missions.⁵⁵

The school also introduced McCaleb to opportunities for preaching tours during which he believed he experienced God’s providential care. During one of his summer vacations from school, McCaleb accepted an invitation from a church in Daviess County to preach his first protracted meeting. He left with only half enough money to make the trip there. A friend had arranged for him to preach one Sunday along the railroad at Buckner. Although a thunderstorm was so loud that it nearly drowned out McCaleb’s sermon, the congregation offered him payment just sufficient to get him to his destination. McCaleb went on to Daviess County to preach the meeting. During the first ten days of the meeting there were no responses and McCaleb considered closing it early. Jim Hinton, one of the members with whom McCaleb was staying, suggested that McCaleb continue on at least until the next Sunday. McCaleb took his advice and when the meeting finally closed, nineteen people had asked for baptism.⁵⁶ McCaleb felt that he had thus learned that trust in God was always rewarded.

In the late summer of 1888, McCaleb heard James A. Harding for the first time when Harding squared off in a debate with a Seventh Day Adventist, a certain Mr. Lane,

⁵⁴ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 32.

⁵⁵ Faith missions leaders such as A. T. Pierson, George Müller, and Methodist missionary William Taylor, benefited greatly either from the publication of their annual reports or from the sale of their books. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 206.

⁵⁶ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 35.

in Columbia, Tennessee, not far from McCaleb's home.⁵⁷ Harding was the clear winner, and his style and superb reasoning attracted McCaleb's attention.⁵⁸ After the debate, Harding returned to Columbia and continued to hold meetings that lasted a month and drew significant crowds despite unfavorable weather.⁵⁹ According to Harding, the "meeting was conducted during the rainiest season ever known at that time of the year; all of the excitement, turmoil, speech making, fire works, vote-buying, and whisky drinking which attend the presidential election came off during the meeting; but, in spite of all of this, the audiences were larger, the interest greater, and the additions more numerous than ever before at Columbia."⁶⁰ As a result of the debate and Harding's evangelistic activity, forty-five people were added to the church there. From the time of this encounter, McCaleb began to read Harding's column's with great interest, and his life increasingly reflected Harding's basic principles of faith.⁶¹ Early in his mission work McCaleb admitted that he did not initially accept Harding's teaching on trust. He wrote,

⁵⁷ Sears was incorrect in his claim that McCaleb was one of Harding's students at the NBS. Sears, *Eyes of Jehovah*, 154. McCaleb wrote of visiting the NBS after he had become a missionary, but he never spoke of having attended the school. Lists of NBS students of that time period do not include McCaleb's name. Nashville Bible School, "Catalogue, 1898," 34-40.

⁵⁸ McCaleb said that Mr. Lane was "lame in one leg and limped as he walked; lame also in his arguments, which appeared all the more prominent in the hands of such a man as Bro. Harding." John Moody McCaleb, "A Man Beloved of God and Men," *Christian Leader* 36, no. 32 (1922): 7.

⁵⁹ James A. Harding, "Debates. Judge Them By Their Fruits," *Gospel Advocate* 30, no. 49 (1888): 2. Cf. "Church News," *Gospel Advocate* 30, no. 44 (1888): 3; "Miscellaneous," *Gospel Advocate* 30, no. 47 (1888), 10.

⁶⁰ Harding, "Debates. Judge Them By Their Fruits," 2. The election was between incumbent Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison who won the election.

⁶¹ McCaleb, "Beloved of God," 7. Harding's statement in the *Gospel Advocate* that had the greatest effect upon McCaleb was that "one should give himself wholly to his preaching and have no concern about his support." McCaleb wrote, "This struck me with great force, and I have never since been able to get away from it."

“I remember reading an article by Brother James A. Harding, some years ago, in which he said an evangelist ought to give himself no concern whatever about his financial support, but give himself wholly to preaching the gospel. This then seemed to me as an extreme ground. I now believe it is true.”⁶² McCaleb came to believe in Harding’s teaching on trust after having witnessed it at work in Harding’s life. Although McCaleb never officially enrolled as a student under Harding, his extended exposure to his teaching and preaching during the meeting at Columbia contributed significantly to his development as a faith missionary.

Marriage to Della “Dorothy” Bentley⁶³

McCaleb’s choice of a lifetime partner reflected his faith orientation. Although the exact nature of their relationship after 1906 is shrouded in mystery, their shared interest in missions in the early days of their marriage made for a happy match. Della, in fact, demonstrated signs of being the spiritual leader in the initial decision to go to Japan. McCaleb’s years at the College of the Bible coincided with the school’s admission of women in 1890. Della Bentley first caught McCaleb’s attention between classes as she descended the same stairway that McCaleb ascended. A fellow student, Hall Laurie Calhoun, introduced them and a special friendship was born. McCaleb wrote of her, “Her attire was simple; her eyes brown, a braid of black hair tied with a ribbon down her

⁶² John Moody McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 36, no. 14 (1894): 209.

⁶³ McCaleb nicknamed Della “Dorothy” in a series of letters he wrote to her while he traveled in Pennsylvania, New York, and Canada. These letters were published in the *Gospel Advocate* during the spring and summer of 1901. Cf. McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 298-304.

back.”⁶⁴ Especially impressive were her “piety, intelligence, and practical common sense.”⁶⁵ Sometime later the two of them were walking in Hyde Park when McCaleb asked her “to be [his]” and requested permission for a kiss, his very first.⁶⁶ After McCaleb’s graduation and just five months before their departure for Japan, I. B. Grubbs, a professor at the college and Della’s close family friend, married them October 7, 1891. The newlyweds moved to Woodsonville, Kentucky, where McCaleb had been preaching.⁶⁷ When they married, the McCalebs agreed “their fortunes should lie cast together in some work of the great wide world.”⁶⁸

The Call to Japan

When the McCalebs made their decision to become foreign missionaries, Japan, which had emerged from two hundred fifty years of complete isolation, was considered to be one of the world’s most important mission opportunities.⁶⁹ In 1549 Roman Catholic missionaries under the leadership of Francis Xavier began mission work in Japan that

⁶⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁵ David Lipscomb, “The Mission to Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 8 (1892): 123. Precious little is recorded about Della Bentley’s life before her marriage to McCaleb. She was born in Mason County, Kentucky, January 10, 1869. Don Carlos Janes, “Dorothy Bentley McCaleb,” *Missionary Messenger* 17, no. 1 (1941): 937. Grubbs knew her “from her infancy” and hosted her in his home while she attended school. Grubbs, “Mission to Japan,” 123. Her strong faith, fortitude of character, and independent spirit were later demonstrated, however, through her fourteen years of missionary service in Japan (1892-1906) and her raising and educating the children alone in the States while her husband continued living in Japan.

⁶⁶ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 39.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁸ McCaleb, “The Beginning,” 1.

⁶⁹ Delavan Leonard, *A Hundred Years of Missions: The Story of Progress Since Carey’s Beginning* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1895), 346; Pierson, *Crisis of Missions*, 95-105. McCaleb was a reader of both of these.

yielded three hundred thousand conversions by 1600.⁷⁰ Fearing domination by foreign powers, Emperor Taiko Sama (Hideyoshi) issued an order for the expulsion of all the missionaries in 1587. By 1617 anti-foreign sentiment led to severe persecution of Christians, and thousands were tortured and killed. The anti-Christian edict, which remained posted until 1873, read: “So long as the sun shall warm the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan; and let all know that the king of Spain himself, or the Christian’s God [the Pope] or the great God of all, if he violate this command, shall pay for it with his head!”⁷¹ Japan was thus closed to the Christian message for over two centuries.

With the California Gold Rush of 1848-1855, Americans reached their own West coast, and Japan became the closest shore for whalers and traders who desired to harbor in Japanese ports for coal and rations after storms at sea. Desirous to protect their isolation, Japanese authorities responded to the approach of Westerners with hostility. Shipwrecked sailors were jailed and mistreated. On July 8, 1853, U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry entered the Bay of Edo under orders from President Fillmore to “demand as a right, and not to solicit as a favor, those acts of courtesy which are due from one civilized country to another.”⁷² A year later Perry returned with ten ships and brokered

⁷⁰ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (New York: Penguin, 1964), 159.

⁷¹ Leonard, *Hundred Years of Missions*, 346.

⁷² Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 142.

the guarantee of fair treatment of shipwrecked sailors and the opportunity to buy coal at two Japanese ports.⁷³ The door of mission opportunity to Japan was cracking open.

Beginning in 1868, Christian medical doctors and pastors, mature men of outstanding character, worked benevolently under the eyes of suspicious authorities to “dispel the prejudices against them and to win men to a more favorable consideration of the Christian gospel.”⁷⁴ Following this period of preparation, language learning, and trust building, the first church was established with ten converts in 1872. McCaleb and his teammates would have certainly been interested to learn that this first group of Christians called themselves the “Church of Christ” and desired to “establish a Japanese national church not specifically identified with any denomination in the West.”⁷⁵ Japanese Christianity was decidedly non-sectarian, and McCaleb’s band had reason to believe their message would be especially well received there.⁷⁶ The ensuing two decades of missionary work in Japan witnessed rapid growth, a developing Japanese leadership, and a significant influx of Western missionaries who dared hope that Japan might become a Christian nation.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 149.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 149 ; Leonard, *Hundred Years of Missions*, 361.

⁷⁶ There were a number of independent Christian churches that were formed. Seven young men, for example, left the Methodist church over denominational rivalries. The work of one of these, Uchimura Kanzo, led to the Non-Church movement in Japan. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 182; A. Hamish Ion, *The Cross and the Rising Sun: The British Protestant Missionary Movement in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, 1865-1945* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wildred Laurier University Press, 1990), 41.

⁷⁷ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 192, 212.

McCaleb believed that the “events and influences that came to bear upon” them in their departure for Japan “were the working out of God’s special providence.”⁷⁸ Their decision to answer the call to go to Japan required them to place their trust in God and furnished them with the first of many demonstrations of God’s providence. They were drawn to this call by the active recruiting of a veteran society missionary named Wendell Kendrick Azbill.

Azbill, the architect and originator of the “Volunteer Mission to Japan,” had previously served under a missions board from 1882 to 1886 as a missionary to Jamaica. He then served as national field worker for the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions and had \$2,500 guaranteed support for his work in Jamaica.⁷⁹ He found, however, “that the chief thing [he] needed couldn’t be bought with money.”⁸⁰ He resolved to become an independent missionary, put himself in touch with those who gave to his mission, and threw himself “completely and immediately on Providence for support.”⁸¹ When he launched his plan to enlist a group of independently supported missionaries for Japan August 15, 1891, his first recruits were Carme Hostetter and Lucia Scott.⁸² These two

⁷⁸ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 41. McCaleb wrote, “I believe it was under supernatural guidance, no less than if I had heard a distinct voice direct from heaven saying, ‘Go to Japan and preach the gospel.’”

⁷⁹ Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 1:11-12.

⁸⁰ C. B. Davies, “How Missionaries Live,” *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 37 (1895): 592.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* The rift between pro and anti-society churches had grown to the extent that Azbill had decided to raise funds among the opponents to the Foreign Missionary Society and channel those funds to the missionaries directly through the churches. David Filbeck and Robert S. Bates, “Asia, Missions in” in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 34.

⁸² Gary Owen Turner, “Pioneer to Japan: A Biography of J.M. McCaleb” (M.A. Thesis, Abilene Christian College, 1972), 28.

graduates of Hiram College in Ohio had previously joined the Student Volunteer Movement and were “holding themselves in readiness to go when the call came.”⁸³

In his search for teammates, Azbill wrote the president of the school in Lexington, Charles L. Loos, who responded with an unequivocal recommendation for J. M. McCaleb.⁸⁴ Azbill then asked David Lipscomb to persuade McCaleb to join him in going to Japan, but Lipscomb refused on the grounds that such an important decision should not be made under the pressure of outside influences.⁸⁵ After McCaleb received a direct invitation from Azbill, he wrote to Lipscomb asking for advice.⁸⁶ Lipscomb answered McCaleb by duly warning him of “the self-denials, deprivations and sacrifices” they that would have to make in the work and “that the happiness and reward must come in self-denials made for the sake of Jesus and the lost heathens.”⁸⁷

As they considered the merits of Azbill’s proposal, “this was a serious moment of no little trial, and more than once [the McCalebs] knelt together and prayed most earnestly for strength and guidance.”⁸⁸ One such winter’s evening while sitting in front of the fire in their home questioning both their abilities and the Lord’s promise to supply

⁸³ McCaleb, “The Beginning,” 1.

⁸⁴ John Moody McCaleb, “Why I Went to Japan,” *World Vision* 4, no. 1 (1938): 14.

⁸⁵ Lipscomb, “Mission to Japan,” February 1892, 73.

⁸⁶ Azbill’s appeal or his subsequent visit to McCaleb must have been very compelling. McCaleb wrote, “Whatever good may be attached to my labors in Japan, due credit must be given Brother Azbill, for it was he in part that led me to see the practicability and moral necessity of going to the heathen, and going as God directs, and trusting him for every need.” John Moody McCaleb, “The Success of Seeming Failure,” *The Way* 3, no. 23 (1901): 180.

⁸⁷ Lipscomb, “Mission to Japan,” February 1892, 73.

⁸⁸ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 42.

their needs so far away, Della began to sing a hymn: “In some way or other the Lord will provide. It may not be my way, it may not be thy way, and yet in his own way the Lord will provide. We will trust in the Lord, and he will provide.”⁸⁹ Della’s willing and trusting disposition pushed McCaleb over the threshold of making the decision. Trusting in God, they both “were given” to the call.⁹⁰ After they had resolved to go, Della made a trip to Lexington to visit her parents. While there, she wrote back to her husband, “Oh, the perfect happiness I enjoy; and it is a happiness that, God willing, no cloud can shadow for years yet. Not even the unhappy thought of leaving parents, brothers and sisters can gloom its brightness.”⁹¹ McCaleb’s letter to David Lipscomb summarized their motivations for accepting the call: “The propriety—rather duty—of our going to Japan has, since my wife’s return home, been prayerfully, and I might add tearfully, considered. Many questions against our going have presented themselves only to be set aside by conscience, providence and the word of God. In view of the benighted and lost condition of the heathen, the obligation of Christians to carry them the light of the gospel, and the judgment to come where each must give an honest and impartial account of his

⁸⁹ M. A. W. Cook, “The Lord Will Provide,” in *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs*, ed. Ira Sankey (New York: Biglow & Main, 1875), 6; John Moody McCaleb, “Japan—Report for April,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 23 (1899): 367.

⁹⁰ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 42.

⁹¹ Ibid. McCaleb later wrote that at the time his wife felt “she was making a great sacrifice to come to Japan. So great was it that there was only one thing, not excepting my own wishes, that kept her from declining to make it. She feared she would displease the Lord. She felt that in her case it was truly— ‘Jesus, I my cross have taken, All to leave and follow thee.’ She now sees it differently, and often speaks of it with joy.” John Moody McCaleb, “Come Over and Help Us,” *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 32 (1895): 526. The text of a poem she composed at this time may indicate that her faith was as great or greater than her husband’s. McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 42.

stewardship to God, we decide to make the sacrifice.”⁹² The theology that stood behind J. M. McCaleb’s commitment to go to Japan echoed the sentiments of mainstream conservative evangelicalism. Their decision to go to Japan loomed large because they were the first of their churches to do so depending solely on God for their financial support.

McCaleb felt that their response to the call was soon met by a small but significant demonstration of God’s approval and providence. Upon receiving news of the McCalebs’ willingness to go to Japan, Azbill came personally to their home in Woodsonville to “mature [their] plans.”⁹³ He traveled with McCaleb to Green’s Chapel to preach and to present details of the work.⁹⁴ Previous to the speaking engagement, McCaleb had shared with Azbill that as newlyweds they had already incurred a debt of fifty dollars that would have to be paid before their departure. At Green’s Chapel, the congregation had determined that the day’s entire contribution would be given to the McCalebs. Although the church knew nothing of the debt nor of its size, the contribution came to just a few cents over fifty dollars.⁹⁵ McCaleb paid off the debt and was grateful to have a sign of God’s approval for their future mission plans.

⁹² John Moody McCaleb, “Letter to Bro. Lipscomb,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 4 (1892): 73.

⁹³ McCaleb, “The Beginning,” 1.

⁹⁴ In another place McCaleb wrote that the Salem church contributed twenty-five dollars, and two other churches made contributions that day bringing the total to \$50.48. *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ John Moody McCaleb, “As I Go Among the Churches,” *Christian Leader* 33, no. 44 (1919): 16; McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 43.

The McCalebs' announcement to go to Japan met with both excitement and testing. Letters flooded in from well-wishers, partners, and many asking to be kept informed through letters and pictures. McCaleb vowed to make frequent reports but to do so through the periodicals that circulated among the churches. He maintained this promise over the next fifty years.⁹⁶ When asked how long they planned to stay, McCaleb responded, "The decision to go is purely voluntary with nothing to hold us to the work but an internal cord that binds us to God and one another. Our own conscience along with the demands of the work must decide whether the stay shall be only for a few years or a life time. We endeavor to do with our might what our hands find to do to-day without anxiety as to what the Lord may call us to by the morrow. . . . To undertake to save souls from hell is the 'biggest' undertaking that man can engage in."⁹⁷ McCaleb thus expressed a sense of God's subjective call and leading. He and Della responded with faith and an urgency created by a sense of souls being forever lost. Since the churches had a true sense of McCaleb being "one of the family" his interest in foreign missions became their own.

The McCalebs' "call" to the mission field paralleled that of dozens of others in the same period who were flocking to Japan to take advantage of a new open door for the Gospel. Charles and Lettie Cowman, for example, were moved by A. B. Simpson's appeal to dedicate themselves to missionary service. After a rushed training period at God's Bible School in Cincinnati, they teamed up with a Japanese student at Moody

⁹⁶ John Moody McCaleb, "Notes by the Way," *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 11 (1892): 167.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Bible Institute named Nuji Nakada. They moved to Japan in 1901 to work as independent missionaries. They opened daytime Bible schools and held evening rallies. From 1912 to 1918 they worked toward their goal of presenting the message of Jesus Christ in every Japanese home. Together with Nuji and E. A. Kilbourne, they founded the Oriental Missionary Society.⁹⁸ Like the McCalebs, the Cowmans read A. T. Pierson's books but had the added opportunity to be personally guided by Pierson in their decision-making.⁹⁹

David Lipscomb began promoting the plan and rallying support for the McCalebs in the *Gospel Advocate*. He was thrilled that a boy from Tennessee had responded to Azbill's call for workers and proudly declared, "We have a missionary now of our own to support, to help, that we may have fruit that will abound to our account in that day. . . . Let us deny ourselves and freely share with them in the self-denial they make for Christ."¹⁰⁰ An excitement emerged from among the Churches of Christ at the thought of not just criticizing the missionary societies but actually engaging in mission work.¹⁰¹ The McCalebs felt that they indeed were not alone as "many a heart [beat] in sympathy."¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Everett N. Hunt, Jr., "Cowman, Charles Elmer and Lettie (Burd)" in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 156.

⁹⁹ Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 190.

¹⁰⁰ Lipscomb, "Mission to Japan," February 1892, 73.

¹⁰¹ P. W. Harsh, for example, in raising support for the "Volunteers" pointed out that opposition to missionary societies was not going to save the lost soul. He wrote, "Are you doing anything for the spread of the gospel and the salvation of the world? Do you answer that you have always been sound in your opposition to Missionary Societies. But what is becoming of the lost sinners the while? Does your opposition to the way others are trying to save him, save him?" P. W. Harsh, "The Azbill Mission," *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 39 (1892): 620.

¹⁰² McCaleb, "Notes by the Way," March 17, 1892, 167.

The McCalebs' plans also met with strong criticism and expectations of failure.¹⁰³

When visiting among the churches in the area where he grew up, friends and relatives sought to discourage them by stating, among other things, that they had “plenty of heathen at home.”¹⁰⁴ This was an opinion with which McCaleb contended most of his life. In response, McCaleb eventually wrote the movement's best-known missions hymn:

Of one the Lord has made the race, Thro' one has come the fall;
Where sin has gone must go his grace: The gospel is for all.
Say not the heathen are at home, beyond we have no call,
For why should we be blest alone? The gospel is for all.
Received ye freely, freely give, From ev'ry land they call;
Unless they hear they cannot live; the gospel is for all.¹⁰⁵

Written as a poem in 1914, the words were set to music composed by Rigdon M. McIntosh and published in 1921.¹⁰⁶ Through this hymn McCaleb brought the missionary ideal into the heart of the Christian community and further contributed to its new self-understanding.

McCaleb also had to face a battle on a much larger front. The Churches of Christ and the Disciples, as these two groups came to be known, were divided over the Foreign Christian Missionary Society. The former cluster of churches opposed the society on the grounds that the local congregations were the only scripturally ordained mission

¹⁰³ McCaleb later revealed that they received many notes from people who discouraged them by stating that “it couldn't be done” and that they would “never make it to Japan.” John Moody McCaleb, “J. M. McCaleb's Japan Work,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 22 (1904): 3.

¹⁰⁴ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 43.

¹⁰⁵ John Moody McCaleb, “The Gospel Is for All,” *Missionary Messenger* 2, no. 9 (1914): 1.

¹⁰⁶ John Moody McCaleb, “Of One the Lord Has Made the Race,” in *Great Songs of the Church*, ed. E. L. Jorgenson (Louisville: Word and Work, 1923), 239.

organizations. These churches had accomplished very little, however, in the way of foreign missions. The latter group argued that the society was merely a necessary expedient to collect contributions from individuals and churches, to support missionaries adequately, and to hold those missionaries accountable for their work. Estranged missionary society supporters among the Disciples were especially expecting this “experiment to fail.”¹⁰⁷ The pro-society paper, *The Christian Evangelist*, observed, “Its failure will demonstrate either that the volunteer plan is not the Bible plan, or that the churches and individuals opposed to missionary societies and contending for the Bible plan are not as much in earnest in missionary matters as they claim to be.”¹⁰⁸

As the McCalebs traveled from Tennessee to Indianapolis to meet with others of the team and to visit home churches and school friends, their anti-missionary society convictions would soon be sorely tested.¹⁰⁹ The church at Indianapolis hosted a reception for Hostetter, Scott, Azbill, and the McCalebs. Although there was a tram strike that

¹⁰⁷ McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” October 13, 1892, 647. After their arrival in Japan, McCaleb wrote, “Well, as incredible as it may seem, brethren, we have actually got to the field [sic] and what may appear still more appalling, so far as I can see we are getting along about as well as other missionaries over here.”

¹⁰⁸ McCaleb stressed that theirs was indeed the biblical plan. He did admit that the *Evangelist’s* article was written with a “sympathetic attitude” and the promise of prayer for its success. McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 53.

¹⁰⁹ The trip began with a visit to the church in Dunlap which McCaleb considered his home and sending church for the first part of his work. An eyewitness to their departure wrote, “The scene was affecting. Tear drops stole down the cheeks of men, women, and children, and many a fervent ‘God bless you’ was uttered.” Evans, “Noble Sacrifice,” 128. The McCalebs also spent several nights in the David Lipscomb home before going on to Bourbon County and Lexington, Kentucky. Fellow students took up a collection at the Chestnut St. church and presented the McCalebs with a gift of thirty dollars in gold. They proceeded on to Indianapolis via Louisville. John Moody McCaleb, “Do We Reject a Portion of Scripture?” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 12 (1892): 185.

morning, “a large and enthusiastic audience greeted” them.¹¹⁰ During the service the church used an organ and, to the displeasure of many, McCaleb felt compelled to speak publicly against its use. A quarrel also surfaced between McCaleb and Azbill when two societies came “forward and proposed to help in the work.”¹¹¹ McCaleb preferred to refuse money from those with whom he disagreed. He also stated that “all offerings should come in the name of the churches.”¹¹² Azbill, on the other hand, had no objection to accepting occasional unsolicited contributions from the societies.¹¹³ Although a generous non-society contribution of \$160 was collected that day, McCaleb’s stubbornness on this point must have created stress for the group. Just three days before

¹¹⁰ McCaleb, “Do We Reject Scripture?”; McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 45.

¹¹¹ These were most likely the Christian Women’s Board of Missions and the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, two newly organized attempts of the Disciples to redirect mission efforts overseas. McCaleb, “The Beginning,” 1.

¹¹² Harding routinely refused to take money from anyone who was not a “Christian of the same faith and order” that he was. Harding, “Ira C. Moore and Special Providence,” 8.

¹¹³ In the summer of 1892 McCaleb told Azbill that he would receive funds only from churches and individuals and that if society funds were contributed to the common fund, he would have to disassociate himself with Azbill. John Moody McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 21 (1893): 334. McCaleb announced that disassociation in February of 1893. John Moody McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 8 (1893): 126. Later McCaleb explained that he did not expect Azbill to condemn receiving money from the missionary societies. He did not agree, however, with Azbill’s receiving money himself from the societies. John Moody McCaleb, “From Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 36, no. 33 (1894): 521. Azbill felt that the difference between the two of them was the same as that which existed between Harding and Lipscomb. Harding would not accept monies from “non-brothers” and Lipscomb would. Azbill implied that McCaleb was over-reaching in his desire to control others. Azbill said that he could not make others change; he was not “pope.” W. K. Azbill, “Azbill Explains,” *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 39 (1893): 617. This unresolved dispute continued to affect their working relationship. Lipscomb attempted to mediate and encouraged both to work out their differences. He sided with McCaleb, but felt that patience needed to be shown to Azbill for working in the right direction. David Lipscomb, “Untitled,” *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 9 (1893): 132; David Lipscomb, “Azbill and McCaleb,” *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 21 (1893): 322. The fallout between Azbill and McCaleb was, in many respects, a microcosm of what happened between the Churches of Christ and the Disciples of Christ.

their scheduled departure from Indianapolis, the total one thousand dollars necessary for the trek to San Francisco and passage to Japan had not yet been given.¹¹⁴

As the five volunteers traveled together they stopped along the way to raise support from churches in St. Louis, Wichita, Denver, Colorado Springs, and Los Angeles. McCaleb chronicled their journey, their encounters with Mormons, Methodists, and Episcopalians, and the providential care they experienced along their way to San Francisco. In a writing style that became quite typical for McCaleb, nearly every incident provided an illustration or spiritual reflection on God. When departing from Denver, for example, the group nearly missed their train due to streetcar delays. McCaleb extolled the virtues of “bearing one another’s burdens” and wrote, “What a grabbing of bundles to relieve each other of burdens, that all might get on safe.” After noting that it was “only by grace of the conductor” that they were able to get onboard, he reminded readers that God wanted all to be saved and by grace.¹¹⁵

With less than twenty-four hours left before their departure, he penned one more article containing a description of the multi-racial atmosphere in San Francisco and a final word of anti-society rhetoric.¹¹⁶ On the eve of their departure McCaleb was aware that faith missions as a substitute for the missionary society was on trial. At three o’clock in the afternoon on March 26, 1892, they set sail for Japan. When they boarded the ship

¹¹⁴ McCaleb, “The Beginning,” 1. McCaleb’s refusal of these early and seemingly innocent offers of money from the societies provides some evidence that he was more than just an opportunist in his theology. Had he merely been looking to embrace the best financial support base, he would have taken a more moderate position toward the acceptance of such funds.

¹¹⁵ McCaleb, “Notes by the Way,” March 31, 1892, 207.

¹¹⁶ John Moody McCaleb, “Notes by the Way,” *Gospel Advocate*, 34, no. 17 (1892): 267.

that day, the McCalebs had no guarantees of future funds save the promises of people such as David Lipscomb to stir the churches to give and send money.¹¹⁷ In fact, they had just enough money to pay for their passage. Their “momentary expressions of grief” were soon replaced with the exhilaration of sighting whales and the “romance of a voyage across the waters.”¹¹⁸ After three and a half weeks of mostly “boisterous and rough” seas and the resulting sickness, they arrived in Yokohama late on April 12, 1892, and disembarked the next morning.¹¹⁹

When McCaleb arrived in Japan for the first time, he was thirty-one years old—older than many of the student volunteers who were rushing to the field but less seasoned and mature than the Protestant missionaries who had done groundbreaking work in Japan thirty years earlier.¹²⁰ The previous two decades of mission work in Japan had been ones of growth and expansion, but the McCaleb’s arrival coincided with a sharp decline in the number of conversions, enrollment in mission schools, and attendance at public evangelistic rallies.¹²¹ A period that had promised to be one of prolonged rapid expansion was interrupted by resurgence of Japanese nationalism and a concomitant anti-foreign

¹¹⁷ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 43.

¹¹⁸ McCaleb, “Notes by the Way,” May 19, 1892, 311.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*; McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” May 26, 1892, 336.

¹²⁰ James C. Hepburn, Samuel Brown, D. B. Simmons, and Guido Verbeck were men of maturity and talent, medical doctors, trained and experienced pastors well into their forties. The earlier, more mature missionaries tended to partner better with the Japanese, encourage more harmony, and give room for greater Japanese independence. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 147.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 200.

feeling that diminished interest in the Christian message and slowed church growth.¹²² The “veritable craze for things Western” gave way to a “strong antagonism towards Christianity.”¹²³ This mood-change represented not only a renewed suspicion toward Christianity, but was also “connected with the deepest levels of ethnic awareness, national pride and loyalty.”¹²⁴ The newly reconstituted government under Emperor Meiji was progressively more apprehensive of the expansion of Western domination.¹²⁵ Noting the imperialistic tendencies of other nations, Japan began to embark on some of its own conquests.¹²⁶ Due to the greater numbers of Western missionaries and their less cautious methodologies, Christianity was again perceived by some as a threat to Japanese identity.

Representative of the time was an Incident of Disloyalty that occurred in 1891. A Japanese Christian of the Non-Church movement named Uchimura Kanzo had been teaching at a government academy. Uchimura was among those who believed “that a basic and at points irreconcilable conflict existed between the Christian understanding of man and society and that traditionally most beloved by the Japanese ruling classes.”¹²⁷ When called upon to bow before the Imperial Rescript on Education in order to show

¹²² Ibid., 191-200.

¹²³ Ibid., 196.

¹²⁴ Ibid.; Richard Henry Pitt Mason and John Goodwin Caiger, *A History of Japan* (Boston: Tuttle, 1997), 280.

¹²⁵ The emperor reformulated the constitution February 11, 1889. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 199.

¹²⁶ Akira Iriye, “Japan’s Drive to Great-Power Status,” in *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*, ed. Marius Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 294.

¹²⁷ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 202.

obeisance, he refused to bow. A newspaper spread word of the incident, and a professor of the Imperial University wrote a series of articles in which he attacked Christians for their perceived disloyalty.¹²⁸ The highly publicized incident resulted in isolated occurrences of verbal and physical persecution.

The McCalebs' First Term of Service, Experimentation, 1892-1899

As a classical representative of the “Big Second Generation of Faith Missions,” a period of expansion of faith missions beyond China, McCaleb’s primary purpose in Japan was to evangelize and plant churches.¹²⁹ During the first seven years of missionary service, his secondary objective was to present a successful experiment of independently supported mission work.¹³⁰ Almost equally important with the tasks of baptizing a large number of Japanese and planting multiple self-supporting and maturing churches, McCaleb aimed at offering a sufficiently funded foreign mission work as an apology for the “apostolic method.” In his own words, their undertaking was more than an “experiment.” It was God’s ordained way of providing for missionaries proven in the time of the apostles.¹³¹ He aimed to demonstrate, by the survival of his family, that trusting in the providence of God was the only correct alternative to the missionary

¹²⁸ Ibid., 203-4.

¹²⁹ Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 48.

¹³⁰ In this matter Müller was probably McCaleb’s model. See below, p. 192.

¹³¹ In response to letters that called their “experiment” a failure, McCaleb responded, “I have never felt any great concern about the success or failure of the ‘Azbill mission,’ any way, so long as all, both at home and abroad, hold on steadily their way, according to the simplicity of the ancient order in breaking the bread of life to those who have it not.” McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” October 13, 1892, 647.

society.¹³² Half way through his first tour of work, McCaleb wrote, “It is not sufficient to oppose what we think to be wrong. We must also demonstrate the right—show the more excellent way.”¹³³ During this period, in fact, he often drew comparisons between the volunteers and missionaries supported by societies and noted, “while we have tried not to be extravagant, we have also avoided extreme economy. I can truly say there has been nothing we needed but what we have been able to get.”¹³⁴ During these first seven years, McCaleb believed that their work rivaled, if not surpassed, the work of the more experienced Foreign Christian Missionary Society. Although he attributed his success in obtaining sufficient funds to his biblical faith method, one could argue that it was the result of his ability to write and promote himself. As one of its weaknesses, the faith

¹³² This was the only known alternative to the missionaries of the Churches of Christ. McCaleb was very familiar with contemporary proponents of “faith missions.” He claimed to have met both A. B. Simpson and Hudson Taylor personally and he held their work and methods in high admiration. McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” October 25, 1894, 670-1; John Moody McCaleb, “Letter from Japan,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 51 (1905): 3; E. Snodgrass, “Foreign Missionary Column,” *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 45 (1895): 710. He knew of and respected George Müller. John Moody McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” *The Way* 4, no. 34 (1902): 271-2. Although not nearly as vocal as McCaleb on this point, Azbill also sought to promote faith missions. Azbill wrote, “I resolved in 1891 to give up the salary I was receiving from a mission board, to throw myself completely and immediately on Providence for support, and to come to this field with any others who could come in the same spirit and in the same way.” Quoted in Davies, “How Missionaries Live,” September 12, 1895, 592.

¹³³ John Moody McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 41 (1895): 652.

¹³⁴ McCaleb’s point was that he and his wife had plenty while F. E. Meigs who worked under a missionary society in China, was “hard pressed.” McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” April 5, 1894, 209. McCaleb’s claims to have enjoyed a reasonable degree of financial security and comfort sometimes backfired. He was accused of living well while others were in need. McCaleb responded that if the Japan missionaries were so well off, then many more would want to join them. He wrote, “I am frank to admit there is a blessedness in this sort of life many people at home have a right to envy. What seems strange to me is that they do not enter upon it for themselves.” John Moody McCaleb, “Have Faith in God,” *The Way* 4, no. 15 (1902): 118. Cf. John Moody McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 7 (1904): 2.

mission method favored the most articulate and charismatic personalities while lesser-known individuals scraped by.

Meaningful Work

McCaleb's earliest efforts in cooperation with the other "volunteers" included learning the language, setting up house, opening schools, preaching and forming a church.¹³⁵ The McCalebs began "housekeeping" in a small Japanese house in Yotsuya, and McCaleb preached his first sermon on "Walking by Faith" through Ishikawa, his interpreter, within the first month of their arrival.¹³⁶ Two new mission stations were established in addition to Snodgrass's already existing work at Koishikawa. Azbill worked together with Lucia Scott in another section of Tokyo, and the McCalebs joined forces with Carme Hostetter in Kanda Ward.¹³⁷

Older missionaries had told them that Japanese adults were very hard to reach and that the greatest hope for successful work was through the children.¹³⁸ George Müller's visit to the country in 1886 had served as the catalyst to begin Christian work among poor children, especially orphans.¹³⁹ In light of this advice, McCaleb opened a preaching place and a school for poor children in Kanda Ward. Reaching out to the poor in that period

¹³⁵ McCaleb, "Letter from Japan," July 7, 1892, 419.

¹³⁶ McCaleb, "Chronology," January 1915, 2.

¹³⁷ The work of these single women was generally associated with married male missionaries more for the sake of the credibility of the women than for direction or assistance. The ladies did the bulk of the schoolwork for which the men took partial credit in their writing, but had the women been alone on the field, their financial support would have been more difficult to obtain.

¹³⁸ John Moody McCaleb, "A Lord's Day in Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 24 (1892): 375.

¹³⁹ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 222.

became an uphill battle. Renewed nationalism and its consequential retardation of Christian growth were especially blocking missionary access to the country's poorer classes. The poor "were easily led by the conservative elements in power to intensify their ancient fear and prejudice against the Christian faith and its adherents."¹⁴⁰ The government's compulsory elementary education program was being used as an arm of "ideological indoctrination and social repression rather than enlightenment."¹⁴¹

In an article providing a rationale for their educational work and evoking sympathy for the plight of both women and children in Japan, McCaleb borrowed rhetoric from the women's missionary movement:

It is in the household that the seeds of eternal destiny are sown. 'From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,' is no exception, nor exclusive rule to be applied only to the word of God, but it applies to every virtue to be implanted in the heart and practiced in the life. If asked what is the greatest practical need of Japan, I would say: Homes for the children, not homes for the destitute or asylums for the poor, but real homes with mothers in them—"home rule" where the mother is obeyed and the father's command is respected; where domestic privacy, virtue and purity are cultivated. This can be done only as the principles of the Bible are inculcated.¹⁴²

The educational work thus aimed in the long run at raising up children to create Christian homes. This approach made excellent use of the talent and presence of a willing female missionary workforce.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 220-1.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 221.

¹⁴² McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," October 27, 1892, 678.

¹⁴³ McCaleb would have been familiar with Pierson's praise of women's work in India. Pierson, *Crisis of Missions*, 169-183. For Della McCaleb's perspective see Della McCaleb, "Japan Letter," *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 39 (1892): 615.

The school's teacher became McCaleb's first convert, and under the direction of Carme Hostetter, the school soon grew to have over one hundred poverty-stricken children enrolled. Considering other mission school enrollments were down fifty percent from previous years, their school's start was exceptional.¹⁴⁴ Supporters back in the States were particularly sympathetic to this kind of work, and Hostetter received sufficient funds to build a schoolhouse.¹⁴⁵ The Hostetter-McCaleb work invited children back to a Sunday school and parents to preaching through the use of interpreters Sunday evenings.¹⁴⁶ Della home-schooled her own three children and taught in the Bible school on Sundays.¹⁴⁷ McCaleb's work also consisted of preaching through special meetings and tract distribution in the parks and from house to house. On one hot summer's evening, for example, McCaleb delivered a talk from the doorstep of the meeting place of the church to the surrounding houses that formed a courtyard. After songs and a talk, members and visitors went inside for prayer and questions. Following the meeting McCaleb went from house to house giving out tracts and seeking to engage the people in discussions about faith.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately for missionaries in this period, these kinds of lectures generally

¹⁴⁴ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 200.

¹⁴⁵ Lucia Scott helped Azbill in much the same way building a school in Yotsuya Ward with funds donated by the East Broadway Church of Christ in Los Angeles and by a friend in Fort Worth. McCaleb, "The Beginning," 1. The schools removed the children from the street and transformed them into model citizens. For a visitor's objective perspective on Hostetter's and Scott's work see Davies, "How Missionaries Live," September 19, 1895, 597.

¹⁴⁶ McCaleb, "Letter from Japan," July 7, 1892, 419.

¹⁴⁷ McCaleb, "Faith in God," 118.

¹⁴⁸ McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," October 31, 1895, 703. McCaleb took new Christians with him occasionally to distribute tracts in city parks. McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," July 18, 1895, 453.

drew smaller and smaller crowds and a larger number of hecklers.¹⁴⁹ On one such occasion, McCaleb encountered opposition when a disgruntled former member organized an “Expel Jesus” lecture only a few doors down from the church meeting place.¹⁵⁰

During this first term there were approximately fifty baptisms as a result of their educational and evangelistic work.¹⁵¹ This number was significantly smaller than the missions’ expectations, and their results were meager in comparison to rates of conversion experienced in the States. Before the McCalebs had arrived, Protestant missions in 1889 had resulted in 5,677 conversions. Due to the growing unpopularity of persons and things Western, the number of converts had dropped the following year to only 1,199.¹⁵² The McCalebs and their teammates discovered that planting churches was going to be much more difficult than they had anticipated.

Challenges and Difficulties Encountered

The success of McCaleb’s faith missions supported by voluntary contributions was accentuated in the papers against a backdrop of challenges and difficulties. In his writing, McCaleb sought to downplay failures and meager results and to stir the sympathetic emotions of potential supporters. Believing that “a half truth [was] the worst

¹⁴⁹ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 200.

¹⁵⁰ “Expel Jesus” was a group of “rougher Buddhists” who aimed to expel Christianity from Japan. E. Snodgrass, “Japan Letter,” *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 36 (1893): 567.

¹⁵¹ He estimated that between fifty and sixty people had been added to the church through the work in Kanda Ward. John Moody McCaleb, “Seven Years’ Experience,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 2 (1899): 26.

¹⁵² Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 200.

deception,” McCaleb believed that both the good and bad of the work should be reported. One difficulty that McCaleb experienced was in learning the language. Within the first year his wife mastered Japanese quickly and was publicly leading singing in the language, but McCaleb was not yet ready to preach in Japanese though prodded by his helper Ishikawa.¹⁵³ According to McCaleb his breakthrough in the language came more than two years after their arrival when he was isolated from all other foreigners for several months in the city of Kanazawa.¹⁵⁴ With such a great influx of Americans into the large cities such as Tokyo, McCaleb needed to go to the interior to seclude himself from English speakers.

Another challenge to which McCaleb made frequent reference in his writing was that of “idolatry.” According to his descriptions, Japan was a victim of “powers of darkness” in the form of “diabolical idolatry.”¹⁵⁵ Japan’s only hope in overcoming “a false view of herself” was for its superstition and idolatry to be “replaced by civilization and enlightenment” by the “elevating power of the gospel.”¹⁵⁶ Language depicting such a “low notion” of culture and justifying mission efforts was common among Protestant

¹⁵³ W. K. Azbill, “The News from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 49 (1892): 782.

¹⁵⁴ Missionaries obtained passports to live outside the concession on the statement that they were “teachers of English.” The McCalebs did so for a brief period until they better understood the law and returned to the concession July 13, 1892. “He considered that so long as it was a law, though an unwise one, the Japanese themselves should be taught to respect it.” McCaleb, “The Beginning,” 1. McCaleb accepted a temporary teaching position in Kanazawa to provide sufficient support for his family. He stated that during that time he had “learned the language now sufficiently to give [his] whole time to the ministry of the word.” McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” August 16, 1894, 513.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in F. A. Wagner, “Letter from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 46 (1899): 720. Cf. McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” November 24, 1892, 742.

¹⁵⁶ McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” June 29, 1893, 406; John Moody McCaleb, “The Bible and Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 20 (1900): 307.

missionaries to Japan from the earliest times.¹⁵⁷ Other difficulties cited included disasters, such as the burning of Yokohama and the 1894 earthquake, disagreements among co-workers, and anti-Christian opposition.¹⁵⁸

The most difficult problem that McCaleb and his co-workers faced was that the transience of their converts prevented the work from moving beyond the infant stage. Many moved off before they had matured in their Christian views and the local church was filled with new converts. In McCaleb's case, at least fifty had been baptized in Kanda Ward, but they were "scattered to the four winds."¹⁵⁹ Lord's Day assemblies were small, and even ten years after the beginning of the work, only six converts were found to be meeting.¹⁶⁰ The proliferation of churches and preaching points in the 1890s made for smaller and weaker churches. The increase in the number of foreign missionaries also shifted greater influence and control from the Japanese to Westerners.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ In contrast, Uemura Masahisa "held the pre-Christian religious experience to be a singular gift of God to Japan of something similar to the Old Testament." Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 156, 210.

¹⁵⁸ McCaleb, "From Japan," August 16, 1894, 521; E. Snodgrass, "Thousands of Japanese Destitute," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 38 (1899): 608. McCaleb struggled especially with Azbill over the twenty-five dollars in quarterly support that Hostetter and Scott received from the Christian Endeavor Society. Azbill believed that McCaleb's position opened "into a very dark labyrinth of intolerance." Azbill, "Astonishing!" 222. The matter was important to McCaleb because the volunteer mission needed to demonstrate that God would adequately provide for their needs without funds from the societies. McCaleb's stubbornness was driven by his conscientious objection and his desire to follow the faith mission model. McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," May 25, 1893, 334.

¹⁵⁹ McCaleb, "Seven Years' Experience," January 12, 1899, 26.

¹⁶⁰ John Moody McCaleb, "From Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 35 (1893): 557; John Moody McCaleb, "Day by Day," *The Way* 3, no. 44 (1902): 352. Regarding this difficulty McCaleb wrote that the converts "being largely of the student class and a floating population . . . scattered almost as fast as they were gathered. The hope to build up a self-supporting church was not realized." McCaleb, "The Beginning," 1.

¹⁶¹ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 214.

