

[H-Diplo Article Review 1114- "With All Your Heart"](#)

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Sejoo Kim. "'With All Your Heart': American Missionaries and the State in Mission Fields." *Diplomatic History* 45:1 (January 2021): 162-185.

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The relationship between church and state has had diverse forms throughout history. The American state and religion have both influenced and been influenced by missionary movements. American missionaries were the main contact points between mission fields and the US government well before the cold war era.^[1] Thus, it is meaningful to trace missionary activities in a mission field and their impact on the US.

In this article, Sejoo Kim traces American missionaries' activities both in colonial and post-colonial Korea, particularly during the 1930-the 1940s. As the title suggests, American missionaries' work and their relationship with the governments in mission fields like Korea contributed to the modus vivendi of their mission as well as their relationship with the state during the Cold War. Focusing on the relationship between Christian missions and the state, this article argues that American missionaries were not only heavily influenced by the colonial government in Korea, but that they also brought the thorny experiences of the mission field back to the US. Thus, the mission demanded close cooperation with the US government during the Cold War so that the US government would not turn a deaf ear to the missionaries' desire for more active participation in the mission field.

Providing ample information on the American missionaries' experiences in colonial and post-colonial Korea, Kim's essay contains three main features. First, it introduces a wide range of existing literature on colonial Shinto shrine debates over whether mission schools participated in Shinto shrine worship with the support of primary and secondary sources. The coverage is so comprehensive that a historian in this field can learn about current research trends on Shinto shrine issues in colonial Korea.^[2] Second, while Kim deals with colonial and post-colonial mission experiences in Korea, he endeavors to bring the Korean case to the wider experience of American missions elsewhere. In this area, Kim introduces many primary sources including the missionaries' personal documents. Third, Kim connects the Korean case to the broad theme of church and state, not just in Korea but also in the US in terms of the Cold War. The Shinto shrine ceremony seems to be an

isolated case, but Kim argues that American missionaries sensed the weak position of the mission and later demanded strong state support of mission enterprises outside the US.

There are also points to be questioned. Though Kim's article is based upon a wide range of primary and secondary sources, it does not deal with some sources on the heated debates on Shintoism among missionaries in colonial Korea. Thus, the pro and con arguments are not fully introduced. For example, the mission's pro-Shinto shrine ceremony argument had at least two aspects. One is that even without religious elements, the mission was also able to serve the Shinto ceremony. The other is that regardless of whether the ceremony contained religious elements, continuously managing educational institutions was important in order to preserve Christian influence in Korea.^[3]

Second, although Kim works to connect the Korean case to the wider trend of American missionaries in other countries, the suggested relationship is not concisely argued because the references to other mission cases is sporadic, lacking a firm connection to the Korean case. Even within the Japanese Empire, there were different types of missionaries, such as George S. McCune (1872-1941) and August Karl Reischauer (1879-1971). McCune fundamentally opposed Shinto shrine worship, while Reischauer permitted the ceremony as a patriotic Japanese event. Also, there were a variety of denominations and other national missions from Canada, the UK, etc. Thus, how the Korean experience was related to the American experience in post-colonial Korea involves consideration of more diverse missions, if not of all the Christian denominations.

Third, when Kim argues that the Korean case of Shinto shrine worship encouraged American missionaries to realize that a strong state would better support religious liberty, he argues that American missionaries' experience was directly related to the Cold War church and state issue. The Cold War experience is unique, in that the US missionaries in the post-colonial context explicitly or implicitly supported the US government's new anti-Communist stance. However, it is possible to argue that the missionaries' experience in colonial Korea aided the entire US government's entanglement with the Christian mission during the Cold War. As the sub-title, shows, Kim argues that multiple mission fields existed. However, the paper mostly deals with the Korean case through American missionaries' works. Consequently, in order to argue that American missionaries' understanding of the colonial state had a great impact upon the overall US missions or upon the relationship between state and church during the Cold War, one would have to bridge several gaps between the Korean and other US cases. For example, there were a few fundamentalists who did not support any close relationship between state and religion in the US, as well as some Christians who argued that the US was a holy land and that in order to protect said holy land, the US government had to be more aggressive towards atheistic Communism.^[4] Thus, this paper would be strengthened by the inclusion of more evidence demonstrating that several mission fields actually supported the strong US state role.

In the introduction, Kim argues that "the political experience the missionaries brought home helped Americans deal with the growing role of the state in their own society" (165). As mentioned, the article states that the colonial experience of the American missionaries in Korea "helped Americans deal with the growing role of the state" in the US. The argument that the American experience in colonial Korea in the realm of state and religion contributed to the growing US state in post-war society is an unorthodox one, and more sources are required to support this.

In section 1 “The Shrine Headache in the Permit Nation,” Kim introduces some features of the colonial period using the phrase “permit nation,” which captured the essence of colonial government and appeared with the Shinto shrine issue in the mid-1930s. Kim cites only one source here to support the idea that Korea “gained the new name” (165).^[5] Although the term is a good metaphor for the colonial government, it is not clear whether the name was widely circulated among American missionaries. The state did substantially permit colonial Korean society to play a certain role, which validates Kim’s argument that the church and state did coexist and that missionaries respected “the authority and capability of the state” (167).