Defections and Additions

The size of the team of volunteers in Tokyo fluctuated during McCaleb's first term. In his quest to demonstrate God's faithful providence for missionaries, McCaleb gladly publicized those who joined the endeavor and explained that no one defected or departed for a lack of sufficient contributions. Additions included Alice Miller, Azbill's recruit; Eugene and Mattie Snodgrass who began to work independently shortly after the McCalebs' arrival; their recruits, Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Pruett, Nettie Craynon; and Calla Harrison who had been recently dismissed from the Foreign Christian Missionary Society for poor health.¹⁶²

Defections of independently working missionaries to missionary societies damaged morale and jeopardized the credibility of the small fledgling faith missions force. Carme Hostetter went to the United States and attended the Nashville Bible School. However, she changed her "mind about religious societies, woman preachers, and instrumental music in the worship" and returned to Japan under the Foreign Christian Missionary Society.¹⁶³ Similarly, after spending two years at the Nashville Bible School, R. L. Pruett worked independently as a missionary in Tokyo beginning in 1895 until his newly married wife caught smallpox. "Expenses increased, bills accumulated, and they

¹⁶² John Moody McCaleb, "Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 16 (1895): 252; McCaleb, "Success of Seeming Failure," 180-1; John Moody McCaleb, "Missionary Sketches," *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 36 (1905): 3-4; R. L. Pruett, "Missionary to Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 4 (1895): 61; E. Snodgrass, "Japan Mission," *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 18 (1895): 284; Snodgrass, "Foreign Missionary Column," July 25, 1895, 471.

¹⁶³ McCaleb, "Information about the Volunteers," October 19, 1902, 231; McCaleb, "The Beginning," 1. Hostetter married M. M. Smyser, a Congregationalist, in 1905. Through her influence her husband was baptized and after a period of living in Maine, he outlived her and worked in Yokoto as an independently supported missionary. Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 1:20.

lost faith. Being encouraged by certain [people within] the F.C.M.S, they applied for admittance, and were accepted.”¹⁶⁴ This rapid turnover of faith missionaries was one of the reasons that the mission boards opposed them. Sometimes missionaries were stranded for lack of support. Ironically, money from the non-society churches was already “speeding away” and arrived to the Pruett before the missionary society money did.¹⁶⁵

Equally discouraging were the departures of W. K. Azbill and Nettie Craynon. Azbill’s wife and children had joined him in Japan in November of 1896, but “the family was dissatisfied with Japan, and finally prevailed on the father and husband to return to America, having remained in Japan about two years.”¹⁶⁶ Miss Craynon “had not been in Japan long till she became dissatisfied with missionary work, went to Yokohama, and entered a business firm as typewriter [sic].”¹⁶⁷ Lucia Scott served faithfully and returned in 1897 to the States out of necessity to care for her aged mother.¹⁶⁸ When Calla

¹⁶⁴ McCaleb, “Missionary Sketches,” September 5, 1905, 3-4.

¹⁶⁵ Years later, in retelling this story, Harding’s judgment of this young couple was very harsh. He wrote, “That he [Pruett] sold out to Satan then and there I have never for a moment doubted. He is just as great a sinner as Abraham would have been, if he had refused to offer up Isaac; or as Job would have been, if he had renounced God on account of his losses and afflictions. No man can attain to a home in heaven who does not walk by faith. Nothing justifies one in turning from what he believes to be right before God. Many a man has died because he would not turn from what he believed to be the will of God.” Harding, “Our Foreign Missionaries,” November 1905, 9.

¹⁶⁶ McCaleb wrote that he left his missionary work and went into business in Kentucky. McCaleb, “The Beginning,” 1.

¹⁶⁷ McCaleb, “Missionary Sketches,” September 5, 1905, 3-4.

¹⁶⁸ Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 1:19.

Harrison's health began to fail again, she moved to Honolulu and continued working as a missionary.¹⁶⁹

McCaleb's explanation in these situations was that people left or changed affiliation out of their own free will or flaw in character, but not because God had failed to take care of them. Such judgments were indeed severe coming from one whose securer support base was insulated from the normal stresses of faith missionaries. In reflection on his experience of the first seven years of trusting in God in the light of those who departed or defected, McCaleb wrote:

Some, after hearing what kind of income I have, have decided that a fixed salary was better than the half of a salary that I got. That's not too hard to figure out. Empty purses have convinced more than one that salaries and denominational mission boards are greatly to be desired. The test of coming to the end of the money is a trial to the flesh, and will either chasten man into a closer communion with God or lead him to fall in with some arrangement that will secure him against such a condition in the future. *The experience of being in want is a blessing to those who will allow themselves to be exercised thereby. . . .* The process of finding out this secret is not always a pleasant one, and hence many are willing to let it go undiscovered and choose rather a course that will secure them a stated and ample sum. A fixed salary for the year between man and man requires no faith in God; it is no more than the unbelieving world is in the habit of doing. Unbelievers judge of their income by the promises men make them, but our promise is from God; it is an agreement between God and man.¹⁷⁰

In the 1880s the atmosphere among missionaries in Japan had been so optimistic that some predicted that the nation might become Christian within one generation.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ McCaleb, "Success of Seeming Failure," 180-1; Snodgrass, "Foreign Missionary Column," August 22, 1895, 539.

¹⁷⁰ John Moody McCaleb, "Missionary Work," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 51 (1899): 811.

¹⁷¹ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 192.

Instead, the 1890s proved to be a turbulent decade in which to build a church. Looking back over their first tour of duty in Japan, McCaleb chose to focus on the financial success of the work. At the end of their first term in Japan, he issued a financial report in which he demonstrated that God had chosen to provide a constant sufficient income.¹⁷² Although some had failed God, McCaleb was confident that God had never failed them. McCaleb noted that of the original five volunteers, two were still serving independently in Japan. He was referring to himself and his wife. In contrast, only one of the original eight of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society remained serving in Japan. McCaleb's point was that the missionary society could not boast better longevity results than those who went depending solely on God.¹⁷³ The experiment in independently supported mission was, for McCaleb, a complete success.

First Furlough, 1899-1901

If one of McCaleb's expressed intents of his first term of service was to demonstrate the feasibility of faith missions in Japan, his purpose in coming to the States in 1899 was to sensitize the churches to their responsibility to send out missionaries.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² In this article McCaleb recorded God's providence in the support of his work as measured through the years: "In 1892 I received about \$900; in 1893, \$678.73; in 1894, \$588.08; in 1895, \$670.62; in 1896, \$671.65; in 1897, \$595.38; in 1898, \$626.38; in 1899, \$646.27. These figures, covering a period of eight years, do not show a 'waning constituency,' judging even from the money point of view." John Moody McCaleb, "Brother McCaleb's Report for December and Summary for the Year," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 5 (1900): 74.

¹⁷³ McCaleb, "Information about the Volunteers," October 19, 1902, 231.

¹⁷⁴ McCaleb wrote, "Faith without experience is of but little value. We like to listen to those who have put their own faith to the test." Having had the experience of being sustained by faith, he then hoped that the churches would listen to him. John Moody McCaleb, "Missionary Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 51 (1899): 811. He also wrote, "My eight years' experience gives me a deeper faith in God and more confidence in his children. With gratitude both to him and them, I press on toward the mark. It is my

His stated desire was to raise awareness of the need for the Gospel and of the churches' duty to respond to this need. He categorically denied that his purpose in the States was to "raise money" and to those who asked him why he came he wrote, "I believe if the churches do not awake to their duty and do all they can, both in their personal efforts and with their means, to save a perishing world they will be lost. My purpose in making the tour of the churches was to impress this truth, and to make men see that unless they are interested in the salvation of others they themselves will be lost. . . . My faith is that we could have spent the rest of our days in Japan and the Lord would have taken care of us (provided that had been the way most pleasing to him)."¹⁷⁵

Although his words were bold and severe, McCaleb was expressing in his own way a truth that Guido Verbeck, a pioneer missionary to Japan, had earlier discovered. In 1883 Verbeck had said that it was not to be expected that "missionaries individually or collectively, should be vastly superior and wiser than their constituencies, the home churches who produce and commission them."¹⁷⁶ McCaleb had ventured beyond the confines of his own background, and after his experience as a foreign missionary, he set

purpose to travel among the churches till next summer one year hence to encourage them more and more in missionary work, when the Lord willing, I shall return to Japan to continue to labor among that people." McCaleb, "Summary for the Year," 74.

¹⁷⁵ McCaleb, "December Report, February 1902," 375. McCaleb promised all the churches that he visited that he would not make any appeals for funds. John Moody McCaleb, "Missionary Work," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 1 (1900): 10; John Moody McCaleb, "Brother McCaleb's Report for February," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 13 (1900): 203; John Moody McCaleb, "An Industrial School for Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 28 (1900): 442; John Moody McCaleb, "My Purpose," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 39 (1900): 607. James A. Harding testified when he heard McCaleb speak, "He did not make any appeals" in fact, "He spoke little of Japan and even less of himself." Harding, "Peculiar Man," 1902, 27.

¹⁷⁶ Guido F. Verbeck, "History of Protestant Missions in Japan," in *Proceedings of the General Conference of Protestant Missionaries in Japan* (Tokyo: Methodist Publishing House, 1901), 874.

out to reshape and broaden the missionary thinking of churches at home. He purposed to stir churches to become missionary training and sending agencies—to uphold the highest standards of godliness and evangelistic zeal. McCaleb’s shared experiences in Japan helped the Churches of Christ to create a vision for world missions.

When the McCalebs decided to travel to the States, they “had not a cent for that purpose,” but noted that “before the time came to pack our trunks, we had enough, and to spare, to pay all expenses.”¹⁷⁷ On August 4, 1899, the McCalebs set sail from Yokohoma and arrived in Portland, Oregon, fifteen days later. By August 23, they arrived in Lexington, Kentucky, to be with Della’s parents.¹⁷⁸ During his two years of furlough, McCaleb was rarely with his family but traveled among the churches lecturing on missions in Middle and West Tennessee, Kentucky, throughout the South and Southwest, through Pennsylvania, and into Canada.¹⁷⁹ His experiences and knowledge of a foreign culture made him a celebrity among the churches that heard his speeches. For two months, Della and the McCalebs’ three children, Lois, Jane, and James Harding McCaleb, lived with James A. and Pattie Harding.¹⁸⁰ During the long months that they were apart, McCaleb stated that he missed his wife and children dearly but continued in

¹⁷⁷ John Moody McCaleb, “Japan—Report for July,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 35 (1899): 559.

¹⁷⁸ John Moody McCaleb, “In Lexington,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 38 (1899): 608.

¹⁷⁹ McCaleb, “Chronology,” March 1915, 1-2.

¹⁸⁰ This probably occurred in the summer of 1901. James A. Harding, “A Peculiar Man and His Peculiar Way,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 21, no. 3 (1907): 8 James Harding McCaleb, surprisingly, was not named for James A. but after his father, James W. Harding. McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” July 26, 1904, 2. The McCalebs had an abiding respect and esteem for the elder Hardings and spent a refreshing time with them during this furlough in Winchester, Kentucky. John Moody McCaleb, “Missionary,” *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 30 (1901): 470.

his missions promotion tour.¹⁸¹ In the late fall of 1899 and the beginning of 1900, Della and the children suffered greatly with the measles.¹⁸² In addition, J. M. McCaleb came down with malaria while in Columbia, Tennessee. Despite their illnesses during this furlough, McCaleb dedicated himself to writing columns in the *Gospel Advocate* and *The Way* in order to raise money for famine stricken India; to raising support for William J. Bishop, a new missionary to Japan, and D. F. Jones, a missionary in China; and to promoting the support of missionaries in general.¹⁸³

At the conclusion of their furlough time, McCaleb stated that if he had prolonged his stay in the States, he would have had enough work for another ten years in stirring the churches to doing God's work. Convinced that for too long the churches had talked about the evils of the missionary societies, he had determined to inform churches about what could be done and how it could be accomplished according to what he believed was the Lord's direction. He especially emphasized that the church remained vibrant and healthy only so long as it was "letting its influence go out for good. . . . No church can be saved

¹⁸¹ During this period, McCaleb published a series of letters to his wife in which he wrote of his love for his family and the difficulty he experienced in leaving them behind. The letters may have been calculated attempts at evoking sympathy and raising funds. John Moody McCaleb, "Missionary Notes," *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 9 (1901): 142.

¹⁸² John Moody McCaleb, "Letter from Brother McCaleb," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 50 (1899): 797; McCaleb, "Chronology," March 1915, 1.

¹⁸³ John Moody McCaleb, "A Word for China," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 47 (1899): 730; John Moody McCaleb, "Brother Bishop," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 52 (1899): 830; John Moody McCaleb, "The Indian Sufferers," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 18 (1900): 288; John Moody McCaleb, "The Famine in India," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 22 (1900): 349; John Moody McCaleb, "Brother McCaleb's Report," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 22 (1900): 347; John Moody McCaleb, "Brother McCaleb's Report for February," *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 11 (1901): 168.

that is not saving others.”¹⁸⁴ The churches’ purity and life were sustained by the renewal experienced in going out into the world to bring the good news. McCaleb wrote, “Like a stream that as long as it is moving, is clear and clean. So the church avoids the contaminations of the world by being a flowing stream outward.”¹⁸⁵

Even the matter of travel was ever a demonstration for McCaleb that God was a provider for those who operated by faith.¹⁸⁶ As the summer of 1901 approached and the McCalebs announced their return departure for Japan, they did not have the funds they needed but were confident through prayer that God would provide.¹⁸⁷ When they left for Seattle to meet a ship leaving August 3, they had received \$211 but still needed another \$105 for passage to Japan.¹⁸⁸ They arrived to the port in time but missed the departure because their notes drawn on Eastern banks could not be immediately cashed. On August 5, another \$107 arrived, and three days before the next ship, the *Olympia*, departed August 24, their bank notes were made good.¹⁸⁹ Their delay, however inconvenient, was considered by them to have been divinely blessed in three ways: Della

¹⁸⁴ John Moody McCaleb, “Two Years’ Work,” *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 30 (1901): 470.

¹⁸⁵ John Moody McCaleb, “Into All the World,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 6 (1900): 91.

¹⁸⁶ Even in their departure from Japan for their first furlough, McCaleb emphasized that they did not have any money in reserve, nor did they have the opportunity to travel among American churches to raise the funds necessary for the trip. At the time McCaleb wrote that he needed two hundred dollars for the trip. He claimed he had it in pledges and cited his pledge, “And my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” John Moody McCaleb, “Japan—Report for February,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 16 (1899): 256.

¹⁸⁷ John Moody McCaleb, “God’s Care,” *The Way* 3, no. 12 (1901): 96.

¹⁸⁸ John Moody McCaleb, “From Louisville, KY to Tokyo, Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 33 (1901): 518.

¹⁸⁹ In the meantime, others such as James A. Harding had made urgent appeals on the McCalebs’ behalf. Harding, “Scraps,” July 28, 1901, 129.

McCaleb's health benefited greatly while staying with the Johnson family near Seattle at Richmond Beach; they avoided arriving at the end of an unbearably hot summer in Tokyo; and the day before their departure, McCaleb baptized the husband of their hostess.¹⁹⁰

The McCalebs' Second Term of Service, 1901-1909, Legitimization

When the McCalebs disembarked in Yokohama, they were met with the news that President McKinley had been assassinated. McKinley was dead, but the optimism of "the missionary effort which has wrought such wonderful triumphs for civilization" gained momentum.¹⁹¹ With the successful conclusion of the Spanish-American war and the securing of the Philippines, American missionaries plunged enthusiastically into the world in which "the conquest by force of arms must be followed by conquest for Christ."¹⁹² The McCalebs had reasons to be optimistic as well. They had a new dedicated teammate, William J. Bishop, who had arrived and begun work in their absence. The Forward Evangelistic Campaign of 1901-1904 launched by cooperating Protestant churches was in full swing. Modeled after similar initiatives in America, "the campaign included a series of mass rallies in the larger cities, visiting teams for single meetings in the smaller places, evangelistic appeals, the signing of cards, after-meetings for personal

¹⁹⁰ John Moody McCaleb, "Report for July," *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 34 (1901): 534; McCaleb, "Louisville to Tokyo," August 29, 1901, 550; McCaleb, "Louisville to Tokyo," September 19, 1901, 598; John Moody McCaleb, "Brother McCaleb's Report for August—The Lord's Way," *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 47 (1901): 730.

¹⁹¹ These were the words of President McKinley at his opening address at the Ecumenical Missionary Conference held in April, 1900. Anderson, "American Protestants," 383.

¹⁹² Words appearing in the *Baptist Union* quoted in *Ibid.*, 380-1.

work, and the final follow-up assumed by local pastors.”¹⁹³ The scheme, which represented a renewed Protestant evangelistic surge, drew crowds totaling three hundred thousand and netted approximately one thousand baptisms. Missionaries were learning to allow the Japanese Christians to take greater responsibility for the evangelism of Japan, and a more positive spirit pervaded.

Having completed his first seven years in which he downplayed the success or failure of the work and emphasized how the society-less missionaries thrived, and having spent two years traveling among the churches to “encourage them more and more in missionary work,” McCaleb entered into his second term of mission work in Japan.¹⁹⁴ His purpose was to establish a Japanese church. His method was to educate children and young people in Christian schools. The use he made of this work was to legitimize the independent faith missions plan through the buying of property and the building of physical structures.¹⁹⁵ In some respects McCaleb’s goals reflected the primary objective of George Müller in his work with orphans: “it might be seen that now, in the nineteenth century, *God is still the Living God, and that now, as well as thousands of years ago, He listens to the prayers of His children.*”¹⁹⁶ Müller cared for orphans, but his purpose in doing so without making appeals for funds was to demonstrate that God still answered prayer. The intention of McCaleb’s work was to demonstrate that God provided

¹⁹³ Charles W. Iglehart, *A Century of Protestant Christianity in Japan* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1959), 119.

¹⁹⁴ McCaleb, “Summary for the Year,” 74.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 291-2.

adequately for missionaries who followed the biblical plan for support. Schools, church buildings, and missionary homes were, for the missionary societies, measures of permanence and success and demonstrated the validity of their work.¹⁹⁷ During his second term of work, McCaleb purposefully sought to prove that his small band of missionaries, living and supported through volunteer contributions, when measured by the same standards, were more effective and less expensive than their missionary society-sponsored counterparts.¹⁹⁸

The Zoshigaya Gakuin

From the beginning of Protestantism in Japan, educational work had been the heart and major emphasis of missionary activity. The government often hired missionaries to teach in state run schools, and missionaries opened their own. In the 1870s, for example, two ex-military Americans, L. L. Janes and William S. Clark, were invited to teach in government schools in Kumamoto and Sapporo respectively. The students were selected carefully and “represented the highest intellectual quality and spiritual vitality of the *samurai* class.”¹⁹⁹ Contrary to the original design of the anti-foreign authorities, many of these young men became Christians and eventually leaders of the Japanese church. The success of this method, combined with McCaleb’s personal

¹⁹⁷ McCaleb pointed out that the Disciples of Christ had nineteen missionaries and had established Drake College in Tokyo. John Moody McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” *Gospel Advocate* 45, no. 49 (1903): 775.

¹⁹⁸ James A. Harding, “C. C. Klingman and the Japan Mission.” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 6 (1909): 8. John Moody McCaleb, “A Word of Explanation,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 7 (1909): 3.

¹⁹⁹ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 169-71.

knowledge of the Harding educational tradition, would have given McCaleb reason to hope that through a school he would be able to convert and train the future leaders of the Churches of Christ in Japan. Although McCaleb was not as successful as those who worked more intelligently and diligently before him, Harding's educational model, as adapted and publicized by McCaleb, became the predominant means of conducting mission work in Japan, South Africa, and eventually China.

The centerpiece of McCaleb's proof of independent missionary legitimacy was a student home that evolved over several years to become the Tokyo Bible School and eventually the Zoshigaya Gakuin.²⁰⁰ McCaleb's Bible school was the realization of a dream long frustrated in the plans of Snodgrass (1892) and later, Azbill (1896). McCaleb had come to understand that a Bible College such as Potter Bible College could never succeed in Japan for lack of a large enough constituency. He contented himself, therefore, with renting a home for Japanese students who flocked to Tokyo for schooling but who would have otherwise had a very difficult time finding a suitably moral environment in which to live. McCaleb's plan had simply been to "give them [students] comfortable lodgings and plain but nourishing fare at a price that will simply cover expenses." His ultimate goal was to be "brought into close touch with young men and have a great influence and do more permanent good."²⁰¹ The faith missions home was, in fact, a

²⁰⁰ Zoshigaya, now in the center of Tokyo, was then a suburb. "Gakuin" is Japanese for "school." The name change occurred at the instigation of George Klingman. John Moody McCaleb, "Common Ground For All," *Gospel Advocate* 49, no. 23 (1907): 358.

²⁰¹ McCaleb, "Missionary Notes," April 19, 1904, 4. John Moody McCaleb, "The Students' Home," *The Way* 4, no. 2 (1902).

standard mode of operation for faith missionaries at that time. McCaleb invited the students to evening Bible classes held in the nearby study center of his co-worker, William J. Bishop, at Koishikawa chapel. The home was opened September 1, 1902, but had to close for a short period in November due to its six boarders going on strike to protest the mismanagement of and inadequate meals provided by the caretaker, Mashino.²⁰² McCaleb did not enjoy the same high quality of students that the earliest missionaries experienced. One year later after these difficulties had been surmounted and the English department was generating enough funds to bear all of the school's expenses, the student home grew to become the Tokyo Bible School.²⁰³

By March of 1904, McCaleb had a band of eight young men consistently attending his Bible classes asking questions such as, "Why do Christians attack other religions?" "Does Christianity rest on fact?" and "What's the difference between the God of Christianity and the gods of other religions?"²⁰⁴ McCaleb conducted studies in a Socratic style and baptized the school's first convert, Takahashi, May 15, 1904.²⁰⁵ McCaleb, as an individual, was willing to discuss and wrestle with the tough issues that the General Assembly of Protestant missionaries had strangely ignored.²⁰⁶ The school's

²⁰² He was given plenty of money for the preparation of student meals but was spending it on "immorality and drink." McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 504-5.

²⁰³ McCaleb, "The Beginning," 1.

²⁰⁴ John Moody McCaleb, "A Letter from Bro. J. M. McCaleb," *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 18 (1904): 9; John Moody McCaleb, "Mission Notes," *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 30 (1904): 2.

²⁰⁵ McCaleb, "Missionary Notes," July 26, 1904, 2.

²⁰⁶ Iglehart, *Protestant Christianity in Japan*, 112-4.

boarding department was suspended from December of 1904 through 1907, but classes averaging about twenty young men and women continued each evening.²⁰⁷

On June 3, 1906, Della took the McCaleb children indefinitely to the United States for the stated reason of providing a better education for them. With his family gone, McCaleb lived very economically, worked long hours, and traveled frequently. No longer needing a home for his family, he sold it and with the proceeds was able to purchase just over an acre of land in Zoshigaya.²⁰⁸ McCaleb built a dorm and an adjoining residence and opened the school October 1, 1907.²⁰⁹ One year later the church started meeting at Zoshigaya with three Japanese members and three Americans. A chapel for the church was completed in February of 1909.²¹⁰ Thus McCaleb felt that he had proven that stable, self-supporting institutions could be opened and maintained without the aid and financial muscle of a missionary society.

McCaleb believed that missionary churches and schools should be kept simple enough in their furnishings that they could always be self-supporting. He had the students organize a committee to manage the rent and pay all expenses so that the school had at least the appearance of being self-governing.²¹¹ Shortly after the Gakuin was built,

²⁰⁷ John Moody McCaleb, "Tokyo Bible School," *Gospel Advocate* 47, no. 29 (1905): 545; John Moody McCaleb, "Japan Letter," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 28 (1909): 3.

²⁰⁸ McCaleb, *Christ, the Light of the World*, 147-8.

²⁰⁹ McCaleb, "Japan Letter," July 1909, 3. McCaleb bought a lot for one thousand yen, then traded with Women's University for a lot half again as big. McCaleb, "Chronology," March 1915, 1-2.

²¹⁰ McCaleb, "Japan Letter," July 1909, 3.

²¹¹ McCaleb maintained the right to veto. McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 510.

McCaleb chose to rent out the director's residence and moved in with the students. He believed the real success of the Bible school was his living among the students and modeling Christianity for them.²¹² By the time McCaleb had determined to make his next trip to the States for furlough, the Zoshigaya Gakuin had become his show piece of independent faith missionary efforts. By the fall of 1909, the Japan independent missionaries could boast a solidly established work. McCaleb, in fact, published a leaflet that contained the following:

Since this work began, there have been about 645 baptisms, seven churches established, besides a boarding school for boys and a number of Bible schools for children. We have four church buildings, six missionary homes, and three school buildings. The church buildings are valued at \$1,500; mission homes, \$6,650, school buildings \$2,500; land owned, \$6,500. . . . We have five new workers who are now considering the idea of going to that field.²¹³

These statistics representing the efforts of all the independently supported missionaries of the Churches of Christ in Japan were typical of Protestant missions in the country at the time. Congregations were generally small and had difficulty supporting themselves. Sympathizers outnumbered active members three to one. These were people who were attracted to the Christian faith, but for cultural reasons or social pressure refrained from formalizing their membership by being baptized.²¹⁴ A study conducted in the 1920s revealed that there were roughly twelve hundred Christian churches and

²¹² McCaleb, *Christ, the Light of the World*, 147-8.

²¹³ Quoted in S. H. Hall, "Missionary Work in Japan," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 45 (1909): 13. While the economic improvement of missionaries rendered the effort more credible for some, disgruntled readers of McCaleb's reports objected that the missionaries owned their own homes. McCaleb retorted that Snodgrass had bought his with money he and his wife had earned and that McCaleb had purchased his through his own work.

²¹⁴ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 246.

eighteen hundred preaching places, with an average membership of approximately fifty each.²¹⁵ Only the larger consolidated churches drew on sufficient financial resources to support their own Japanese preachers. Despite the prevailing desire of the Japanese to take on the responsibility of works of expansion, Western missionaries believed that the enlargement of the work justified the arrival of more missionaries.

Recruitment of Workers

The purchase of property and the establishment of the Bible school were just two components in the legitimization of McCaleb's anti-missionary society work. Another was the constant appeal for more workers. Proponents of the missionary societies argued that their organizations provided accountability for the workers supported by them, ensuring trustworthiness and a strong work ethic, but that the non-society missionaries did not have to respond to anyone. Independent missionaries were subject to a higher degree of scrutiny and were suspect.²¹⁶ Although not formally expressed in the papers, even non-society missionaries admitted that lone workers could make astounding and untruthful claims about the successfulness of their work.²¹⁷ After all, other co-workers were not available to confirm or dispute reported results. One of the effects, intended or not, of McCaleb's attempt to recruit more workers was the cultivation of a sense of

²¹⁵ Iglehart, *Protestant Christianity in Japan*, 178-80.

²¹⁶ John Moody McCaleb, "A Consideration of the Facts," *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 31 (1901): 486; John Moody McCaleb, "Is No One Responsible?" *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 34 (1901): 534; John Moody McCaleb, "The Register's Criticisms," *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 38 (1901): 598.

²¹⁷ Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to Clarence G. Vincent, Tokyo, November 24, 1913.

accountability. Having more workers resulted in an aura of trustworthiness and contributed to his ability to raise funds more successfully.

William and Alice Bishop, the first workers to respond to McCaleb's pleas, arrived in Japan shortly after the McCalebs' departure for their first furlough in the fall of 1899. They became the McCalebs' closest associates during that period and labored in Japan from 1899 through 1913. During the McCalebs' first furlough, Snodgrass wrote that he was anxious for their return and expressed that he hoped that they would bring other workers back with them.²¹⁸ During McCaleb's travel among the churches, he attempted to encourage others to return with them, but his invitations yielded no immediate fruit, and they returned to Japan alone. McCaleb continued to write the churches begging for more workers. In fact, nearly every article of his contained a reference to the need for additional missionaries.²¹⁹ He believed that Japan was "wide open" and in need of no less than one hundred more full-time workers.²²⁰ Although he had been writing such articles for more than ten years, he had netted only the one recruit, William Bishop.

In 1901 McCaleb wrote a letter of commendation and praise for the opening of Potter Bible College at Bowling Green and expressed his hope that its graduates would become missionaries. Japan alone, he believed, needed hundreds. McCaleb's recruitment

²¹⁸ E. Snodgrass, "Prospects in Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 52 (1900): 827.

²¹⁹ For examples see McCaleb, "Bible and Japan," 307; John Moody McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," *The Way* 3, no. 50 (1902): 398-9; McCaleb, "Missionary Notes," February 16, 1904, 2.

²²⁰ McCaleb, "McCaleb's Japan Work," May 31, 1904, 3.

efforts eventually led to the Cunninghams' arrival in Japan in 1901, Gertrude Remington in 1904, the Klingmans in 1908, and the Hons in 1909.²²¹ W. D. Cunningham initially collaborated with McCaleb as an independent missionary when he was rejected by the society as "physically unfit." The two had a falling out when Cunningham began to introduce a musical instrument into worship. McCaleb may have also felt envy for Cunningham's work which in 1904 resulted in thirty-two baptisms.²²² Gertrude Remington went to Japan in response to McCaleb's plea for an osteopathic physician.²²³ She was a nurse who had trained in Kentucky and practiced osteopathy in New Jersey.²²⁴ Remington initially lived with the McCalebs and supported herself through her work.²²⁵ Charles and Clemmie Klingman, graduates of Potter Bible College, came to Japan in time to substitute for McCaleb who returned to the States for his second furlough.²²⁶ Bert Hon met with McCaleb in Cincinnati during his second furlough. Due to Bert's "nervous headaches" the Hons lasted less than a year and returned to the States.²²⁷ Although this increase in the work force helped to render the work credible, more importantly,

²²¹ The Klingmans had already made their commitment to become missionaries as a result of a sermon they had heard from William J. Bishop. See below, pp. 285, 310.

²²² John Moody McCaleb, "Japan Missions," *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 36 (1905): 5; McCaleb, "Missionary Sketches," September 5, 1905, 4; James W. Zachary, "Japan Missions," *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 27 (1905): 13.

²²³ McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," January 23, 1902, 331.

²²⁴ James A. Harding, "Another Missionary on the Way to Japan," *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 6 (1904): 8.

²²⁵ McCaleb, "Letter from McCaleb," May 3, 1904, 9.

²²⁶ Harding, "Klingman and His Wife to Japan," 8-9.

²²⁷ McCaleb, *Christ, the Light of the World*, 63; McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 367.

McCaleb's appeals created a climate of openness to verification. McCaleb's reports seem to indicate an intentional attempt to demonstrate a collegiality and close working relationship with frequent visitation between the workers.²²⁸

Sensational Interest Narratives

McCaleb sought to legitimize his work further by writing of the sensational interest the Japanese populace had in the Christian message. Typical of McCaleb were his stories of preaching in the park to large crowds. Going and coming from his classes in the morning, McCaleb had noticed a park in Tokyo and determined that it was an ideal place to preach. Having inquired of the police and having been told that no written permissions were necessary, he began preaching weekly in any park he liked. Usually he found a rock on which to stand, began singing to draw crowds of 100-500 Japanese, and then preached to them. One of his favorite illustrations to use in preaching was that of three idols that stood together. During the night two of the idols are smashed with only the one in the middle remaining undamaged. According to the story, the town's people accused a young Christian boy of having smashed the idols. When the boy suggested that the idol in the middle had smashed the other two idols, his accusers said that the middle idol could not have caused the damage because it was "not able to move hand or foot." The boy then asked, "Why do you worship such a god that cannot protect his companions from destruction?" In such a way McCaleb sought to convince curiosity seekers that the Christian God was superior to their idols. Following his preaching, he distributed tracts to

²²⁸ For an example see John Moody McCaleb, "From Day to Day," *The Way* 3, no. 43 (1902): 340.

his audience which included some who were “well-dressed, beggars, nurses, and babies.”²²⁹ Although McCaleb’s stories drew the intense interest of the Japanese, he never reported how many baptisms resulted from preaching in the park.

Setbacks to Expansion and Legitimization

In his writing McCaleb often had to report discouraging news of closings, unfaithful converts, insufficient funds, and small gatherings for worship. After ten years of unsuccessfully seeking a replacement for Carme Hostetter, for example, he was forced to close the charity school that she had previously directed.²³⁰ Although McCaleb tried to present evidence that Japanese converts were very committed, he could not deny that many apostatized, or were proselytized by other religious groups that could provide handsomer salaries for Japanese preachers. McCaleb baptized, for example, a young man named Oyanchi, who shortly afterwards asked McCaleb to write him a letter of recommendation so that he could work for the Universalists.²³¹ The arrival in the late 1870s of Unitarian envoys, or ambassadors as they preferred to be called, was disruptive to the relative unity and harmony that existed among Protestant missionaries. In 1877, for example, Reverend A. M. Knapp came to Japan principally to express sympathy with the

²²⁹ For examples of such accounts see John Moody McCaleb, “Fellowship,” *The Way* 4, no. 13 (1902): 103; John Moody McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 49 (1904): 2.

²³⁰ John Moody McCaleb, “Life’s Daily Record,” *Gospel Advocate* 50, no. 21 (1908): 343.

²³¹ John Moody McCaleb, “From Day to Day,” *The Way* 3, no. 38 (1901): 301.

traditional religions of Japan.²³² The Unitarians were unable to accomplish much in establishing churches, but their considerable influence was unsettling.²³³

McCaleb claimed to be sufficiently supported, yet very early in his second tour of mission work he began to supplement his income by teaching English each morning from eight to ten o'clock to the employees of the Tokyo post office.²³⁴ The small Japanese audiences in Kanda Ward for preaching and communion paled in comparison to the large ones he addressed each Sunday afternoon at the U.S. Naval Hospital.²³⁵ In his writing McCaleb downplayed his failures and defined success not in terms of numbers but faithfulness. He wrote, "But the Lord does not depend on enthusiasm to carry out his purposes. All cannot have it. If the Lord should demand this of me I should be a failure. I couldn't arouse people to a high pitch of enthusiasm if I should try. But the Lord assures success on a basis that all can attain—faithfulness."²³⁶

The greatest blow to McCaleb's attempts to legitimize the independent work was the return of his own family to the States. For the first fourteen years of their work, Della had contributed to her husband's mission work through offering hospitality, teaching ladies' and children's classes, and by caring for and educating their children at

²³² Otis Cary, *A History of Christianity in Japan*, vol. 2 (New York: F. H. Revell, 1909), 199.

²³³ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 188-9.

²³⁴ John Moody McCaleb, "A Day in the Life of a Missionary," *The Way* 3, no. 39 (1901): 307; McCaleb, "From Day to Day," 340; McCaleb, "Day by Day," 352. This employment may have begun as early as 1899 when he said that he began teaching part time in order "to keep about even with current expenses."

²³⁵ McCaleb, "Day by Day," 352; John Moody McCaleb, "The First Lord's Day of the Year," *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 12 (1904): 3.

²³⁶ McCaleb, "December Report," February 1902, 376.

home. On June 3, 1906, however, she left for the States with their three children for the purpose of securing a better education for them.²³⁷ Long separations of missionaries from their families were common and McCaleb considered the arrangement to be a difficult trial. Their situation, however, also presented a financial challenge. How could McCaleb justify the collection of funds from churches to care for his family that was in the States, while only he carried on the mission work? In his defense, McCaleb argued that board missionaries received one hundred dollars per month plus another one hundred dollars for each child. If supported by one of the societies, the monthly cost for his family would have been four hundred dollars while he, working alone in Japan, could live on less than four hundred dollars for the entire year. In 1908, in fact, his family in America had needed \$992 while he needed only \$158. The total for the McCaleb family was still far less than what was required for a missionary sustained by one of the missionary societies.²³⁸ McCaleb's ability to sustain his family with voluntary donations was due, no doubt, to his extreme frugality, his willingness to partially support himself, and many generosities extended to his family.

²³⁷ Janes, "Dorothy McCaleb," 937.

²³⁸ James A. Harding, "C. C. Klingman and the Japan Mission," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 6 (1909): 8; McCaleb, "Word of Explanation," February 1909, 3. Evidence would seem to indicate that McCaleb prioritized his work, travel, and promotion of missions above his family. Even during visits back to the States, he spent very little time with his family. In 1909, he traveled for over two months before even going to see them. "Condenser," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 34 (1909): 5; John Moody McCaleb, "From Yokohama to San Francisco," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 29 (1909): 3.

Popularizer of James A. Harding's Teachings

Harding began unreservedly to lend support to J. M. McCaleb during McCaleb's first furlough home when he witnessed firsthand that McCaleb refrained from making appeals for funds and strictly trusted in God for his income.²³⁹ On hearing McCaleb speak for the first time Harding wrote,

I supposed, of course, that he would be pretty energetic in visiting the churches, that he would speak fully of Japan and of the needs of that field, that he would show the necessity of liberal giving for the support of the work, and that he would take some steps to enlist churches and individuals in his enterprise; but when I had the privilege of hearing him he did nothing of the kind. . . . One night I went with him to one of his appointments. Instead of speaking, as I had expected, about his work, instead of trying to arouse in the brethren enthusiasm for himself and that in which he was engaged, he was wholly absorbed, it seemed to me, in the effort to induce them to love God more and to serve him better. He spoke little of Japan and less of himself.²⁴⁰

After this encounter, Harding was convinced of McCaleb's genuine trust in God and projected his confidence backward in time on McCaleb's earlier demonstration of this virtue. Harding was particularly impressed by McCaleb's initial willingness to show his dependence on God in leaving for Japan the first time by heading to the port of departure without having yet received the necessary funds to sustain his family in their work and without a contract. Harding also admired him for not "accumulating money while he was here [in the States on furlough] to carry him back, and to help him in the

²³⁹ Harding first cited McCaleb's faith and began to quote him in 1901. Harding wrote, "He expresses some important truths so well that I feel like copying some of them. Brother McCaleb believes God will supply all his needs and grant to him all that he ought to have, if he will serve and trust God as he should." Harding, "In Whom Shall We Trust?" April 1901, 18. He later announced McCaleb's intention to return to Japan and solicited funds for him stating, "When a man like he is wants to go into the foreign field, and is willing to go without covenant or contract with any one but Jehovah, we ought to be glad to help him in going, and faithful in supporting him while he is there." Harding, "Scraps," July 28, 1901, 129.

²⁴⁰ Harding, "Peculiar Man," 1902, 27.

work across the great sea,” and noted, “when the time came for him to return [to Japan] he had not money enough to go; but he started and reached the Pacific Coast.”²⁴¹ Harding added, “Like the servants of Jesus in his day, when they went out preaching the gospel of the kingdom, taking nothing for their support as they went, he has lacked for nothing.”²⁴² In Harding’s firm opinion, McCaleb was a “peculiar man” but one who was right in putting his trust in God.²⁴³

Financial Support

J. M. McCaleb frequently published articles in the *Gospel Advocate* and the *Christian Leader and the Way* that reflected Harding’s basic tenets of faith and applied them to the foreign missionary. Like Harding, McCaleb wrote that the missionary ought to be working and not worry about support.²⁴⁴ He admitted that “from a strictly business point [of view], there [was] scarcely anything more foolish and void of good. . . . Leave out faith,” he said, “and such a course is justly censured.”²⁴⁵ McCaleb argued, however, that a “fixed salary . . . between man and man [required] no faith in God.”²⁴⁶ The

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ “Peculiar” in the sense of being both “unusual” and “belonging to God” (1 Peter 2:9, KJV). Harding wrote, “Every man who puts his trust in God and walks by faith in him is a very peculiar man in this age, and his ways are very peculiar ways; but those who so do are right, and all others are wrong.” Ibid., 27-8. Other articles in support of McCaleb included Harding, “McCaleb and His Trust in God,” 58-60; Harding, “Japan Missionaries and Special Providence,” 8-9; Harding, “In Whom Shall We Trust?” May 1905, 8; Harding, “Peculiar Man,” 1907, 8.

²⁴⁴ McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” May 9, 1895, 303.

²⁴⁵ John Moody McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” *The Way* 5, no. 8 (1903): 649.

²⁴⁶ McCaleb, “Missionary Work,” December 21, 1899, 811.

missionary's promise was not to be from people but from God. To seek "a new pledge from our fellow-men," he said, was to "show distrust in the Lord's pledge."²⁴⁷

Like Harding, McCaleb also opposed life insurance, making appeals for money, and missionary begging. McCaleb wrote that purchasing life insurance really did not insure; it merely placed confidence in a company rather than in God.²⁴⁸ He decried the board missionaries who carried life insurance policies because they failed to "trust the Lord to take care of their families."²⁴⁹ From the earliest days of his missionary work, McCaleb expressed thanks to readers for their gifts and claimed that money had always been in sufficient supply without his having to ask for it. He had, of course, W. K. Azbill to help raise it, and there was also an excitement about this new venture that helped to generate funds more easily.²⁵⁰ McCaleb employed several rhetorical devices that in effect substituted for appeals. As mentioned earlier, he reiterated the need for more workers, implying that if readers were not themselves willing to be missionaries, they needed to at least support those who were willing.²⁵¹ He also demonstrated compassion for his supporters. While Christians were experiencing financial hardships in America, McCaleb pledged to work even in the absence of funds, supporting himself if necessary.²⁵² Even

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ John Moody McCaleb, "Life Insurance," *The Way* 5, no. 28 (1903): 965.

²⁴⁹ John Moody McCaleb, "Brother Hamlin and the Churches," *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 36 (1904): 2.

²⁵⁰ McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," August 10, 1899, 502.

²⁵¹ McCaleb, "Come Over," August 15, 1895, 526.

²⁵² McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," May 9, 1895, 303.

his repeated articles in which he boldly declares that he would not make appeals for funds may have been a means of subtle solicitation.²⁵³ He also rallied sympathetic support by articulating persuasive arguments for orthodox positions.²⁵⁴ Although he did make appeals on behalf others, for missionary homes, and for his Bible school, he held that “the heathen world” did not “need money, but men—consecrated, godly men who [sought] first the kingdom of God.”²⁵⁵ Like Harding, McCaleb did not make direct appeals, but he did know how to work the system through an ever-increasing visibility among the churches and an intense frequency of published articles and reports.

Special Providence

In a style patterned after Harding’s, McCaleb affirmed that God delighted in answering the prayers of the righteous by granting their needs. McCaleb believed that “while God [worked] through natural means, the laws of nature . . . [were] not so unchangeable but that God [could] change their course and control human affairs to especially bless his own children.”²⁵⁶ He argued that if human beings derive personal

²⁵³ For an example see McCaleb, “God’s Care,” 96.

²⁵⁴ His writings included expositions on revelation, instrumental music, and missionary societies. John Moody McCaleb, “Modern Idolatry,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 1 (1892): 8; McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” October 19, 1893, 667; John Moody McCaleb, “The Word of God,” *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 20 (1895): 315; John Moody McCaleb, “Report for Second Quarter,” *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 32 (1895): 523. McCaleb’s stabilization of a support base through occasional expressions of orthodoxy set him apart from Harding. James A. Harding was generally at odds with the conservatives of the Restoration Movement whereas McCaleb tended to champion their cause and assured his credibility.

²⁵⁵ McCaleb, “February Report,” March 29, 1900, 203.

²⁵⁶ McCaleb, “Does God Care Especially for His Own?” 569.

benefit by exerting power and control over the laws of nature, “why should it be thought a thing incredible that the Author of these laws should do as much?”²⁵⁷

McCaleb’s reports frequently claimed the special providence of God at work in his life. On more than one occasion he and his wife lacked the money to buy groceries; they prayed and the next day received a money order sufficient for their need. One very cold winter when they had run out of fuel to heat their home and had nothing left but a bucket of coal dust, McCaleb was tempted to order more coal by putting it on credit. He wrote, “But then came the better thought. If I have asked the Lord to do a certain thing in a certain time, I can never know whether or not he will answer me unless I abide by my own stipulations. I gained the victory, and then and there cast myself upon him.”

Returning home with his nearly empty bucket, he found that a letter had just arrived with \$150.²⁵⁸

McCaleb similarly told the story of a reader who wrote a check, addressed the envelope, posted it, but forgot to insert the check. The letter was lost and never arrived. McCaleb asserted that through God’s providence the check was spared from being lost. The contributor later safely mailed the check. McCaleb wrote concerning the experience, “Again, it may be objected that such a view makes it necessary to believe that God in some mysterious way operated directly upon men’s hearts independent of the Word. I do not know just how directly or indirectly, or again just how independently of the Word such providential oversight may be, but that God does providentially work in the affairs

²⁵⁷ John Moody McCaleb, “The Fixed Laws of Nature,” *Gospel Advocate* 44, no. 42 (1902): 534.

²⁵⁸ John Moody McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 7 (1899): 107.

of the world, leading men to do this or keeping them back from doing that, is clearly taught in the Bible.”²⁵⁹

On another occasion the McCalebs were behind in their house payments. He thought to ask God to provide this money over the six months but then thought, “Why not one?” Before anyone had read about this situation in the papers he claimed, “the Lord had provided that \$200.”²⁶⁰

Despite God’s abundant providence, McCaleb also believed that God could and did often withhold assistance in order to discipline the believer. A Christian’s own “unfitness” could keep one from receiving God’s good gifts. McCaleb wrote, “When trials come, they should be received with joy, since we may be sure they are to help us to a higher and holier life.”²⁶¹ McCaleb, believing that the Christian missionary should embrace such difficulties, also wrote, “God will accept no one’s service without trial, and those who enter the vineyard should never lose sight of this.”²⁶² For McCaleb, “Faith without experience [was] of little value” and God increased the credibility and attractiveness of one’s faith by putting it to the test.²⁶³ God’s special providence in moments of adversity, then, was a conduit of discipline leading to holiness. Historically,

²⁵⁹ John Moody McCaleb, “Letter from Bro. McCaleb,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 6 (1905): 7.

²⁶⁰ John Moody McCaleb, “Report for January Remarks,” *The Way* 4, no. 5 (1902): 40; McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” March 20, 1902, 389.

²⁶¹ McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” August 10, 1899, 506.

²⁶² John Moody McCaleb, “Who Shall Go to South Africa?” *Christian Leader and the Way* 19, no. 27 (1905): 1.

²⁶³ McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” December 21, 1899, 811.

McCaleb was mixing faith and missions in words and themes common to the Keswick/holiness movement. Faith and holiness led to mission, and the experience of depending on God in mission led the believer to complete spiritual surrender to God.²⁶⁴

In battling with the modernist incursions and threats on religion and spirituality, McCaleb sided with fundamentalists in his reliance on Scripture and affirmed God's continued supernatural interventions in the physical world. McCaleb claimed to have proven the veracity of Harding's teaching on "special providence" on foreign soil. In so doing, he contributed to the idea of "special providence" which became the predominant understanding among the Churches of Christ to explain God's working in partnership with missionaries. McCaleb's expression of trust also set the standard by which future missionaries of the movement were judged. As will be seen in the next chapter on William J. Bishop, the home churches came to expect missionaries to practice McCaleb's implementation of trust theory.

Otherworldly Perspective

Pacifism

The appropriation of Harding's otherworldly perspective tested the resolve of McCaleb's convictions. Like Harding, McCaleb believed that the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world were "utterly incompatible," the former being established in peace by the shedding of the founder's son's own blood and the latter in violence by

²⁶⁴ Like Harding, McCaleb's writings often reflected language and elements of the Keswick/Holiness movement. See above, p. 44.

shedding the blood of others.²⁶⁵ Like David Lipscomb and other Southern religious leaders who were stunned by the support Northern churches gave to the Union cause before and during the Civil War, McCaleb embraced a radical pacifism that excluded Christian involvement in government and politics.²⁶⁶ Pacifism, which was the majority position of the Churches of Christ, appealed strongly to the destitute whites of the South who opposed the war. In their perception, “the war created wealth by exploiting the poor.”²⁶⁷ Very early in his missionary career, McCaleb opposed Christians taking oaths and holding government positions.²⁶⁸ He used anti-war rhetoric and opposed military service. He often used the soldier’s life, however, as a metaphor for a Christian’s undistracted devotion and duty to God.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ John Moody McCaleb, “The Church and the State,” *Gospel Advocate* 37, no. 39 (1895): 614.

²⁶⁶ Lipscomb, *Civil Government*. Lipscomb would have opposed the war anyway on theological grounds. He refused to carry any weapon to protect himself and encouraged congregations to not take sides in the conflict. Michael Casey, “From Pacifism to Patriotism: The Emergence of Civil Religion in the Churches of Christ During World War I,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66, no. 3 (1992): 458.

²⁶⁷ Michael Casey, “From Religious Outsiders to Insiders: the Rise and Fall of Pacifism in the Churches of Christ,” *Journal of Church and State* 44, no. 3 (2002): 456-7, 460-3. Casey contends that church leaders consciously embraced radical pacifism as a means to establishing a clear identity of the movement. Once obtained, the Churches of Christ slowly shifted positions. When in World War I the Germans were considered to be evil, soldiers were seen as Christians fighting for freedom. See also Casey, “Pacifism to Patriotism,” 376.

²⁶⁸ McCaleb, “Church and State,” October 3, 1895, 639.

²⁶⁹ John Moody McCaleb, “A Soldier Boy’s Experience,” *The Way* 3, no. 48 (1902): 382-3. McCaleb wrote of the resistance that smaller but absolutely dedicated Japanese soldiers demonstrated in their war against the Russians as an example for Christians. Referring to such soldiers he wrote, “They know that no halting, hesitating, half-hearted effort will amount to anything. It is win or die. Throw this kind of earnestness into the Christian life and something will be done.” McCaleb, “Japan Work,” February 28, 1905, 3. Hutchison called the missionary tendency to apply militaristic language to spiritual conquest the “moral equivalent for imperialism.” Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 91.

Such convictions brought McCaleb into direct confrontation with the newly found patriotism of his Japanese converts. After years of frustrating attempts to renegotiate fair-trade with the West, Japan was finally able to obtain a new treaty that abolished the older inequalities. The accord was signed in 1894 and became effective in 1899. As a result the Japanese began to see themselves as a world power. “From 1887, Japan set itself irrevocably in the direction of the authoritarian, expansionist nationalism, that, with varying kinds and degrees of emphasis, was largely to characterize its national policy until 1945.”²⁷⁰ Previous regional loyalties to feudal lords were replaced with a unified national patriotism that revolved around the eventual veneration of the emperor.²⁷¹ Military victories against China in 1895 and Russia in 1905, combined with rapid industrial growth, contributed to a marked increase in the nation’s self-confidence.²⁷² McCaleb seemed to have little understanding or appreciation for the reactive nature or cause of Japanese nationalism and militarism, and his pacifism clashed with the Japanese culture.

On one occasion at the close of worship, a Japanese brother made an announcement about the return of the emperor from his coronation ceremony, and the assembly concluded with the singing of a national song. McCaleb, greatly agitated, arose and objected, “This meeting is not for the purpose of celebrating the emperor, but Christ; it is the meeting for the Lord’s Supper; hence to close this meeting with the national song

²⁷⁰ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 199.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Emperor worship was codified and formalized after Emperor Meiji’s death in 1912. Ibid., 243.

was a great mistake. For this reason I could not sing it with you.” McCaleb then dismissed the church by praying for God to have mercy on them.²⁷³

McCaleb’s convictions on heavenly citizenship also brought him into sharp conflict with his own government. When McCaleb received an invitation to celebrate the Fourth of July in 1897 with other expatriates, he responded by quoting the words of Jesus: “My kingdom is not of this world” and added, “[I] cannot encourage a mere sectional patriotism or glory in an independence established in blood and cruelties of savage and merciless war. ‘Our citizenship is in heaven.’”²⁷⁴ However sincere his anti-government feelings may have been, McCaleb’s words were poorly timed and inflammatory. His response was passed on to a certain “Minister Buck,” a representative of the U.S. government in Tokyo, who understood McCaleb’s words to be a renunciation of American citizenship and consequently denied McCaleb’s request for a passport renewal ten days later. In his reply the minister stated, “The instructions of the United States Government strictly and positively forbid the issuance of passports to any other persons than citizens of the United States.”²⁷⁵ The minister therefore requested some evidence of citizenship and allegiance to his home country. After inquiries, a prolonged correspondence, and two personal visits to the minister, McCaleb refused to take the oath of allegiance required to obtain his passport and argued that ultimately he, as a Christian, was the best kind of citizen because he honored God over and above the Constitution.

²⁷³ John Moody McCaleb, “Strange, But Not Rare,” *Gospel Advocate* 58, no. 30 (1916): 770.

²⁷⁴ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 101.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

Refusing to capitulate, McCaleb approached the Japanese government and explained the details of this impasse. As a matter of courtesy, the Japanese issued him a passport through the American authorities without question.²⁷⁶

Voluntary Poverty

McCaleb's implementation of Harding's otherworldly perspective led him in his writing to emphasize evangelism specifically to the poor, to exalt the virtue of voluntary poverty, and to promote simplicity of lifestyle for greater missionary effectiveness.

Unlike middle class church leaders Müller's and Pierson's acquired poverty, McCaleb's was intrinsic to the origins and identity of Southern Churches of Christ. Born in poverty, these churches held that Christians should avoid the temptations of material wealth.

David Lipscomb had affirmed that "adapting themselves to the poor" was a sign of the true church.²⁷⁷ McCaleb wrote, "To forget the poor and go among the rich is like a physician who would forsake the sick and afflicted and spend his time among the well and able-bodied. . . . One evidence that Jesus gave to John that he was the Christ was that 'the poor have the gospel preached unto them.' But the poor will never listen to a man

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 100-15. In 1919 McCaleb again attempted to renew his passport, and the American officials in Japan requested that he take the Oath of Allegiance. McCaleb eventually obtained his passport by circumventing the Embassy and making his application directly to Washington. McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 514-6.

²⁷⁷ Anthony L. Dunnivant, "David Lipscomb and the 'Preferential Option for the Poor' Among Post-Bellum Churches of Christ," in *Poverty and Ecclesiology, Nineteenth Century Evangelicals in the Light of Liberation Theology*, ed. Anthony L. Dunnivant (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992), 40. As a land owner, David Lipscomb was not utterly poor himself. He argued for the virtue of poverty on theological grounds.

who himself lives in plenty. He may be a good man, but they will never be able to see whether he is laboring among them for their good or from profession.”²⁷⁸

Seeking to follow the example of Jesus in sympathizing with the poor, McCaleb held that the missionary had to “be poor himself.” McCaleb wrote, “Usually the financial condition of the missionary is so far removed from that of the people in general that there is really but little heartfelt connection between them. In order to sympathize with the poor, one must be poor himself.”²⁷⁹ He also believed that the experience of coming to the end of one’s money, although a “trial in the flesh,” ultimately “chasten[ed] a man into a communion with God. . . . The experience of being in want [was] a blessing to those who allow[ed] themselves to be exercised thereby.”²⁸⁰ McCaleb described his own experience of being in want and its spiritual result in these words:

I have not been so poor in many a day. I have come absolutely to the limit of all human resources. There is no way I can turn for deliverance. If I take out my purse and open it there is not a dollar in it. If I go to the bank I have not a dollar there. My income in Japan is now not enough to defray my own personal expenses—less than \$25 a month. There is not a friend I can approach who has it to lend, and if there were this would only defer the stress, to increase it later on. I am even a month behind with my personal living. In looking around, in whatever direction I may turn, I can see no means of deliverance from any human source. I am expected to pay something like a hundred and thirty dollars at the end of this month to meet current expenses. To the natural eye there is, at most, not more than \$25 in sight. My hands are as if they were tied. My strength is gone, my efforts unavailing. I am as helpless as an infant. I was going astray feeling that much depended on me. Then it was I; now it is i [sic]. The Lord threw his lasso about me. I struggled long and hard against him. I looked around in every direction for deliverance, but he drew me all the tighter, ‘with the cords

²⁷⁸ McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” December 21, 1899, 811.

²⁷⁹ McCaleb, “Seven Years,” January 19, 1899, 42.

²⁸⁰ McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” December 21, 1899, 811.

of love' till I tripped and fell. The fall seemed hard and I panted under it. But I finally said, Lord, you have conquered. I give up. The struggle is over. No longer do I look around but i [sic] look up.²⁸¹

In this article McCaleb confesses that during this period he was assailed by doubt. He also admits plainly that by his own encouragement others had come to depend on him rather than on God. God, however, used privation to redirect McCaleb's reliance. God was showing McCaleb that he was to urge others to trust in God and not in him. By such expressions, McCaleb successfully exacted sympathy from his readers. As a masterful writer, he knew how to work the system and stir supporters to give without making direct appeals.

The authenticity of the rhetoric of his self-imposed poverty is debatable. While he did exemplify an austere frugality over fifty years of missions in Japan and relinquished all possessions at the end of his work, McCaleb, unlike Harding who did not accumulate property, acquired land and constructed homes, church buildings, and schools. When he was forced to leave Japan in 1941, however, he deeded the church property to a Japanese preacher, Hiratsuka, and turned over \$13,172 from the liquidation of his assets for the support of Sarah Andrews and Lillie Cypert who remained in Japan during the war.²⁸² His only remaining property, a cottage in Karuizawa, he also left to Andrews.²⁸³

²⁸¹ John Moody McCaleb, "Looking Around and Looking Up," *Gospel Advocate* 58 (1916): 1183.

²⁸² John Moody McCaleb, "Moving Pictures," *Gospel Advocate* 83, no. 48 (1941): 1147; John Moody McCaleb, "Sold Property," *World Vision* 8, no. 1 (1942): 11; John Moody McCaleb, "Some Things That Happened in 1941," *World Vision* 8, no. 2 (1942): 12. McCaleb's generosity in this matter is difficult to establish. He was being forced out of the country and was not allowed to take the money with him.

²⁸³ McCaleb, "Some Things That Happened," 12.

On the other hand, poverty and wealth are relative terms. McCaleb preached a lifestyle of simplicity, but by the standards of fellow missionaries and perhaps poorer Christians living in the southern U.S., his lifestyle bordered on extravagance.²⁸⁴ William Bishop's widow, Clara, implied that while the Bishops lived identificationally among the Japanese in poverty, McCaleb accumulated property and received far more than his share of contributions. He had more than sufficient funds to conduct his work in Japan and also to support his family comfortably in the States.²⁸⁵ McCaleb rationalized his purchases of property as "good stewardship" and explained that extraordinary expenses were paid for with funds that he earned as a teacher or from the sale of his own property.²⁸⁶

As an independent missionary, McCaleb had a fine line to hold. If his contributors were to become aware of the desperate conditions in which he found himself at times, they would have been moved to give more generously. If, however, he described the full measure of his need, McCaleb would undermine the validity of the faith missions principle and provide ammunition for the missionary society camp to point out quickly the failings of the independent missions movement. By publicly embracing the virtue of poverty, McCaleb could hint at his needs without denying the validity of faith

²⁸⁴ McCaleb admitted as much. McCaleb, "Faith in God," 118.

²⁸⁵ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

²⁸⁶ He explained that the expense for his world tour, for example, was paid for through the sale of his summer home. McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," October 31, 1895, 703; John Moody McCaleb, *On the Trail of the Missionaries* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1930), 265.

missions.²⁸⁷ This was yet another technique for raising funds within the faith missions arrangement.

Piety and Non-Denominationalism

McCaleb's teaching mirrored that of Harding in piety and the non-denominational character of the church. McCaleb took stock in daily Bible reading and the spirituality of prayer.²⁸⁸ He encouraged Bible reading but warned that the practice of its teaching was far more important than simply coming to an understanding of the correct doctrine. McCaleb wrote, "Yes, [we] must always be ready to defend our doctrine.' But there is one thing, dear brother, far more important than this. It is to so study the Bible that we are better able, far better able, to do the doctrine than to defend it. Don't be uneasy about the defense of the doctrine. It has been defended long before you and I were born; it will be after we are gone."²⁸⁹

McCaleb believed that prayer was a means to align one's will with God's, to request needed resources, and to discover God's leading in the making of decisions.²⁹⁰

Although McCaleb never said so, the reading of A. T. Pierson's biography of George

²⁸⁷ Unlike Harding, McCaleb did not express himself on the imminent return of Christ. He disagreed with R. H. Bolls on premillennialism but chided him only for the inordinate amount of time and space that Bolls dedicated to the topic. John Moody McCaleb, "Criticism," *Word and Work* 15, no. 1 (1922): 10. He also dissociated himself from Don Carlos Janes, who upon his death declared in his will that he was thoroughly and unreservedly premillennial in his convictions. Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 1:13; Don Carlos Janes, "He Being Dead Yet Speaketh," *Missionary Messenger* 21, no. 2 (1944): 1617-8.

²⁸⁸ McCaleb, "Japan Letter," September 29, 1892, 615; McCaleb, "Word of God," 315; McCaleb, "Day in the Life of a Missionary," 307.

²⁸⁹ McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," November 22, 1894, 737.

²⁹⁰ McCaleb, "Letter to Lipscomb," 73; John Moody McCaleb, "How Does God Answer Prayer," *The Way* 4, no. 49 (1903): 489.

Müller must have shaped his views on prayer. Concerning prayer, McCaleb used Pierson's words verbatim: "God's real answers to prayer are often seeming denials. Beneath the outward request he hears the voice of the inward desire, and he responds to the mind of the spirit rather than to the imperfect and perhaps mistaken words in which the yearning seeks expression."²⁹¹ He believed that God provided daily for his family's needs in response to prayer and that God's promises of providence were just as valid in his day as in the day of the Apostles.²⁹²

He claimed to belong to no denomination and considered valid the immersion of any person who believed in Christ.²⁹³ He vehemently opposed missionary societies but readily conceded that a missionary society engaged in missions was infinitely better than anti-missionary society churches that sat idle. He liked to apply to the debate over missionary societies the wisdom once offered to a young lady who disdained the pronunciation of a young man. McCaleb wrote, "He would rather marry a man who said 'taters' and had them, than a man who said 'potatoes' and had none. . . . I will say I have more respect for a man who works through societies and does something than us who keep out of these things, and do nothing."²⁹⁴ McCaleb thus continually prodded the non-

²⁹¹ McCaleb, "Missionary Notes," November 20, 1902, 271; Pierson, *Müller of Bristol*, 245.

²⁹² McCaleb, "Faith in God," 118.

²⁹³ John Moody McCaleb, "Japan—Report for March," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 21 (1899): 322; McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," August 10, 1899, 506; McCaleb, "Summary for the Year," 74. McCaleb's affirmations of non-denominationalism were out-shined by the earliest mission work in Japan which was characterized by a spirit of cooperation and by a strongly expressed desire of the Japanese to be nonsectarian. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 175.

²⁹⁴ McCaleb, "Japan Work," February 28, 1905, 3-4.

society churches to either begin independently supported mission work or to cease from making objections.

McCaleb promoted the usefulness of debates if “done for the right motive and in the right spirit” but decried those who rallied behind one contender or another. McCaleb liked to use the illustration of a man who yelled at a drowning boy for getting into the water without knowing how to swim. McCaleb wrote that the boy replied, “Help me out and scold me afterwards.” McCaleb added, “Scolding is good in its place, but it should be given in broken doses. It is much easier to scold than to help. Many are the cries for help that are never heard, because those that should lend assistance are too much occupied saying what ought not to have been done.”²⁹⁵ He, thus, strongly affirmed that a holier life was far more important than the winning of a debate and that helping was far more effective than scolding.

Beyond Harding

J. M. McCaleb stood on the shoulders of James A. Harding. His missionary methods and published articles amplified and adapted principles acquired from Harding. The Japanese cultural context, together with the pressing urgencies of mission work, required McCaleb to move beyond Harding’s simple “life of trust.” Harding’s ideal evangelists trusted God and planted churches that trusted wholly in God. Harding was confident that the organic expansion of the church would spontaneously flow from such

²⁹⁵ John Moody McCaleb, “Needs of the Hour, n. 2,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 39 (1900): 611; McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” January 12, 1904, 2. For a satire on how to kill the spirit of Christian love, see John Moody McCaleb, “How to Make Love Wax Cold,” *Gospel Advocate* 36, no. 8 (1894): 115.

trust and result in the sending forth of an ever-increasing number of missionaries.²⁹⁶

McCaleb, however, promoted a systematic and planned approach to church sponsored missions. According to his scheme, congregations should send out and sponsor missionaries who were well known to them.²⁹⁷ Through these alterations, McCaleb became a transitional figure and bridge to the next generation of missionaries of the Churches of Christ who sought the assistance and guaranteed support of sponsoring congregations. McCaleb also built on Harding and moved beyond him in the matters of intentional self-exemplification, Christianity and civilization, developmental ministry, and indigenous church principles.

Systematic Selection, Sending and Support of Missionaries

J. M. McCaleb envisioned a missionary movement among the Churches of Christ in which every Christian was a contributor and every congregation a sender of its own missionaries. This idea was not revolutionary in itself, but his promotion of the idea through widespread visitation of the Churches of Christ during furloughs was foundational.²⁹⁸ McCaleb stressed to his audiences that the duty to preach the gospel was

²⁹⁶ Harding believed that if Christians would begin truly to trust in God, they would as a natural consequence contribute greatly to the cause of missions. Harding, "What Is It to Trust God?" 137; Harding, "Scraps," August 21, 1902, 161-2; Harding, "If It is Not So," 330.

²⁹⁷ Harding diametrically opposed this plan. Harding, "Should the Congregation?" 8-9.

²⁹⁸ McCaleb advocated the system of establishing direct "living links" between churches and supported missionaries based on the system he had found among the Southern Methodists. McCaleb, *Christ, the Light of the World*, 13. Before McCaleb, A. T. Pierson proposed to the Presbytery of Philadelphia the idea of "individual links" with missionaries to solve the problem of chronic debt. He speculated that by 1898, 500 congregations could have been supporting and keeping in touch with their own missionaries. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 188.

solemnly given to every Christian. Christians were subdivided into two types: those who go and those who send. Both were to also do the work of the other half. Those who went were also to help send others; those who sent also shared the gospel.²⁹⁹ Regarding this responsibility, McCaleb stated, “To suppose an unwilling Christian is as impossible as to suppose a drunken Christian.”³⁰⁰

In his tours among the American Churches of Christ, McCaleb dared to propagate bluntly the message that churches had to be sending and supporting missionaries in order to be saved. He wrote, “I believe if the churches do not awake to their duty and do all they can, both in their personal efforts and with their means, to save a perishing world they will be lost. My purpose in making the tour of the churches was to impress this truth, and to make men see that unless they are interested in the salvation of others they themselves will be lost.”³⁰¹

Doing the math, he supposed that a congregation with one hundred members tithing was able to give two thousand dollars annually, the half of which was best spent locally, and the other half internationally.³⁰² Such a level of contribution would be sufficient for each such congregation to support fully two workers in any given field. He believed that even a church of ten members could give five hundred dollars, an amount

²⁹⁹ McCaleb, “Missionary Work,” December 1899, 799. This twofold division was a popular idea among A. T. Pierson and others.

³⁰⁰ McCaleb, “Missionary Work,” January 4, 1900, 10.

³⁰¹ McCaleb, “December Report,” February 1902, 376.

³⁰² Pierson pioneered the use of statistical analysis in the promotion of missions. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 68.

sufficient to support one missionary. Since in his experience he had never found a church with less than ten members, he concluded that the only reason a church could have found for the need of cooperating with other churches in the support of a missionary was “to get off with doing less than its duty.”³⁰³ He also stressed upon his hearers that participation of a congregation in missionary support, especially in the sending of its own people, was a joyful experience and a way of showing complete earnestness in obedience to God. He wrote, “What I am anxious to hear the churches begin to say is: ‘We are preparing to send some of our own number and support them.’”³⁰⁴ McCaleb also stressed that the best way to stimulate the churches at home to greater evangelism was to invest more heavily in foreign missions.³⁰⁵

As stated in the previous chapter, Harding opposed McCaleb’s sponsoring church idea, but the momentum reached by 1910 was too great for even Harding to slow or oppose. The sponsoring church model eventually became the most prominent method of selecting and sending missionaries among the Churches of Christ. McCaleb worked the home base, extended his own name recognition, and worked the system for his own benefit, but while doing so, he effectively created a unified missions consciousness upon which missionaries later drew for support.

³⁰³ McCaleb, “Missionary Work,” January 4, 1900, 10.

³⁰⁴ John Moody McCaleb, “Missionary Work,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 3 (1900): 22.

³⁰⁵ McCaleb borrowed this theme from A. T. Pierson. Pierson, *Crisis of Missions*, 303.

Intentional Self-Exemplification of Self-Support

Harding's teaching on trust called for preachers not to rely on human beings, missionary societies, or churches but on God alone. Harding taught that occasional secular work for one's support was a means God might use to provide for a person. Strictly speaking, Harding would have opposed any self-sufficient model of missionary support. Although McCaleb embraced Harding's position on self-support, he fully promoted self-sufficiency as an intentional example to his converts and future church leaders. This position moved well beyond Harding's ideology. Holding a job and supporting himself, at least in part, was for him a necessary part of the missionary equation. Although this constituted a compromise of faith missions principles, self-support on a foreign field, he reasoned, was still risky and required faith in God. It remained, therefore, the antithesis to the security of support via the missionary society.

In working at the post office a couple of hours a day partially to support himself, McCaleb believed that he benefited in several ways. First, by cutting himself loose from a church-provided salary and by his laboring for his own support, he was able to diminish the impression among the Japanese that he was there as a religious professional doing mission work only because he was paid for it. Second, working to provide an income, according to McCaleb, brought the missionary "more in touch with the people among whom he labored and led them to feel that he [was] more nearly one of them."³⁰⁶ Third,

³⁰⁶ McCaleb, "Missionary Notes," December 21, 1899, 811. He also wrote, "If the missionary shows by his own example that religion is something practical even in the secular callings of life, it gives it a more acceptable reality than it can otherwise have." McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," February 23, 1893, 126.

self-support also opened doors “for the gospel that otherwise remained closed.”³⁰⁷

According to McCaleb, “the only disadvantage that, to [him seemed] to appear, [was] that it sometimes confined [him] to only one place more than [he] considered best.”³⁰⁸

Above all other advantages to self-support, McCaleb held that it permitted him to set an example for the Japanese preachers. Generally speaking, Japanese Christians were independently minded and were convinced that the country needed to be evangelized by the Japanese. The first generation of missionaries, in fact, believed that “the responsibility for the conversion of Japan must lie primarily with the Japanese Christians.”³⁰⁹ As the number of Western missionaries increased, power and organizational structures strengthened. Financial resources were enlarged and the newer missionaries maintained a greater degree of control over the churches.³¹⁰ Many foreign missionaries seemed to be oblivious to the problem.³¹¹ The crisis was exacerbated by the irresponsible support of nationals. There were always hirelings who were willing to allow

³⁰⁷ McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” December 21, 1899, 811.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 183.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 212. Inglehart has suggested that this was the first time in Protestant foreign missions that the issue was clearly raised. Inglehart, *Protestant Christianity in Japan*, 121-25.

³¹¹ Thomas speculated that self-support was difficult in part because of poverty in the rural areas and a student majority membership base in the cities. Winburn Thomas, *Protestant Beginnings in Japan: The First Three Decades, 1859-1889* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1959), 87. Drummond attributed the continued dependence of the Japanese on Western funds to “the normative concept of a congregation, however small, supporting its own pastor. . . . The force of the concept . . . has been . . . to hinder the emergence of lay leadership.” Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 187-88.

Westerners to put them on their payrolls. Inordinate salaries aroused both envy and suspicion from the peers of national preachers and tended to stall church growth.³¹²

To avoid the age-old missionary problem of a perpetual dependency on foreign funds, McCaleb advocated self-support. When Japanese converts offered to preach if paid, McCaleb pointed to himself as an example. He lived by faith, supported himself by teaching, and expected that any national preachers should do the same. He regretted that he had not held to this position from the start. He said, “When first coming to the country, I fell into the mistake of employing ‘evangelists,’ but seeing my mistake, gave it up since.”³¹³ McCaleb was quite aware of the indigenous principles passed on to him by Harding and others.³¹⁴ His echoing of the principles may have been, however, more rhetoric than respect. As one who received and forwarded funds for others, he exercised paternalistic control over his teammates and nationals.³¹⁵

Christianity and Civilization

In spite of the difficulties generated by Japanese nationalism, McCaleb’s entrance into Japan coincided with a temporary openness to the Gospel. The middle classes especially recognized in Christianity a civilizing force and turned to it in hopes of

³¹² Roland Allen offered a classic description of this problem. Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 6, 49.

³¹³ John Moody McCaleb, “To Wed a Japanese Preacher,” *The Way* 5, no. 31 (1903): 1015. McCaleb waffled on this point. At times he denied nationals support only to see a newly baptized potential preacher leave to join another group. McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” August 10, 1899, 502. At other times he rallied support for Ishikawa, Hiratsuka, and especially Fujimori. For an example, see W. K. Azbill, “Letters from Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 1 (1893): 11.

³¹⁴ See above, p. 121.

³¹⁵ His style contrasted notably with that of William Bishop and with the rapport and mutual respect generated by earlier missionaries. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 173.

building a new Japan. Fukuzawa Yukichi, a journalist who had formally attacked Christianity, encouraged its adoption because of “its superiority in wealth, intelligence, virtue, and ability to attract persons of rank.”³¹⁶

James A. Harding drew clearly defined lines between the heavenly kingdom and the kingdoms of the world that he believed were destined to destruction. McCaleb’s language blurred these lines and, echoing the work of James Dennis, embraced Christianity as a force of civilization and advancement for the transformation of nations.³¹⁷ In a three part series entitled “The Bible and Japan,” McCaleb argued that the improvements in Japanese culture and civilization were due to the arrival of the Bible brought by missionaries through the open door created by Commodore Perry.³¹⁸ He believed that in the fifty years previous to his own work, the teaching of the gospel had affected changes in Japan’s backward ways, poverty, and minimal freedoms. He wrote, “Is it the Bible that has helped the people? Some do not want to give the credit to this source, but that this is the source of Japan’s elevation there can be no question.”³¹⁹

³¹⁶ Thomas, *Protestant Beginnings in Japan*, 161.

³¹⁷ In a monumental work, Dennis attempted to demonstrate the progress that Christianity has brought to cultures worldwide. James Shephard Dennis, *Christian Missions and Social Progress: A Sociological Study of Foreign Missions*, vol. 1-3 (New York: Revell, 1897-1906). According to Hutchison, “Dennis’s book was among the most regressive from the viewpoint of anyone who hoped to disentangle missionary purposes from those of an implicit cultural imperialism.” Hutchison shows how indigenous principles were implemented, rejected, and reversed. Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 107-9. McCaleb may also have reflected the influence of William Jennings Bryan whom he heard speak in Japan in 1904. McCaleb, “Chronology,” March 1915, 2.

³¹⁸ John Moody McCaleb, “The Bible and Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 14 (1900): 224.

³¹⁹ John Moody McCaleb, “The Bible and Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 20 (1900): 307.

He believed that idolatry required ignorance, but the gospel thrived best when accompanied by education. The Bible, in fact, worked to enlighten a Japan that previously had a “false view of herself.”³²⁰ Wherever the Bible went, despite its failure to ever convert all citizens of any given nation, it always benefited the cultures contacted by it. He also believed in significant overlap of American culture and the Christian religion. He wrote, “The introduction of our civilization of necessity introduces the Bible, for the two are inseparably connected.”³²¹ According to McCaleb, changes wrought by the Bible’s influence in Japan created an unprecedented opportunity for missionaries. McCaleb, in talking about the advances brought to Japan by the arrival of Christianity, was recognizing simply what was Japan’s greatest interest in the religion—its role in civilizing and creating a new social order, a new Japan. Changes were not merely a function of the Bible being taught and Christianity being adopted, but the result of certain classes of Japanese seeking Christianity specifically as a means to Westernization.³²²

McCaleb’s attitude toward the Japanese culture was an enigma. On the one hand, he tended to depict Japanese life with broad ethnocentric strokes.³²³ He referred to the Japanese as “ignorant barbarians” and made broad sweeping generalizations about the

³²⁰ McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” June 29, 1893, 406; McCaleb, “Bible and Japan,” 307.

³²¹ McCaleb, “Bible and Japan,” 307.

³²² Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 191.

³²³ McCaleb was not alone. A. B. Simpson described the Japanese people as “frightfully immoral people.” Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 116. Pioneer to Japan, James C. Hepburn, commented that the Japanese morals were “like all pagan peoples, untruthful, licentious and unreliable.” Elliot Griffis, *Hepburn of Japan and His Wife and Helpmates: A Life Story of Toil for Christ* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1913), 97.

idolatry and immorality of the people.³²⁴ Such expressions may have reflected his immature understandings as a newly arrived missionary, or they may have been ploys to so deplorably paint the miserable conditions of the Japanese as to stir American church interest, sympathy, and generosity. Ten years later, however, he willingly admitted that his Japanese counterpart, Fujimori, had convinced him that missionaries were very wrong to impose American traditions on the Japanese. McCaleb's shift toward respecting culture is recorded in these words: "The effort to convert the 'heathen' has perhaps done more to correct the errors of the missionaries than any other one thing."³²⁵

Hutchison has noted that in this period missionaries and mission promoters experienced great difficulty extricating themselves from their cultural imperialism. They were aware of the dangers of Westernizing other countries but the task of evangelism was so very important that imperfections in methodology had to be overlooked. He quotes Robert Speer's admission, "We cannot go into the non-Christian world as other than we are or with anything else than that which we have. Even when we have done our best to disentangle the universal truth from the Western form . . . we know that we have not done it."³²⁶

McCaleb grew to recognize the beauty of foreign cultures and to promote the necessity of the missionary's identification with the people. McCaleb wrote fascinating

³²⁴ McCaleb, "Notes," 267; McCaleb, "Notes from Japan," November 24, 1892, 742.

³²⁵ McCaleb, "First Lord's Day," 3.

³²⁶ Robert E. Speer, *Christianity and the Nations* (New York: Revell, 1910), 67. Quoted in Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 121.

accounts and descriptions of Japanese history, culture, people, and landscape. Even in his first impressions, he found the people to be “polite, non confrontational,” having “many good attributes but a difficult time keeping their word.”³²⁷ He narrated events such as Japanese weddings, funerals, his excursions into the country, and he depicted the plight of women.³²⁸ Although his descriptions might have made life in Japan seem difficult, he wrote to readers that it was “not so bad as one would naturally think, once accustomed to it” and recognized that “our customs seem just as awkward to [the Japanese] as theirs to us and are equally hard to adopt.”³²⁹ Through his writing, McCaleb effectively offered the churches at home a window on the Japanese world and shaped their attitudes toward vastly different cultures and places.

He pleaded with his fellow missionaries to recognize how their behavior inadvertently and scandalously offended other cultures.³³⁰ He held that a properly qualified and effective missionary was one that could “become all things to all men and yet in all things essential to the faith be true.”³³¹ He believed missionaries ought to go as families and to “identify themselves with the people and be one among them.”³³²

³²⁷ John Moody McCaleb, “From Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 34, no. 23 (1892): 358.

³²⁸ McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” June 22, 1893, 396; John Moody McCaleb, “Brother Fujimori and His Work,” *The Way* 3, no. 33 (1901): 262; McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” July 23, 1906, 746; McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” August 6, 1903, 778.

³²⁹ McCaleb, “Notes from Japan,” October 6, 1892, 627.

³³⁰ He cited specifically the case of Hindus who observed Western missionaries eat without washing, eat meat, and touch dead bodies. McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” January 12, 1904, 2.

³³¹ McCaleb, “South Africa,” July 4, 1905, 1.

³³² *Ibid.*

McCaleb's primary motivation was to mobilize the Churches of Christ toward mission. His on-the-field experience widened his mind and made him more conscious of his Westernizing ways. Yet his dreams of educating and civilizing as a foundation for evangelism, carried an unstoppable inertia. To promote mere evangelistic activity would recruit only male preachers. A broad definition of mission compelled Christians from a wider spectrum including printers, nurses, homeopathic clinicians, women, and educators.

McCaleb fostered dreams of transforming Japanese society through developmental ministry.³³³ Knitting was taught in his schools, he said, "Because they have no one else to take enough interest in them to do it, and useful occupations are the foundation stones of practical Christianity. No one can be a Christian and live in idleness, but in order to know how to work children must be taught."³³⁴ He made plans to establish an industrial training school complete with enough land for a few acres to cultivate. Speaking of potential students, McCaleb wrote, "They need to be taught that the Christian religion is seen in the shop, in the field, and in the daily life."³³⁵ He firmly believed that teaching "people to be independent and to follow honest occupations" was

³³³ Years later McCaleb attributed his belief in combining the teaching of the gospel with the teaching of farming or a trade to the plan of J. W. McGarvey. McCaleb believed that a missionary could choose to preach the gospel to the people but "have nothing to do in the betterment of their economic and social conditions," but believed that the better way was "to have employment for those who need it and help them to help themselves." McCaleb, *On the Trail*, 119.

³³⁴ John Moody McCaleb, "Extracts from Some Good Letters," *The Way* 4, no. 3 (1902): 22.

³³⁵ John Moody McCaleb, "What We Hope to Do," *The Way* 3, no. 4 (1901): 32.

essential to Christian character.³³⁶ In 1919, McCaleb mortgaged his own property to contribute six thousand yen to Mr. Iida's opening of a sewing school. Initially Lillie Cypert served as the school's matron and Bible teacher but resigned and refused to return when she discovered Iida smoked cigarettes. The school closed and McCaleb's loan to Iida for the school was a "dead loss."³³⁷ McCaleb's Zoshigaya Gakuin operated until 1928 and over the years enrolled more than one thousand Japanese young men.³³⁸

McCaleb's position on the role of Christianity in the shaping of culture served to modify drastically Harding's counter-cultural, otherworldly perspective and provide the foundational basis for missionaries who opted to engage in educational and developmental mission strategies.³³⁹ This was especially true for the second generation of missionaries that went not to Japan but to South Africa, to Northern and Southern Rhodesia and established both schools and farms. McCaleb also would serve as a transitional figure for George S. Benson with whom McCaleb would work in China for a brief period in 1929.³⁴⁰ Benson eventually rejected Harding's otherworldly perspective and sought to be politically active in the name of guaranteeing the most favorable conditions in the world for the spread of the Gospel.³⁴¹

³³⁶ McCaleb, "Industrial School," 442.

³³⁷ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 509.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 512.

³³⁹ Harry Fox, O. Bixler, and B.F. Rhodes opened the King Bible School that operated on the "industrial plan" that trained young evangelists for work in industry. *Ibid.*, 513.

³⁴⁰ McCaleb, *On the Trail*, 20-38.

³⁴¹ Burke, "Introduction," iii. Stevens and Hicks provide the best published records of Benson's anti-communistic crusade of the new religious right. L. Edward Hicks, *Sometimes in the Wrong, but Never*

Missionary Statesman

By the end of his second term as a missionary to Japan in 1909, McCaleb had lived a little more than half his life embodying Harding's principles, demonstrating the feasibility of independently supported mission work, promoting systematic church sponsored missionary financing, and developing a philosophy of interchange with culture. In the second half of his life, McCaleb became a "missionary statesman" through the publishing of books, travel around the world to various mission points, and recruitment of new missionaries.

Second Furlough, 1909-1912

With the arrival of Charlie and Clemmie Klingman to superintend the Zoshigaya Gakuin, McCaleb made plans to sail for the United States with the intention of visiting as many Bible Schools as possible and of getting "churches more systematically linked" with new missionary recruits.³⁴² Leaving Yokohama June 15, 1909, he arrived via the *Asia* in San Francisco June 27.³⁴³ Although he had not seen his family in three years, he strangely delayed joining them in Louisville for more than two months by making stops to visit churches and domestic missionaries such as Fuqua in Boulder, Colorado, en route

in Doubt: George S. Benson and the Education of the New Religious Right (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994); John C. Stevens, *Before Any Were Willing: The Story of George S. Benson* (Searcy: Harding University Press, 1991). Benson also described how his years in China affected his anti-communism. George S. Benson, *Missionary Experiences*, ed. Phil Watson (Delight: Gospel Light, 1987).

³⁴² Don Carlos Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, vol. 2 (Louisville: Janes Printing, 1943), 7-8; John Moody McCaleb, "Invitations," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 10 (1909): 3.

³⁴³ McCaleb, "Yokohama to San Francisco," July 1909, 4.

from California.³⁴⁴ After a brief reunion with his family, he traveled to Cincinnati to meet with journal editors F. L. Rowe and R.H. Boll, missions promoter Don Carlos Janes, and prospective missionaries Bert and Laura Hon to discuss their missionary preparation.³⁴⁵ The Hons traveled to Japan a year later but due to Bert's nervous condition were forced to return almost immediately to the States.³⁴⁶

In a style similar to that of Robert Wilder and John Forman who traveled among Bible institutes two decades earlier, McCaleb toured the Bible colleges and schools calling on their students to commit to being foreign missionaries.³⁴⁷ In 1910, McCaleb began his tour by spending the first week of January at J. N. Armstrong's Western Bible and Literary College in Odessa, Missouri. During his week of passionate pleading and recruiting, ten male and twelve female students committed to becoming foreign missionaries.³⁴⁸ A visit to Harding's Potter Bible College a month later surfaced another eleven students who were willing to affirm, "I am willing to go anywhere in the wide world as missionary where God wants me to go."³⁴⁹ The positive response and

³⁴⁴ "Condenser," 5; John Moody McCaleb, "Brother McCaleb in America," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 27 (1909): 5; McCaleb, "Brother McCaleb in America," August 1909.

³⁴⁵ F. L. Rowe, "An Important Conference," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 36 (1909): 5.

³⁴⁶ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 499. Hon's work was too brief to be personally much of a success but he converted a Japanese named Ishiguro who became a preacher and built up the Otsuka church.

³⁴⁷ Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 149.

³⁴⁸ John Moody McCaleb, "Visiting the Churches," *Gospel Advocate* 52, no. 2 (1910): 51.

³⁴⁹ John Moody McCaleb, "Potter Bible College," *Gospel Advocate* 52, no. 9 (1910): 275. McCaleb's pledge was only slightly different from the one 2200 students made as the result of the Wilder and Forman tour: "I am willing and desirous, God permitting, to become a foreign missionary." John R. Mott, *Addresses and Papers of John R. Mott* (New York: Association Press, 1946), 12.

atmosphere of these two schools inspired McCaleb to make similar visits to A. G. Freed's school in Henderson, Tennessee, and Stanford Chamber's school in New Orleans.³⁵⁰

Wilder and Forman took advantage of the Y.M.C.A. and formed chapters of the Student Volunteer Movement, but such organizations did not exist among the Bible schools visited by McCaleb. His tour did create a culture that exists to this day of missionary visits to Bible schools of the Churches of Christ.

During September 5-14, 1910, McCaleb delivered a series of lectures on missions at the Foster Street Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee. The lectures were compiled and published under the title, *Christ, the Light of the World*.³⁵¹ In his lectures McCaleb surveyed the history of the expansion of Christianity and emphasized that the church should not be distracted from carrying out its mission for the sake of fighting errors. Drawing a parallel with early Protestant reformers who championed biblical doctrine while neglecting evangelism, McCaleb said, "I fear those great men and those of us who have followed after have spent too much of our strength combating the errors of the people around us, so that we have almost lost sight of the great commission."³⁵² He also discussed the current state of missions among Christian denominations, drawing out the

³⁵⁰ John Moody McCaleb, "On the Way to Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 54, no. 8 (1912): 231. McCaleb offered no word in his report concerning the success of the visit. He speaks well of the Freed's school, but his tone is negative about his reception in that area. His visit to Henderson may have born fruit at the school much later when one of its students, Lillie Cypert made her decision to become a missionary to Japan. John Moody McCaleb, "In New Orleans," *Gospel Advocate* 54, no. 12 (1912): 359; John Moody McCaleb, "Another Worker Ready for Japan," *Missionary Messenger* 4, no. 11 (1916): 2.

³⁵¹ McCaleb, *Christ, the Light of the World*.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 7.

lesson that the first conversions required years of work, but that thousands followed persistence.³⁵³

Mission promoters of the day were arguing that recent history displayed signs that God was opening doors around the world. Asian countries had opened their ports to trade and other nations, such as India, were opening up to Western missionaries under the colonizing rule of Great Britain.³⁵⁴ McCaleb followed in this same vein of missionary enthusiasm. He surveyed the countries of the world and drew attention to the ever-increasing number of countries now open to the preaching of the Gospel. He highlighted mission opportunities in Turkey and Russia and spent several lectures describing Japanese life, culture, and religion.³⁵⁵ In his concluding lectures he stressed that generous giving in missions was a source of renewal and growth for home churches.³⁵⁶ Overall, McCaleb expressed a very optimistic outlook and believed that the world could be claimed for Christ during this crucial time for global evangelism. Steamers crossing the seas interconnected continents as never before so that any land could be reached.³⁵⁷ He asserted that the human spirit of conquest had to be bridled and used for the church's chief end, "to impart the knowledge of life to a perishing world."³⁵⁸ He further said,

³⁵³ Ibid., 20-45.

³⁵⁴ Two classic examples upon which McCaleb drew were Pierson and Leonard. Leonard, *Hundred Years of Missions*; Pierson, *Crisis of Missions*, 18-28.

³⁵⁵ McCaleb, *Christ, the Light of the World*, 46-159.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 188-236.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 16.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., v.

Man is a creature of conquest. If his energies are not turned into one channel, they will flow in another. . . . The spirit of conquest is also what has made the cruel practice of war so popular through the ages. This spirit, common in all the races, must be sanctified by the gospel and turned to a worthier purpose. . . . Instead of going forth in armies equipped with weapons of death, man must learn that his mission is that of a benefactor, and that his own happiness depends chiefly on imparting happiness to others. . . . Henceforth we must seek riches by giving them to others, and must wage war to make alive rather than to kill.³⁵⁹

McCaleb's lectures in Nashville broadcast the same triumphal tones that were present in the militaristic language of missionary conquest. As the political powers were colonizing and flexing their military power, so Christians were conquering in the name of Christ. William Hutchison dubbed this "the moral equivalent for imperialism."³⁶⁰

Third Term, 1912-1919

The receiving of new recruits and the expansion of the work beyond Tokyo characterized McCaleb's next tour of duty in Japan. Hannah and C. G. Vincent sailed for Japan in 1911 while McCaleb was still in the United States. In 1912, they supervised the Zoshigaya Gakuin, a year later the Bishops' work at Koishikawa Chapel, and together with Hiratsuka pioneered the beginnings of the work in the Ibaraki province.³⁶¹ Other newcomers who responded to McCaleb's appeals included Sarah Andrews in 1916, Lillie Cypert in 1917, and O.D. and Anna Bixler, Erroll and Bess Rhodes, and twin brothers

³⁵⁹ Ibid., v-vi.

³⁶⁰ Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 91.

³⁶¹ Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 2:15-6; John Moody McCaleb, "News from Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 54, no. 3 (1912): 71; Clarence G. Vincent, "Wm. J. Bishop Mission," *Missionary Messenger* 2, no. 2 (1914): 1; Clarence G. Vincent, "Mission Notes," *Missionary Messenger* 3, no. 2 (1915): 2.

Harry and Herman Fox and their wives Pauline and Sarah in 1919-20.³⁶² After an attempt to center their work on their own Health Foods Industry factory, the Bixlers moved to take up the work among farmers in Shioda Mura that had been initiated in the Ibaraki province by Vincent and Hiratsuka.³⁶³ The Rhodes moved to Omiya in 1923 and then on to Urizura in 1932.³⁶⁴ McCaleb's own daughter, Lois Anne, and her husband, John T. Glenn, announced in 1915 that they planned to join the work in Japan, but after they had their first child, nothing further was said about their departure.³⁶⁵

Third Furlough, 1919-1920

Upon his next trip to the States, McCaleb found that the American churches had acquired a more favorable attitude toward taking part in missions and were more generous.³⁶⁶ His travels included a stop in Honolulu, giving three speeches in Santa Rosa, and his arrival to Louisville to see his wife Della who had suffered from an ulcerated stomach three years earlier.³⁶⁷ At least seven years had passed since he had last visited

³⁶² McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 366-7.

³⁶³ Orville D. Bixler, "Ibaraki, Japan," *Christian Leader* 36, no. 18 (1922): 16; McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 530.

³⁶⁴ McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 531.

³⁶⁵ W. W. Feeman, "More Good News," *Word and Work* 9, no. 7 (1915): 15. In the announcement of his granddaughter's birth, McCaleb said that the Glenns still had plans to work in Japan but this was the last anything was heard of such plans. John Moody McCaleb, "Moving Pictures," *Missionary Messenger* 4, no. 9 (1916): 4.

³⁶⁶ John Moody McCaleb, "As I Go Among the Churches," *Christian Leader* 33, no. 45 (1919): 6; John Moody McCaleb, "Report for December," *Christian Leader* 34, no. 2 (1920): 16; John Moody McCaleb, "Report for December," *Word and Work* 13, no. 2 (1920): 53.

³⁶⁷ Don Carlos Janes, "Missionary Notes," *Word and Work* 9, no. 6 (1916): 279; McCaleb, "Looking Up," 1183; John Moody McCaleb, "Another Delay in Honolulu," *Christian Leader* 33, no. 18

her. During this furlough he conducted a speaking tour that took him from church to church beginning in Southeast Florida and ending in Texas when he delivered the Abilene Christian College lectures.³⁶⁸ He spoke at J. N. Armstrong's new Bible college in Harper, Kansas, during Thanksgiving of 1920 and then set sail for Japan with Julius H. and Margaret Pennell, and Don Carlos and Myrtie Janes.³⁶⁹ The Pennells began their difficult mission work in Honolulu and remained there until their health failed in 1941.³⁷⁰ The Janes continued on with McCaleb to Japan where they stayed for nine months before starting their world tour.³⁷¹ As a popularizer of Harding's ideas, McCaleb was successfully propagating faith missions, stimulating churches to greater generosity, and recruiting larger numbers of new missionaries.

Last Years in Japan

J. M. McCaleb served three more terms in Japan in which he acquired credibility as an expert in missions. His financial autonomy from self-support afforded him the liberty to travel to mission points around the world, to raise funds on behalf of others, and

(1919): 9; John Moody McCaleb, "From San Francisco to Louisville," *Word and Work* 12, no. 7 (1919): 212-3.

³⁶⁸ John Moody McCaleb, "Announcement," *Christian Leader* 33, no. 29 (1919): 9; John Moody McCaleb, "The Commission After Twenty Centuries," in *Abilene Christian College Lectures* (Austin: Firm Foundation, 1920), 189-97.

³⁶⁹ J. N. Armstrong, "Program at Thanksgiving at Harper College," *Christian Leader* 34, no. 46 (1920): 12; John Moody McCaleb, "Five Missionaries Going Out," *Christian Leader* 34, no. 50 (1920): 8.

³⁷⁰ Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 2:26.

³⁷¹ Don Carlos Janes, *Our World Tour: Personal Observations and Experiences on a Trip around the World, 1920* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1924), 47.

to consult with churches concerning works in Korea and China.³⁷² In 1929, McCaleb's desire to "learn more about how to make mission work more successful in foreign fields" led him to make a long tour of the independent and society-supported missions stations of the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples of Christ in China, India, and Africa.³⁷³ His expressed purpose was to gather information that would improve his own work and allow him better to educate current and future missionaries of the Churches of Christ. Along the way he also visited Palestine, Italy, France, England, and Scotland. The goal of the trip and his subsequently published journal was to demonstrate that "successful work done in Scriptural ways may furnish useful examples to many others who shall devote themselves to the work of carrying out the great commission in foreign fields."³⁷⁴ Two others of the Churches of Christ, J. W. Shepherd and Don Carlos Janes, had made similar tours.³⁷⁵

Traveling very light, McCaleb stopped in Shanghai and Peking before visiting with the Broadduses, Bensons and Oldhams, missionaries of the Churches of Christ in Hong Kong. After a visit to the Philippines, he returned to China and proceeded to Burma, Calcutta, Agra, and Delphi. In his book he colorfully narrated his encounters with

³⁷² McCaleb served in Japan from 1920-1929, 1930-1936, and 1937 through 1941.

³⁷³ McCaleb, *On the Trail*, 3.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁷⁵ Don Carlos Janes, a student of Harding and the foremost missions promoter among the Churches of Christ between the World Wars, published two travel logs. In his first he tells of his visit to Bristol, England, and his admiration of George Müller. Don Carlos Janes, *A Trip Abroad* (Cincinnati: Rowe, 1905), 25-29; Janes, *Our World Tour*. J. W. Shepherd, baptized by Harding and educated at the College of the Bible at Lexington, worked in New Zealand and traveled extensively. His reports appear in the *Gospel Advocate* from 1888 to 1905.

the people and customs of each place. He lauded the work of those missionaries who were successful, especially in encouraging self-supporting churches.³⁷⁶ His journey took him to the Seychelles, Mombassa, and to the Rhodesias for an extended stay with missionaries of the Churches of Christ—the Hadfields, Scotts, Reeses and Merritts.³⁷⁷ There he was particularly impressed with the attempts of the missionaries not only to preach the gospel but to help the people improve their own living conditions.³⁷⁸

From South Africa, McCaleb traveled through Alexandria and Jerusalem to Rome. On the final leg of the journey McCaleb traveled through France, England, and Scotland before arriving in Portland, Maine, Boston, Albany, and Detroit. Finally he arrived in Indianapolis where his son, Harding, was living. He ended his trip in Louisville on November 6, 1929. He calculated that he had traveled more than 34,000 miles at a cost of \$1510 procured from the sale of his summer cottage in Japan.³⁷⁹ As knowledge of his travels spread among the congregations, McCaleb became a recognized authority on the viability of missions, and congregations called upon him as a consultant.

Shortly after his return to Japan in 1930, the Waverly-Belmont church requested that McCaleb make a visit to a national worker named S. K. Dong whom the church was supporting in Korea. After a very successful series of evangelistic meetings in which he spoke fifteen times and had thirty-one responses, McCaleb concluded that the work was

³⁷⁶ McCaleb, *On the Trail*, 91.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 267.

very worthwhile and that, if possible, a co-worker for Dong should be found.³⁸⁰ A few years later, McCaleb surveyed the missionary work of the Cassells in the Philippines and proceeded also to investigate the possibilities of mission work in Shanghai.³⁸¹

McCaleb's last years in Japan were also ones of personal struggles. At the Zoshigaya Gakuin students instigated two strikes: one over McCaleb's refusal to put out flags for a national celebration, and a second over the dismissal of a dishonest and drunken cook. His greatest difficulty was in finding a trustworthy Japanese man to work as superintendent. One of the elders of the church recommended a recent convert named Kubota for the position. After an earthquake damaged the school in 1923, Kubota rallied the resident students and attempted to take possession of both the church and the school. McCaleb called upon the sheriff to evict Kubota and the students from the school, but when the matter went to court, McCaleb was forced to settle with Kubota for five hundred yen. Although the home had housed over a thousand students through the years and approximately one hundred of them had been baptized, McCaleb regretted ever working with boys of university age and was convinced that a better work could have been done among children of middle school.³⁸² The offer of housing to the young adult men seemed to attract shiftier, less disciplined characters. McCaleb reasoned that if he

³⁸⁰ F. B. Shepherd, "Who Will Go? Whom Shall They Send?" *Gospel Advocate* 73, no. 38 (1931): 1202.

³⁸¹ John Moody McCaleb, "A Trip to the Philippines and China," *Gospel Advocate* 77, no. 19 (1935): 444.

³⁸² McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 510-2. This was a perennial problem. The older the student, the higher the educational level required of the missionaries.

had worked with younger children, they would have been more impressionable, and he could have had more success in shaping their behavior.

By the mid-1930s McCaleb's eyesight was becoming so poor that he was nearly blind. As early as 1930 his left eye had become obscured by cataracts, and by 1936 specialists in Japan verified that his right eye also suffered the same condition. In 1937, he traveled to Nashville where over a period of six months he had surgery on each eye to remove cataracts. The surgeries were successful and ended two years of comparative blindness.³⁸³ After his second operation McCaleb went to Louisville to visit his wife and daughter, Lois, and then went on to Chicago to see his son, Harding.³⁸⁴ In late 1932 Della had been placed in a sanitarium with an "affliction sadder than death."³⁸⁵ So poor was her condition that "it seemed there was no hope for her," but a year later she recovered and was allowed to go home.³⁸⁶ Five years later when McCaleb was in Japan, he received a letter from his son with the news that Della had died on January 30, 1939.³⁸⁷ At some point after her return to the United States, Mrs. McCaleb had a "serious surgical

³⁸³ John Moody McCaleb, "Returning to America," *Gospel Advocate* 78, no. 36 (1936): 861; John Moody McCaleb, "For the Sake of Others," *Gospel Advocate* 79, no. 15 (1937): 358.

³⁸⁴ Although Della had been very ill and he had not seen her in seven years, McCaleb makes only passing mention of spending "a few days with some of my family in Louisville," but gives detailed accounts of time with his son, Harding, and daughter Ruth, in Chicago and South Dakota. John Moody McCaleb, "My Trip North," *Gospel Advocate* 79, no. 48 (1937): 1149.

³⁸⁵ John Moody McCaleb, "Annual Report," *Oriental Christian* 4, no. 2 (1933): 11. No other information is recorded. Given that she was placed in a sanitarium, she may have had tuberculosis.

³⁸⁶ John Moody McCaleb, "Report for 1933," *Oriental Christian* 5, no. 2 (1934): 12.

³⁸⁷ John Moody McCaleb, "The Family Circle Broken," *Gospel Advocate* 81, no. 11 (1939): 245. McCaleb's tribute to his wife after her death centered on her qualities as a student, mother, housekeeper, and cook. He recognized the virtue of her willingness to accompany her husband to Japan but had nothing affectionate to say.

operation” and her health was weak. In the closing moments of her life, Myrtie Janes kept vigil at her bedside and read to her. The Janes family cherished pleasant memories of her “meek and quiet spirit.”³⁸⁸ Even though “her latter years were fraught with pain and physical weakness,” McCaleb plowed forward in his work in Japan far from his needy wife.³⁸⁹

Della was bright and talented in her studies in college and in the direction she offered in the education of her own children. Her work in Japan led to the opening of what later became known as the “American School.” “When the time came for [their children] to return to America to continue their studies, the burden of their education fell mainly on her.”³⁹⁰ All three of their children, Harding, Ruth, and Lois, graduated from college. J. M. McCaleb praised his wife’s cooking and housekeeping abilities. No doubt the hospitality that she had offered played a major role in their mission work in Japan. McCaleb cryptically stated that “the Azbill party of five would have been blocked from coming had she declined, and the work in Japan may have never been started.”³⁹¹ She may have been the peace-maker that held these independently minded people together or, since there were young single women on the team, her presence was necessary to render the mission honorable. She was not well-suited to the climate in Japan and while in the

³⁸⁸ Janes, “Dorothy McCaleb,” 941.

³⁸⁹ Robert H. Boll, “Mrs. J. M. McCaleb,” *Word and Work* 33, no. 2 (1939): 41.

³⁹⁰ McCaleb, “Family Circle Broken,” 245.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

country often complained of having difficulty breathing and suffered from fatigue.³⁹² Between concerns for her children and her health, Della had ample reason to return to Kentucky. McCaleb, however, was much too preoccupied with his work and travels to give much attention to her. Since he was quite attentive to his children, the researcher is left to conclude that he and his wife may have been estranged.³⁹³

Until the early 1930s the number of missionaries working in Japan continued to increase, but the Depression eventually thwarted the work and its expansion. McCaleb offered to deed the property of the Zoshigaya church and his own house to a missionary who would come and be his successor but no one was willing or able.³⁹⁴ Although McCaleb had envisioned spending the rest of his life in Japan, the outbreak of World War II forced him to return to the United States.³⁹⁵ On October 22, 1941, McCaleb boarded the *Taiyo Maru*, the last ship sailing from Japan for the American shores until after the war. Of the twenty-two churches once established in Japan, ten were still healthy and meeting together. He pleaded with the two single women missionaries to leave with them, but Lillie Cypert and Sarah Andrews “felt that the Lord still had a work for them to

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ McCaleb’s daughter remembered that after a certain point Della refused to see him any more. Motoyuki Nomura, Yamanashi-Ken, Japan, in a letter to Shawn Daggett, Searcy, Arkansas, February 28, 2007.

³⁹⁴ John Moody McCaleb, “The Time Has Come,” *Gospel Advocate* 77, no. 42 (1935): 999.

³⁹⁵ McCaleb, “Moving Pictures,” 1941, 1147; John Moody McCaleb, “My Final Report,” *Gospel Advocate* 83, no. 52 (1941): 1244.

do in Japan.”³⁹⁶ The heroic story of these young women is yet to be written.³⁹⁷ Before leaving, he entrusted all the Zoshigaya church property to a Japanese preacher, Hiratsuka, and a board of trustees.³⁹⁸

When McCaleb left Japan, he could take no money from the sale of property. He had, however, accumulated over the years approximately \$5,500 in bonds with the George Pepperdine Foundation.³⁹⁹ Thus, after fifty years in Japan, he moved to Los Angeles. There he married Miss Elizabeth Reeves, a woman nearly half his age.⁴⁰⁰ With his bond money and financial help from his son, Harding, he retired in Los Angeles.⁴⁰¹ While there McCaleb served as Professor Emeritus of Oriental Languages and Religion at Pepperdine College from 1943 to 1953, and in his retirement occasionally taught until he suffered a heart attack October 20, 1945.⁴⁰² He died November 1, 1953.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁶ McCaleb, “Final Report,” 1244.

³⁹⁷ Bonnie Miller is under contract with ACU Press to publish a work on the life of Sarah Andrews.

³⁹⁸ McCaleb had considered other options such as creating a literature fund from the proceeds of the sale of the property. John Moody McCaleb, “Japan,” *World Vision* 8, no. 1 (1942): 11.

³⁹⁹ McCaleb, “Final Report,” 1244.

⁴⁰⁰ Elizabeth Reeves had read McCaleb’s book when she was a little girl, heard him speak in her hometown of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and saw the cultural items such as idols that he displayed on a table. They were married January 27, 1942. She was not quite 41 years old, McCaleb was 81. Elizabeth McCaleb, “Elizabeth McCaleb,” in *A Missionary Pictorial*, ed. Charles R. Brewer (Nashville: World Vision, 1966).

⁴⁰¹ E. L. Janes, “J. M. McCaleb,” *Missionary Messenger* 30, no. 12 (1953): 82.

⁴⁰² Turner, “Pioneer to Japan,” 117-8.

⁴⁰³ E. W. McMillan, “A Monumental Life: J. M. McCaleb, 1861-1953,” *California Christian* 9, no. 11 (1953): 3.

Conclusion

John Moody McCaleb embodied, popularized, and exemplified Harding's principles of faith missions. He determined to refrain from making financial appeals for himself, to partially support himself as necessary, and to trust implicitly in God's special providence. Although he discarded Harding's premillennialism, McCaleb viewed and taught that the material world was passing away quickly and that the Christian should live urgently, sacrificially, and simply as a citizen of heaven. McCaleb himself strictly avoided entanglements in government, including voting and pledge taking. Although insistent on the absolute necessity of adhering to New Testament patterns for the planting of churches, McCaleb maintained a dialogue with missionaries of various denominations and expressed admiration for those actively engaged in world evangelism. Without compromising his own convictions concerning congregational autonomy, he held that working as a missionary under a missionary society was ultimately far better than rejecting missions altogether.

McCaleb gradually transformed Harding's faith missions plan into the church sponsorship model. As the Nineteenth Century drew to a close, there was an outright rejection of the institutionalism of the missionary society structure among the Churches of Christ. As anti-missionary society feelings intensified, so did the desire to launch missionary work supported directly by individuals and churches. As McCaleb's team of volunteers offered itself and was poised to go, the only other known option for missionary support was faith missions. Once churches and individuals became accustomed to giving to and participating in missions and their members moved from the

lower to middle economic classes, McCaleb's suggestion that congregations take up the entire support of missionaries was better received. The churches continued to reject the organizational structure and work of the missionary societies, but the faith missions model, which eliminated financial appeals, was no longer the only available option. Beginning with McCaleb's promotional work in 1909, Church sponsorship was born and missionaries began to solicit more secure arrangements with sponsoring congregations that collected and forwarded missions funds from multiple sources. McCaleb, therefore, helped to shape the missionary support structure that is still in place among the Churches of Christ today.

J. M. McCaleb's enduring legacy consists more in the promotion of missions, the recruitment of missionaries, and the formation of the church sponsorship model than in establishment of a numerically successful church in Japan. At the age of eighty when McCaleb was forced to leave Japan, he entrusted his only enduring work into the hands of a Japanese preacher. Hundreds of his converts were scattered to various regions of Japan and among various denominations. Only a handful of Japanese Christians diligently persisted in meeting at the Zoshigaya property. He had, however, visited mission points from China to Africa, written more books and articles on missions than anyone of his fellowship, raised mission awareness among hundreds of churches across the United States, and successfully recruited the next generation of missionaries.

CHAPTER FOUR

WILLIAM J. BISHOP: THE IMPLEMENTER OF THE PLAN

Introduction

One of the most significant but little known disciples of James A. Harding was William J. Bishop, a missionary to Japan and a man of both great faith and sacrifice. What Harding taught and McCaleb popularized, Bishop succeeded in implementing. As an integral part of Harding's trust equation, for example, missionaries were to assist churches in appointing elders without unnecessary delay.¹ Bishop acted upon this conviction and was the first foreign missionary of the Churches of Christ to ordain elders in a newly-established church.² William J. Bishop's development of national leaders is, therefore, eminently important in the history of missions of the Churches of Christ because he was Harding's first student to put into practice the primitivist faith principles of church planting in a foreign context. Others had planted churches and ordained elders domestically, but Bishop renounced the authority normally exercised by missionaries overseas and gave it to the Japanese. Bishop is also significant because his methods were

¹ See above, p. 125.

² Snodgrass had appointed one elder as a "pastor" in a way that reflected a more Protestant ecclesiology than the primitivist design espoused by Harding and other Restoration Movement leaders. E. Snodgrass, "Churches of Christ Mission in Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 35, no. 49 (1893): 774.

better adapted to the context of Japanese missions. While McCaleb's paternalistic ways chafed against the independently-minded sensibilities of Japanese church leaders, Bishop recognized the self-reliant nature of the Japanese and worked fraternally alongside them. He was also the first missionary of the Churches of Christ to acknowledge the loyalty, potential, and leadership qualities of the *Samurai* class.³ His training of and partnership with Yunosuke Hiratsuka contributed to the survival of the church in Japan through the next four decades.

More importantly, William J. Bishop is significant to the history of missions of the Churches of Christ because his reckless commitment to fulfilling his missionary vow testified powerfully to the value of Harding's trust theory. He demonstrated a faith beyond reason that ended in his untimely death, the scandal of which threatened the recently-initiated faith missions system of the Churches of Christ. The loss of Bishop's life resulted, however, in strengthening the resolve of supporting churches to adequately provide for the new faith missionaries that were inspired to take up his work.⁴

His anonymity was due in part to dying at the relatively young age of forty-one, being overshadowed by the prolific J. M. McCaleb, and his not having published any literary works of his own. While McCaleb often had his pen and notebook in hand,

³ For the importance of the *Samurai* class in the development of Protestant Christianity, see Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 133, 153, 180.

⁴ Robert similarly argues that the death of America's first foreign missionary, Harriet Newell, together with a published account of her devotion and piety became an inspiration to others to become missionaries. She writes, "Ironically, Harriet Newell in death became a missionary to America. Rather than seeing her death as a tragic waste of life and discredit to idealism, her husband and followers interpreted her sacrifice of life as a martyrdom." Dana L. Robert, "The Influence of American Missionary Women on the World Back Home," *Religion and American Culture* 12, no. 1 (2002): 62.

Bishop had his sleeves rolled up and was busy at work. Immersed in evangelism, he was often too occupied to write reports.⁵

Having attended the Nashville Bible School, Bishop sat under Harding, adopted some of his essential principles of faith, and modified others. The imprint of Harding's teaching is seen in such acts of faith as Bishop's departure for Japan, October 14, 1899. Before receiving enough money to buy their passage to Japan, Bishop left his secure job as a minister, and, without any promise of support, headed with his newly-married wife to the port in San Francisco, California. Harding's influence was especially evident in Bishop's sacrificial lifestyle and commitment to self-support.

Although Harding directly influenced Bishop, the missionary's life, work, and teaching did not fully mirror Harding's mindset. True, he did launch his mission work by principles of faith and endured great hardship including the deaths of his first wife and child. Through his marriage to his second wife, however, he came into contact and under the influence of L. S. White, a preacher who directly opposed and attempted to refute Harding's trust theory.⁶ Propelled by trust in God, Bishop worked as a missionary to

⁵ Motoyuki Nomura, in a letter to Shawn Daggett, February 28, 2007.

⁶ In 1902 the Pearl & Bryan Street Church of Christ in Dallas took interest in the Bishops and sought to help William transition from self-support to a regular guaranteed salary. They wrote concerning him, "We believe that all faithful Christian missionaries to heathen lands—and those of our home land, too—should be supported in such a way as to enable them to give their entire time to mission work." Charles Mauzy and R. T. Skiles, "From the Church in Dallas, Texas," *Gospel Advocate* 44, no. 21 (1902): 342. L. S. White came into contact with the Bishops when he was hired by this church to be their full-time preacher, the first among the Churches of Christ in Texas. Joseph W. White, Dallas, in a letter to Earl Irvin West, Memphis, Archives, Harding University Graduate School of Religion, Memphis. White called Bishop a member of this church. L. S. White, "Harding-White Discussion," *Christian Leader and the Way* 24, no. 22 (1910): 9. Bishop and White were also linked through their excellent friend, Jesse P. Sewell who was the only other full-time preacher in Texas in 1906. In 1910 William wrote an introduction to the

Japan with and without sufficient American church support. When funds were low or a printing press was needed for the work, Bishop was unapologetic in his appeals for financial support. In this matter, Bishop tended to differ from his teacher. Harding would solicit funds for others but never for himself. Bishop never made a receipt of funds a condition for carrying out his missionary duty. Sincerely believing, however, that his mission work was not his own but belonged to God, Bishop felt his requests did not violate faith principles. He did not, therefore, show reluctance in requesting funds from interested churches and individuals. After all, he was asking not for himself, but for God's work. Bishop's use of financial appeals, therefore, represented another modification to Harding's plan and is extremely important to the history of missions of the Churches of Christ because "asking for God's work" eventually became normative for subsequent missionaries. The story of Bishop's life is both compelling and moving as his faith called him to experience sacrifice, not only of his first wife and daughter, but also of his own life.

Bishop's Early Life and Nashville Bible School Days

Early in life William J. Bishop learned that trust in God functioned as a partnership whereby William dutifully worked to carry out God's design for his life and depended on providential means to furnish whatever his own resources could not supply.

Harding-White Discussion on the question of trust in God and encouraged readers to "study with an open mind. Remember God's revelation is not one-sided. Every expression of truth has its complement; study both, let Scripture interpret Scripture." William James Bishop, "Introduction," in *The Harding-White Discussion* (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, 1910), 2.

As a child of the Reconstruction Era in the South, he experienced both poverty and opportunity. If the old rural plantations represented the world of slavery, the new growing urban centers, such as Nashville, symbolized an entrepreneurial spirit of optimism that produced wealth and opportunity. In the 1870s Nashville's economy was beginning to flourish with wholesale trade, finance, manufacturing, and the railroad.⁷ In moving to Nashville, Bishop's circumstances would also improve. Although he was young and an orphan, William found work, pursued an education, and lifted his eyes to foreign mission opportunities.

Life as an Orphan

Born in Hillsboro, Tennessee September 20, 1872, William was exposed to the Christian faith by both his mother and grandfather.⁸ Little else is known about his childhood except that he "lost his mother early in life," attended the Nashville public schools, and served in an apprenticeship in the printing business before entering Nashville Bible School.⁹ Concerning this period in his life Bishop wrote, "I attended school in the morning, worked in a printing office in the afternoon, and studied at night the first year 'til the burden became heavier than I could bear. Then I prayed to the Lord

⁷ Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 103-4.

⁸ According to Bishop's daughter Mary B. Arledge, letters between William's maternal grandfather W. A. Rodgers and his mother, Emma Rodgers Bishop, demonstrated both were members of the Churches of Christ and readers of the *Gospel Advocate*. Mary Bishop Arledge, "Genealogy, n.d.," Handwritten notes.

⁹ William James Bishop, "A Printer-Missionary for Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 19 (1899): 304; J. W. Grant, "William J. Bishop," *Gospel Advocate* 55, no. 17 (1913): 390.

and he put it into the hearts of Brother and Sister Henry Notgrass, of North Nashville, to help me, and I lived in their home and attended school. During vacation I continued to live with them and put the money I earned in the printing office in the bank, paying a very small amount for board.”¹⁰ He was always very grateful to both God and the Notgrasses who made it possible for him to get an education. Bishop cherished his fond memories of those days in their home and of the Notgrasses’ younger daughter, Eugenia. Both Bishop and “Genie,” who was like a little sister to him, heard the “Bible read every evening and Brother Notgrass prayed simply and naturally to our Father. It seemed to [William] that home life was perfect.”¹¹

Bishop’s Vow

At the age of twenty, Bishop came under the influence of Harding and learned to trust in God in the matters of finance and church planting. Knowing that his future depended on schooling that lay just outside of his own financial abilities, Bishop made a vow to God to serve as a foreign missionary in exchange for a Christian education. Thus, Bishop entered Nashville Bible School under the presidency of James A. Harding “without money and without the promise of any.” That he was able to continue at this beloved school, Bishop considered as God’s providence. Harding’s teachings on faith, coupled with Bishop’s own providential experience, intensified his commitment to

¹⁰ Bishop, “A Printer-Missionary for Japan,” 304.

¹¹ Genie, Bishop’s younger “adopted” sister, preceded him in death by one year. His warm and tender expression of sympathy attests to Bishop’s kind and gentle character. William James Bishop, “In Memory of Genie,” *Gospel Advocate* 54, no. 28 (1912): 806.

become a missionary.¹² Later, during a period when he was earnestly praying for the funds necessary to travel to Japan, Bishop reflected back upon his school days and wrote:

I was early impressed with the importance of foreign missions, and when Brother J. M. McCaleb called for workers in Japan, I pledged my life to service in that field. For four years I have constantly prayed to be directed into the very field I ought to labor in. My prayer was one of faith, and I feel sure that the Lord expects me to go to that country. . . . When I asked the Lord for the privilege of staying in this grand school, I pledged my life to service in Japan or Mexico. The way has opened up for me to go to Japan. The Lord gave me what I asked for, and I must fulfill my pledge.¹³

The money he earned in the print shop was never quite sufficient to meet the expenses of board and school. When his summer's work savings were depleted, he believed that God answered his requests for help through the generosity of Harding, who paid his board for two months, and by the hospitality of J. W. Grant. Early in 1895 when Bishop's "means had given out" and he had his trunk packed ready to abandon his schooling and resume his trade as a printer, J. W. Grant made him the generous offer of "a home as long as he needed and would accept it."¹⁴ The Grants provided William with room, board, and the occasion to meet another one of their boarders, a young widow named Alice Davis, whom he would marry several years later. Thus conscious of God's providence, Bishop began to take his first steps to becoming a faith missionary.

¹² John Moody McCaleb, "A Missionary Sketch," *Gospel Advocate* 43, no. 6 (1901): 92; John Moody McCaleb, "The Missionary Labors of Wm. J. Bishop," *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 22 (1913): 1.

¹³ Bishop, "A Printer-Missionary for Japan," 304.

¹⁴ Grant, "William J. Bishop," 390.

Training Under James A. Harding

Bishop's years at the Nashville Bible School were some of the happiest of his life. He studied Greek and forged lifelong friendships with future church leaders such as Jesse P. Sewell.¹⁵ Students and teachers alike admired him and loved him "for his noble worth and fine character."¹⁶ James A. Harding himself took great pleasure in his pupil whom he found to be "a diligent, painstaking, persevering worker and an exceptionally conscientious Christian."¹⁷ Bishop reciprocated this affection and had a great appreciation for the lessons of his professors "Lipscomb, Harding, Kurfees, Smith" and others who taught him with their "words of admonition and encouragement."¹⁸ Bishop was impressed by the ability of these teachers to work together despite their differences of opinion. "They all [tried] to obey God and to persuade all others to do likewise."¹⁹

The decade in which Bishop schooled at the NBS was a period of enthusiastic interest in missions. In 1891, just five years after its founding, the Student Volunteer Movement had recruited sixty-two hundred students from 350 institutions of higher

¹⁵ William James Bishop, "Consecrated Talents Used," *Japan Missionary* 1, no. 5 (1904): 3. Bishop expressed that he was greatly encouraged that when Jesse "was sick nigh unto death and there were grave doubts of his recovery, his wife knelt daily at his bedside and while praying for his life to be spared never failed to mention 'Bro. Bishop and his work in Japan.'"

¹⁶ Grant, "William J. Bishop," 390.

¹⁷ Harding, "W. J. Bishop and the Japan Mission," 128. Harding stated that he knew him well and that Bishop had proven himself to be a great encourager of churches and an effective evangelist having converted many souls.

¹⁸ William James Bishop, "Notes," *Japan Missionary* 1, no. 5 (1904): 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

education in Canada and the United States.²⁰ Members rallied around the movement's watchword, "the evangelization of the world in this generation," and pledged themselves to become foreign missionaries. Three hundred twenty of them were already serving on the mission field. That year the First International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement held in Cleveland, Ohio, attracted 558 of these students from 151 schools, thirty-two returned missionaries from around the world, and thirty-two representatives from mission boards.²¹ By 1898, the Student Volunteer Movement had reached over eight hundred schools and colleges and had sent 1,173 of its missionaries to 53 foreign countries.²² Although the NBS did not directly participate in the movement, reports from the first mission efforts of the Churches of Christ in Japan were beginning to appear in the *Gospel Advocate*, and students were taking both pride and interest in this new missionary-society-less endeavor.²³

In an atmosphere of missionary enthusiasm, Bishop worked his way through school and continued in prayer concerning his vow. During these school years, Bishop sat in Harding's classroom and absorbed his insights on trust. Years later, Bishop fully

²⁰ Parker, *Kingdom of Character*, 13.

²¹ Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 190-1.

²² Parker, *Kingdom of Character*, 13.

²³ In 1910 M. C. Kurfees, a teacher of the school, did attend the SVM meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, and expressed admiration for the "unbounded zeal, enthusiasm and burning interest in mission work which seemed to characterize and animate the movement." M. C. Kurfees, "The Layman's Missionary Movement," *Gospel Advocate* 52, no. 6 (1910): 207.

attributed his missionary life of faith to the teachings he received at the feet of James A. Harding.

I was for five years a student under Bro. Jas. A. Harding [sic] in the Nashville Bible School, and daily he emphasized a certain selection of Scriptures, giving to them an interpretation that caused our hearts to burn within us and filled us with a desire to please the Lord so that we might have our every need anticipated and filled by Him. I left school and have spent ten years in a field of work ten thousand miles from the human “source of supply.” I have thus had a chance to study this great question from both the academic and the practical standpoints.²⁴

Bishop thus understood that God providentially guided his decision to become a missionary and provided for his housing and finances to make this goal a reality.

Preaching in Paris, Texas

Before ever leaving the United States, Bishop began to put trust principles into practice in the preaching work of a local church. Bishop began itinerant preaching while at the Nashville Bible School in 1894, and, before receiving his diploma, he was called away to work indefinitely with a church in Paris, Texas. As he assumed his first ministerial job, he experienced what he later identified as God’s purpose and plan at work. He boarded with the J. D. Elliott family.²⁵ This was a providentially guided choice, for while he was living in this home, he made the acquaintance of the Elliott’s daughter, Clara, who would later play a major role in his life. In preaching, Bishop practiced what

²⁴ Bishop, “Introduction,” 2.

²⁵ The Elliot family had a reputation for hospitality. R. W. Officer, missionary to native Americans at Atoka, Indian Territory, stayed with the Elliott family on his visit to Paris, Texas in 1894. John Moody McCaleb, “Letter From R. W. Officer,” *Gospel Advocate* 36, no. 1 (1894): 6.

he had learned from Harding. He modeled spirituality and demonstrated an abiding trust in church members. The Paris congregation, which flourished under his spiritual leadership, loved and appreciated William to the extent that it tried to persuade him to stay instead of becoming a missionary. Even his mentor James A. Harding suggested that preaching there “might be his work.”²⁶ In his preaching in Texas, Bishop so thoroughly demonstrated the qualities of an effective missionary by “encouraging and strengthening churches” as well as “converting sinners,” that Harding unreservedly predicted that Bishop would do “a great work wherever God may guide him.”²⁷ No matter how well-suited for preaching in Texas he might have been, he refused to turn his back on his original vow to become a missionary.

Marriage to Alice Davis

While Bishop was working in Paris, Alice Johnston Davis had returned to her home in Cedar Hill, Tennessee, and participated with her sister Cassie in making arrangements to bring Bishop and Samuel P. Pittman to the town to conduct a “gospel meeting” in the summer of 1898.²⁸ Alice had met William when the two of them had boarded in the Grants’ home. She may have had ulterior motives in extending this

²⁶ Don Carlos Janes, “William J. Bishop,” *Missionary Messenger* 18, no. 6 (1941): 1009.

²⁷ Harding, “W. J. Bishop and the Japan Mission,” 128.

²⁸ Grant, “William J. Bishop,” 391; Don Carlos Janes, “Mrs. Alice Davis Bishop,” *Missionary Messenger* 18, no. 7 (1941): 1035; Janes, “William J. Bishop,” 1009.

invitation to him. For, as Alice entertained them during the meeting, Bishop “learned to love her beautiful character.”²⁹

Like Bishop, Alice Johnston was born in 1872 and had experienced the sadness of being orphaned from her parents. Her father died when she was only seven, and her mother died when she was just twelve years old.³⁰ When she finished the eighth grade at the age of sixteen, she said goodbye to her maternal grandmother in Cedar Hill and moved to Memphis. There, she took a business course while living with her father’s parents and worked for Hermitage Bank. Four years later she returned to live with her other grandmother until her death and then moved to Nashville, taking jobs teaching at Falls Business College, Watkins night school, and Belmont College.³¹

Alice married a farmer of Cedar Hill named Charles Davis, October 2, 1895, but he died just three months later. When Bishop met Alice in the J. W. Grant home, she was twenty-three years old and had been recently widowed. Her sister was attending NBS, and Alice had moved to Nashville again to be near her. Her sister Cassie had been immersed while in Memphis, but Alice persisted in her Methodist faith until hearing the gentle and persuasive preaching of M. C. Kurfrees who convinced her to be immersed.

²⁹ Grant, “William J. Bishop,” 391.

³⁰ Interestingly, McCaleb, Bishop and Davis were orphans and were not hindered by the pull of family to remain at home.

³¹ Janes, “Mrs. Alice Davis Bishop,” 1035.

During the meeting that Bishop preached at Cedar Hill, he fell in love with Alice. He took notice that she was a “consecrated woman” and “one of God’s noble women.”³² He was especially delighted that in complete sympathy with his vow to become a missionary, she pledged to work with him in Japan.

Maintaining the Vow

By the spring of 1899, Bishop had been praying about becoming a missionary for four years and in correspondence with J. M. McCaleb, hoped to get to Japan by mid-summer. The plan had been for the Bishops to arrive in Japan a month or so before the McCalebs’ furlough to the States in order to introduce them personally to the work they would assume in the McCalebs’ absence.³³ Bishop, therefore, traveled and raised funds while looking forward to his marriage to Alice.

On Alice’s twenty-seventh birthday, June 8, 1899, their mutual friend, J. W. Grant, conducted their wedding ceremony. After a few days spent in Nashville with the Grant family, their honeymoon evolved into weeks and months of fund-raising for their mission to Japan. They traveled among the churches stirring interest in Japan as a mission field and “exhorting them as to their duty in sustaining missions.”³⁴ In the period, then, after his education, Bishop maintained his resolve to fulfill his vow. He practiced Harding’s faith principles in local church work and noted their worth. He also believed

³² Bishop, “A Printer-Missionary for Japan,” 304.

³³ Bishop, “Missionary Notes,” June 8, 1899, 362.

³⁴ Grant, “William J. Bishop,” 391.

that he experienced God's providence in finding both a companion and financial support for his missionary endeavor.

Fund Raising and Departure, 1899

During his first term of service, Bishop's faith in and partnership with God were forged through tragedy, isolation, and loneliness. In their departure, Alice and William Bishop plowed forward despite her poor health and their lack of funds, thus demonstrating their willingness to take large risks in acting on faith. Despite his tranquility being shattered by Alice's death only four months after their arrival, Bishop proved himself to be the kind of hard-working missionary capable of fully implementing the Harding pattern of church planting. The loss of his wife and the extended absence of the McCalebs forced the lonely William Bishop to rely on the assistance of the Japanese Christians and to work fraternally with them.

A "Printer Missionary" for Japan

William Bishop's initial intention was to raise only the necessary funds to travel to Japan and to get started in their missionary work in Tokyo. One of the missionaries on the field, Eugene Snodgrass, had already opened a printing office, earned the good will of the people, and had written to William that the office would soon become "self-supporting." Given his previous experience and abilities as a printer, Bishop felt called specifically to this vocation in Japan. McCaleb, who partially supported himself through teaching, heartily agreed that this plan was a promising one. Bishop would not be there

totally reliant on an American missionary salary, “which, if withdrawn, would cause him to leave that field of labor.”³⁵

Origin of the Self-Supporting Ideal

Bishops’ vision of a society-less, self-supporting, and independent mission work aimed at establishing churches based on following the pattern of the New Testament. This vision had its roots in the work and thought of Anthony Norris Groves (1795-1853). Groves, the founder of the so-called “Plymouth Brethren,” rejected sponsorship by the Church Missionary Society and the denominational ordination of the Anglican Church.³⁶ He also developed a missionary theory that attempted to practice the idealized Christianity described in the New Testament, and he depended solely on prayer as a means for support while endeavoring as a missionary under the harsh conditions of Baghdad (1829-1833).³⁷ During the next twenty years of his missionary work in India, Groves sought partially to support himself through the cultivation of sugar and cotton.³⁸ Groves was a major influence, through his brother-in-law George Müller, on Hudson

³⁵ In fact, McCaleb argued persuasively in favor of self-supported mission work for the increased evangelistic opportunities it afforded and as an expression of one’s total reliance and trust in God. McCaleb, “Missionary Notes,” December 21, 1899, 811; McCaleb, “Brother Bishop,” December 28, 1899, 830.

³⁶ Robert Bernard Dann, *Father of Faith Missions: The Life and Times of Anthony Norris Groves* (Waynesboro: Authentic Media, 2004), 13.

³⁷ He presented these thoughts in a pamphlet entitled *Christian Devotedness* which is reprinted in Mrs. Anthony Norris Groves and Sentinel Kulp, *Memoir of the Late Anthony Norris Groves* (Sumney Town: Sentinel Publications, 2002).

³⁸ Harold H. Rowdon, “Groves, Anthony Norris” in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 264.

Taylor.³⁹ In his quest to diffuse the gospel in the interior of China beginning in 1866 through the China Inland Mission, Taylor adopted Groves' emphases on identification with the culture and on prayer as the sole means of missionary financial support. Müller implemented faith principles in establishing work among orphans in Bristol, England. Both Müller and Taylor influenced James A. Harding who passed these principles on to William J. Bishop.

Missions in "God's Way"

Churches in many denominations across the South fostered anti-missionary society feelings. Denominational missionary societies were often tied to the wealth, politics, and liberal theology of the industrial North and had alienated southerners by passing resolutions favoring the Union during the Civil War.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the preference for local control over bureaucratic management led either to the rejection of the mission boards altogether or the creation of new ones. Bishop took advantage of these anti-missionary society feelings as persuasive leverage in raising funds. By the turn of the century the rift that had formed between the "loyals" (Churches of Christ) and the "digressives" (Disciples) was nearly total and complete. The "loyals" who had rejected the Foreign Christian Missionary Society objected to the tyrannical and "unbiblical"

³⁹ Fiedler, *Story of Faith Missions*, 25, 55.

⁴⁰ Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 28-9. William Taylor conflicted sharply with the Methodist mission board over his establishing self-governing churches in India (1870-1875) on an equal footing with American churches. Tension between Taylor and the society also persisted over the matter of his advocacy of self-supporting missionaries. David Bundy, "Taylor, William" in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 660.

power and control it exerted over the congregations. The loyalist camp also argued that the bureaucracy of its organization was inefficient and gobbled up funds that should be destined directly for mission efforts.⁴¹ Bishop appealed to this crowd by pointing out that all Christians belonged to the only missionary society or organization authorized by Scripture, the church. He wrote, “As members of that society . . . all are under the commission of our Lord. . . . I work in and rely solely upon God’s divinely-organized institution, the church: use only God’s ordained instruments and means; and am identified with none but those who thus endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit. The most effective way in which to accomplish the overthrow of human societies is to work vigorously in God’s organization and make full use of his plans and means.”⁴²

Among the Churches of Christ, there were currently only three “living link” or directly supported missionaries overseas.⁴³ While traveling and writing to raise support, the Bishops urged Christians to prove that not only was their way the right way to carry out mission work, but it was also the best and most fruitful way.⁴⁴ This debate raged for

⁴¹ Ironically, David Lipscomb published an article on the most recent missionary convention on the same day that the Bishops arrived in Japan. According to the article some 7500 delegates had attended the convention and had raised \$250,000 for missions. He expressed that it mattered little as such a meeting had raised funds that would have otherwise not been given. He wrote, “We submit less done in the name of the Master and according to his will is more acceptable to him and more blessed by him than much done after our own wisdom.” To Lipscomb, the missionary society was a “dangerous machine.” David Lipscomb, “The Missionary Convention,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 44 (1899): 696.

⁴² Bishop, “Missionary Notes,” June 8, 1899, 362.

⁴³ Janes, “Missionary Directory,” 1126.

⁴⁴ Bishop was not alone in this technique. “J. Hudson Taylor and H. Grattan Guinness argued that their missions made more efficient use of funds, cultivated greater spirituality among their missionaries, and were more aggressively evangelistic than the denominational mission societies.” Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 55.

decades as the expression of a clash between two contrasting world views. Bishop subscribed to the Harding tradition which espoused trust in God. He rejected the other world view represented by the more prosperous and self-reliant Foreign Christian Missionary Society. As funds trickled in, William's good friend, Jesse P. Sewell, also applied pressure on potential donors by stating that they had the obligation not merely to condemn and criticize the societies but also to send missionaries according to God's plan. He wrote, "People condemn the missionary society. Now we have the opportunity to send someone in God's way but we don't? We make loud speeches and write long articles about loyalty to God. . . . So far we are right; but when we have made these speeches and written these articles, we are done. . . . The Lord presents an opportunity for us to do his work in his own way, and we are not to be found. . . . It costs breath to condemn digression; it costs work and money to do the Lord's work."⁴⁵ In recommendation of Bishop, Sewell wrote, "I do not hesitate to say that he is the best young man I have ever known intimately."⁴⁶ This positive appeal, however, immediately followed Sewell's guilt and fear ploys. He wrote: "We have the money to send them, but we do not do it. . . . The people there fail to hear the gospel, and are lost. Who will be condemned, those who are anxious and ready to go or we who could send them, but do it not?"⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Jesse P. Sewell, "Our Missionaries for Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 35 (1899): 558. See also Jesse P. Sewell, "Independent Missionary Work," *Gospel Advocate* 44, no. 21 (1902): 342.

⁴⁶ Sewell, "Our Missionaries for Japan," 558.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Bishop also tried to rally financial support among the Tennessee churches by contrasting the little given to missions with the large amounts spent on new or remodeled buildings. As southern Christians became wealthier after the war, they began erecting larger and more comfortable facilities. Primitivists such as Bishop who resisted this trend promoted the support of missions as a way to maintain the purity and simplicity of the churches. Bishop saw a “great evil in the matter of expensive meeting houses for churches . . . built and furnished mainly for personal comfort and the gratification of fleshly desire, thus spending an average of at least a thousand dollars a month for this purpose.”⁴⁸

Both Sewell’s and Bishop’s articles were blunt and unrelenting toward those churches and individuals who were not participating in mission work through their contributions. Perhaps such an approach had become necessary given that the anti-missionary society movement had morphed into an anti-missions movement.⁴⁹ Judging by the letters written to the editors of the *Gospel Advocate* and *The Way*, many Christians among the rank and file of the churches considered foreign mission work altogether “unscriptural.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Bishop, “Missionary Notes,” September 7, 1899, 570.

⁴⁹ Armstrong, “Anti-Missionary,” 241; Henderson, “Historical Review,” 206; James DeForst Murch, *Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1962), 318.

⁵⁰ This argument originated in the dispute that arose when Hardshell or Primitive Baptists rejected the formation of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions (1814). Ammerman holds that their anti-missionary sentiment was a function of their fierce independent pioneer spirit. National organization made sense to the city dweller but not to those scattered in isolated settlements. Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Baptist Battles:*

Risk-Taking as an Expression of Faith

As the fall of 1899 approached, funds were still incomplete, and the newly-married Bishops missed their opportunity to spend a month with the McCalebs in Japan to become oriented to this new work. William and Alice Bishop decided to exercise their faith and journey to San Francisco in the first leg of their journey to Japan.⁵¹ Although they still lacked more than seventy-five dollars to pay their expenses to Japan, they made up their “minds to start at all hazards.”⁵² Bishop wrote: “I determined to go as far as the means I had would allow, and then, if necessary, turn aside to some occupation to earn enough to carry me the rest of the way.”⁵³ Bishop considered the lack of funds a mere test of faith, for as soon as they determined to leave Texas, the remaining travel funds plus some extra money for the printing office arrived.

In retrospect one wonders if the Bishops were not too hasty in their departure. Alice’s concern for her own poor health had motivated her to take a course in nursing before they married.⁵⁴ There were also suspicions that Alice may have contracted

Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 29.

⁵¹ Beginning the trip without the guarantee of support was in line with Harding’s teaching. Harding, “Co-operation,” 346.

⁵² McCaleb, *Traveled Roads*, 163.

⁵³ McCaleb, “A Missionary Sketch,” 92. Harding had taught that God always provided: “sometimes God supplies the needs of his faithful workers by stirring up the hearts of his children to contribute to them, sometimes by opening up ways in which they can work and sustain themselves. But in one way or an other [sic] he always cares for them; he never fails them.” Harding, “Mission Work,” 98.

⁵⁴ Janes, “Mrs. Alice Davis Bishop,” 1035. Reprinted in Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 2:3.

tuberculosis before leaving Texas.⁵⁵ Her fragile health was further threatened while in the home of a “sister Bonner” of Madera, California, when shortly before the Bishops’ departure for Japan, Alice fell and broke three of her ribs. Her injury was serious enough to keep her in bed for most of the time.⁵⁶ The newlyweds were nevertheless determined to push forward believing that they were answering in faith the very call of God.

Extremely grateful for all the generous financial gifts they received, the Bishops decided to execute their missionary plans. In their last published announcement before leaving, they begged their supporters to pray for them and concealed their worries: “We ask for constant prayer of all the true children of God. We are now in good health and spirits. [May] the Lord give us rich harvests of souls at home and abroad.”⁵⁷ That request being made and conscious of God’s providence, William and Alice Bishop boarded the *America Maru* and departed from San Francisco October 14, and arrived in Yokohama, November 2, 1899.

First Term in Japan, 1899-1901

Arrival in Japan

When the Bishops arrived in Japan, less than twenty missionaries of the non-missionary society Churches of Christ had preceded them in foreign work, and only six

⁵⁵ Clara Elliot Bishop, William’s second wife, remembered that the Japan-bound missionary couple had come by and been in their home. Clara states that she believed that even then Alice was tubercular. Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to F. L. Rowe, Cincinnati, November 17, 1913.

⁵⁶ John Moody McCaleb, Tokyo, in a letter to Clara Bishop, Dallas, July 2, 1913.

⁵⁷ William James Bishop, “Brother Bishop Starts for Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 43 (1899): 684.

were present in Japan.⁵⁸ As one of the earliest missionaries of the Churches of Christ, his cheerful endurance of hardship contributed to the widespread acceptance of Harding's trust principles. John Lerouet had pioneered work to Guyana, South America (1889-1905) while Strother Cook had left the Southern Baptists to identify himself with the Churches of Christ and worked as a missionary in Lagos (1891-1907). In the Near East, Azariah Paul died just three years after schooling at the Nashville Bible School and moving to his homeland of Turkey (1890-1893) and John Karagiozian worked four brief years in Cyprus (1896-1900). John Sherriff, a New Zealander, was working as a missionary and supporting himself as a stonemason in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, while the Chinese-speaking D. F. Jones evangelized as a colporteur in Hankow, China.⁵⁹

A New Independent Japan

The Bishops' arrival coincided with the third wave of Protestant missionaries to Japan who were forced to become more savvy in their methods and more willing to place once again the leadership of the churches into the hands of the Japanese. Bishop's implementation of Harding's trust theories for church planting was exceptionally remarkable because it proved to be ideal for the changing climate of Japanese sentiment toward Americans. Drummond thus describes the situation of Protestant missions:

⁵⁸ Janes, "Missionary Directory," 1129. The McCaleb family had recently returned to the States for furlough after seven years of work in Japan. They would not return to Japan until 1901.

⁵⁹ D. F. Jones, "A Note from Brother Jones," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 52 (1899): 830; D. F. Jones, "From China," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 10 (1900): 160; McCaleb, "Word for China," 730.

The first generation of pioneer missionaries of heroic mold and achievement was largely gone. In some ways as a result of the changing situation in the church and theological education in the United States in the late nineteenth century, the following and more numerous generations of missionaries did not have on the whole the same high level of cultural background and theological training as their forebears. A number of the now emerging Japanese Christian leaders were superior in cultural breadth and theological depth to almost any of the missionaries.⁶⁰

At the time of the Bishops' arrival the re-negotiated treaty guaranteeing fairer treatment of the Japanese by the West had just gone into effect. Japan had acquired a higher and more unified view of herself, and Westerners were obliged to grant her greater independence. Japanese churches were also asserting themselves and "a strong desire emerged to express Christian faith and life within the context of Japanese cultural traditions."⁶¹ Among Congregationalists, the American Board allowed its missionary work force to drop from eighty-nine to fifty through attrition by 1900. The next decade would be a period of creative leadership of those Japanese who were faithful to the "classic forms" of Christian teaching.⁶² Uemura Masahisa, for example, successfully convinced the Ninth General Assembly of the *Nihon Kirisuto Kyokai* to accept his proposal that only self-supporting churches be given representation within the organization. The assembly took a census of all the missionary and educational activity conducted by the churches and placed them under the administration of joint committees

⁶⁰ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 213.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁶² *Ibid.*

that consisted of an equal number of Japanese and foreign Christians.⁶³ As a twenty-seven-year old who had completed his college degree, already worked with a congregation in Texas, and possessed a growing library, William Bishop, though still young, was quite eager to work humbly together with the Japanese in this atmosphere of growing independence. Trained under Harding, he aimed at entrusting the leadership of the church to a Japanese eldership as soon as possible.

Status of the Japan Missions of the Churches of Christ

When the Bishops stepped off the boat in Yokohama, Japan, they joined a small work force busily engaged in printing, educational, and evangelistic work. As Harding's "son in the faith," William Bishop's work and fraternal treatment demonstrated an unusual amount of trust in the Japanese leadership of the church. The German-born F. A. Wagner had adopted as his spiritual son in the faith a young Japanese man named Otoshige Fujimori, and the two of them moved to Fujimori's homeland in 1898 with the hopes of carrying out Alexander Campbell's ideal of establishing a Christian colony. The two of them purchased a tract of land and eventually built their work up to include an orphanage, a home for the elderly, a school, and a church in Shimosa. After three years Wagner became very ill and died, but his protégé, Fujimori, together with Fujimori's wife and eight children, continued in the work for many years.⁶⁴

⁶³ Ibid., 216-7.

⁶⁴ F. A. Wagner, "Letter from Japan to Brother McCaleb," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 46 (1899): 720; West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 3: 315.

Before the Bishops' arrival, at least six single women had been or were currently working as missionaries in Japan conducting Sunday schools, training Bible women, and running English schools.⁶⁵ The two women who became most notably associated with the Bishops were Nettie Craynon and Alice Miller.⁶⁶ Nettie's stay was quite short but of great significance to the Bishops for the care that she provided for Alice Bishop when she became very ill.⁶⁷ Alice Miller, on the other hand, outstayed all of her male counterparts, save J. M. McCaleb, and together with a Japanese evangelist, established the Yotsuya mission in Tokyo and continued in that work until her death in 1928.⁶⁸

E. Snodgrass and his wife, Mattie, had already opened a printing office, and although they badly needed a newer printing press, they were publishing *The Voice*, an English periodical, and religious tracts in English.⁶⁹ There was a strong interest in Chinese and English literature among the educated classes, and Snodgrass, McCaleb, and then Bishop recognized the importance of monthly publications for families, women and

⁶⁵ Janes, "William J. Bishop," 1129. Even from the beginning of Protestant missions in Japan, women played important roles in establishing and maintaining schools. Mrs. Hepburn opened a school for girls in Yokohama in the 1860s. Griffis, *Hepburn of Japan*, 113. Work among women by single women missionaries was replicated among Japanese creating "Bible women." A "Bible woman" was a national who, after training, was given the responsibility to evangelize among the women and children of her country. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 180.

⁶⁶ E. Snodgrass, "The Work in Japan," *Gospel Advocate* 41, no. 24 (1899): 370; E. Snodgrass, "From Japan—Report for 1899," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 9 (1900): 139.

⁶⁷ Janes, "William J. Bishop," 30. Craynon arrived in Japan sometime during 1896 at the age of 21 and stayed until sometime in 1900.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 25. Overall, in the first half of the twentieth century, the single women missionaries to Japan stayed much longer than the men. Miller, together with Sarah Andrews and Lillie Cypert, each remained on the field more than 22 years. Cypert and Andrews persisted in their work even through the difficult years of World War II.

⁶⁹ Bishop, "Missionary Notes," June 8, 1899, 362.

children.⁷⁰ Fires in Yokohama had recently reduced more than 3,000 homes to ashes, and Snodgrass made appeals to American churches for financial benevolent help.⁷¹ Snodgrass also lamented the anti-foreign climate, the revival of Buddhism, Japan's widespread skepticism and especially the divided condition of the workers.⁷² Their work with the Koishikawa church was advancing slowly with children's classes averaging about 30 in attendance and the English school having an enrollment of about 40. William Bishop purchased Snodgrass's printing office and made plans to print religious works in Japanese and open a bookstore.⁷³

Although health, political, and religious conditions were challenging and conversions came slowly, the missionaries of the Churches of Christ in Japan possessed an optimistic outlook and believed that the Bible was changing the "idolatrous" Japanese culture.⁷⁴ McCaleb, for example, held that missionaries were an advancing "great force of civilization" and succeeded because Christian education was displacing idolatrous

⁷⁰ Publication progressed through three phases. First books were written in Chinese and English. Then the same works were translated into Japanese. Lastly, tracts were written and produced by the Japanese. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 179-80, 206-07.

⁷¹ Snodgrass, "Thousands of Japanese Destitute," 608.

⁷² Snodgrass, "From Japan—Report for 1899," 139.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ John Moody McCaleb, *From Idols to God: or, My Religious Experience* (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, 1907). Wagner stated that the only war a Christian needed to fight was that against the powers of darkness, that, in his opinion, was being waged on two fronts: against the idolatry in Japan and the doctrinal infidelity in the States. Of these powers he wrote, "While we meet them here in the shape of diabolical idolatry, you will meet them over there in the shape of proud infidelity." Wagner, "Letter from Japan to Brother McCaleb," 720.

ignorance.⁷⁵ He wrote, “Japan had a false view of herself. She was not a nation of men, but of gods, demons, spirits—anything but common men.”⁷⁶ He never anticipated the day when the Bible would entirely convert the nation but firmly believed that wherever it went, the Bible benefited all and accompanied the advancement of civilization. The Bible and civilization were “inseparably connected.”⁷⁷ McCaleb implied in his writing that changes from backward ways, poverty, and lack of freedom were brought about by the teaching of the gospel.⁷⁸ Wagner, positioned seventy-five miles inland and hard at work in establishing his Christian Colony, believed that the ever-increasing official opposition to Christianity in Japan could only be temporary. He wrote, “God in heaven laughs at the poor worms of the dust, who crawl and kick in the slime of their ill-spirited ignorance, and the time will come when he will put to shame an idolatrous emperor and a blind, heathenish nation by the power of his grace, love, and mercy.”⁷⁹

Initial Work and Optimism

Applied to the Japanese situation, Harding’s principles called for a fraternal relationship with an emerging national leadership, an industriousness in self-support, a thorough respect of the local language and culture, and an emphasis on spiritual

⁷⁵ McCaleb, “Bible and Japan,” 307; McCaleb, “Bible and Japan,” April 15, 1900, 224.

⁷⁶ McCaleb, “Bible and Japan,” 307.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ McCaleb, “Bible and Japan,” April 19, 1900, 254.

⁷⁹ Wagner, “Letter from Japan to Brother McCaleb,” 720.

development through Bible reading. Filled with optimism, William set to work learning Japanese, looking after McCaleb's work in Kanda Ward, and teaching Bible classes to young men in English. This early work resulted in the baptism of one little girl.⁸⁰ Most of his energies during this period were expended in physical labor including carpentry and masonry to better equip the printing office that he had purchased from the veteran missionary E. Snodgrass.⁸¹ He took on several small printing jobs and worked toward establishing a commercial clientele large enough to sustain the publication of a religious tract in Japanese each month. His first two printed religious works translated into Japanese were a tract he had written on "How to Study the Bible," and Harding's Bible reader card. He distributed the card en masse among the Japanese preachers so that people might learn to read the Bible "lid to lid."⁸²

Conditions were difficult and funds were insufficient. Alice and William settled into a Japanese rental house constructed of weatherboard that was but a quarter of an inch thick. The interior walls were made of paper, and given Tokyo's crowded streets and frequent fires, the Bishops feared that they and their house were both at risk. The thin walls rendered their home nearly impossible to heat and kept the fuel bills high. Their first winter in Tokyo was the severest that Snodgrass had seen in his twelve years'

⁸⁰ William James Bishop, "A Missionary Letter," *The Way* 2, no. 9 (1900): 185; McCaleb, "McCaleb's Report," July 19, 1900, 462.

⁸¹ E. Snodgrass, "Report 1899," *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 9 (1900): 139.

⁸² Bishop, "Missionary Letter," February 1900, 185. Faith missionaries such as Müller and Taylor were often in the habit of distributing their materials free of charge.

experience.⁸³ Bishop reported that his health was excellent and that he intended to stay in Japan indefinitely.⁸⁴ Alice, however, was not faring well. Weakened by her injury in California, she became a victim of tuberculosis.⁸⁵ With money tight, “William saw the time when he did not have the money to buy the right kind of food for his sick wife.”⁸⁶ Knowing something needed to be done to improve their situation, William sought to raise enough money to move into an American style home given to him by J. M. McCaleb. With the aid of Japanese carpenters, Bishop removed every nail and moved the home board by board a long distance to another rented piece of property in a better location.⁸⁷

The Cost of Radical Faith

Less than six months into their mission work, Bishop experienced the sacrificial cost of Harding’s call to radical faith. As the weather grew colder and the Bishops’ home

⁸³ E. Snodgrass, “From Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 14 (1900): 223.

⁸⁴ Bishop, “Missionary Letter,” February 1900, 185.

⁸⁵ J. M. McCaleb and Clara Bishop differed on the cause of Alice’s death. McCaleb, perhaps wanting to avoid the perception that mission work was more life-threatening than life in the United States, affirmed that Bishop’s first wife died because of an injury resulting from a fall in California. McCaleb, ; John Moody McCaleb, “The Future of Our Work in Japan,” *Gospel Advocate* 55, no. 32 (1913): 751. Clara, however, argued categorically that Alice died of tuberculosis. Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to John Moody McCaleb, Tokyo, June 9, 1913; Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, July 29, 1913. J. W. Grant stated that Alice broke her ribs before departure, weakening her and rendering her more likely to get tuberculosis. Grant, “William J. Bishop,” 391.

⁸⁶ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, December 31, 1913. The claim of insufficient funds may have been more melodrama on Clara’s part than reality. Bishop himself reported that from April 3, 1899, when he began raising funds for their work in Japan through May 25, 1900, a total of \$1422.53 had been contributed to his work. In this period he never complained about the lack of funds, although he did request gifts of three hundred dollars in order to move the house that McCaleb had given to him. William James Bishop, “To the Churches of Christ,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 28 (1900): 451.

⁸⁷ Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, July 29, 1913.

damper, Alice's health continued to decline.⁸⁸ Under the duress of tuberculosis, the beauty of her character was all the more obvious to those around her. William noted that "her sufferings were borne with cheerful patience"⁸⁹ and the Bishops' co-worker, Nettie Craynon, who took care of her right up to her last days, wrote, "I was the first to greet your sainted sister Alice on this shore; the first to minister to her bodily pain; and one of the number who had learned to speak her name reverently who saw her beautiful spirit take its joyous flight in perfect peace to the beautiful beyond. Bravely and nobly did she hold up the cross of Christ. It can be truly said of her that her work is complete. She was a missionary to the missionaries and not one of us but were brought to a closer walk with our dear Savior through her beautiful example of a perfect life."⁹⁰

Despite William's noble efforts to secure a healthier place to live and all his loving care, Alice's health worsened dramatically and his bride of only nine months died on March 8, 1900. In the last hours of her life she gave parting words of loving wisdom to those friends who were caring for her, and requested that Scripture be read, "a prayer offered, and 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul' be sung."⁹¹ Although sick, her weak voice joined with the others at the phrase, "O receive my soul at last." Those who died on the field

⁸⁸ "But the climate was damp, the houses not warm and she gradually declined with tuberculosis until March 8, 1900, when she departed to be with the Lord." Janes, "Mrs. Alice Davis Bishop," 1035.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Nettie Craynon, Tokyo, in a letter to Don Carlos Janes, Louisville, March 21, 1900, quoted in Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 1:30.

⁹¹ Janes, "Mrs. Alice Davis Bishop," 1035.

were important to the shaping of new missionary attitudes within the Churches of Christ, because their deaths were interpreted by Christians back home as quasi-martyrdoms.⁹²

Bishop's Work

William wrote very little of his wife's passing. In fact, nothing from his hand appeared in the papers from February through June of that year until stoically he wrote a report of his work and said of Alice, "she was ill, then she fell asleep."⁹³ He may have wanted to write more, but the death of a missionary on the field was a sensitive matter to handle.⁹⁴ The announcement of her death could inspire others to the same degree of faithfulness, but it also had the potential to discourage or to raise the issue of whether God was supporting the mission. Alice's death occurred in the initial and vulnerable years of this faith mission. News of her untimely death, Bishop feared, might also mean the demise of the fledgling movement. Inwardly he agonized and for a period of two years he suffered grief and loneliness. Bishop kept his pain to himself and bravely continued in his work. Alice Bishop was the first of the missionaries of the non-society

⁹² Robert, "Influence of American Missionary Women," 62.

⁹³ Bishop, "To the Churches of Christ," 451.

⁹⁴ The Kansas-Sudan mission, for example, ended in disaster when five of its missionaries died of malaria within three months. When missionaries of the Africa Inland Mission died in 1896, Pierson attributed the tragedy to satanic opposition and encouraged the work to continue. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 180, 189.

Churches of Christ to fall on the field. She was buried in the foreign section of the Aoyama Green Hill Cemetery.⁹⁵

Tuberculosis was a deadly enemy at the turn of the twentieth century. Approximately one-fourth of all deaths in Europe, the United States and Japan were attributed to the infection.⁹⁶ Crowded conditions, poor nutrition, and low awareness contributed to the infection rate being much higher in Tokyo than in the rest of the country.⁹⁷ Had the Bishops remained in the United States, there would have been no guarantee that Alice would have survived, although with proper treatment and diet, her chances would have been greatly improved. In Alice and William Bishop's case, stepping out in faith was not without its cost.

Bishop's Loneliness

Although outwardly Bishop maintained his composure, inwardly he was deeply distraught. He sought relief from his loneliness by throwing himself into the work. He continued in his printing work and determined to focus his printing efforts on works in

⁹⁵ Six years later Bishop attempted to get one hundred people to each give a dollar for the purchase of a headstone but was unsuccessful. William James Bishop, "Mrs. Alice Bishop," *Japan Missionary* 2, no. 5 (1906): 2. The grave was still unmarked in 1913 when Bishop's second wife, Clara, renewed attempts to raise gifts from among supporters for the two grave markers. Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, December 27, 1913. The grave remained unmarked until a group of Japanese Christian scholars and a Methodist missionary formed a committee to protect the Protestant gravesites within the foreigners' section of the cemetery. Motoyuki Nomura to Shawn Daggett, February 28, 2007.

⁹⁶ Lawrence Geiter, *Ending Neglect: The Elimination of Tuberculosis in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2000), 23.

⁹⁷ Iyo Araki San, "Tuberculosis in Tokyo and Vicinity," in *Transactions on the Sixth International Congress on Tuberculosis* (Philadelphia: Fell, 1908), 573.

Japanese.⁹⁸ Convinced that the Japanese would be more likely to read what they paid for, he set his goal on distributing, printing, and selling five to ten thousand tracts on salvation in Japanese each week and hoped to maintain this pace to produce as many as five hundred thousand pieces per year. This broadcast sowing of seed unwittingly stood as prophetic metaphor for Bishop's work of faith. Without guarantees of effectiveness or results, the Word was indiscriminately cast to the people. Likewise, Bishop allowed his life to be cast onto and planted in foreign soil. He promised his supporters to publish and mail out quarterly a paper about the Japan mission entitled, *The Sword*. He took "full control" of the Kanda Ward work among thirty-four poor children, whom he taught daily, and a half dozen Christians who met together for the Lord's Supper each Sunday. Additionally, he vowed, "As I learn the language I will be able to do more in this work."⁹⁹

As much as the winter had been cold, the summer proved to be unbearably hot and although most of the American missionaries of various denominations had taken refuge in the mountains for vacation, Bishop trudged forward in his work. Bishop found the climate too hot to concentrate on his study of Japanese but baptized a twelve-year-old daughter of one of the members of the Kanda Ward church. She had been taken in, taught, quizzed and tested by Ms. Wirick before her baptism. Bishop was still new to the work and his most credible influence was exerted on those closely associated with the

⁹⁸ According to Bishop printing in English was more expensive and required more time. He also discovered that few of Japan's population of 42 million could speak English.

⁹⁹ Bishop, "To the Churches of Christ," 451.

church, especially the children whose families were already converted to Christianity. That his first two converts were girls reveals that the single female missionaries, Nettie Craynon and Alice Miller, probably exemplified an admirable lifestyle and contributed significantly to the teaching of the children. In this period Bishop wrote that he appreciated financial gifts but especially needed the prayers of his supporters.¹⁰⁰ Readers at home had opportunity to perceive that Bishop clung firmly to the faith missions ideal in the face of grim adversity.

First Furlough 1902 and Marriage to Clara Mae Elliott

Romance by Mail

William continued on this course for one more year until he could bear his loneliness no longer. Of this period of time he wrote, “There were many times, when the oppressive weight of loneliness pressed down upon me and gave as keen a sense of pain as any suffering from physical disorder. At such times no employment gave me relief. Often I walked miles in an effort to get away from the pain of being alone.”¹⁰¹ Bishop determined to press on faithfully in the work until the McCalebs’ return. In November of 1901 not long after the McCalebs had rejoined the work in Japan, he began writing Clara Mae Elliott, a young lady of Paris, Texas, and the daughter of J. D. Elliott. “In correspondence with Brother Elliott’s family at Paris, Texas, he learned that one in that family had already learned to love him and was willing to assist him in the work of his

¹⁰⁰ William James Bishop, “Missionary Notes,” *Gospel Advocate* 42, no. 37 (1900): 579.

¹⁰¹ William James Bishop, “Why I Came Home,” *The Way* 4, no. 5 (1902).

chosen field.”¹⁰² Bishop had made his home with the Elliott family while preaching for the Lamar Street church in that city and had returned to visit them with his first wife Alice en route to Japan. Recognizing the divine providence by which they had made each other’s acquaintance, by letter William and Clara secretly made plans for marriage and Bishop promised to come and marry her in the spring of 1902.¹⁰³ So, as promised, he arrived in Texas in the early spring and the two were wed by Bishop’s best friend, Jesse P. Sewell, on April 1, 1902.¹⁰⁴

Clara Mae Elliott was born in Lewisburg, Tennessee, in 1878. She received her education in the public grammar and high schools in Nashville and attended Ward Academy. Clara was with her family in Paris, Texas, when she became one of the thousands baptized by T. B. Larimore. While growing up, she had been taught to oppose foreign mission work, as it was often associated with instrumental music “as things digressive.”¹⁰⁵ The memory of William’s character and charm must have been inviting enough to change her opinion about mission work, for she became willing to join him in Japan. Her strength of conviction and abilities in ministry were soon tested on the Japanese mission field.¹⁰⁶ She was also about to discover that in a style patterned after his

¹⁰² Grant, “William J. Bishop,” 391.

¹⁰³ William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to Clara Mae Elliott, Paris, Texas, January 12, 1901.

¹⁰⁴ William James Bishop, “A Missionary and Fortunes,” *The Way* 4, no. 8 (1902): 63; “Miscellany,” *Gospel Advocate* 44, no. 15 (1902): 229.

¹⁰⁵ Don Carlos Janes, “Mrs. Clara Elliot Bishop,” *Missionary Messenger* 18, no. 7 (1941): 1048.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

teacher, James A. Harding, her husband William would make room for her to make valuable contributions to their mission work.

U.S. Travel and Influence

Bishop's trip to the United States, although occasioned by his wife's death and his desire to remarry, had an incalculable impact on the future of missions of the Churches of Christ. As a young man who had maintained his faith principles through trying circumstances, his earned credibility swayed audiences and inspired a new wave of missionaries. His influence made a particularly deep mark on students at Potter Bible College who, moved by Bishop's presentations, would spend the rest of their lives promoting foreign missions.

Bishop traveled together with his young bride visiting churches and Christian schools with his "magic lantern" showing pictures of Japan, recounting fascinating stories of Japanese culture, and raising funds. While on this tour, he made a visit to Potter Bible College where he delivered an address that had a profound effect on many students but especially on three of significance: C. G. Vincent and C. C. Klingman who later determined to join the Bishops in the Japan Mission, and Don Carlos Janes. Although Janes never fulfilled the vow he made that day to become a foreign missionary, he did spend the rest of his independently-wealthy life raising, receiving, and forwarding funds for missionaries all over the world.¹⁰⁷ He became the single most important promoter of

¹⁰⁷ On that occasion Bishop had intended to show pictures using the magic lantern but the projector would not work. Don Carlos Janes, "William J. Bishop," *Gospel Advocate* 55, no. 17 (1913): 391;

missions in the Churches of Christ prior to World War II. Before finishing his studies at Potter, Janes made a trip to Europe and the Holy Land and published two books about his travels which brought the world into the purview of the churches in his fellowship. He became a powerful evangelist, and his interest in prophecy and premillennialism contributed to his intense interest in mobilizing churches to support mission work. “From 1911 to 1915 he edited and published *Encouragement Magazine*.”¹⁰⁸ He was a regular contributor to the foreign missionary column of *Word and Work* from 1916 forward. He edited, published and distributed two missionary publications: *Booster’s Bulletin* (1924-1928) and *Missionary Messenger* (1929-1944). In 1929, he and his wife Myrtie made a world tour and visited missionaries along the way. He so dedicated himself to being the helper of missionaries that he was often called “the one man missionary society.”¹⁰⁹

Bishop could not have imagined the inestimable good that would be accomplished through his simple presentation at PBC and its influence on the young Don Carlos Janes. He was sowing seed that produced a harvest much later. At the conclusion of Bishop’s tour in the fall of 1902, the Bishops spent most of their time working with the church in Sherman, Texas, and traveling among the churches in that area. William wrote that he was “anxious to return to Japan now and to go forward in the work already begun: I am

Janes, “William J. Bishop,” 1009. In 1920 Janes inherited a large enough amount of money that he was able to support himself. Elkins, *Church-Sponsored Missions*, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Elkins, *Church-Sponsored Missions*, 10.

¹⁰⁹ Robert H. Boll, “Press Comments,” *Missionary Messenger* 21, no. 2 (1944): 1620.

homesick for the ‘Land of the Rising Sun.’”¹¹⁰ The Bishops sailed for Japan in October and arrived in Yokohama November 24, 1902.

Second Term of Work, 1902–1908

Life in Japan for the Bishops

During the next six years, Clara and William enjoyed a close and full partnership in the work through which they believed they saw God’s providence blessing their lives. In the evenings when William would return from the printing office or from holding Bible classes, he and Clara “shared everything together and spoke . . . about the work.”¹¹¹ Their work during these years also interspersed with moments of recreation. Occasionally they took time to enjoy the beauties of the host country together. In the spring when the cherry trees were in full bloom, William rented a boat and took his wife polling down the river to view the sights. William was “inept in polling” and marveled at the “little Japanese boys who could do it with ease.”¹¹²

Although he and Clara had to bury their firstborn child in a grave close to his first wife Alice, William, who had spent his youth as an orphan, finally experienced the joy of having a family of his own. He spoke tenderly of his three daughters born to him and Clara during the span of only four years. Margaret Elliott was born in 1903, Julia

¹¹⁰ William James Bishop, “I Am Ready,” *Gospel Advocate* 44, no. 42 (1902): 534.

¹¹¹ Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, November 17, 1913.

¹¹² William James Bishop, “Cherry Blossoms,” *Japan Missionary* 2, no. 5 (1906): 1.

Elizabeth in 1905, and Mary Emma in 1906.¹¹³ When their second child was just one year old, she was hospitalized with “a bad sore eye.” They feared she would lose the eye but “she recovered and the eye [seemed] to be none the worse.”¹¹⁴ Several years later the family delayed their furlough trip to the States because one of the children had diphtheria. She recovered, and the family was eventually able to sail for San Francisco.¹¹⁵

Clara’s Work

Having witnessed how Harding had worked in a complementary partnership with his wife, Pattie, at the NBS, Bishop determined to have the same kind of working relationship with his wife. From the beginning of their marriage and work in Japan, Bishop dreamed, “She can teach the women and children, while I can teach the men and boys; and together we will have a home.”¹¹⁶ Beyond her duties as the mother of three small daughters and keeper of the home, she took the responsibility of raising funds from “a number of good sisters in the American churches” for a Bible woman named Mrs. Kato.¹¹⁷ The two of them together worked among the women and children of the church and neighborhood. They visited “the homes of the people and [held] special Bible study

¹¹³ William James Bishop, “Margaret Elliott Bishop,” *Japan Missionary* 1, no. 5 (1904): 2; Janes, “Mrs. Clara Elliot Bishop,” 1049.

¹¹⁴ Bishop, “Cherry Blossoms,” 1.

¹¹⁵ Janes, “Mrs. Clara Elliot Bishop,” 1048; Janes, “William J. Bishop,” 1009.

¹¹⁶ Bishop, “I Am Ready,” 534.

¹¹⁷ Clara Bishop, “To Your Account,” n.d., Clipping. A “Bible woman” was a national who, after training, was given the responsibility to evangelize among the women and children of her country. Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 180.

meetings for the women.”¹¹⁸ When William was too busy working to support the family or ill from working too much, Clara kept up with the writing of reports and letters to supporters and directed the local work of the church.

Bishop, The Reader

William possessed talent as a speaker, and although he did not finish his formal education, he developed his keen mind through reading.¹¹⁹ When funds were available, William spent them on an ever-growing and well-organized library.¹²⁰ He was an avid reader, loved to study, and was particularly fond of collecting books on Bible lands, archeology, and psychology.¹²¹ His investment in these books and Bible dictionaries enhanced his personal preparation as a scholar and eventually amounted to a valuable collection of reference works.¹²²

Taking Over Snodgrass’s Work

In his previous three years of work (1899-1901), William Bishop supervised McCaleb’s work in the Kanda Ward and opened a printing office.¹²³ After the McCalebs

¹¹⁸ Clara Bishop, “To Your Account.”

¹¹⁹ Clara wrote of her husband, “I believe that we haven’t a preacher in our brotherhood who has a better and more capable mind than William had. There are some who had better educational advantages, but none who are better read.” Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

¹²⁰ McCaleb, “Missionary Sketches,” September 5, 1905, 3-4.

¹²¹ Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, July 29, 1913.

¹²² Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

¹²³ McCaleb was in the States traveling among the churches and raising interest in foreign missions.

had completed their time in the States and returned to Japan, the Bishops had the opportunity to begin a new church work of their own and to transform faith into courage. In the early spring of 1903 Eugene Snodgrass and his wife Mattie made plans to give their work into the hands of another missionary and to return to the States. Mattie's health had seriously deteriorated, and she needed medical attention immediately.¹²⁴ After McCaleb refused Snodgrass's offer to take up his work, Snodgrass gave the Koishikawa Chapel and the oversight of the church meeting in it into the hands of William Bishop on February 22, 1903. The work that in the papers had a gleam and a shine was not at all what it had seemed.¹²⁵ Although Snodgrass had claimed to have baptized many Japanese, the Bishops were only "able to locate three worthy members."¹²⁶ Due to the transience of those converted, many members had relocated to other parts of the country. Also detrimental to the work was Snodgrass's failure to confront the Japanese leadership concerning at least two rather scandalous incidents.

When the Bishops inherited this so-called "work," the church in that location had an abysmal reputation for several reasons. For one, the printer that Snodgrass had employed was an Englishman who took meals together with an elderly woman and her daughter. Being "the very scum of the earth," he at some point forced himself upon the

¹²⁴ Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 1:22-23.

¹²⁵ Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to John Moody McCaleb, Tokyo, June 14, 1913. The actual state of the Snodgrass work when delivered into the hands of the Bishops was in dispute. Hiratsuka mentioned that Yokoo, Masuno and some other brethren were helping with the church. Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan," 2.

¹²⁶ William James Bishop, "Bishop-Hiratsuka Japan Mission," *Christian Leader and the Way* 24, no. 18 (1910): 4.

girl and “ruined her life.”¹²⁷ Although all of the neighbors knew of the rape, she soon married another man, and she and her new husband became solid members of the church. Clara wrote years later that the child born to the young girl looked more like the mother than the Englishman father and was a good child.

The second scandal involved the preacher that Snodgrass supported to work with him. According to Clara’s remembrances, he was a “rascal.” He and his wife lived in a room connected with the chapel. The woman, even with her husband’s knowledge, was having sexual relations with other men and, no doubt, rented out the church bed for profit. William ordered them to leave the property but after they had refused numerous times, he went to the building with a pistol in his pocket and gave the preacher but an hour to leave. That night the Japanese preacher and his wife left town owing all the merchants in the neighborhood and were never heard from again. Clara later recounted that William never had to display his pistol, but he was ready to use it if necessary. The pistol was always a source of worry to her.¹²⁸ In William’s mind, the courage to cleanse the church of these scandals was an expression of trust in the biblical plan for church planting.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Hiratsuka, “History of the Church in Japan,” 2.

¹²⁸ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, Tokyo, November 24, 1913; Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, July 29, 1913; Clara Bishop to John Moody McCaleb, June 14, 1913.

¹²⁹ 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 called for the expulsion of the sexually sinful from the church. According to Roland Allen the Pauline pattern called for excommunication by the majority, and not by the missionary. Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 123.

Partnership with Yunosuke Hiratsuka

William and Clara must have often questioned their decision to take up Snodgrass's work at Koishikawa Chapel. The newly-wedded missionaries, however, demonstrated their fortitude of character and optimistic faith by plodding ahead in what became one of the healthiest and most mature mission stations of the Churches of Christ in the early 1900s. Their generous hospitality, long hours of labor, respect for Japanese culture, and trust in their new converts were all factors that contributed to the fruitfulness of their work.¹³⁰ The key to their success, however, consisted in the Bishops' invitation to a young Japanese Christian man of the *Samurai* class, named Yunosuke Hiratsuka, to work with them.¹³¹ In the months immediately following the departure of Snodgrass, Yunosuke quickly became like a son to the Bishops and worked side by side with William in nearly every aspect of the work. William Bishop's acceptance and trust in Yunosuke Hiratsuka became the expression of his implementation of Harding's church planting principles.

¹³⁰ Letters, reports, and especially Hiratsuka's history seem to indicate that the Bishops were unusually open in welcoming people into their home for events such as a special prayer meeting January 6, 1906, in which "many Japanese members came and prayed for the grace of God through the year, thanking Him, for the blessings of the past year." Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan," 2. The Bishops also kept Miss Tomie Yoshie in their home for at least two years while she attended the university and assisted in the teaching of Sunday school classes. Yoshie eventually attended Potter Bible College and returned to work among the churches as a Bible woman. William James Bishop, "Who Will Do It?" *Japan Missionary* 2, no. 1 (1905): 3.

¹³¹ Bishop referred to Hiratsuka as an "efficient worker" and said of him, "He is largely to be credited with the success of the work at Koishikawa Chapel, Tokyo." William James Bishop, "Plain Statement of the Work in Japan," 1910.

The *Samurai* and Christianity

The early history of the Protestant church in Japan is closely tied with the political and economic displacement of the *Samurai*, and the Bishops' work was certainly no exception. When the Meiji government was solidly established in the late 1860s, clans from three southwestern fiefs, Satsuma, Choshua, and Tosa, who had backed the imperial restoration, came to occupy almost all of the administrative posts in the new government. The *Samurai* who had loyally supported the former Tokugawa government were virtually excluded from positions in the new administration. The abolition of fiefs and the feudal system, which the *Samurai* had supported, left this class jobless. The vast majority of the *Samurai* were suddenly unemployed and many of them were among the first to take advantage of the educational opportunities provided by the recently-arrived Western missionaries. Concerning the *Samurai*, Drummond writes, "To understand the history of Protestant Christianity in Japan is to realize that the bulk of the leadership and a relatively large part of the membership of the church until well into the twentieth century were drawn from these *Samurai*, many of whom were to a considerable extent socially and economically dispossessed."¹³² Missionaries had been blocked in their attempts to reach farmers and laborers who had been marginalized by governmental policies from the opportunities of modernization. They found in the *Samurai*, however, an accessible audience.¹³³ Although only five percent of the population was *Samurai*, they comprised,

¹³² Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 168.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

according to some estimates, forty percent of the membership of the Christian churches. In Tokyo the concentration of the *Samurai* in the churches was as high as seventy-five percent.¹³⁴

Many of these *Samurai* transferred their loyalty to and engaged their noble leadership qualities in the cause of the Christian faith. One such example parallel to Hiratsuka's case was Okuno Masatsuna. Okuno had supported the *Bakufu* and was left without income when his lord was defeated during the Meiji Restoration. In his despondency he became a language teacher for Samuel R. Brown, a Reformed Church missionary. After becoming a Christian, Okuno offered his creative talents of calligraphy to cut the wood blocks for the printing of the first New Testament translation of the Bible. As a poet, he contributed to the development of a true Japanese hymnology. As a powerful preacher and faithful Christian, "he represented to the men of that day the transmutation of *Samurai* loyalty into the morally purified, spiritually ennobled dedication that characterized not a few Christian leaders, clerical and lay, of the first generation."¹³⁵ The real backbone of the Japanese church consisted of these men, such as Okuno and Hiratsuka, who, guided by ethical sensitivities and loyalty, led the young churches dependably.

¹³⁴ Griffis, *Hepburn of Japan*, 224-226.

¹³⁵ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 178.

Hiratsuka's Conversion

Hiratsuka had spent his early adulthood seeking to avenge himself by finding and killing the thief who had murdered his father. His father had strictly educated him in Confucianism from the age of seven. His indoctrination into this ancient religion eventually led, however, into Christianity, as the Confucian system had failed the *Samurai* who had lost their occupations. Hiratsuka remembered, "So, I became a boy who thought deeply about things. One night I looked into the sky and wondered where all those stars had come from. No one could answer. So even from the age of ten years old I was searching for some religion."¹³⁶

Hiratsuka's desire to study Confucianism further took him to Tokyo where connections of his father's friends, the Okushi family, gave him a home and found him employment first as a policeman in the Imperial Palace and later as a banker. He became dissatisfied with both the police work and with Confucianism, and he desired to explore American civilization. English would be necessary to pursue this dream, and so he enrolled in an English school in the Kanda Ward conducted by J. M. McCaleb. He wrote of that meeting: "There I learned that the young American teacher, named J. M. McCaleb, was a missionary who would also teach Christianity to us. In truth, I did not care so much about Christianity, not knowing anything at all about that teaching.

¹³⁶ Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan," 11.

However, I felt kindly toward him.”¹³⁷ Both modernization and new moral guidance became factors in his search for religion.

In time, Hiratsuka’s fondness grew not only toward McCaleb but also toward his message until he came to believe that the “heavenly Father” had sent the Son to save him from his sinful state. He recalled, “It was a very wonderful teaching to my soul, and, thank God, the dissatisfaction in my heart was taken away. The question of the stars in the sky was cleared up and the light shone into my heart.”¹³⁸ Truly desiring to be transformed by the conversion, Hiratsuka “made changes stopping worldly sinful practices.”¹³⁹ He abandoned his desire to take revenge, and he forgave “that enemy who had killed [his] dear father.”¹⁴⁰ In Hiratsuka, then, *Samurai* military values were replaced by a new ethic, and his transformation was complete on multiple levels.

Becoming a Bridge

Some key Japanese preachers of the early period of Protestant evangelization were trained and educated in the United States. They served as important “bridge people” who obtained the confidence and trust of Western missionaries and possessed a thorough understanding of their own people and culture. Such leaders were able to adapt Western Christianity and render it accessible to the Japanese culture. An excellent illustration of

¹³⁷ Ibid., 13.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 14.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

such a person, who also displayed the sacrificial and independent spirit of the *Samurai*, was Paul Sawayama. Having been converted to Christianity through the mission of the United Church of Christ (of Presbyterian-Reformed tradition), Sawayama returned from his study in the United States in 1874 and established a church in Osaka. He gave up opportunities to enter government service at higher pay, determined to be satisfied with the salary provided by the Japanese church, and opened the Baika Girl's School without the financial help of foreigners. His work led eventually to the founding of the first Japanese home missionary society.¹⁴¹ Yunosuke Hiratsuka's story is similar to Sawayama's at some points.

After converting to Christianity, Hiratsuka fulfilled his dream of going to the U.S. Upon his arrival in San Francisco, he boarded at a Japanese Y.M.C.A. and was befriended by one of E. Snodgrass's converts, Tomijoro Hosogai. Worshipping first with the Presbyterians and then with Congregationalists, Yunosuke attended grammar school, then high school, and had intentions of continuing his education at Stanford University. Under the weight of his studies his health declined, and he was advised to take rest in the cleaner air of Salinas, California. To the astonishment of doctors who had given a much more serious prognosis, Hiratsuka responded well to his new environment and was nearly completely healed within a few weeks. Mr. Inazawa, who directed the mission house of his convalescence, invited Hiratsuka to help him in the mission, and so he began to serve

¹⁴¹ Thomas, *Protestant Beginnings in Japan*, 143; Verbeck, "Proceedings," 841-848. According to Thomas, Sawayama's willingness to live sacrificially on the small salary given him by the Japanese church may have contributed to his early death.

and assist there. Over the course of the next three years, Hiratsuka developed and exercised many of the ministry skills that became so valuable to him upon his return to Tokyo.

His former Japanese benefactor, Mr. Okushi, wrote him a letter expressing that “the family was waiting very much for [his] coming back home.”¹⁴² In his autobiography, Hiratsuka recalled that he was extremely grateful for his spiritual experiences and that he believed that God was guiding him to return to his home country. He received more than just spiritual formation; he also obtained a first-rate Western education. Given that Okushi’s daughter, Hanako, had been waiting six years for him, he probably had some secondary motivations for his returning. At the invitation of Mr. Okushi and with the promise of marriage to Hanako, Yunosuke Hiratsuka returned to Japan, his home country. Of that moment he recalled, “I thanked the Heavenly Father by His son, Jesus Christ, for the grace which He had given me in America and the safe voyage home. That prayer was offered in my room of the Okushi house secretly, because Mr. Okushi and his family did not believe in Christ.”¹⁴³ Although Hanako and her family were Shintoists and anti-Christian, Yunosuke told her about his faith, and she agreed to marry him; the two were wed August 23, 1903.¹⁴⁴ As soon as they were married, he began teaching the Bible to his wife, and she accepted baptism five years later.

¹⁴² Hiratsuka, “History of the Church in Japan,” 23.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Mr. Okushi and his family did not believe in Christianity but they believed in Hiratsuka. Hiratsuka remembered Okushi’s saying, “I do not like Christianity, but I like Yunosuke Hiratsuka.” Ibid.

McCaleb's Rejection of Hiratsuka

The contrast between McCaleb as a popularizer and Bishop as the executor of Harding's trust concepts is best seen in their differing treatment of Hiratsuka. When Hiratsuka returned to Japan, he determined to find the American preacher, McCaleb, who had first taught him about Christ. After several days of searching, Hiratsuka finally found the McCalebs' home. A child came to the door then ran and got McCaleb. Only after Hiratsuka explained that he had been baptized by McCaleb, gone to America, and recently returned, did McCaleb understand who he was. After listening to Hiratsuka's account of his American experiences, McCaleb balked at the thought of bringing Hiratsuka back into the church. Instead, he recommended that he attend the Bishops' church in Koishikawa Ward the next Sunday.¹⁴⁵ Perhaps McCaleb thought to simply rid himself of an opportunist by sending him on to the next missions station. The Bishops welcomed him warmly, took him into their home, asked him about his evangelistic work in San Francisco, and invited him to help in the work. Hiratsuka consented and of that moment remembered this: "We prayed together to God, kneeling on the floor of that room. It was one Monday evening in October 1903. Mr. Bishop taught me many important Bible facts and principles for which I am most thankful. He taught me the way of God more perfectly."¹⁴⁶ By his accepting and teaching Hiratsuka, William Bishop

¹⁴⁵ McCaleb may have desired to distance himself from Hiratsuka. McCaleb probably suspected that his contact with Christians of the Y.M.C.A. and of other denominations had broadened Hiratsuka's religious thinking beyond McCaleb's comfortable limitations. Motoyuki Nomura to Shawn Daggett, February 28, 2007.

¹⁴⁶ Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan," 24.

demonstrated that he was notably more trusting and welcoming than McCaleb. McCaleb was brusque, controlling, and at times autocratic. Bishop, unthreatened by Hiratsuka's wider Protestant connections and contact with the Y.M.C.A., placed confidence in him as a capable Japanese leader. Harding's undenominational influence was at work in Bishop's acceptance of Hiratsuka. Bishop not only trusted Hiratsuka, he believed in the Holy Spirit's ability to correct an error in Hiratsuka's beliefs. Bishop's acceptance of Hiratsuka is important to the history of missions of the Churches of Christ because it proved that McCaleb's gathering of power was detrimental to the work but Bishop's diffusion of authority was advantageous. Ironically, the man for whom McCaleb had little time or patience eventually built and led the strongest Church of Christ in Tokyo. At the advent of World War II, McCaleb left his converts in the care of Hiratsuka and after two years the Koishikawa and Zoshigaya congregations merged.¹⁴⁷

A Japanese/American Partnership

Born and raised in the *Samurai* tradition, Hiratsuka was taught to show loyalty to those he respected or considered to be his superiors. He was from Mito, which was the capital of the Ibaraki prefecture and a part of the Tokugawa Shogunate for four hundred years. Originating in the Mito *Samurai* mentality, Hiratsuka was trained from his birth to be obediently devoted to his superiors. Demonstration of devotion could be authentic or merely superficial depending on the character of the individual. The *Samurai* had no

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 9.

other choice than at least to pretend to be loyal to their lords. To please one's superior, to flatter him or her, and to be attentive to a master's facial expressions were all duties of the *Samurai*. Bishop, an innocent-minded, pure-hearted, though perhaps partially blind American Christian missionary, had no alternative than to depend on an English-speaking native with whom to work.¹⁴⁸ Bishop needed Hiratsuka as much as Hiratsuka needed him.

True to their trusting nature, Clara and William demonstrated a kind and welcoming confidence in the Japanese workers from the start. Bishop encouraged Hiratsuka to preach the next Sunday morning and took him along to make visits in the afternoon. From that moment on, Hiratsuka did most of the preaching on Sunday mornings, unless McCaleb happened to visit and asked to speak. Hiratsuka often translated for Bishop in the evenings. Although McCaleb sent Hiratsuka to Bishop, the idea to have Hiratsuka involved in evangelistic work was Bishop's.¹⁴⁹ The following statement reveals Bishop's fraternal trust in Hiratsuka: "When he came to us ready to work for the Master here, I rejoiced that the Lord had sent me that man I needed. He has proved a true yokefellow. We are studying together, preaching, teaching, translating tracts, setting up type, printing and distributing tracts—working side by side in it all. He

¹⁴⁸ According to Motoyuki Nomura, Hiratsuka may have simply known how to work the American system of support. Hiratsuka would have realized that working for American missionaries was the least expensive way to improve his education, to experience cultural uplift, and to participate in the country's modernization. Motoyuki Nomura to Shawn Daggett, February 28, 2007.

¹⁴⁹ William James Bishop, "Bro. Hiratsuka and the Work at Koishikawa Chapel," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 47 (1909): 4.

is most companionable as a fellow-worker. His life is a living gospel to his countrymen.”¹⁵⁰ From the inception of the partnership, Bishop treated Hiratsuka as an equal and made plans to establish him, and other mature men, as elders over the congregation.

In an attempt to make a clean break from the work of Snodgrass, Hiratsuka and Bishop decided to close the day-school and concentrate their work on the conversion of adults. They called in Otoshige Fujimori to hold an evangelistic meeting that attracted crowds of eighty to two hundred people. At times the weather was so hot they moved the meeting out into the chapel yard under the arbor. Bishop recalls those days:

Brother Yokowo stood at the corner and urged passing people to enter and listen. I stood by the gate and gave out gospel leaflets and tracts. Some refused them, some took them reluctantly, and some removed their hats and accepted the sheets with a bow and “thank you.” I remember one evening, while Brother McCaleb was preaching at the gate to a crowd in the street. I saw Fujimori talking with a man under the arbor and Hiratsuka was instructing a man in the chapel while I was in the printing office printing leaflets (‘Bible Answers to Earnest Inquirers’) and soon I was giving them out ‘hot off the press.’ This meeting greatly helped our regular meetings.¹⁵¹

As the missions congregation grew, the printing office was moved to the chapel yard; and with gifts that Bishop solicited from the United States, the two of them built a home on the same lot for Hiratsuka, his wife, and his eventual four sons and three daughters. They “desired with all of their hearts to establish a Church of Christ in the

¹⁵⁰ William James Bishop, “Letter from Brother Bishop,” *Gospel Advocate* 48, no. 1 (1906): 2.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

Koishikawa Ward.”¹⁵² Thus, through personal work, teaching in their homes and in the homes of others, conducting Bible classes, and preaching “the church grew gradually year by year” until it counted fifty-two members in the first six years.¹⁵³ The health and growth of the fledgling church reflected the mutual acceptance that the Bishops and Japanese members showed of each other.

Bishop also encouraged the Japanese in their independent planting of other churches. Yunosuke Hiratsuka was thus responsible for the founding of the Church of Christ in his home village in the Ibaraki region of Japan. Whenever he visited his native region, he “taught the gospel to [his] relatives and village people.”¹⁵⁴ During his visit of September 6, 1909, and after having heard the gospel many times, Yunosuke’s mother, his niece-in-law, and her mother were all immersed in the brook that flowed below the Hiratsuka house. His mother was sixty-seven years old and often said, “How wonderful it is to look upon the beautiful sky of the sunset. Is there not someone in that sky? So noble so high and magnificent it is! The gods in Japan were once common people, but the God of Christianity is the Highest and the One True God.”¹⁵⁵ The baptism of his elder brother-in-law, Soan Hiratsuka, followed a little more than a month later. Soan’s two sons Makoto and Takashi became leaders and pillars of the church in the Ibaraki region. The

¹⁵² Bishop, “Bishop-Hiratsuka Japan Mission,” 4.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Hiratsuka, “History of the Church in Japan,” 28.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

evangelistic work of this church continued nicely through the cooperation of later missionaries C. G. Vincent and O. D. Bixler.¹⁵⁶

Bishop's Work

William and Clara devoted themselves as completely as possible to their evangelistic and printing ministries. At times when gifts from supporters in the States were lagging, William took on more secular printing work to fill-out the funds necessary for the family budget. Even then, he worked long, hard hours supporting his family and then teaching others.¹⁵⁷ His printing work included tracts, newspapers, and the eventual publication of J. W. McGarvey's *Commentary on Acts*. One of Bishop's tracts was a little booklet entitled "The Way of Life." Using a railroad theme, the tract unfolded to reveal a time table of scriptures and stations along the way for "Hearing, Faith, Repentance, Confession, Baptism, Salvation, Seasons of Refreshing, Joy, Hope and all the virtues," with the final destination being Eternal Life.¹⁵⁸ His inclusion of the three stations after "salvation" reflected Harding's emphasis on holiness. He printed calendars filled with pictures of missionary workers that he sent to supporters and churches in America. His newspapers included occasional issues of the *Japan Missionary* and the *Missionary*

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 33-34.

¹⁵⁷ Bishop, "Letter From Bishop," 3.

¹⁵⁸ William James Bishop, "Koishikawa Chapel and Printing Office," *Japan Missionary* 2, no. 1 (1905): 4.

Messenger: the former intended for supporters, and the latter for distribution among the Japanese.

Convinced that McGarvey's *Commentary on Acts* presented the best "clear exposition of the text with special attention given to conversion stories," Bishop obtained permission to translate, print and distribute it in Japanese.¹⁵⁹ He tried to raise the funds among churches in America for the translation and the printing but was unable. Although he did not express himself on the matter, this lack of response must have been discouraging. True to his character he eventually accomplished the project through self-sacrifice. He gathered the necessary funds by selling his printing press and hiring himself out to the largest Christian publishing house in Japan. Imitating the style of other faith missionaries, he distributed the commentary free of charge to Japanese evangelists of all denominations throughout the country and even made it available to Shinto temples and priests. With this broadcast seed-sowing mentality, he hoped and prayed that the printing work would lead to the conversion of thousands.¹⁶⁰

The printing press had been William Bishop's principal means of an adequate income. Its sale for the sake of the distribution of the commentary represented a radical and sacrificial act of faith. He had given up his major source of revenue. Although others would benefit from the printing of the commentary, Bishop now had to add an outside

¹⁵⁹ William James Bishop, "'Commentary on Acts' Issued in Japanese," *Gospel Advocate* 52, no. 17 (1910): 531.

¹⁶⁰ McGarvey's *Commentary* has been reprinted and is highly valued by Japanese Christians to this day. Motoyuki Nomura to Shawn Daggett, February 28, 2007.

secular job to his ministerial duties in order to provide for his family. The intense pace of life, work, and evangelism that followed must have worn on him. By March 8, 1909, he was “forced by the threatened nervous collapse to hasten home to America,” but before leaving, he placed the commentary in the hands of the printer.¹⁶¹

The printing, preaching, and the Bible class work of William Bishop led, through a network of family connections, to the conversion of “some good, faithful young men and other inquirers” including S. Abe, a high officer of the Japanese government and Hiratsuka’s elder sister, Mrs. T. Yasumi.¹⁶² The core indigenous leadership of the Kamitomizaka Church that met in the Koishikawa Chapel consisted initially of three men who were not even converted by William Bishop: a lawyer baptized by Snodgrass named Tomoji Yokoo; Yunosuke Hiratsuka, baptized by McCaleb; and Ikutaro Kamikura, taught and baptized by Hiratsuka. This third man, Kamikura, came to Hiratsuka on September 1, 1905, and Yunosuke “taught him, telling him from the beginning of the Old Testament to the end of the New Testament . . . all things of Christianity.”¹⁶³ They talked for over five hours and such was the intense hunger for the message that Kamikura refused to stop to eat something until Hiratsuka baptized him in a nearby river.¹⁶⁴ The

¹⁶¹ Bishop, “‘Commentary on Acts’ Issued,” 531.

¹⁶² Hiratsuka, “History of the Church in Japan,” 27.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

genius of William and Clara Bishop's work resided in the confidence and trust they placed in the Japanese regardless of who might have converted them.

Riots and Political Unrest

The peaceful and happy tranquility of the Bishop home was sometimes threatened by political unrest. In the early spring of 1904 Japan declared war on Russia in an attempt to expel the Russians from Manchuria and Korea.¹⁶⁵ Port Arthur on the Liaodong Peninsula was the Russians' only warm water port, and the Japanese with their newly-bolstered imperialist ambitions were determined to occupy Korea and retake the port. In 1905, Russia was experiencing a revolution at home and had suffered three confidence-shaking defeats at the hands of the smaller Japanese army.¹⁶⁶ Rather than continue in a costly war, the Russians opted for peace and signed a treaty with Japan in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on September 5, 1905.¹⁶⁷ Theodore Roosevelt had brokered the peace, but riotous discontent erupted in Japan when the terms of the peace were announced. The Japanese were angry that in the treaty they had not obtained more territory and monetary reparations. Since the United States had pressured Japan into settling on these terms, Japanese fury was released against Americans living in Japan.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ A Declaration of War was issued but arrived after the Japanese attack on Port Arthur February 8, 1904. Denis Warner and Peggy Warner, *The Tide at Sunrise: A History of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905* (Portland: Cass, 2001), 17-20.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 528.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 537.

In the fall of 1905 Bishop was walking about and talking with people not really aware that riots were spreading across Tokyo. He stopped to gaze at the burning of the Home Minister's house and had to ask a bystander the cause of the violence. Bishop reported that "police boxes" and churches across the city had been attacked, but he did not believe that the riots were instigated by an anti-Christian feeling, though partially provoked by the "tactless methods of some Christian propagandists."¹⁶⁹ Their Koishikawa Ward remained quiet for the most part, save for the burning of the police boxes. "Not so much as a letter was erased from the blackboard on which [they] had . . . announcements out at the sidewalk." Martial law eventually restored order and Bishop reported the incident with a calmness characteristic of a firm trust in God's providential care.¹⁷⁰

State of the Work

In the year previous to their furlough in 1909, the Bishops together with the Koishikawa church enjoyed remarkable growth receiving eighteen new converts, thus bringing the total membership to fifty-two. In addition, when McCaleb left for a visit to America, his converts were united with them. Although Bishop was growing both weary and ill, he was convinced more than ever that the work they were doing was essential. He

¹⁶⁹ Bishop, "Letter From Bishop," 2-3.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

believed that with the folding of McCaleb's Zoshigaya congregation into that of his own that there was now "no other church of the ancient order in the city."¹⁷¹

There were additional signs of the Bishops' success prior to 1909. The printing operation had been enlarged and the Sunday school attendance grew. Out of respect for Japanese culture, he learned that a class separation had to be maintained. The wealthier children attended class in the morning, while the poorer attended in the afternoon, about sixty in all. There were no "rice Christians" in the congregation, Bishop maintained, because all of them, with the exception of a few boys sustained by their families, supported themselves. Bishop reported that the church consisted of eleven heads of households, seven of which had Christian wives. The work was nevertheless subject to the effects of a transient population. A number of the congregation moved away from Tokyo. Bishop kept in touch with these members who traveled back to their native villages. He believed that their scattering meant that "Japan [was] full of open doors."¹⁷² He considered Koishikawa Chapel to be the headquarters for an evangelistic work that was beginning to disperse across the country. Most of the members who remained in Tokyo were of the "better classes, educated" occupying "positions of honor."¹⁷³ The church, firmly established by 1909, consisted of teachers, government leaders, business

¹⁷¹ Bishop, "Bishop-Hiratsuka Japan Mission," 4.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

people, and clerks.¹⁷⁴ The Bishops' years of patient and trusting labor among the Japanese was beginning to bear fruit. With the promise of the Klingmans' arrival as their replacement, they made plans for a trip to the United States. Bishop had kept his vow to God, and with a loyalty characteristic of the *Samurai*, he had spent all his energy in faithfully carrying out God's mission.

Second Furlough, 1909–1910

Just as soon as the Bishop family was well enough to travel, they booked passage for March 6, 1909, to visit churches, Bible colleges, and family in the United States and arrived March 26.¹⁷⁵ The trip was occasioned by William's declining health. He needed rest and the attention of American doctors.¹⁷⁶ Shortly before the Bishops' departure, Charles and Clemmie Klingman arrived in Japan and cared for the Bishops' Koishikawa church and McCaleb's Zoshigaya work during their absence. The Klingmans had both attended Potter Bible College under Harding and pledged to become missionaries after hearing Bishop speak there in 1902.¹⁷⁷ Klingman captivated audiences with his rich and beautiful singing voice and succeeded in baptizing another sixteen people in his first year of work.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ The trip was delayed because one of the Bishop children had diphtheria and had to get better before sailing. Janes, "William J. Bishop," 1009.

¹⁷⁶ Bishop, "'Commentary on Acts' Issued," 531.

¹⁷⁷ Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 2:14.

¹⁷⁸ Bishop, "Bishop-Hiratsuka Japan Mission," 4; Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan," 28.

Meanwhile, the Bishops traveled among the American churches in the interest of foreign missions and raising support. When speaking of the responsibility of the churches to support foreign missions, Bishop was direct and unambiguous: “There is no gainsaying that command. It is the bugle call which, to the true soldier, never loses its thrilling, response-compelling power. It is not a request; nor is it a suggestion. It leaves nothing to our choice. There is no exception to be made, there is no room for evasion. It is not obscure but explicit. It is an order, comprehensive and unequivocal, a clear, peremptory, categorical imperative. ‘Go!’”¹⁷⁹ Given his years of service and personal sacrifice, Bishop had the personal ethos to make this statement immensely credible.

Parting from Established Missionary Etiquette

The Bishops’ difficulty in raising funds is significant because it demonstrates that the faith method had become the expected means of conducting mission work. Some of those who heard their reports and appeals were moved to tears and inspired to contribute generously to missions while others were greatly displeased with Bishop’s intense and direct solicitation of funds.¹⁸⁰ The expectation, established by McCaleb among home churches, was that missionaries invited to speak could talk about their work but should not make direct appeals for contributions. Even though William Bishop had been working hard with his own hands in order to provide for most all of his family’s needs, some looked upon his tactics with suspicion and disdain. In cities such as Atlanta, Bishop

¹⁷⁹ William James Bishop, “Bishop—Hiratsuka Japan Mission.”

¹⁸⁰ William James Bishop, Paris, Texas, in a letter to E. A. Elam, Nashville, June 20, 1910.

delivered “interesting lectures on the manners, customs, and religions” of Japan.¹⁸¹ Using his stereopticon views, he brought his listeners “face to face with the condition of the people [in Japan] and showed vividly the great good” that was being done.¹⁸² His visual and stirring presentations served the important function of cultivating the missionary spirit among the churches because he was putting a face on the foreign peoples for home churches.¹⁸³ Bishop reported that since the beginning of the work of the Church of Christ in Japan, 654 had been baptized and seven churches established. His visit in Atlanta motivated the congregation “to greater aspirations in missionary work.”¹⁸⁴

Tensions with McQuiddy

Bishop’s fund-raising efforts were not received favorably by those who were, at least in practice, still “anti-missionary.” While working from Paris, Texas, as a home base, William distributed a fundraising card “presenting a man holding with each hand the tip end of his pant pockets turned inside out and empty.”¹⁸⁵ E. A. Elam and J. C. McQuiddy, editors of one of the most widely circulated papers among the Churches of Christ, the *Gospel Advocate*, took offense at both the card and an article written by one of Bishop’s Texas friends, L. S. White, that accused the Nashville churches of not doing all

¹⁸¹ Hall, “Missionary Work in Japan,” 13.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Robert, “Influence of American Missionary Women,” 60. See above, p. 16, footnote 30.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ E. A. Elam, “Brother Bishop’s Work Continued, 1910,” Unpublished manuscript.

that they should to help the Bishops. Elam and McQuiddy believed that Bishop was insinuating that he was poor and had no money and that reports concerning the Japan mission were too impractical and vague.¹⁸⁶ They also felt that White had no right to “scold” the Nashville churches.¹⁸⁷ Consequently they both returned a flat “no” to Bishop’s request to recommend him in the *Gospel Advocate*, and they blocked him from making any pleas for the Japan work at the next reunion of the Nashville Bible School.¹⁸⁸ Bishop had violated the norms of missionary support and reporting established by McCaleb. He had also situated himself between two competing models of ministry. The Tennessee tradition preferred the sacrificial lifestyle of the itinerant evangelist while the Texas congregations were beginning to hire and locate their own permanent preachers. Bishop had labored strenuously to support his family. In his mind, his solicitation of gifts was simply offering to churches the opportunity to fulfill their missionary duty. McQuiddy and Elam, however, saw Bishop as a beggar who violated the “no appeals” principle of faith missions. Whatever the cause, the McQuiddy/Elam rejection was very

¹⁸⁶ William James Bishop, Paris, Texas, in a letter to J. C. McQuiddy and E. A. Elam, Nashville, Spring, 1910. Cf. Elam, “Brother Bishop’s Work Continued. Elam wrote, “The churches he is visiting are not getting a very definite conception of any special purpose he hopes to accomplish and to suggest that he state concisely and clearly this purpose and himself make ‘stirring’ and ‘practical’ speeches to this end.” Cf. J. C. McQuiddy, Nashville, in a letter to William James Bishop, Paris, Texas, June 16, 1910.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ William James Bishop to J. C. McQuiddy and E. A. Elam, Spring 1910.

serious given that standard fund-raising in that period required the endorsement of the appropriate periodical.¹⁸⁹

McQuiddy and Elam were being petty and using their editorial influence in papal style to maintain their image and control over the Nashville churches. Knowing this, Bishop responded by writing long accounts of the “definiteness” of the work and renewed requests for help.¹⁹⁰ His passion and commitment to the work were immovable. He declared that he had labored with such intensity of effort that he had risked “wrecking [his] health and was forced to return to the States.”¹⁹¹ “I am not a dependent compelled to look to the churches for support,” he wrote, “I can command a good position in the business world at a fair salary.”¹⁹² Bishop’s choice of words represented a significant shift in paradigm for missionary support among the Churches of Christ and would eventually lead to the conviction that trained missionaries were worthy of an adequate income. Bishop also argued that McQuiddy held a position of responsibility and that he ought in sermon and article to promote the adequate and continual support of mission work. In Bishop’s opinion, the Churches of Christ were only truly apostolic to the extent that they carried out the mission to preach the gospel everywhere. In hopes of re-

¹⁸⁹ Vivian Dike’s missionary bands similarly depended on the *Free Methodist* paper to rally and obtain support. Howard A. Snyder, *Populist Saints: B. T. and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 858, 871-3.

¹⁹⁰ Bishop, “Plain Statement of the Work in Japan”; William James Bishop, “Koishikawa Church of Christ—Annual Report,” 1910.

¹⁹¹ Bishop, “Plain Statement of the Work in Japan,” 17; emphasis added.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

acquiring McQuiddy's editorial support, he wrote words with predictive overtones: "I thoroughly appreciate your interest in the work in Japan, for to me it is my very life, and *I am ready not only to suffer for it but to give my life for it.*"¹⁹³ Bishop's affirmation to McQuiddy was extremely important because it was prophetic and to a certain degree demonstrated that his eventual death was not accidental. Three years before his death, Bishop was conscious of his overworking, his endangered health, and the risks involved. That he pressed forward in the pace of the work was intentional. His readiness to die for the cause demonstrated the weight and urgency he felt for preaching the gospel.

Deteriorating Relationship with McCaleb

As one who in Harding style trusted Hiratsuka implicitly and had delegated to him the chief role of the local church leadership, Bishop resented McCaleb's attempts to gain control of the national workers. During this furlough both the Bishop and McCaleb families were in the States, and the frayed nerves of their strained relationship began to show. Initially Bishop held McCaleb's work in such high esteem that he was motivated to go to Japan through his influence. From 1899 until 1908 reports published in the church newspapers demonstrated that Bishop and McCaleb enjoyed a reciprocal respect for each other. By 1909, they had shared the same theater of operations for ten years, and Bishop's

¹⁹³ William James Bishop, Paris, Texas, in a letter to J. C. McQuiddy, Nashville, June 20, 1910. Bishop wrote, "The removal of cause for criticism by actively doing the work in Japan and elsewhere will not only make us happy but will put us right in line with what God commands us to do in His great commandment through his Son, and give to the work a twentieth century duplicate of the Church of Christ set to work to preach the gospel to every creature of the first century. We are apostolic only in so far as we reproduce the apostolic practice in the Churches today."

patience with his co-worker's paternalism was wearing thin. In the November 16, 1909, issue of *The Christian Leader and the Way*, J. M. McCaleb made an appeal for funds for Yunosuke Hiratsuka.¹⁹⁴ On the surface the appeal was innocent enough, but the younger missionary took exception to McCaleb's claim to have been the one to recruit Hiratsuka to the ministry and to the specific request that funds be sent to Hiratsuka through McCaleb. The American who held the funds controlled the national preacher and Bishop wanted to protect Hiratsuka from McCaleb's dictatorship. Bishop wrote a corrective in the same journal against McCaleb's taking ownership of the work.

Now I am in favor of enlarging the work in Japan and appreciate Bro. McCaleb's interest, but I must make it clear once for all that the work at Koishikawa chapel is not in Bro. McCaleb's hands and never has been since it was turned over to me by Bro. Snodgrass. I alone am responsible for the manner of conducting that work, and I object to Bro. McCaleb stepping in and writing as though he had taken charge of that work, and taking the liberty of directing the manner in which that work shall be conducted, and designating funds for certain features of that work, subject to his disposal.¹⁹⁵

Bishop's words demonstrated that he had courage to defend the independence of the Japanese workers and to oppose McCaleb who was revered by the American churches. Bishop's voiced opposition was a momentous course of action in the early history of this missionary movement because McCaleb's tendency was to gather power while Bishop sought to distribute it. Given that McCaleb's words were brief, and relatively innocent, at least on the surface, and considering Bishop's rather firm reaction

¹⁹⁴ John Moody McCaleb, "Missionary News," *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 46 (1909): 5.

¹⁹⁵ Bishop, "Hiratsuka and the Work at Koishikawa Chapel," 4.

and response, the issue of the receiving and forwarding of funds must have been a previous point of contention.

Their dispute echoed that of many missionary relationships when competing for funds. McCaleb offered an apology in a subsequent article and attempted to assure readers that his intentions were noble: “My suggestion that the work be enlarged was simply from a general interest I have in our work over there, and not from any desire whatever to interfere with his plans. . . . I never intentionally made any other impression than that the Koishikawa work is in Bro. Bishop’s hands. . . . I trust my dear brother, while sojourning in America, will not spend his energies fighting a phantom and thus detract from the interest of the work as a whole.”¹⁹⁶ Despite McCaleb’s apology, Bishop stayed on his guard against McCaleb’s dreams of territorial aggrandizement. He continued, however, to take advantage of McCaleb’s notoriety and fund-raising skills. He depended on McCaleb, in fact, to finish raising the necessary support from among the Nashville churches for his third and last tour of duty in Japan. In spite of the discomfort and tension of living in McCaleb’s shadow, Bishop attempted to work in a cordial and friendly relationship with him. During this furlough the Bishop family stopped in Louisville en route to Cincinnati and enjoyed a day and a half reunion with the McCaleb family. Their conversation revolved mainly around how to move the churches to greater involvement in the support of mission work and how to recruit others to “offer

¹⁹⁶ John Moody McCaleb, “Bro. Bishop’s Work,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 49 (1909): 5.

themselves for the foreign fields.”¹⁹⁷ McCaleb described the relationship in these words: “Bro. Bishop and I have for ten years been co-laborers in Japan. We have sat down to each other’s tables, and our children have played together, while our better halves have been the closest of friends. To have him in our house again made us think of old times. While in the homeland our brother is calculated to do much good in stirring up missionary interest.”¹⁹⁸

During this furlough William Bishop made a tour of the Bible schools delivering a series of seven lectures at Dallas, Abilene, Sabinal, Lockney, Thorp Spring, Gunter, and Cordell. As the embodiment of Harding’s trust principles for church planting, Bishop’s visits to these schools played a significant role in the recruiting of the next generation of missionaries such as Dow Merritt, Will N. Short, George Scott, Alva Reese, C. G. Vincent, Orville Bixler, Herman and Harry Fox, and Erroll Rhodes.¹⁹⁹ While traveling he also assisted E. C. Fuqua in obtaining and setting up a printing press for mission work in Colorado.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ John Moody McCaleb, “Bro. Bishop in Louisville,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 23, no. 45 (1909): 3.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Janes, “Missionary Directory,” 1126-33.

²⁰⁰ Janes, “William J. Bishop,” 1009.

Third Tour of Mission Work in Japan, 1911–1913

Mounting Tensions

In 1910, a failed assassination attempt on the emperor in Japan had repercussions for the Christian community and its missionaries. Referred to as the famous “High Treason Incident,” the plot of a group of anarchists under the leadership of socialist Kotoku Shusui was exposed, and twelve men were executed. Kotoku was not a Christian, but the emperor venerating-public perceived that there were connections between his orientation and the influence of Christianity in the country. Amid suspicions and immense hostility that could have led to his own murder, Japanese Protestant leader, Uemura Masahisa, willingly conducted the funeral of Oishi Seinosuke, one of the twelve who was a Christian. Uemura was not a social activist but refused to abandon the family of Oishi in this time of crisis. Although this event did not have a direct effect on the Bishops’ work, it represented the growing tensions between Japanese nationalism and Christianity.²⁰¹ Japan’s victories over China in 1895 and over Russia in 1905, together with its territorial acquisitions and progress in modernization, culminated in an extremely high level of national pride formally expressed in cultic worship of the emperor.²⁰² Japanese antagonism toward foreign Christian missionaries undoubtedly slowed the progress of their work.

²⁰¹ Drummond, *History of Christianity in Japan*, 211-2.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 243. After Emperor Meiji died in 1912, professors Hozumi Yasoku and Kakehi Katsuhiko formalized the “ideological expressions of this position.”

The Heathen at Home

When William and Clara Bishop arrived in Tokyo, Japan in April 1911, they rejoined a work of great promise and expectations but of meager results, in comparison with other fields, that made inspirational reporting difficult. On May 28, 1911 the church extended an official “Welcome Back” party to the Bishops and celebrated joyfully the immersion of seven Japanese converts.²⁰³ Within the first year of their return to Japan, there were another sixteen baptisms which brought the total membership to ninety-five, of whom forty-five were residents of Tokyo.²⁰⁴ However, according to meeting and attendance records for December 1911 through November 1912, the Koishikawa church met 287 times with an average attendance of less than fourteen people. In the past Bishop had worked so diligently in evangelism that he had neglected fund-raising and reporting. He would send out letters, do better for a time, and then the funds would begin to dwindle again.²⁰⁵ This recurring cycle was common for independently supported missionaries and was the chief reason given by some for having a mission board or a “home office” committee.

Rallying the financial support and interest of American churches for the Japanese mission was rendered difficult by at least two factors. First, the successes of missionaries in other foreign works, such as that of E. S. Jelley in India, made the Japan work look

²⁰³ Janes, “William J. Bishop,” 1009.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. The other half of the members were scattered throughout Japan and some in foreign countries but maintained close contact with the Bishops.

²⁰⁵ Bishop, “Letter From Bishop,” 2-3.

small.²⁰⁶ Secondly, some considered the faster growing domestic mission fields of the United States a greater priority. As Dana Robert writes of an earlier period, “In the 1870s making a case for foreign missions was a lot tougher than for home missions. While European powers vied for world domination, Americans were more interested in developing the United States.”²⁰⁷ For example, a Christian sister of Unity, Maine, named H. S. Knight objected and argued that sending missionaries to foreign countries caused the New England states to be overlooked. She wrote, “The Gospel should first be taken to every part of this country [U.S.] and its immediate boundaries, and when this has been done, [we ought] to continue to push out until we reach the countries beyond the Atlantic and Pacific.”²⁰⁸

When missionaries wrote their constituencies and asked why churches were not giving more to send new workers to the field, men like G. G. Taylor responded that the work at home required less effort and delivered greater results. On the occasion that missionary candidates Zora Hoffman and Olera Craig were attempting to raise funds to join the Japan mission, Taylor argued that they would have been better off to remain in their homes of Colorado and California. Why should they have to sacrifice so much and

²⁰⁶ Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to Clarence G. Vincent, Tokyo, July 15, 1913. After years of struggling to compete with such reports, Clara wrote, “I often wonder to myself if his reports are padded and how such a creature can have such success.” She also implied that Jelley often pretended to want to have other workers with him, but was best served by the illusion of success that working alone afforded him. No one was ever there to report differently.

²⁰⁷ Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 66-7.

²⁰⁸ H. S. Knight, “Brother McCaleb’s View of the Situation,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 24, no. 26 (1910): 9.

learn the language in another country? “Is there any good reason why these young ladies should sacrifice their home people . . . in favor of a foreign people [whose evangelization] requires so much more of time and means in the way of qualifying themselves for effective service?”²⁰⁹ Taylor even questioned “whether it [was] . . . either wise or scriptural for the disciples in America to thus direct their energies and resources” when regrettably the six New England states could scarcely count two hundred adherents to the Churches of Christ.²¹⁰

Bishop’s response to these objections was simply to inform the churches of their duty and to carry out plans to fulfill his own with or without necessary support.²¹¹

Although his original intent was to support himself through printing work, he gradually came to prefer to be working with the support of the churches than for “mere money.”²¹²

When contributions from the home churches were insufficient, he turned to working with his hands as a last resort. On one such occasion he wrote:

I had determined not to accept any outside work this year and to devote all the time possible to my publication work, but lack of funds has forced me to give no small part of my time to printing for others in order to meet expenses. For several months now we have received almost nothing from the churches in America. . . . For the last six months my wife and I have not received more than one-half enough to cover our living expenses and the expenses of the work. We began October with less than one dollar in the bank and a little small change in pocket. Nearly all our bills for groceries, vegetables, coal oil, eggs, meat,

²⁰⁹ G. G. Taylor, “Foreign Missions,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 24, no. 19 (1910): 4.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ McCaleb, “Missionary Sketches,” September 5, 1905, 3-4.

²¹² Bishop, “Letter From Bishop,” 2.

laundry, land rent, etc. are unpaid. . . . “It’s all a-goin’ out, and none a-comin’ in.” . . . The work my heart is in has to be set aside. I would much rather be working for the Churches of Christ. I earn by hard work every cent I receive from America. A missionary is not a subject of charity; evangelizing the world is the grand enterprise of the church. When I receive enough money to pay our living and mission expenses, I can give all my time to mission work.²¹³

Bishop thus stressed to the home churches that missionaries were worthy of the support that they received and had no reason to be ashamed of requesting the necessary funds to care for their families while devoting themselves to full-time evangelistic work. Bishop’s self-sacrificing lifestyle and earned credibility played an extremely important role in the history of missions of the Churches of Christ because his views began shaping the attitudes of potential mission donors. Changes came slowly and at a painfully high price.

The Nashville Plan

The final two years of the Bishops’ work in Japan were fraught with controversy over funding and culminated in one of the most tragic failures in the history of the earliest mission efforts of the Churches of Christ. Failure, however, became a severe though effective teacher. When Bishop returned to Japan, he hoped to receive enough financial gifts that he could devote himself to full-time ministry. The plan was simple, bold, and innovative. Rather than gather funds from scattered churches vaguely familiar with a missionary known only through letters, reports, and occasional visits, McCaleb urged the churches that knew William J. Bishop best to cooperate in the full support of their native-

²¹³ Ibid., 3.

born son. The idea was initiated by William Bishop himself who proposed it to J. C. McQuiddy, a prominent church leader and editor living in Nashville. Bishop wrote to him, “May you get the Churches of Nashville and vicinity to take up the work at Koishikawa Chapel in Japan and heartily support it. There is no more successful work in Japan than this. We get results. We have both members who let their lights shine and have workers with which to grow, and we have literature to scatter abroad.”²¹⁴

Three months prior to the Bishops’ departure from the States, J. M. McCaleb exerted his influence with J. C. McQuiddy and among these churches to execute the plan and solicit commitments from twelve Nashville congregations for a total of \$1,165 which was promised for the Bishops’ full-time evangelistic work in Japan. Given the eventual negligence of these churches in providing these funds, these commitments may have been mere verbal concessions to satisfy a persistent McCaleb rather than heartfelt commitments.

McCaleb wrote Bishop and exhorted him to write McQuiddy often because he “is doing more for you than any one man in Nashville.”²¹⁵ Bishop would have done well to have followed more closely McCaleb’s advice. Bishop’s relationship with McQuiddy was already strained, and McQuiddy would be quick to find an excuse to default on the agreement. Upon receiving the news of this pledged financial support, Bishop wrote to

²¹⁴ William James Bishop to J. C. McQuiddy, June 15, 1910.

²¹⁵ John Moody McCaleb to William James Bishop, January 13, 1911. McCaleb made the arrangements and McQuiddy was the one who stuck out his neck. McQuiddy must have felt that having given his recommendation to this arrangement, he would be criticized.

McQuiddy promising to acknowledge every gift with a postcard and to send copies of the *Japan Missionary* to all the churches. He also expressed that he liked McQuiddy's idea of having one person responsible in every church so that monthly contributions were not forgotten. William vowed that the churches would have no "chance to claim they do not hear from me."²¹⁶ This promise seems to have been very important to McQuiddy who felt that his own reputation was somewhat at stake.²¹⁷

McCaleb, McQuiddy, and the Nashville churches, not to mention the Bishops, were all very excited about this new way of cooperating and supporting missions. Finally, the "anti-missionary society" churches had found a way to rid themselves of the "anti-missionary" stigma that had characterized their inactivity in foreign work. Both missionaries and supporters were optimistic that an "apostolic" model of support had been put into service. The commitment of the Nashville churches to cooperate and to take up the support of the Bishop family was widely publicized, so much so, that other supporters from outside Nashville cut them off.²¹⁸ Although the Bishops had "no intimation as to the month the Nashville churches [intended] to begin to send their gifts,"

²¹⁶ William James Bishop, Paris, Texas, in a letter to J. C. McQuiddy, Nashville, January 29, 1911.

²¹⁷ McQuiddy wrote to Bishop concerning this arrangement, "It seems to me the time has come for the church to be active in the work. It is not enough to find fault with others. . . . I want you to assure me that you will report all money received from the churches and report promptly on reception of the contribution. Some of the brethren seem to be a little uneasy along this line." J. C. McQuiddy, Nashville, in a letter to William James Bishop, Paris, Texas, January 23, 1911. McCaleb also recognized that McQuiddy was the one who had "clinched" these supporters and suggested to Bishop that he "keep in close and sympathetic touch with McQuiddy."

²¹⁸ William James Bishop to J. C. McQuiddy, July 26, 1911.

they wrote that the money was already needed but determined to live on credit upon their arrival in Japan.²¹⁹

The plan, so carefully conceived, was poorly executed. However well-meaning the Nashville churches might have been, they were very slow in initiating their support and sporadic in maintaining it. That the flow of cash from the Nashville area churches delayed more than six months and remained inconsistent thereafter brought immense hardship upon the Bishop family.²²⁰ The promises made in January 1911 were not fully acted upon until July; thus, William and Clara, who returned to Japan in April, went four months on the field without any income.²²¹ Expenses for their family of five amounted to one hundred dollars per month while the support of their Japanese co-workers totaled sixty dollars. William had to borrow some four hundred dollars to furnish their home and take care of his family but by August approximately nine hundred dollars arrived from the Nashville churches. The Bishops managed to finish the year out of debt having supported their family of five, Yunosuke Hiratsuka's family of five, brother Ishiguro, and Mrs. Kato, twelve people in all.²²² The financial stress of the year had nevertheless taken

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ The first forwarding of funds by McQuiddy in April was only \$114.60 and McQuiddy suggested that Bishop should write to encourage the other churches that had made a promise to help. J. C. McQuiddy to William James Bishop, April 22, 1911.

²²¹ Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to J. C. McQuiddy, Nashville, February 17, 1913.

²²² William James Bishop, "Year End Report, 1911," Undated handwritten memo.

its toll on the Bishops' work, morale, and health.²²³ Whether the Nashville churches were too slow in sending their promised contributions or Bishop was too infrequent in his reporting is difficult to determine. The evidence seems to indicate that although Bishop bore partial responsibility, those Nashville churches that failed in their promises to support the work in Japan were mostly to blame.

Over the course of 1912, support from the Nashville churches continued to come in hiccups. In order to make ends meet, William took on a job for a large publishing company that "stole away [his] vitality."²²⁴ He worked long hard hours for the publisher and maintained his intense schedule of Bible classes and mission work in the evenings. He became so tired working in the publishing house that he attempted to resign, but his manager, who was in bad health himself, refused his resignation. Eventually Bishop's own health declined to the extent that he could work only half a day. In this period Bishop wrote about the difficulty of being a self-supported missionary:

In January, 1912 I handed in my resignation to the manager of the publishing house, though I did not know what my prospects were for an income from America. The close confinement in an office was telling on my health. I had strength only for each day's work, was exhausted at night and could work little of evenings on letters and articles for the papers. I had frequent consultations with my co-workers, Bros H & I [sic]. I worked 7 days in every week, devoting Sundays to Koishikawa chapel. I worked Thanksgiving Day, my birthday, and Christmas. My only chance for rest was at night.²²⁵

²²³ Bishop's letters to McQuiddy explain that the work was being stalled due to the lack of funds. His tone is desperate as he wrote, "I need the funds for this *now*." William J. Bishop to J. C. McQuiddy, July 26, 1911.

²²⁴ William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to J. C. McQuiddy, Nashville, June 4, 1912.

²²⁵ William James Bishop, "Publishing House, 1912," Undated handwritten memo.

By the early summer of 1912, the Nashville plan began to disintegrate, and William and Clara became victims of a vicious cycle. The supporting churches expected detailed reporting for the support they contributed; not receiving adequate and consistent support, William sought secular employment to support his family; his secular job took so much of his time he had little time to report; supporting congregations disappointed in Bishop's communication felt justified in not sending any more support and withheld it. The Nashville churches ceased sending money and claimed that since William did not honor their agreement, they were no longer obliged to respect it.²²⁶ The Bishops were thusly overworked and under funded and eventually impoverished. The Bishops continued to pay their work bills even when they did not have enough for themselves. Clara later wrote of this period, "We who have been on the field . . . know what it means to sacrifice for the work's sake."²²⁷

Breach of Contract

McQuiddy's claim that Bishop had not written his supporters was absurd.²²⁸ The reports may have been scarce but not entirely non-existent. McQuiddy himself had heard

²²⁶ Bishop stated that his only fault was that he did not report enough about the funds that he had received. He was shocked, however, that the churches seemed to be more interested in financial reports than in work reports which were so very positive. "I have not failed, save to REPORT [sic]." William James Bishop to J. C. McQuiddy, October 3, 1912. Bishop found writing a detailed financial report quite difficult since there was great confusion in the personal gifts they received and since exact amounts from each person or congregation was not included. William James Bishop to J. C. McQuiddy, July 26, 1911.

²²⁷ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

²²⁸ Several reports were written. William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to Churches of Christ of Nashville, Nashville, April 30, 1912.

from Bishop and knew that he was ill and having a very hard time maintaining his job and the evangelistic work and keeping up with correspondence.²²⁹ In 1911 and 1912 William composed at least four reports for the papers, and in February of 1912, his wife Clara began publishing reports concerning the mission work.²³⁰ Bishop also wrote directly to individuals in supporting congregations apologizing that communication had been slow and explaining that he had not been able to write due to the “heavy work that [he had] been compelled to do in the large printing office during the last eighteen months.”²³¹

The Nashville churches had promised a consistent sufficient support for the Bishop family under the simple condition that the Bishops supply frequent reports. Their hesitation put the Bishops in a financial bind that William sought to resolve by taking on extra work and overtaking his energies. The Bishops did furnish reports but not to McQuiddy’s satisfaction. McQuiddy seemed to have agreed to arrange this support under

²²⁹ William J. Bishop to J. C. McQuiddy, October 3, 1912. Bishop said in this letter that it was necessary for him to get a job to pay obligations, keep support up for his family, and provide an income for national workers. He stated that at the end of the day he needed to get rest. If he stayed up at night working, then he was the worse for it. “Every attempt to overstep those limits and work late at night, or to fail to give some time to rest after the full day’s work at the office, brings me up with a brisk warning. I simply cannot do more than a day’s work in a day.”

²³⁰ Clara Bishop, “Visiting in Japan,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 26, no. 9 (1912): 4-5; Clara Bishop, “How Do We Count Success,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 26, no. 34 (1912): 1; William James Bishop, “Work in Japan as a Business Proposition,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 25, no. 6 (1911): 5; William James Bishop, “Koishikawa Church of Christ, Annual Report,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 25, no. 6 (1911): 13; William James Bishop, “A Misconception Regarding Support,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 25, no. 32 (1911): 5; William James Bishop, “From Bro. Bishop,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 26, no. 29 (1912): 5.

²³¹ William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to J. G. Allen, Nashville, September 27, 1912; William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to Albert Seitz, Nashville, September 27, 1912; William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to A. W. McCartney, Nashville, September 3, 1912.

the dominating influence of McCaleb but sought to get out from under the obligation once McCaleb had returned to Japan. McQuiddy had more concern for his own reputation than for the well-being of a sacrificial and conscientious missionary. Given McQuiddy's powerful influence and his unwillingness to exert it upon their behalf, the Bishops were stranded in dire need.

William's Illness

The first decade of the twentieth century saw a sharp increase of tuberculosis in Japan. With the increased industrialization of the country, a larger number of persons were gathered in close working conditions in factories and mills. Lack of sanitary measures contributed to a rapid spread of the disease. According to medical reports from this period, the frequency of communication with others, impoverished nourishment, "excessive mental worries and bodily strains undergone from the severe struggle to earn a living—all these contribute[d] toward the immediate cause of tuberculosis infection."²³² Bishop's age, poverty, and over-exertion in the work-place made him a prime candidate for tuberculosis.²³³

By the fall of 1912, William Bishop's illness and fatigue had nearly decimated him. On September 27, he wrote to an American friend: "Pardon my failure to send you

²³² Shibasaburo Kitasato, "Tuberculosis and Its Prevention in Japan," in *Transactions on the Sixth International Congress on Tuberculosis* (Philadelphia: Fell, 1908), 15. The mortality rate due to tuberculosis was nearly twice as high in 1900 as it was in 1890 in Japan.

²³³ San, "Tuberculosis in Tokyo," 573. Men were nearly four times as likely to die of the infection as women. Tuberculosis in Japan was more resistant to treatment, and without proper nutrition recovery was nigh impossible.

articles as I had promised, but the fact is that my strength is not sufficient to carry me through each day's work. I get to noon very well, but during the afternoon I simply drag along. I have overdrawn my vitality until I really have none left and am now working on the ragged edge."²³⁴

During the last half of that year Bishop was not able to continue his studies and classes, so Clara did the best she could to meet his obligations in Japan and to continue submitting reports to the church papers in the States. To the publisher of *The Christian Leader and the Way*, F. L. Rowe, she wrote, "During the last months of Bro. Bishop's [sic] stay in Japan, he was not able to teach his classes. I did the best I could and went night after night when he could not get out in the bad weather. I do not care for undue credit and praise."²³⁵ As her husband's illness grew increasingly worse, Clara continued to share the gospel with others as effectively as she could. Although the fruit of her work was not immediately evident, within the year, one of those baptized by Hiratsuka in May of 1913 attributed his conversion to her work. He wrote, "I wish to express to Mrs. Bishop my heart because her teaching drew me to Christ and this Church!"²³⁶

²³⁴ Janes, "William J. Bishop," 1010.

²³⁵ Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, July 29, 1913.

²³⁶ Yunosuke Hiratsuka, Tokyo, in a letter to Clara Bishop, Dallas, May 22, 1913.

Rush to Monrovia California for Medical Help

At the beginning of the new year, recognizing his failing health and heeding the doctor's advice, Bishop made plans to sail for California.²³⁷ On January 19, 1913, just three days before leaving, he completed a supremely important task that he had planned two years earlier.²³⁸ On his last Sunday evening in Japan, William ordained elders in an emotional service, a bold first step that would serve as a significant milestone for the missionary efforts of the Churches of Christ. Twenty-two church members crowded into his home because Bishop was not well enough to go to the chapel.²³⁹ Clara recalled that this was the most impressive service that she had ever seen and that William was “overcome with feeling” because he knew that he might never see these church members again on this earth.²⁴⁰ Bishop had lost his voice and could speak only in a hoarse whisper. Ishiguro read passages from the Bible before Bishop prayed and placed his hands on Yunosuke saying, “By the authority of Jesus Christ, I appoint you to be an elder of the Kamitomizaka Church of Christ. Amen.”²⁴¹ He then did the same for the Brothers Yokoo and Kamikura. In his final act as a missionary, Bishop entrusted the leadership of the

²³⁷ Clara Bishop, “Our Severest Trial,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 6 (1913): 9; Janes, “William J. Bishop,” 1010; John Moody McCaleb, Tokyo, in a letter to Don Carlos Janes, Louisville, January 14, 1913. Published in Don Carlos Janes, “Concerning William J. Bishop, Missionary,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 3 (1913): 4.

²³⁸ According to Yunosuke Hiratsuka, Bishop had written him of this intention while in the United States. Hiratsuka, “History of the Church in Japan,” 29.

²³⁹ An undated memo in the Bishop papers lists the twenty-two names of those who were present.

²⁴⁰ Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to Don Carlos Janes, Louisville, August 4, 1913.

²⁴¹ Hiratsuka, “History of the Church in Japan,” 29.

church permanently and completely to the three Japanese men according to the training that he received from James A. Harding.

Pottenger's Sanitarium

William was shipped off to California with money borrowed from his co-worker J. M. McCaleb and promised by Nashville churches.²⁴² Having rested on the ship, Bishop made some improvement, but his energies were suddenly spent upon his arrival as he battled his way through customs with heavy luggage by himself. He sought refuge in a hotel in San Francisco but was refused on account of his being tubercular. He went on toward Los Angeles where he collapsed into the arms of his friend and former co-worker, Charlie Klingman.²⁴³ He was taken to Pottenger's Sanitarium in Monrovia, California, "where his case was so hopeless the doctors did not expect him to survive 'til morning."²⁴⁴ In the meantime, Clara's father, J. D. Elliott, traveled by train to California to stay by William's side.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Unfortunately, even this debt, assumed in the hopes of saving a missionary's life, became a point of contention. McCaleb put in a claim against Clara's personal property and withheld money collected for her support in partial repayment of the debt. Eventually McQuiddy sent money to McCaleb to pay off the rest of the debt including interest. Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

²⁴³ J. D. Elliot, Monrovia, in a letter to F. L. Rowe, Cincinnati, April 4, 1913, appeared in F. L. Rowe, "From the Bishops," *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 14 (1913): 4.

²⁴⁴ Janes, "William J. Bishop," 1010.

²⁴⁵ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913; J. D. Elliot, "Sister Bishop in Dallas," *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 20 (1913): 5.

Clara's Continued Work in Japan

Clara was hoping all along that William would get better and remained in Japan to continue the work.²⁴⁶ She wrote, "He must leave Japan as soon as possible. The children and I will stay in Japan for the present. I must look after the work. The separation will be hard to bear, and doubly so since Mr. Bishop is sick. There will be many weeks of anxiety for us as the months of separation go by. But we have great hopes that the California climate will do much for him."²⁴⁷ Over the course of the next three months Clara pleaded with William to allow her to come to his side, but he insisted that she stay in Japan and carry on the work. William himself had been very reluctant to leave for the United States saying, "that if it only meant a temporary prolongation of his life, he wished to stay in the work in Japan."²⁴⁸ These words were still another significant demonstration that William Bishop was aware that his life was in the balance and that he considered their mission more important than his own survival. This pronouncement expressing the Bishops' extraordinary level of commitment to continue their mission at all costs must have had a profound effect in the shaping of a new positive attitude toward

²⁴⁶ Bishop, "Our Severest Trial," 9.

²⁴⁷ Clara Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to Enola Wilson, Nashville, January 8, 1913. Clara was also very clear that she did not consider herself to be "head of anything connected with our work here in Koishikawa," but was "responsible to the Japanese workers." She stated, "My work is that of teaching and of work among women and children." Clara Bishop, "Koishikawa Notes," *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 14 (1913): 5. Unordained Western women were often better mentors for native men than male missionaries who assumed the power. See below, p. 352, footnote 293.

²⁴⁸ Janes, "William J. Bishop," 1010. Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, July 29, 1913 appeared in Rowe, "From the Bishops," 5.

missions among supporters. At least one church leader, however, was resistant to the fresh missions sentiment.

The McQuiddy Misunderstanding

About a month before Bishop's arrival in the States, one of his friends, John Straiton, without permission, published one of Bishop's private letters in *Christian Word and Work* that intimated that support from the Nashville churches had been insufficient.²⁴⁹ McQuiddy took exception to the publication and its editor, D. L. Watson, and published a response. McQuiddy's answer printed in the *Gospel Advocate* stated that Bishop had broken faith with the Nashville area churches by not providing reports. He argued that when one party broke the contract, then it became null and void.²⁵⁰ He also wrote Bishop privately while he was in the sanitarium. Straiton and Watson wrote their appeals for the Bishops without any request from William, but McQuiddy continued to hold him responsible for the whole affair.

Although McQuiddy's accusations were unwarranted, his perceived persecution troubled Bishop deeply, and the anxiety thus caused could have only worsened his fragile health. McQuiddy's actions were typical of the inability of home churches to understand field conditions and the problems they presented. Clara believed that McQuiddy had a personal grudge against William and that McQuiddy's nasty articles written against him

²⁴⁹ John Straiton, "Across the Seas," *Christian Word and Work* 5, no. 52 (1912): 9.

²⁵⁰ J. C. McQuiddy, "An Unjust Criticism," *Gospel Advocate* 55, no. 4 (1913); J. C. McQuiddy, "Brother Bishop's Support," *Gospel Advocate* 55, no. 7 (1913).

hastened his death. She wrote, “William’s mind was troubled over the matter all the time and his fever was kept high by them. And not only did McQuiddy prod him publicly [sic], but in private letters to William when he knew that William was on his dying bed.”²⁵¹ On one occasion Charlie Klingman, a former missionary to Japan and co-worker to the Bishops, came by to check on William, and he commented on his high fever running up. In response William said, “Oh I can’t shake McQuiddy.”²⁵² Clara later narrated the details in these words: “When Charlie wrote to McQuiddy and told him the true facts imploring him to stop the persecution and that he was rapidly pushing William into the grave, McQuiddy wrote back saying that if anybody was responsible for pushing him into the grave, it was ‘Bro. Bishop’s wife,’ since she sent him the articles.”²⁵³ However cruel McQuiddy may have been in causing William added distress, his articles may have had just the opposite effect of what McQuiddy had desired. Even after all McQuiddy’s opposition, by June funds totaling nearly two thousand dollars were given for William’s medical care and expenses. Moved by the persuasiveness of the Bishops’ faith and resolve, supporters responded compassionately and generously to the Bishops’ plight. The donations given over a period of less than six months were a remarkable increase in missionary support.

²⁵¹ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

Clara's Attempt to Join William

Although afflicted in the throat and unable to talk above a whisper, William Bishop communicated through others who dictated for him that Clara should remain in Japan.²⁵⁴ Clara's letters seem to indicate that by remaining she was attempting to please her husband. Her focus was to continue the work there while he recovered. Clara had totally dedicated herself to the work and her "heart was in Japan."²⁵⁵ Their dream was for William to recover fully and rejoin her in the work. The dream was not to be realized.

On April 1, 1913, the Bishops' eleventh anniversary passed with William in very poor health in Monrovia and Clara worried and anxious in Tokyo. When the end seemed imminent and all hope was lost, Charlie Klingman and J. D. Elliott sent a telegram to Clara urging her to book passage for her and her three girls to leave on the steamship *Mongolia* scheduled to depart April 5, 1912, so that they could join William for the last days of his life.²⁵⁶

Clara wrote of that moment: "Upon two days and nights of preparation without even a minute of sleep. . . . I wonder to this day how it was possible to get matters adjusted, get three children ready for such a long journey, and get to the ship before

²⁵⁴ In a telegraph dated March 23, J. D. Elliot wrote of Bishop, "He is so hopeful, and desires for Mrs. Bishop to continue the work." Quoted in F. L. Rowe, "Bro. Bishop's Condition," *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 13 (1913): 9.

²⁵⁵ Clara Bishop to Don Carlos Janes, August 4, 1913.

²⁵⁶ For the text of a telegram from Charlie Klingman to McQuiddy see A. B. Lipscomb, "Brother Bishop Passes to His Reward," *Gospel Advocate* 55, no. 15 (1913): 344.

sailing time.”²⁵⁷ Friends helped her pack, sewed a few things, gave her money and got her off to the port. Three sisters remained with her overnight in the hotel as the ship was delayed in its departure by one day.²⁵⁸ Saturday evening, April 6, Clara and the Bishops’ three little girls boarded a ship for the States.

Only a couple of hours after her departure, a telegram arrived in Tokyo with the sad news that William had lost his battle against tuberculosis and had died April 4, 1913. Japanese Christians in Tokyo had considered sending her a “wireless” notification but preferred to spare her the news until she could have the comfort of her father.²⁵⁹ During the voyage of two weeks Clara’s mind was fixed on seeing her husband again, but when she and her three daughters disembarked in San Francisco, they were greeted by the face of her sorrow-filled father, J. D. Elliott, who bore the dreadful news.²⁶⁰ Elliott wrote of that moment, “One of the saddest duties of my life was to inform Mrs. Bishop that her coming was *too late*.”²⁶¹

William’s funeral was held in Monrovia, April 6, 1913, at 9 o’clock in the morning and was attended by friends in the Los Angeles area. His body was placed in a vault awaiting Clara’s arrival. Supporters read of the news in the brotherhood papers and

²⁵⁷ Janes, “Mrs. Clara Elliot Bishop,” 1048.

²⁵⁸ Clara wrote of these friends, “I shall always love them for their kindness.” Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Hiratsuka, “History of the Church in Japan,” 30.

²⁶⁰ Janes, “William J. Bishop,” 1010; McCaleb, “Missionary Labors of Wm. J. Bishop,” 1. According to one eyewitness, “Oh, it was awful. . . . Very pathetic scene.” Don Carlos Janes, “Brother Bishop’s Work and Some After Thoughts,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 18 (1913): 5.

²⁶¹ J. D. Elliott, “From the Bishops,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 18 (1913): 12.

were deeply saddened.²⁶² Mission supporters such as Don Carlos Janes encouraged the churches not to abandon the work in Japan but to be inspired by Bishop's life and to support the work more than ever. Janes wrote, "I cannot consider it [Bishop's death] a 'great blow' or 'set back' to foreign missions. Bro. Bishop we all know was a noble workman; 'though dead yet speaketh.' His labors, influence and life will continue to bear fruit. . . . I don't doubt more sympathy, love and interest will now be manifested in Japan and our missionaries than ever before. . . . Bro. Bishop's life blessed and so will his death. . . . May I characterize it as 'sad but not bad' for us."²⁶³ Janes' words were not wasted. In fact, they identified one of the most important contributions that William Bishop made to the shaping of missions attitudes within the Churches of Christ. Over the next five years mission interest in Japan increased as new missionaries, men and women, committed to the effort.²⁶⁴

Christians in Tokyo also held a memorial service for William Bishop April 20, 1913, in which J. M. McCaleb made a speech and six Japanese friends gave talks.²⁶⁵ The Japanese especially suffered over his loss because they loved and respected William so much for his fraternal relationship with them. Clara Bishop wrote of the occasion, "I'm

²⁶² Tributes to William Bishop were printed in the April 24, 1913 issue of the *Gospel Advocate*. One such article was by Mattie Holder, "William J. Bishop," *Gospel Advocate* 55, no. 17 (1913): 391.

²⁶³ Janes, "Brother Bishop's Work," 5.

²⁶⁴ Before Bishop's death the number of missionaries of the Churches of Christ numbered in the teens. Over the next two decades, however, the number doubled then tripled. Elkins, *Church Sponsored Missions*, 98.

²⁶⁵ Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan," 30; Clarence G. Vincent, "Memorial Service Held in Memory of Wm. J. Bishop April 20, 1913," *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 21 (1913): 5.

sure every member of the congregation loved William. I think he gained the respect and love of the Japanese more than any missionary we have ever had. He treated the men as *men* and not as children. He treated Hiratsuka as an equal and a brother. He never showed any feeling of superiority nor any littleness in his dealings with Japanese.”²⁶⁶ Although he did appeal for funds, William was remembered for his trust in God especially as he fully implemented Harding’s church planting principles.

Clara, together with her daughters and father, made her way back to Texas where, stung and shocked by William’s death, she sought both to cope with the event and to plan for her young family’s future.²⁶⁷ On her thoughts toward God she wrote, “I do not blame God in the matter of his death. God had nothing to do with it. It all came about in a natural way. But it seems dreadful that one who could have been so useful either in Japan or America, should have been cut down by death. I believe that we haven’t a preacher in our brotherhood who has a better and more capable mind that William had. There are some who had better educational advantages, but none who are better read, I believe. Yes, the foreign missionaries’ work is not finished in Japan by any means.”²⁶⁸

McCaleb’s Maneuver

Clara’s responsibilities in selling their home in Japan and remaining committed to the work of the Koishikawa Chapel afforded her little time to be paralyzed by her grief.

²⁶⁶ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

²⁶⁷ Elliot, “Sister Bishop in Dallas,” 5.

²⁶⁸ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

The execution of her plans to maintain financial support for the Koishikawa church and its national evangelists brought her into a direct confrontation with two of the most powerful and influential men of Churches of Christ in the early twentieth century: J. C. McQuiddy, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, and J. M. McCaleb, the best-known missionary statesman among these churches. An accurate and unbiased history of the events of Clara Bishop's life over the next six months is difficult to establish. A reader of her correspondence with McQuiddy, McCaleb, and C. G. Vincent is left to wonder if her letters are the paranoid ravings of a grief-stricken missionary widow who was obsessed with her husband's legacy, or the expressions of a courageous and loyal woman who refused to capitulate to the envious attempts of a paternalistic McCaleb to seize control of his co-worker's successful mission. The preponderance of the evidence in the private letters and published articles demonstrates that, although both parties bore at least partial responsibility for the contentious exchange, ultimately one of the two was incapable of admitting fault and decidedly promoted personal interests over reconciliation.

Clara's Emotional State

A missionary widow such as Clara was certainly deserving of a period of mourning, compassion, and the unswerving financial and moral support of the churches committed to the Japanese mission. She had been actively engaged in one of the most fruitful works in Japan for eleven years at the cost of great personal sacrifice. The early months of her return to the States, however, were fraught with a longing for her life with

her husband in Japan, financial concern for her daughters, and the task of insuring the future health of the missionary church which she was forced to abandon.

Clara's grief was indeed great. In the days immediately following her husband's death and her settling in Texas with her parents, she tried to find solace and peace, but the house was frequently crowded with a steady flow of visitors, and the summer heat wearied her all the more. She wrote to Clarence Vincent, "It is hot here, 95 degrees at our house. The children have to live in the bathtub to keep cool. I'm washing, ironing, cooking, sewing and worst of all [we] have company all of the time. Outside my immediate home folks, the Klingmans are the only ones I have any desire to be with. I'd give anything to be at home in Japan. I am miserable with the desire and longing to be there. I'm sure William thought I would stay in Tokyo. I'm tired in mind and body. I dare not look to the future."²⁶⁹

At times she risked drowning herself in sorrow but clung to the hope of a brighter future in which she would work, support herself, and provide an excellent education for her daughters. In another letter she penned these words: "Well, if Hades is any worse than what I have been through within the last few weeks and months, I hope to avoid the place. With sorrow and grief, physical run-downness [sic], heat, work, worry as to what to do in the future to feed and clothe my children. . . . Surely no suffering could be greater than what I have had! Maybe sometime life will be brighter, but it seems mighty

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

gloomy now.”²⁷⁰ She presented a composed and confident face publicly to her readers in the papers, but she confided in her fellow missionaries a measure of the despair that she was feeling. Even in pleading with McCaleb for his support she dramatically portrayed her disposition: “If only I had William! Nothing else would matter. I would pray to die if I had not my children. What is life! Only long drawn out years of endless trouble. You do not know what trouble is. When you suffer such a loss as I have had, then you will know what it means.”²⁷¹

Beyond the daily chores and the pressure to entertain guests cheerfully, Clara wrote that she was having a difficult time meeting her financial obligations. She felt that she could not rely on her aging father who was frequently ill, and so she sought to supplement her income by taking in sewing.²⁷² She assigned top priority to the raising of support for the Japanese preachers and workers who had been under her care and deprived herself in order to forward them promised funds. At one point later that fall she had just nineteen dollars for herself, and it was time to send money to Japan again. She wrote, “I believe that I am receiving enough for the work, but scarcely nothing for myself.”²⁷³ She failed to get enrolled in a teacher training college such as Normal or

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Clara Bishop to John Moody McCaleb, June 14, 1913.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

Denton, but planned to study on her own and eventually become a teacher to provide for her three daughters.²⁷⁴

In a letter to Clarence Vincent, Clara summarized the overall difficulty she was experiencing in her resettlement in the United States. Although she would not have known to identify her condition with this term, she was in the throes of “reverse culture shock.”

My heart is so full of longing to be back in Japan that there is no place for other thoughts. Perhaps if I were there and did not find William I might be just as miserable. I did not know before that the world could be such an uninteresting place. There seems absolutely nothing left. I see my old friends and they and their affairs are of no more interest to me than are my thoughts and affairs to them. Even our own church people are bored when I try to speak of Japan or our life there. My own family seem [sic] to think I should pick up life just where I left it when I left America the first time. But I have changed, my interests are different. I have no interest in the people I used to find most in, and I am a bore to them. . . . You may think you want to be back in America, but as I have said before, thank your stars that you are in Japan in a congenial work and be happy.²⁷⁵

Given the overall difficulty of the grief that Clara was experiencing that year and the concern that she held for the welfare of the Koishikawa church, her reason for soliciting McCaleb’s support immediately following her husband’s death is all the more comprehensible. The central problem was that conservative missions had little place for widows. She needed the backing of a trusted name. Just a little over a month after William’s passing, on May 10, 1913, Clara composed a letter in which she attempted to rally McCaleb’s acceptance of her plan to “keep the Koishikawa work in [her] hands.”

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

She wrote, “It is my plan to keep the Koishikawa work in my hands, to have all funds for Koishikawa work sent to me, and I will forward to Hiratsuka. . . . If you approve my plan . . . will you please make mention of the fact to the papers? If you do not approve, then of course I would appreciate silence. We cannot all see alike and have the same ideas and opinions, of course.”²⁷⁶ J. M. McCaleb’s travel, lecturing, and writing in the promotion of missions established his reputation as the most knowledgeable member of the Churches of Christ in worldwide evangelism. His approval won the trust of those scattered churches that contributed to the small missionary workforce across the globe, and Clara felt that she needed his endorsement to continue raising funds for the Koishikawa work. Nothing, however, could have prepared Clara for the course of action that J. M. McCaleb took in response to her appeal.

McCaleb’s Actions

McCaleb’s actions were calculated and swift, although most unexpected by Clara. At the next meeting at Koishikawa Chapel, McCaleb attempted to turn the church against Clara and lobbied for them to come under his sponsorship and care. Yet even more surprisingly, he immediately responded to Clara with an unbending threat. He demanded that she release the Koishikawa Chapel work, property, and direction of its national evangelists to his care or he would write to the church papers, openly opposing her plan, and request that these papers deny her the opportunity to publish appeals in the future.

²⁷⁶ Quoted in John Moody McCaleb, “Just a Word,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 48 (1913): 10. The actual texts of this particular letter and McCaleb’s first response are not preserved in the Bishop archive but must be reconstructed through this article and other correspondence.

Even without waiting for a response from Clara, he at once composed such an article and stipulated that the editors of the *Gospel Advocate* should hold it ten days. If she relinquished the work, the article would not be printed, but if she insisted on directing the work, the editors were to print his article and refuse to accept any responses from Clara Bishop. McCaleb began the article thanking readers for “the liberal response toward the relief of Sister Bishop,” but then warned them of the inadvisability of her plans to oversee the Koishikawa work, argued against the continued support of Clara Bishop, and implied that the work should be given into his hands.²⁷⁷ Excerpts of McCaleb’s article are as follows:

I regret to see that our sister means to try to superintend the Koishikawa church from America. . . . To assume the role of a missionary *in Japan* and yet *reside in America* is an abuse of the missionary calling. If, in addition to those who are in active service, the churches must also permanently support those called back home, they will have a right to complain against foreign missions as being unduly expensive. With no interruption to my own work, I could, if necessary, render more effective service to the Koishikawa church than Sister Bishop possibly can all the way from Texas, and this without the extra cost of a penny.²⁷⁸

A. B. Lipscomb and J. C. McQuiddy of the *Gospel Advocate* accepted McCaleb’s article and notified Clara Bishop that they would no longer publish either her appeals for support or her acknowledgements of funds received.²⁷⁹ Other editors such as F. L. Rowe

²⁷⁷ McCaleb, “Future of Our Work in Japan,” 751.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. In all fairness to McCaleb, in his article he did state, “I do not wish to have the oversight of the Koishikawa church” and suggested, “We have still a better arrangement in that we have Brother and Sister Vincent to take the work entirely in hand.”

²⁷⁹ *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, in a letter to Clara Bishop, Dallas, June 11, 1913. According to Bishop, the *Gospel Advocate* even refused to publish the “thank you” letter she had submitted recognizing

of *The Christian Leader and the Way* rejected McCaleb's article on the grounds that they found it unfair to sister Bishop.²⁸⁰ Clara pleaded her case in letters to Lipscomb, McQuiddy, and McCaleb, but when she refused to bow to McCaleb's ultimatum, the article was published on August 7, 1913.²⁸¹

McCaleb's Motivation and Rationale

An avalanche of correspondence between Clara and McCaleb ensued, and their war of words renders the task of establishing McCaleb's motivations quite difficult. If one attributes the most noble of motivations to McCaleb, the following rationales should be noted from his perspective. First, he perceived that Clara intended to direct the work from a distance indefinitely. For a conservative movement that basically relegated women and confined them to the tasks of medical assistance, educational work, and evangelism among other women, Clara's plan would put Clara in a very strong position normally reserved for men. In such a case Clara would do best to turn over the work quickly to avoid any mounting criticisms of a woman being in charge of the work.²⁸²

the funds that had been given to her after her husband's death. Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

²⁸⁰ Clara Bishop, "An Explanation and a Reply," *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 35 (1913): 4.

²⁸¹ Clara Bishop to John Moody McCaleb, June 14, 1913; Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to the *Gospel Advocate*, Nashville, June 14, 1913; A. B. Lipscomb, Nashville, in a letter to Clara Bishop, Dallas, June 25, 1913; McCaleb, "Future of Our Work in Japan," 751; J. C. McQuiddy, Nashville, in a letter to Clara Bishop, Dallas, August, 2, 1913.

²⁸² Even Clara admitted a certain sensitivity to this possible objection as already noted. Bishop, "Koishikawa Notes," 5. See also James A. Harding, "Woman's Work in the Church," *Christian Leader and the Way* 18, no. 10 (1904).

Although the faith missions movement was seeing an increase in the number of women missionaries who dominated numerically, militant fundamentalism was becoming a force around 1909-1910 and significantly limited the role of women in missions. Among Protestants, women's mission boards were compelled into mergers with their larger male-led denominational societies and, as a consequence, women began losing their voice in decision-making. Their roles in missions became narrowly defined and in many cases their roles eliminated.²⁸³ In the Churches of Christ as in all other churches, women missionaries continued to outnumber the men through World War II. Harding had held and taught that in the New Testament every avenue of service was open to women except those roles that caused her to lead publicly in the worship assembly.²⁸⁴ McCaleb welcomed women to mission work and averred that they were far more capable at some tasks than men. Nevertheless, as primary fund-raiser and figurehead in Japan, he maintained control of those women who did the bulk of the day-to-day educational and social ministry of the mission. Clara Bishop threatened McCaleb's power structure by refusing to relinquish control of her husband's work. In McCaleb's view, Clara's work as

²⁸³ Robert, *American Women in Mission*, 253-4, 302. The United Brethren Church forced the women's board to merge in 1909, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1919, and the Disciples of Christ in 1919. See also Paul Harvey, "Saints but Not Subordinates: The Woman's Missionary Union of the Southern Baptist Convention," in *Women and Twentieth-Century Protestantism*, ed. Margaret Lamberts Bendroth and Virginia Lieson Brereton (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 4-24.

²⁸⁴ James A. Harding, "Shall the Women Teach and Lead the Prayers in the Public Assemblies?" *Gospel Advocate* 29, no. 23 (1887): 366; Harding, "A Bible School at Bowling Green," 58; James A. Harding, "Woman's Privilege in the Church," *The Way* 4, no. 28 (1902): 226-7; Harding, "Woman's Work," 8.

a missionary and teacher was acceptable; directing a mission separate from his authority was not.

Second, McCaleb also argued that Clara's plan violated a clearly established precedent that missionaries on the field should direct the work of nationals financially supported by American churches. After all, if Americans could direct the work of nationals from the States, then why go to the expense of sending and keeping Americans overseas? McCaleb thought that Clara's arrangement would contribute to the erosion of the missionaries' reason to live and work in a foreign country. Even Clara's husband, William, held that it was impossible to do work through the natives alone and believed that "Wagner had it right. He was like a father to Fujimori"²⁸⁵ and worked alongside him. McCaleb argued that Clara was not respecting the wishes of her husband but was actually going against a policy that they had commonly held.²⁸⁶

Third, McCaleb genuinely cared for the expansion of the missionary spirit among the Churches of Christ and reasoned that William's death could be considered a defeat and discouragement. He was interested in keeping damage to the "missionary image" to a

²⁸⁵ William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to F. L. Rowe, Cincinnati, n.d.. William Bishop also wrote, "No church and no individual in America can manage and oversee work in a foreign field without having an American representative ON THE FIELD [sic] to do the overseeing." He opposed the support of nationals in various parts of the world for whom no accountability was required. William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to F. L. Rowe, Cincinnati, November 20, 1911.

²⁸⁶ McCaleb, "Future of Our Work in Japan," 751. McCaleb wrote, "Until now she and Brother Bishop have both strenuously opposed such an idea and have insisted that all native workers and work should be under the supervision of the missionaries on the field. Less than a year ago I wrote an article recommending that offerings be not sent direct to the native workers, but to the resident missionary who had personal superintendence of the work. Brother Bishop read the article and told me he heartily approved it. Why, then this change now?"

minimum.²⁸⁷ Having a widow direct a work carrying the name of her deceased husband would perpetuate the impression that foreign mission work was dangerous. To McCaleb's credit, he later stated that he did not personally care to take over the Bishops' work. He just wanted for it to continue under the care of a missionary on the field. McCaleb wrote, "I greatly regretted to take this step that doubtless to some seemed unsympathetic, but in the midst of grief our sister was busily maturing her 'plan' and asking for my approval or silence."²⁸⁸ While Don Carlos Janes and F. L. Rowe recognized the inspirational and motivational influence of Bishop's death, McCaleb feared that criticisms of the independent work might erupt and crush the missionary movement.²⁸⁹ Time has demonstrated that Janes and Rowe were right. The divide between the supporters of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society and the Churches of Christ had already grown so wide that not a word of criticism concerning Bishop's death was uttered. Bishop's faithful service resulting in death intensified interest in missions and rallied the churches to greater missionary activity.

²⁸⁷ McCaleb demonstrated this kind of thinking in letters to Clara by insisting, for example, that William Bishop's first wife died as the result of an injury sustained in California and not because of their life in Japan. Clara Bishop to John Moody McCaleb, June 9, 1913; John Moody McCaleb to Clara Bishop, July 2, 1913; McCaleb, "Missionary Labors of Wm. J. Bishop." Three years later when Clemmie Klingman died, McCaleb was very quick to point out that tragedies occurred all over the world and were not limited to the life of a missionary.

²⁸⁸ McCaleb, "Just a Word," 10. Clara claimed, however, that McCaleb said in a letter to her that he would gladly take over the work as "a sideline" to his own work. Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

²⁸⁹ For a parallel see Ellinwood's criticism of faith missions after the premature deaths of the Kansas-Sudan missionaries. Ellinwood, *Questions and Phases of Modern Missions* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1899), 134; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 195.

Clara's Perspective

Taking Clara's perspective, however, a very dark side of the otherwise heroic and much-idolized missions icon, J. M. McCaleb, appears. Her letters suggest that McCaleb was hungry for power. She accused him of taking advantage of her weakened state, grief in the loss of her husband, and her natural desire for security, in order to get her to surrender to his demands. With three national evangelists employed and an eldership established, the Bishops' work was indeed healthy. To take this work under his wings and to bring especially the very fruitful Hiratsuka under his direction would increase his ability to report greater successes. Clara maintained that McCaleb had "tried for so long to be the head in Japan" and that the Japanese workers resisted being under him.²⁹⁰ Even the Koishikawa church had written to Clara and expressed its preference for her to be "overseer and responsible for support."²⁹¹ They stated that if the work had to be transferred, they wished C. G. Vincent to take it up and concluded their letter, "Be our mother always, please."²⁹² If Clara Bishop and Yunosuke Hiratsuka could form a partnership, they both stood to benefit from the relationship. Through Hiratsuka, her

²⁹⁰ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913. Clara also sarcastically reminded McCaleb of his tendencies toward excessive self-aggrandizement. "I suppose next week's paper will of course come out with your disapproval. They have put you on a pedestal and are now worshipping at your shrine. I suppose you are most ready for that monument—the one I once heard you say would some day be erected in your honor. You've forgotten you said it! I haven't. . . . I will say to you a thing that I had hoped never to have to say. The Japanese workers do not wish to be under you in any way. I had it from their own tongues." Clara Bishop to John Moody McCaleb, June 14, 1913.

²⁹¹ Yunosuke Hiratsuka to Clara Bishop, May 22, 1913.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

family's mission work could continue and her husband's name honored. Through Clara, Hiratsuka would be shielded from McCaleb's domineering and controlling style.²⁹³

Clara Bishop's Defense

If Clara had any visions of glory, her letters and articles indicate that they were not for herself. She was very emotionally attached to the work at Koishikawa Chapel, but her persistent desire was for all future contributions made to this work to be given in the name and honor of her deceased husband William. She was confident that her husband's work and sacrifice would be inspirational and would generate greater enthusiasm for missions. She and her girls had lost a husband and father but the church had gained a missionary hero whom she desired to immortalize with the founding of the "William J. Bishop Mission." After McCaleb's article came out in the *Gospel Advocate*, Clara found papers willing to publish her response in early September. Her defense was fourfold. First, contrary to McCaleb's assertion that her plan was against her husband's will before he died, Clara stated that it was his full intention to keep the work in their hands. William had trained Hiratsuka and knew him to be "absolutely trustworthy and capable."²⁹⁴ He

²⁹³ Clara Bishop's situation is strikingly similar to a situation discovered by Bonnie Sue Lewis. In the McBeth mission among the Nez Perce, in roughly the same era, a succession of women missionaries prepared Native American preachers for ministry and ordination. As women, they could teach but not preach except through the men that they trained. Within this conservative movement women were not given the power or authority to direct men. In this leadership vacuum, the trained native evangelists had the liberty and autonomy to conduct their work until white male domination returned and paternally robbed them of their self-hood. Bonnie Sue Lewis, "Women Missionaries and the Formation of Native Presbyterian Pastors in the Pacific Northwest," in *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers: Missionary Women in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Dana Robert (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 31-33.

²⁹⁴ Bishop, "An Explanation and a Reply," 4.

had established elders and was confident that these men would lead the congregation in the right direction without local supervision. She also believed that McCaleb was hypocritical in this matter since he directed his work in Japan during his long furloughs in the States.²⁹⁵ Second, Clara argued that she “had never stated publicly that [she] had expected to keep the work in [her] hands permanently.”²⁹⁶ For her, this was purely a temporary arrangement. Her letters to Clarence Vincent as early as June 15, 1913 prove that she already had in mind certain conditions under which she would concede the work to Vincent’s direction.²⁹⁷ Before his article was even published, McCaleb had in hand notification that Clara’s plans were merely temporary.²⁹⁸ Third, she believed McCaleb had acted unfairly and uncaringly since he attacked her while she “was in the midst of [her] sorrow and trouble.”²⁹⁹ Finally, she believed that the Koishikawa church had the final say in its own direction. Ultimately, she was certain that the congregation wanted to avoid McCaleb’s leadership over it.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁵ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

²⁹⁶ Bishop, “An Explanation and a Reply,” 4.

²⁹⁷ Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, June 15, 1913 ; Bishop, “An Explanation and a Reply,” 4.

²⁹⁸ F. L. Rowe and J. D. Elliot, “Sister Bishop’s Work in Japan,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 32 (1913): 9. Rowe affirms that he wrote McCaleb on June 10, 1913 and made him aware of the temporary intentions of Clara Bishop’s plan.

²⁹⁹ Bishop, “An Explanation and a Reply,” 4.

³⁰⁰ Clara Bishop, “A Further and a Final Word,” *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 48 (1913): 10.

Whatever McCaleb's motivations may have been, the *Gospel Advocate* was the only paper willing to publish his objections to Clara's so-called "plan."³⁰¹ This paper did have one of the largest circulations among the Churches of Christ, but McCaleb seems to have miscalculated how cruel his article would sound in the wake of such a sad death. When Clara published her letters of defense in the *Christian Leader and the Way*, McCaleb made one attempt to clarify his position and then acquiesced.³⁰² Clara moved rapidly to put the work into the hands of a newly arrived missionary who would honor and trust the Japanese as her husband had done. McCaleb, however, never apologized but remained silent. Clara thus succeeded in her bid to honor her husband's memory and protect the dignity and independence of the Koishikawa church.

Transfer of the Work

After spending the rest of the year in correspondence with and in building trust in Clarence Vincent, Clara Bishop decided to place the Koishikawa work completely under his supervision.³⁰³ She stipulated several conditions with him, printed five hundred

³⁰¹ F. L. Rowe expressed his regret "that Brother McCaleb and the *Advocate* found any excuse for the publication. As early as June 10, the writer of these lines wrote to Brother McCaleb suggesting in very plain words that Sister Bishop be allowed to handle her own work in Japan without any interference, until such time as she found it wisest to transfer it." Rowe and Elliot, "Sister Bishop's Work in Japan," 9.

³⁰² McCaleb, "Just a Word," 10. Clara wrote two articles and had the last word. Bishop, "An Explanation and a Reply," 4; Bishop, "A Further and a Final Word," 10.

³⁰³ In an undated letter written to Vincent sometime before November 1913, Clara revealed her willingness for him to take over the work. She wrote, "It is going to be the hardest thing I ever did in my life to turn over absolutely our work. You will have to be patient with me. I simply cannot sit down now and write to these papers that I have relinquished the work. It seems a very part of William and now that the time has come for me to give up this that William loved so well and my last tie to Japan, it is almost more than I can do. . . . I know I loved it. I can find nothing that I had rather do. I'd gladly return to it if I

announcements that were sent out to supporters, and publicly declared the transfer in December.³⁰⁴ Vincent very loyally and patiently worked with Clara to take over the work and continued with it until the illness of his own wife forced their return to the United States on June 9, 1915.³⁰⁵ Vincent had been one of Harding's first students at Bowling Green and had decided to become a missionary to Japan after hearing William Bishop speak during his visit to the PBC.³⁰⁶ Over the next three decades Clara Bishop and Clarence Vincent were diligent in their correspondence with Hiratsuka and the Koishikawa church. On September 1, 1923, an earthquake damaged the chapel seriously and Bishop and Vincent worked together to help raise funds to build a new chapel that was opened in 1924.³⁰⁷ In those decades the church thrived under the guidance of national elders and evangelists. At the advent of World War II in 1941, McCaleb left Japan and transferred the responsibility of his work with the Zoshigaya church to Hiratsuka. After two more years, the Koishikawa elders met with McCaleb's church and

could. There are many here who wish me to keep the work and think I should, but I have decided to let you have it." Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

³⁰⁴ Clara Bishop, "Our Work in Tokyo," *Christian Leader and the Way* 27, no. 50 (1913): 2.

³⁰⁵ Vincent's letters to Clara demonstrate his kindness and admirable character. Despite her sometimes acrimonious tone, he had the ability to respond calmly in the best interest of the work. There was, however, some kind of disagreement that occurred between Vincent and Bishop over the name of the mission in 1915. A potential donor offered to make a sizeable gift to the work under the condition that the name be changed. Vincent also stated that he thought the name was an offense and if she did not consent to the name change, then he would release the work back to her. Clarence G. Vincent, Tokyo, in a letter to Clara Bishop, Dallas, December 6, 1915.

³⁰⁶ Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 2:15-16.

³⁰⁷ Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan," 34.

the two groups merged and became the Toshima Zoshigaya Church of Christ.³⁰⁸

Ironically the legacy of William Bishop's fourteen years of placing full confidence in the Japanese leadership eventually sustained and adopted the orphaned work of the man who had attempted to take possession of the whole missionary enterprise in Tokyo.

Clara Bishop moved to Abilene, Texas, in 1921, and served Abilene Christian College in the roles of secretary to the president, dormitory hostess, and registrar until her retirement in 1951. Margaret, Julia and Mary all graduated from Abilene. Clara, thus, realized her dream of securing an education for her three daughters. Margaret and Julia also obtained their master's degrees from Vanderbilt University and were connected with higher education in Pennsylvania.³⁰⁹ After she retired from her work at Abilene Christian College, she joined her daughter Mary Arledge in Springfield, Missouri. She died in a nursing home July 25, 1970.³¹⁰

The Influence of James A. Harding's Teaching

As stated in the opening of this chapter, the imprint of Harding's ideology was clearly seen in William J. Bishop's life and mission work. In some ways their life experiences were similar. They both lost their first wives and children to death. They both were willing to work to support themselves and supply funds for the costs associated with

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 39.

³⁰⁹ Janes, *Missionary Biographies*, 2:6.

³¹⁰ Seth Patterson, "Clara Bishop," Abilene Christian University, http://www.acu.edu/centennial/profiles/clara_bishop.html [accessed March 24, 2007].

work they wanted to accomplish for God. They both were married to women who were their full partners in their work. Overall, however, the new circumstances of a foreign country encountered in missions drove William Bishop to hold to Harding's teachings but in a modified form.

Harding's Trust Theory

One of the most pronounced ways that William Bishop made a contextual application of Harding's "trust theory" was in his treatment, training, and trusting of Japanese Christians.³¹¹ His openness and hospitality toward the Japanese, together with his practicing reciprocity with them, demonstrated his genuine trust in the Japanese people and the work that God was doing among them.³¹² Harding held that true trust in God would inspire churches to appoint elders.³¹³ Extremely important to the history of missions of the Churches of Christ is the fact that William J. Bishop acted upon this

³¹¹ According to Clara Bishop, William "never tried to rule [the church]. He was always one of you, a teacher and a guide." Clara Bishop, Dallas, in a letter to Koishikawa Church, Tokyo, July 8, 1913. Hiratsuka's history also testifies that Bishop's treatment of him was more as a brother than as a father. Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan." See Bishop's own words, Bishop, "Letter From Bishop," 2. From the very beginning of their work together Bishop's prayer was that "We may be the younger 'Paul and Barnabas.'" Bishop, "Consecrated Talents Used," 3.

³¹² Concerning reciprocity Clara Bishop wrote, "I am sure that you did as much for us as we did for you. The earnestness and zeal of many of you has often helped us and made us stronger." Clara Bishop to Otsuka Koishikawa, Zoshigaya, and Sendagaya Churches, December 1, 1913.

³¹³ Harding argued that hesitating in the appointment of elders in a congregation was a rejection of God's plan for the church. In answering the question if elders should be appointed immediately, Harding's reply was an unequivocal, "yes." He wrote, "I have been taught by those whom I most love and honor that in faith, teaching and practice we should strive to be what the apostles taught Christians to be in their day; that in their teaching they present to us the model church, which we should try to reproduce in every community. Now if we are not to follow the apostles in this matter, if their teachings and examples with regard to elders are to be utterly disregarded, by what rule are we to be required to follow them in anything?" Harding, "Elders and Deacons," 8.

conviction when others would not and was one of the first foreign missionaries of the movement to appoint elders in a newly established church. In this act, he demonstrated his trust in God, in God's plan for the organization of the church, and in three Japanese men who were appointed.³¹⁴ Even in the days leading up to his death, Bishop knew that the Koishikawa church "had good elders to guide [them] and to look after [them] and do the necessary work of the church."³¹⁵ According to Clara, "It was always Mr. Bishop's desire that the elders control the affairs of the church."³¹⁶ The very poverty of the Bishops constrained them to a "three-selves" approach. Not having an abundance of money and needing to work secular jobs himself, reliance on the Japanese leadership was logical. Bishop's approach was also consistent with all the early Protestant works in Japan that devolved quickly to Japanese control. Bishop was undoubtedly influenced by this trend.

Bishop appropriated Harding's trust theory in regards to money in a much more diverse way.³¹⁷ Harding was set squarely against the solicitation of funds. He was firmly

³¹⁴ William's plan to appoint elders actually was conceived much earlier. According to Hiratsuka, Bishop had written a letter June 7, 1910 suggesting that he and two other Japanese men should soon become elders of the church. Hiratsuka, "History of the Church in Japan," 29. Clara stated that William did not have any trouble vouching for the Koishikawa church while being in the States because "He *knew* Bro. Hiratsuka to be absolutely reliable." Bishop, "An Explanation and a Reply."

³¹⁵ Clara Bishop to Otsuka Koishikawa, Zoshigaya, and Sendagaya Churches, December 1, 1913.

³¹⁶ Ibid. Admittedly, Bishop's posture among the Japanese was not always so positive and trusting. At one point he insisted that Japanese workers be supervised locally because there was so much fraud and deception present among Asian workers. William James Bishop to F. L. Rowe, November 20, 1911. On one occasion Clara Bishop advised against Japanese church members taking ownership of the building. Clara Bishop to Clarence G. Vincent, November 24, 1913.

³¹⁷ As already suggested, William was also influenced by L. S. White, Harding's counterpart in the salary-trust debate. White definitely had an influence on the Bishop family. While in the heat of the battle Clara mentioned in a letter that Brother White was coming over soon and she would ask him what he thought she should do. Clara Bishop to F. L. Rowe, July 29, 1913.

convinced that he personally could make appeals to God only for his every need. Bishop, however, openly solicited funds for printing projects, the support of Japanese workers, for the acquisition and construction of buildings, and for his own salary.³¹⁸ Yet in a style similar to Harding's, William and Clara never made the receipt or promise of needed funds a condition for carrying out their duty.³¹⁹ William would ask for funds; and whether necessary monies were contributed or not, he would proceed with his work through self-support, short-term loans, or even the selling of personal property as in the case of the sale of his printing press to pay for the translation, publication, and distribution of McGarvey's *Commentary on Acts*. Bishop taught the churches what they should do and then proceeded to do what he knew he should.³²⁰ As even McCaleb noted concerning him, "Where he does not find a way he makes one."³²¹ Since the Bishops

³¹⁸ For an example of Bishop's creative approaches to fund raising see William James Bishop, "Power of Standard Oil in Japan," *Christian Leader and the Way* 21, no. 6 (1907): 1. Standard Oil sells oil in Japan that is used in lighting the streets. Bishop used the oil to run his generator to print tracts that light the spiritual way of the people. He asked his readers to contribute to the purchase of a cylinder press to do better work to get more light out.

³¹⁹ On this matter Harding wrote, "I reply, if an individual, a number of individuals, or a congregation proposes to give a man a definite sum of money in consideration of his performing his duty diligently to God in the discharge of his proper work as a preacher, I see no reason why he should not receive it. He should not, however, make the performance of his duty conditional upon their promise to pay." Harding, "Metcalf's Question," 806. See also James A. Harding, "How Should It Be Done?" *Christian Leader and the Way* 24, no. 45 (1910): 8-9.

³²⁰ Bishop would often send out a letter about giving to mission work and then leave the responsibility up to the churches. For an example see William James Bishop, "A Circular Letter from Bro. Bishop," *Christian Leader and the Way* 20, no. 2 (1906): 5. Sewell noted that in the early days of Bishop's mission work he was at times without clothing and food. "He has no notion, however, of giving up the work; he is preparing himself for greater usefulness, and, without complaining is pressing right on, doing all he can and thanking God for what we do." Jesse P. Sewell, "Brother Bishop's Japan Mission," *Gospel Advocate* 44, no. 8 (1902): 134.

³²¹ McCaleb, "Missionary Sketches," September 5, 1905, 3.

were supporting themselves for the most part, they might have reasoned that they were not requesting funds for themselves but for the work, and, therefore, they did not violate Harding's "trust theory" principles. The truth, however, echoes from Bishop's life and writings that as a faithful servant of God, he never required a constant sufficient income as a condition for his missionary service. Even in the last year of his life after several months of receiving almost nothing from the States, he took on more work to meet expenses. Giving up or withdrawing were not really options in his mind.

"Vow" as Faithfulness Leading to Personal Sacrifice

William Bishop also made a specific missionary application of Harding's concept of "resolve" or in Bishop's case "vow" in grateful response to God's special providence. In Harding's case the experience of God's providential care had led him to "resolve" never to go to people for his wants and needs but to God alone.³²² Such a resolve meant to place oneself totally in God's hands so that, regardless of the outcome, death or deliverance, God's plan would be accomplished. Harding wrote and taught that trust implied trial.

It is necessary that our faith shall be tried. The soldier who expects to go through war without smoke or dust or blood—without toil or pain or sickness, free from hunger, thirst, weariness, disease and death—is indeed a very foolish fellow, for war means all these things.³²³

³²² Harding, "In Whom Shall We Trust?" 19. This conviction was based not only on experience but also upon his reading of and reflection on Philippians 4:6.

³²³ Harding, "On Why Things Go Wrong," 8.

If a life of affluence will enable a man the better to glorify God, God makes him rich, as in the cases of Abraham and Job; if a life of poverty would be better, he makes him poor, as in the cases of Jesus and his apostles; if wealth, might, honor, high station would the better enable him to glorify God, Joseph, David and Daniel; if, in connection with poverty, disease and humiliation would be better, these also are given, as in the case of the last days of Lazarus. . . . We should pray to God to give us whatever is best for us, wealth or poverty, honor or humiliation, health or sickness, life or death; being sure that whatever he gives to his dutiful child will be a blessing; resting in the faith that for all that we sacrifice or suffer for him we may expect a hundredfold reward, even in this present time.³²⁴

Harding believed and instilled in students, such as William Bishop, that ultimately trust in God was not a guarantee of a protected and danger-free life. Trust was the assurance that in hunger, thirst, nakedness, and danger God would provide what was best—which sometimes meant death. Harding’s words on this point were in Bishop’s case quite prophetic: “God’s child is often in danger, but God delivers him every time, and in the best way for him. Sometimes death brings the easiest, speediest and best deliverance; and then God will surely send that dark messenger, who, however, never brings anything but blessing to God’s faithful child. I know well that if I live as I ought to live, the best day of all to me will be the day of death.”³²⁵

Although Bishop may have compromised in the implementation of Harding’s “trust theory” in the matter of soliciting funds, he fully clung to his vow as it led him to demonstrate his faithfulness through sacrifice. Early in his college days William had vowed that if God would allow him to pursue his education, he would spend his life as a

³²⁴ Harding, “Scraps,” February 27, 1902, 370.

³²⁵ Harding, “Scraps,” May 14, 1903, 578.

missionary. Don Carlos Janes observed that this vow served as an immovable anchor for the Bishops to steady them during difficult times in Japan. During the Russo-Japanese War, funds were made available for the Bishops to return but they decided to stay. Also upon a later visit home he was asked by family to stay for ten years in the States, but remembering his vow, Bishop continued back in the mission that cost him his life. Janes recalled, "Away back there when he was a poor, uneducated boy, he promised the Lord that he would give his life to mission work if enabled to go through school, and neither war nor the wish of relatives separated him from his chosen field."³²⁶

William Bishop proved by giving his life to the mission in Japan that trust in God was not merely talk, nor the receipt of God's good gifts, but a total willingness to spend and give his life in service to God. Harding had taught about trusting in times of difficulties. The Bishops lived this reckless trust. Bishop's conviction pushed him to live by faith well beyond reason. Reflecting on the import of William's life and death, Mattie Holder wrote in his honor, "I would rather be William J. Bishop, with a consciousness of having done my duty faithfully to God, lying in that vault in Los Angeles, Cal. than to live in the most beautiful home in the wide, wide world, surrounded with literature, music, art, and everything money and talent can supply, without Christ."³²⁷ Through the voluntary offering of his life, Bishop solidified the faith missions identity that Harding had sought to bring to the Churches of Christ.

³²⁶ Janes, "William J. Bishop," 391.

³²⁷ Holder, "William J. Bishop," 391.

Harding's Otherworldly Perspective

At least one other area of comparison between William Bishop and his spiritual mentor, James A. Harding, deserves attention. Harding possessed and taught an otherworldly perspective that promoted simplicity of life, full participation in the spreading of Christ's kingdom, and abstention from any kind of involvement in human governments foreign or domestic.³²⁸ Although perhaps more out of necessity than out of principle, Bishop practiced Harding's self-sacrificing simplicity. He made no attempt to accumulate wealth or material possessions. The house he lived in was given to him and he relocated it on rented property. When he died, the house was of some value, but only because he had made renovations and improvements with his own hands.

William Bishop represented the non-flamboyant style of quiet servants trained under Harding's leadership. He much preferred fruitful work to fund raising, and evangelism to reporting. In comparison with other missionaries such as J. M. McCaleb, his reports and appeals for support are rather sparse in the church papers. He was, for the most part, too busy in Christ's work to write. He did write personal letters to supporters

³²⁸ Concerning simplicity and prioritizing the spiritual over the temporal, Harding wrote, "The man claiming to be a Christian, who spends more money for that worthless weed, tobacco, or for flowers with which to adorn his front yard or for fancy papers and paints to beautify his dwelling, than he does for saving men; who devotes more time, attention and money to the bodily and temporal welfare of his children, than he does to spiritual and eternal interests, will sure have many a care in this life, and a fearful reckoning to settle in the world to come." Harding, "The Great Need of Ministry," 742. Harding advocated the paying of taxes, obedience to laws, and prayer for civil authorities yet stated, "Every government on this earth is in the hands of wicked men. The government of Christ is at war with every one of them. . . . I believe it should be our ambition to so live and teach as induce every one we can to forsake the governments of this world and to devote himself wholly to the kingdom of Christ. We should have nothing to do with appointing or electing officers for the governments of Satan. We ought not have any kind of partnership with him. . . . We are to overcome by gentleness, by meekness, by teaching the doctrine of Christ and by living according to it." Harding, "Kingdom of Christ vs. Kingdom of Satan," 931.

and published a periodical in which he reported on the work but was not the type for sensational reporting. He noted that writing in behalf of the work was “a severe tax upon my time and strength. The more energy required in keeping up the interest of the brethren, the less left for the work here. It makes my heart ache when I think that we not only must be separated from our loved ones and our brethren among whom we would like to live and labor, but must plead with the churches for a living.”³²⁹ Indeed, his lack of talent as a writer may have caused him anxiety and made it difficult for him to write reports.

His missions interest in Japan, however, influenced William to take an accommodating stance toward government and culture. For William, “becoming all things to all people” required a missionary to both esteem and demonstrate respect for foreign culture by participating in it. In stark contrast with McCaleb’s complete rejection of Japanese nationalism, Bishop accepted and encouraged it among his Japanese converts.³³⁰ On the occasion of the death of the Emperor, Bishop composed a letter to be read at a memorial service held by the Koishikawa church. In the letter he praised his co-worker Yunosuke Hiratsuka for taking a lead in having such a service and requested that

³²⁹ Bishop, “Letter From Bishop,” 3.

³³⁰ In contrast, on one occasion McCaleb opposed his church’s singing of the national song at the conclusion of a church meeting. McCaleb, “Strange, But Not Rare,” 770. Previously narrated, see above, pp. 213-4. On another occasion McCaleb refused to allow the congregation to raise a flag in honor of the country’s first emperor. John Moody McCaleb, “The Student Trouble at Zoshigaya Gakuin,” *Gospel Advocate* 59, no. 37 (1917): 886.

he obtain for him as many postcards pertaining to the Emperor as possible.³³¹ For William and Clara Bishop, Japan was their new home, and they took great interest in their adopted country. Indeed, their support of nationalism may have contributed to the success of their mission. For McCaleb, otherworldliness was an excuse to oppose Japanese nationalism, for the Bishops, it was reason to embrace it.

Conclusion

William J. and Clara Bishop's mission work associated with the Koishikawa Chapel in Tokyo, Japan, became one of the most fruitful of the Churches of Christ in its time and proved to be the most resilient in diligently growing and surviving difficulties such as earthquakes and war. Although the success of the work can be largely attributed to Japanese leadership of the congregation, Bishop's implementation of Harding's teaching helped to empower the Japanese to take responsibility in their own church.

In the early days of the Koishikawa work, Bishop published an article entitled "Dendo Sekkyo" or "Seed Sowing" in which he wrote, "The seed sowing and the cultivation of the soil is our work — God gives the sunshine of His love, and the earlier and latter rains of His grace. We sow in hope and in time the sowers and the reapers will rejoice together."³³² This brief quote embodies the essence of Bishop's philosophy of Christianity: work heartily and sacrificially to the extreme limits of one's personal abilities and trust firmly in God's power and ability to provide the people necessary to

³³¹ William James Bishop, Tokyo, in a letter to Yunosuke Hiratsuka, Tokyo, August 5, 1913.

³³² William James Bishop, "Dendo Sekkyo," *Japan Missionary* 1, no. 5 (1904): 1.

accomplish the task. "Seed sowing" was an appropriate metaphor for Bishop's life. Once released from the hand of God, his life was sown in foreign soil. He trusted God to produce the harvest. As a risk taker, he did not wait for the guarantees of safety or of results. His life, as he had been taught, was but seed to be divinely sown. God, the eternal harvester would cultivate and render productive the life given for the salvation of others. Bishop was aware that he was laying down his life in mission work. William Bishop's body was buried in Englewood Cemetery, Los Angeles, but knowledge of his devotion and sacrifice continued to bear fruit. Within the next decade, a new crop of faith missionaries of the Churches of Christ, including Lillie Cypert, Sarah Andrews, the Bixlers, and Foxes, prepared to enter Japan and congregations arose to become their sponsors.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Chapter one poses the question, “How did the anti-missionary Churches of Christ become missionary?” Between the founding of the ACMS in 1849 and the sending of their first cross-cultural missionary to Japan in 1892, the Churches of Christ became increasingly negative toward mission work. By the turn of the century, however, that trend had reversed and the Churches of Christ were beginning to send missionaries overseas and to embrace the missionary imperative. Ironically, this “anti-missionary” branch of the Stone-Campbell movement successfully shed its inglorious epithet and today supports eight times the number of missionaries supported by the pro-society Disciples of Christ.¹ This dissertation attributes the growth of missions sentiment in the Churches of Christ to the influence of James A. Harding. Born in a time of intense revival, to a family guided by spiritual concerns, Harding embarked on a life of radical and contagious faith. He made a simple decision to reject guaranteed salaries and to rely wholly and completely on God. Consequently his “trust theory” spread through his example among kindred spirits. James A. Harding contributed to the birth of the missionary movement of the Churches of Christ by envisioning, espousing, and

¹ Siewert and Welliver, *Mission Handbook*, 116, 125, 230. The Christian Churches also chose to send missionaries independently without mission boards and now support approximately the same number of missionaries as the Churches of Christ.

practicing a life of faith in the providence of God. Harding also imported and adapted faith missions ideas that gave shape to both the Churches of Christ and its missionary movement.

This dissertation also profiles two men who expanded and implemented Harding's ideas: J. M. McCaleb and William J. Bishop. Talented with showmanship and singleminded in his purpose, McCaleb neglected family and his work, but successfully promoted church-sponsored missions among the Churches of Christ. His frequent reporting, extensive travel, and intense speaking schedule bolstered missionary interest and activity among congregations in the United States. He effectively broadcast Harding's ideas in a modified form until they were embraced throughout the Churches of Christ. Bishop, inspired by Harding and recruited by McCaleb, voluntarily exhausted his energies and health to evangelize among the Japanese, establish a self-sufficient church, and entrust his work to national leadership. Bishop was McCaleb's antithesis inasmuch as he devoted himself to his family and to the relentless implementation of faith principles but was remiss in publicizing his work and ideals. His death attests to his unbending conviction that God provides for those who lay down their lives in the preaching of the Gospel. Churches regarded his "sacrifice of life as martyrdom" and young admirers of Bishop's devotion pledged to become missionaries.

Interpretation of Harding's Contributions

Harding's Success as Promoter of Faith Missions

Harding's thought blended older Restoration principles with new ones that were gleaned from like-minded individuals such as George Müller. In keeping with the heritage of the Restoration Movement, Harding maintained a firm primitivist grasp on the priority and exclusivity of Scripture. However, he consciously rejected reason as its chief guiding principle of interpretation and asserted that trust in God and the work of the Holy Spirit were the key to unlocking biblical meaning. He disseminated his concepts through preaching, writing, and especially inculcating his students with the ideas of special providence, sacrifice, liberality, and indigenous methods of church planting.

Harding's own beliefs were blended from a variety of sources. Samuel Roger's "open universe" found ready and wide acceptance by Harding in his youth. James T. Barclay's admission that scientific theory had to be updated constantly led to Harding's prioritizing faith and Bible reading over intellectual pursuits. When Harding discovered the stream of faith missions as it flowed from Anthony Norris Groves through George Müller and Hudson Taylor, he discovered that their ecclesiology and commitment to Scripture matched his own. Embracing their propositions of radical faith was a natural step. He, therefore, unapologetically introduced both Müller and his ideas to his audiences, his readers, and his students.

After the Civil War, the Churches of Christ fiercely defended their identity, were suspicious of notions emanating from other religious movements, and generally attacked any incursions of new or outside theological ideas. They believed that the American

Christian Missionary Society and its associated organizations represented the infiltration of wealthier northern modernist denominationalism. Like other Southern religious groups, they resented “Yankee” interference after the war as non-biblical and remained more literalist in their interpretation of Scripture.² Harding’s credibility, established by his life of faith, enabled him to serve as a portal through which the stream of faith missions and holiness principles could flow into the Churches of Christ. These principles were accepted among churches and individuals because Harding also argued for them by making strong appeals to Scripture. His theories circulated, met with initial resistance and were eventually accepted. He used holiness language and borrowed from a wider and broader tradition. He successfully increased the attractiveness of these ideals by stripping them of their association with Protestantism. By reaching to Müller across the ocean, he found the inspiration to move his church fellowship beyond its national borders.

By appropriating the influences of Rogers, Müller, and Keswick holiness, Harding gave attention to the human heart as well as to the head. Harding’s students, so many of whom became domestic and foreign missionaries, claimed that his teaching of the Scriptures “caused [their] hearts to burn within [them] and filled [them] with a desire to please the Lord so that [they] might have [their] every need anticipated and filled by Him.”³ By embodying faith principles and by possessing a deep personal spirituality,

² “Southern denominations in particular suspected that a Yankee plot was behind attempts to organize their women.” Robert, “Influence of American Missionary Women,” 69

³ Bishop, “Introduction,” 2.

Harding successfully inspired a new generation of missionaries and Christian educators who were pro-missionary.

Why did Harding's vision inspire? Primitivists saw his vision as Bible-based, and those concerned about the lost in the world saw it as a call to action. As a child of the primitivist movement, he imbibed its highest value, faithfulness to the Scriptures. At the same time he also pointed to a New Testament imperative that the Churches of Christ had still not undertaken, foreign missions. His kingdom language and vision challenged his audiences to avoid earthly entanglements and to believe that their only citizenship was in heaven. Harding's otherworldly Christianity took root rapidly among those previously confined to a small-world mentality and who were anxiously looking for a way out. His brand of activism avoided associations with the northern urban remedies and cut a new course that allowed the Church of Christ to retain its primitivist mentality and identity. He held in tension both the intellectual and spiritual, faith and reason.⁴ Harding attracted and motivated students by redefining the relationship between faith and reason. He gave priority to the first, without abandoning the second. His teachings provided the necessary formula that enabled the Churches of Christ to become missionary without sacrificing congregational autonomy.

⁴ These words are borrowed from Robert's evaluation of A. T. Pierson. Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 300.

Harding's Response to Modernism

In the nineteenth-century threats of modernism generated various reactions among Christian denominations. Denominations divided along sectional lines under pressures such as those caused by evolutionary theory, higher-criticism of the Bible, and liberal theology. Some churches chose to embrace the new changes and adapted themselves to new trends. Other movements fortified positions and attacked modernism. Harding chose a third route and led those under his influence to view themselves as citizens of a higher kingdom. As such, their duty was to purify the church and to call others out of the world into God's kingdom. Harding's response to modernism was to ignore human organizations and governments and seek, instead, to transform the hearts of people called to another kingdom created outside of the physical world.

In Harding's view, the "Disciples" were making accommodations to increases in wealth (including instruments in worship) and denominational organization (missionary societies). He opposed these tendencies because they were divisive and distracted the church from performing its otherworldly duties in God's kingdom. In this sense, Harding was a fundamentalist. His view of trust in God meant trust in Jesus' promise to return and God's ability to provide. His perspective also required obedience to a sacred text as God's ultimate communication. As an unintended consequence, his teaching contributed to the official and irreparable divide of 1906 between the Churches of Christ and the Disciples. His influence, however, also shaped the newly established missional identity of the Churches of Christ.

Social historians have suggested that the Churches of Christ have been heavily influenced by the role of reason. In Harding's case, his movement was also responding to the threats to faith created by the ever-increasing influence of modernism and reason. Rather than resorting to the use of reason and head-centered dogmatism (though he certainly could be dogmatic), Harding committed himself to a heart-driven pursuit of God and of holiness. In his mind, he made faith master and reason an obedient servant. His thought was more closely associated with the Spirit-led adherents of the holiness movement than with the theologians of mainline Protestant religion. The fundamentalists' divide away from mainline Protestantism occurred in response to perceived threats from modernism. People in the Harding tradition could not divorce themselves from the rural southern culture in which they were immersed. They did, however, seek to respond to modernist trends through spirituality. By mentally traveling outside of the world, especially in Harding, they discovered their missional purpose in the world. Clinging to the goal of restoring pristine New Testament Christianity, leaders influenced by Harding pursued purity of doctrine, faith, and life.

Harding's Slogan

The slogan, "God is the sender, every Christian should go, and the Lord will provide," encapsulated Harding's attempt to construct a comprehensive world view. "God the sender" meant that God as the active keeper of promises was not bound by natural law. Through the transformation effected by the Holy Spirit, God shaped Christians into a persuasive lifestyle. As the sender, God daily and providentially led

missionaries by plans that gradually unfolded and by opportunities that divinely opened before them. By “every Christian should go,” Harding emphasized the urgent imperative of giving, going, and sacrificing created by the imminent return of Christ. All Christians, male and female, educated and uneducated, lay people and full-time ministers, were equally responsible in their duty to preach the Gospel so that the lost could be saved out of the world.⁵ The phrase, “the Lord will provide,” signified that God still worked through and beyond the missionary. Funds and protection came to those who presented their requests to God without depending upon organizations. The Holy Spirit matured and directed newly converted national church leaders and allowed the missionary to work fraternally. God still answered prayer and always delivered in the divinely appointed way: sometimes in inexplicable financial income, and at times in rescue through death.

How did faith missions become the predominant view within the Churches of Christ? Harding established credibility for faith principles which he diffused with the flavor of the rural South. McCaleb shared his cross-cultural experience and popularized the “trust theory” among churches at home. Harding’s radical principles were difficult to embrace, but McCaleb sanctioned a more acceptable middle ground by promoting missions supported directly by individual congregations. His model became known as “church-sponsored” missions. McCaleb’s endorsement of no-appeals mission work, however, had its negative side effects. He inoculated the churches against supporting

⁵ A. T. Pierson expressed similar thoughts with the slogan, “All should go and go to all.” Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 175.

missions in any other way. Furthermore, he inadvertently undermined the support that he tried to raise from Nashville churches for his colleague, William Bishop. In summary, Harding borrowed and developed, trained and inspired. McCaleb brought his plan to the Churches and diffused it domestically. Bishop took the plan to Japan and put it into the hands of the Japanese.

Harding's principles and philosophy were not fully tested until put into practice by William J. Bishop. Although his death demonstrated the tragic consequences of the failure of independently church-supported missions, his readiness to die for this ideal provided persuasive proof for its truth. The persuasive appeal of any given ideal is directly proportional to the willingness of its adherents to suffer for it.⁶ Bishop not only implemented faith principles, but he also willingly died for them. When observers of history examine the facts surrounding Bishop's death, they can certainly question the validity of faith missions. They cannot, however, easily question the level of his commitment nor dismiss the value he attributed to these principles. Bishop was fully aware that such trust encompassed a willingness to die for the cause. Future missionaries looking at the harsh reality of Bishop's death were faced with two possible conclusions: one, that this model did not work, and more secure means of support must be found; or

⁶ I owe this insight to George Hunter who wrote, "Most people judge as most believable those advocates who seem most to believe their message—as evidenced by sacrificing, paying a price, or taking risks for their beliefs." George G. Hunter, *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 74. In speaking of the early church Stark averred, "Martyrs are the most credible exponents of the value of a religion, and this is especially true if there is a voluntary aspect to their martyrdom." Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 174.

two, so valued, so valid are these faith principles that their adherents are sincerely ready to die for them.

Harding's Appropriation of Ideas

As already mentioned, Harding unearthed truths in Rogers, Müller and Taylor that blended well with his own convictions and served his promotion of missions. His church-planting strategies reflected the three-selves movement of Anderson and Venn.

J. M. McCaleb was also a borrower. McCaleb, though principally disciplined by Harding through reading, also sought to emulate the literary style of A. T. Pierson in mobilizing churches and individuals to engage in foreign missions. He lacked the depth of spirituality and integrity embodied by Pierson, but he passionately attempted to keep the churches informed about the opportunities for and progress of world missions. William Bishop, although an avid reader exposed to many ideas, was a faithful executor of Harding's plan. Harding's words and convictions were frequently on his lips and in his heart. Under the influence of L. S. White, however, Bishop deviated significantly from Harding in making appeals for funds. Otherwise, Bishop constructed the community of believers in Koishikawa according to Harding's blueprint in the finest details. Within their own movement, the men and their work seemed novel, but little of their thought can be identified as original.

Harding's "Reckless" Faith?

Did the application of Harding's teaching lead to faith or folly? Whether intentional or not, Harding's trust principles circumvented the anti-missionary society

impasse. Faith missions outside of the Churches of Christ, such as the China Inland Mission, had found their way past the bureaucracy, denominational limitations, and higher educational requirements of the mission boards. By adopting this alternative model, Harding provided the Churches of Christ with an avenue to launch foreign missions without sacrificing their avowedly sacred ecclesiology. Harding helped this movement with an evangelistic heart to discover its missionary hands.

Did Harding's principles lead to a reckless and foolish exercise of faith? Some launched their mission work stimulated by his teaching and his example but later chose to defect. The early history of missions of the Churches of Christ, in fact, is filled with scattered examples of defections to and away from it. R. L. Pruett, for example, considered the faith principle folly and turned to the Foreign Missionary Society when his wife got small pox. Harding, of course, argued that this smitten couple bailed out too soon and that the first emergency funds, issued in response to prayer, arrived from the treasuries of independent churches and not the societies.

Harding's Missionary Legacy

McCaleb gave voice to Harding's faith principles throughout his forty-nine years of mission work. McCaleb claimed that he did not make appeals for funds. The irony is that he was so worried about faith missions and money that he was writing more often than working. Others maintained their course and clung to faith in providential care through periods of privation and intense suffering. William Bishop lost his first wife and child. He surrendered his own life as well. Tuberculosis was the immediate cause of

Bishop's death, but the failure of the Nashville plan of church sponsorship indirectly hastened his demise. Rather than abandon this model, the end result in view of Bishop's death was that churches became more serious in the fulfillment of their commitments. Opponents of faith missions could have cried that Harding's trust theory was more folly than faith, but Bishop's death seemed to have had the effect of strengthening the resolve of churches to provide more adequately for their missionaries.

For what did Harding hope? He longed for the Second Coming of Jesus and prayed that by experiencing renewal, the church would be ready for Jesus' return. At least two of his students perpetuated his message. R. H. Boll was consumed with its promotion into the next generation. Don Carlos Janes also worked consistently in support of missions based on premillennial beliefs without, however, drawing constant attention to his views of the end times. Harding's hope that every congregation would become a missionary society was never realized. He did, however, raise up a trust-oriented missionary force. Ironically, the urgency created by the premillennial return of Christ led both to the rapid training of missionaries and to the establishment of permanent institutions. Harding's son-in-law, J. N. Armstrong, continued his literary, preaching, and educational traditions along the same lines of faith principles until his death in 1944. He served as president of Western Bible and Literary College, Cordell College, Harper College, and eventually Harding College. His students who became missionaries testified that Armstrong was one of the most important influences in the development of their missionary zeal. Most of these missionaries bore the marks of Harding's "trust theory," otherworldly perspectives, and commitment to undenominationalism. They generally

adhered to his teaching on simplicity and sacrifice and were careful in their use of resources.

At least in part, Harding's legacy survived. Harding forestalled the inevitable institutionalization of his movement. In his life he was uncompromisingly resistant to the forces that would denominationalize the church. He channeled the energy of a huge movement of youth who were ready to act. The success of his work was not merely his own but also spoke well of the quality and character of the workers who followed in his steps.⁷ His pietistic focus and pacifism remained the norm among missionaries of the Churches of Christ until World War II. Conscientious objectors following in this tradition were persecuted and interred in work camps.⁸

Beginning in the 1920s champions of orthodoxy within the movement labeled premillennialism a dangerous heresy. Some missionaries such as McCaleb disavowed premillennial views while other missionaries discreetly continued to hold their views. Orthodox preachers required disassociation from all non-conformists, limited the role of women, and narrowed the definition of Christian. Harding's undenominational ideals survived in the anonymity and freedoms afforded to missionaries overseas but domestically succumbed to the intimidation tactics of ultra-conservative writers and preachers.

⁷ Robert called "those who launched the missionary movement of the 1880s and 1890s . . . the activist generation." Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 299.

⁸ Sears, *For Freedom*, 159.

Harding's radical faith missions model did not endure. His ideas did serve to invigorate the Churches of Christ with a missionary spirit and momentum that generated funds and missionaries into the next century. His principles fit well for his time and place, but as the Churches of Christ grew more affluent, McCaleb's church-sponsorship model replaced Harding's pure faith mission method. Harding's pessimistic view of the future that required voluntary poverty became increasingly unpopular among a movement entering the middle class. His outsider mentality was difficult to maintain as the Churches of Christ achieved a respectable missionary effort by the late 1920s. His trust theory burned like a fuse that ignited the missionary explosion without leaving many traces of its origin. "No appeals" of any kind became "appeals only to God's authorized representative, the church."

James A. Harding's most permanent legacy was the stream of missionaries that trained in his schools or in schools established by his students. To the present day, roughly one third or more of the missionaries of the Churches of Christ were educated in colleges influenced by Harding's teaching. Harding never dreamed of permanent structures but temporary and mobile schools intended to meet the urgent need of educating the minds and shaping the spirits of young men and women for the missionary task. After his death in 1922, donors pledged twenty-five thousand dollars in his honor for a new administration and classroom building at Harper, Kansas. The edifice was never erected, but the funds became seed money to establish a school that bore his name,

Harding College.⁹ Ironically, that monument to his legacy symbolizes something he opposed: an institutionalized, secure, and endowed school.¹⁰ Nevertheless, within the school, James A. Harding's missionary zeal and fervor based on deep spirituality continue their struggle to survive.

Implications

One of the most important implications of this study is that the spirituality and missionary nature of the Churches of Christ have been inadequately historicized. The characterization, in fact, of the Churches of Christ as a movement guided by Baconian rationalism fails to account for the faith missionaries that it produced, supported, and sent abroad. Their history demonstrates that the Churches of Christ at the turn of the last century were a pietistic movement whose identity was primarily defined by its missional purpose. This truth, therefore, underscores the insufficiency of the rationalistic paradigm formerly applied to this religious group and calls for a re-examination of its overall history in light of its spiritual, faith-based missions.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., 193-202.

¹⁰ A. J. Gordon similarly sought to train faith missionaries and not to establish the lasting institution which carries his name. Brereton, "Bible Schools," 111; Robert, *Occupy Until I Come*, 239.

¹¹ For an evaluation of Richard Hughes' *Reviving the Ancient Faith* as an attempt to reinterpret the history of the Churches of Christ in light of its "apocalyptic" moorings, see Douglas A. Foster, David Edwin Harrell, Jr., and Samuel S. Hill, "Rethinking the History of Churches of Christ: Responses to Richard Hughes," *Restoration Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1996): 1-12. Allen uncovered a "spiritual crossroad" in the history of the Churches of Christ but states that it "was quickly passed and the memory of it largely lost." C. Leonard Allen, *Things Unseen: Churches of Christ In (and After) the Modern Age* (Siloam Springs: Leafwood, 2004), 71-99; C. Leonard Allen and Danny Gray Swick, *Participating in God's Life* (Orange: New Leaf, 2001), 23, 32, 37-58. Hicks and Valentine have contributed to the reinterpretation of the Restoration Movement through a spiritual lens. Hicks and Valentine, *Kingdom Come*.

Another implication of this research is that the Churches of Christ can now be more accurately defined by their positive characteristics. In the past, historians have identified the Churches of Christ and interpreted their history in negative terms by highlighting their opposition to both the instrument and the missionary society. By reconstructing how the trust theory took hold and emboldened its missionaries, historians now have a way of seeing the Churches of Christ as an entity with positive traits. Thus, historians can now account for the movement's piety that was channeled into creating schools like the Nashville Bible School, Potter Bible College and eventually Harding College, as well as launching a successful missionary enterprise. Furthermore, the movement created a culture of missionary reporting that became prominent in the *Gospel Advocate*, *Christian Leader and the Way*, and *Word and Work*. Harding, McCaleb, Bishop, and others, flawed though they were, generated and diffused this missions consciousness and rendered it the heart of their movement.

APPENDIX

Sources of the Study

The body of secondary literature and theory that serves as this project's foundation includes works on American fundamentalism and evangelicalism, the history of faith missions, the social setting of the rural South before and after the Civil War, the opening of Japan to Christianity, and the history of the Disciples and Churches of Christ.

American Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism

Since the Churches of Christ are considered by some to be fundamentalists, several works on fundamentalism are particularly helpful. Ernest Sandeen in *The Roots of Fundamentalism* argues that American fundamentalism was an outgrowth of millenarian doctrines. He especially stresses the movement as a mentality that has persisted and continued to thrive despite the many predictions of its demise. George Marsden, in *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, contends that although end-time theologies contributed to the overall identity of fundamentalism, the movement was principally the result of anti-modernist Protestants and evangelicals, seeking to respond to the cultural threats unleashed against the Christian faith. Joel Carpenter, in *Revive Us Again*, builds on the work of both Sandeen and Marsden and seeks to solve the riddle of fundamentalism's survival and its becoming a sizeable alliance of evangelicals. These works provide the background for the religious setting of the emergence of the Churches

of Christ, to which James A. Harding belonged, as a separate entity from the Disciples. Carpenter's collection of essays in *Making Higher Education Christian* furnishes a description of the role that universities and Bible colleges played in the preparation and mobilization of students to foreign mission fields. Michael Parker's *The Kingdom of Character* contributes significantly to this historical picture by offering a history of the Student Volunteer Movement as it exploded in foreign mission enthusiasm at the turn of the twentieth century.

History of Faith Missions

The Story of Faith Missions by Klaus Fielder establishes for this dissertation the connections among Anthony Norris Groves, George Müller, Hudson Taylor, the broader faith missions movement, and James A. Harding. He categorizes the Churches of Christ together with the Brethren as "non-church" movements and demonstrates how they contributed to the origins of faith missions. A. T. Pierson's biography, *George Müller of Bristol*, together with Dana Robert's *Occupy Until I Come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* provide the history of the two men who most influenced the beginnings of missions in the Harding tradition. Harding drew extensively from Müller and McCaleb from A. T. Pierson. Timothy Weber and J. C. Pollock provide the background to Harding's premillennial and holiness ideas.¹

¹ Pollock, *Keswick Story*; Weber, *Shadow of the Second Coming*.

Social Settings of the Rural South and the New Japan

For information specifically relating to the social and religious setting of both the antebellum and post-Civil War rural South, this dissertation is particularly indebted to the editorial work of John B. Boles. His *Companion to the American South* contains essays that outline the issues and scholarship that are crucial for an understanding of this period. Boles' *Religion in Antebellum Kentucky* was particularly helpful as an outsider's perspective of the great revivals that gave birth to the religious movement in which James A. Harding was raised. Richard Drummond, in *A History of Christianity in Japan*, supplies a history of Japan's opening to Western civilization and its initial evangelization by Christian missionaries and national church leaders.

History of the Churches of Christ

Of the various histories written of the Churches of Christ, Earl Irvin West's four-volume *Search for the Ancient Order* is the most comprehensive. Drawing from memoirs, personal publications, religious periodicals, and debates, West narrates the events and personalities of the primitivist Restoration Movement that gave birth to what were later called the "Churches of Christ." His work describes the initial formation of the American Christian Missionary Society and sides with those Christians and churches that opposed it and eventually separated from its supporters. West maintains that although leaders voiced staunch opposition to the society on the theological grounds that it violated the New Testament pattern of congregational autonomy, the real break with the society came over

its adopted resolution to support the North during the Civil War.² West's work is particularly important because it narrates the successes and failures of the first missionary efforts of the Restoration Movement to Jerusalem, Africa, Jamaica, and Nova Scotia through 1930 and describes the beginning and development of the movement's Christian colleges in connection with the rejection of the missionary society model. Although it contains the best collection of the Churches of Christ's early missionary accounts, West's book gives much more attention to the domestic growth and struggles of the movement.

David Filbeck, *The First Fifty Years*, describes the early missions efforts of the Christian Churches whose history overlaps with the Churches of Christ. He provides a perspective from the other side of the 1906 division that occurred in the Restoration Movement and narrates the work of J. M. McCaleb's contemporaries who served with him in Japan as distant religious relatives. Filbeck credits W. K. Azbill, McCaleb's original partner, as the genius who originated the "direct-support" mission method. Filbeck also demonstrates that after 1906, the missionary society issue was not entirely resolved. Through a gradual process lasting thirty years, the Christian Churches distanced themselves from the Disciples over issues of modernism and open membership. Equally

² Society supporters such as J. W. McGarvey held that since David Lipscomb opposed the missionary societies, then Lipscomb needed to find a biblical and operational substitute. Lipscomb's paper, *The Gospel Advocate*, served to rally support for independent missionaries, while his Nashville Bible School, served to train and supply missionaries, West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 3:357. Parallel to the struggles within the missionary societies of many American denominations, the American Christian Missionary Society's ever increasing resolutions in favor of the North met with an intensified criticism of the society from those members of the South. Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1949), 224.

helpful and written from a similar viewpoint is McAllister's and Tucker's *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church*.

Richard Hughes and Leonard Allen have led an influential crusade by writing a history of Churches of Christ in a way to force the movement to be more conscious of its own tradition and to recognize the human origins of that tradition. In *Discovering Our Roots*, for example, these authors have argued that the Churches of Christ were primarily a product of the Age of Reason. According to Hughes and Allen, the movement's founders sought to unify Christians in three ways: by eliminating affections and loyalties to unbiblical traditions, by reducing the necessary practices of the church to those clearly expressed in the Bible, and by elevating reason in the process of interpretation to make those determinations. Although they willingly admit that at least one branch of the Restoration Movement emphasized holy living over the legal use of the Bible as a religious constitution, they paint a picture of a movement more prone to argument and interest in form than to pietistic grace-centered expressions of Christianity.³ In a subsequent work, Hughes maintains that there were two streams that constituted the movement, but the rationalistic fighting style effectively routed out and marginalized the otherworldly Spirit-led branch.⁴ Using Allen and Hughes as a foil, my research project

³ "The Stone movement was restorationist, to be sure, but in the early years it focused more on holy and righteous living than on the forms and structures of the primitive church. Restoration for Stone and his colleagues meant first of all restoring the life style of the first Christian communities." Allen and Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots*, 103.

⁴ Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 168-191.

discovers the extent to which the Harding missionary entourage constituted a grace-centered and Spirit-led branch within the Churches of Christ.⁵

L. C. Sears' biography of James A. Harding, *Eyes of Jehovah*, contains an account of James A. Harding's life, of his philosophy of faith, and of the chain of Bible schools that led to the establishment of Harding College. Sears portrays James A. Harding as a great evangelist and Christian educator motivated and guided by a radical faith in God. Harding, together with David Lipscomb, started the Nashville Bible School whose graduates became the founders of many of the Christian colleges associated with the Churches of Christ in the early half of the twentieth century. Harding and Lipscomb, in their otherworldly, pacifist, non-sectarian, and faith perspectives cast a die for their disciples that would perpetuate these ideologies long after their deaths.

Sears' second work, *For Freedom*, records the life of the strongest heir to James A. Harding's convictions, his own son-in-law, J. N. Armstrong. Together these two men opened Potter Bible College, and later Armstrong served as president for a line of schools that eventually led to the birth of Harding College in 1924. These schools included Western Bible and Literary College (Odessa, Missouri), Cordell Christian College (Cordell, Oklahoma), and Harper College (Harper, Kansas). These schools, though small and short-lived, produced the bulk of the pioneer missionaries of the Churches of Christ

⁵ Olbricht traces the roots of Christ-centered missions to the Harding tradition. Olbricht, *Hearing God's Voice*.

whose work bore a striking resemblance to both Harding and Armstrong's teaching and personal lifestyle.

This research project also rests upon the collective historical picture provided by published missionary reports in periodicals that circulated among the Churches of Christ. These include *The Gospel Advocate*, edited initially by David Lipscomb; *The Way*, edited by James A. Harding; *The Christian Leader and The Way* edited by F. L. Rowe in cooperation with Harding; *Word and Work*, edited by premillennialist R. H. Boll and containing regular contributions by Don Carlos Janes; and a variety of papers printed by J. M. McCaleb and William J. Bishop. Unpublished regional mission histories, theses, biographies, primary archival materials such as letters and, the Bible school catalogues all contributed to the research of this dissertation.⁶

⁶ Though many biographies and some regional histories have been written, a comprehensive history of missions of the Churches of Christ is yet to be published. This dissertation is an initial step in that direction. Worthy of mention in this regard is Elkins, *Church-Sponsored Missions*; Henderson, "Historical Review." Thirty oral histories were taken in the early phases of this research that confirm the trajectory of Harding's missionary influence. This data will be included in subsequent work on the history of missions of the Churches of Christ. Harding University's Center for World Missions also possesses a "Living History of Missions" archive of four volumes containing forty-nine interviews with missionaries, three quarters of which are conversations with those who either graduated from or taught at Harding College.