Also, when Kim discusses the existing literatures on the change of tide in the colonial government’s enforcement of Shinto over all the educational institutions in the late 1930s, he does not indicate why the colonial government changed its course in such a dramatic way. Although he works to connect these Shinto debates to the US version of the fundamentalist-modernist clash in the 1920s (170), the Korean case was unique because most missionaries believed that Shinto shrine issues were analogous to the ancestor worship debates, which Catholics did not support by the 1930s. Thus, to propose that the Korean Shinto shrine issue was analogous to the US theological debates necessitates a deeper study of their similarities and differences. There was, for instance, a complete absence of theological modernists in Korea even among those that support Shinto shrine worship, like Horace H. Underwood (1890-1951), who still adhered to the fundamental Christian doctrines.^[6] Thus the analogy should contain a certain caveat.

In section 2, “Surveillance and Ambivalence,” Kim discusses Japanese enforcement of Shinto shrine worship upon all colonial mission schools and the missions’ various responses to the new colonial government’s policy, arguing “if patriotism embodied in State Shinto itself was not evil, then the problem lay in its excess and, more importantly, its digression from the right path.” (175). For Kim, the diversion from the right path was related to the Japanese military clique who produced a “totalitarian state” (page citation) in the 1930s. Yet, some pro-Shinto missionaries like Underwood, who acknowledged the religious element in Shinto worship, believed that even worship attendees were permitted able to go to the shrine for patriotic purposes unless they participated in the religious segment.^[7] Thus, missionaries’ responses to Shinto worship extended beyond whether tight state control over society was imposed in Korea, though ultimately it was related to a “military or totalitarian state.” Kim correctly argues that “missionaries readied themselves for Uncle Sam’s call to offer their service” (176) to preserve an Anglo-American notion of the church-state symbiosis.

In the third section, “Onward Christian Soldiers,” Kim argues that “mission leaders, while deploring the outbreak of the war, saw in the global crisis ample opportunities for the promotion of Christian internationalism”(177) by cooperating with the US government. Kim introduces several instances of this close cooperation. Henry D. Appenzeller (1889-1953) worked in the Military Intelligence Division during World War II and in the Korean Chapter of Church World Service after the war, and Arthur B. Bunce (1901-1953) headed the Korean Office of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA). Thus Kim further argues that “the church-state symbiosis was not just restored but reinforced” (180). James Gordon Holdcroft’s (1878-1972) case was very striking because although he criticized Japanese spiritual mobilization in the 1930s, Holdcroft embraced “military fundamentalist” views akin to “Christian theocracy” or “Christian nationalism” in the US (182), in which he supported

fundamentalist Carl McIntire's (1906-2002) campaign for a constitutional amendment to enforce school prayers in the US during the 1960s.

In this section, since the examples offered as evidence in fact comprised different types of "missionaries," they do not fully support the argument that colonial mission contributed to the changed relationship of state and church in the US. Henry D. Appenzeller was a Methodist missionary who ran a middle school in Korea during the colonial period and supported the US information service under the US Army Military Government in Korea (1945-48).^[8] He passed away in 1953, so we do not know what kind of work he might have engaged in had he lived longer. Arthur C. Bunce was a YMCA worker in colonial Korea for six years from the late 1920s to the early 1930s, and his position did not involve typical missionary work, but was rather that of a social worker. Bunce also passed away in 1953 while he worked for the Economic Coordination Agency (ECA), so we do not know what attitudes he held towards church and state.^[9] James Gordon Holdcroft's position was quite unique because he took a strong stance against Shinto shrine worship in the 1930s and left for the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions (IBPFM), probably in connection with the lukewarm Presbyterian attitude towards Shinto issues. Holdcroft is perhaps the most suitable case for Kim's thesis, in that while US missions criticized Japanese intervention in civil life, American missionaries were transformed into strong supporters of "Christian internationalism" during the Cold War. Even so, Holdcroft's inclinations make him part of a minority among former Presbyterian missionaries.

Overall, this paper provides the sharp insight that American missionaries were culturally influenced by their mission fields, while they, in turn, influenced the mission fields. Although the supporting evidence is somewhat untenable for a larger argument on US policy as a whole, the paper suggests that the Cold War was just one dimension of missionaries' work in a mission field but two dimensions vis-à-vis the people in the mission field. With its introduction to current research on American missions and the Cold War US culture, this paper is highly valuable in that very few such studies have been conducted with a focus on Korea.

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Notes

^[1] See John King Fairbank ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[2] ___ Recent publications are Dae Young Ryu, "Missionaries and Imperial Cult: Politics of the Shinto Shrine Rites Controversy in Colonial Korea," *Diplomatic History* 40/4 (2016): 606-634; and Jong-Chol An, *Miguk sŏn'gyosa wa Hanmi kwang'ye, 1931-1948: kyoyuk ch'ölsu, chŏnsi hyŏmnyŏk, kŭrigo Mi kunjŏng* [American Missionaries and Korean-American Relations, 1931-1948: withdrawal from education mission, wartime cooperation, and the American military administration] (Seoul: Institute for Korean Church History, 2010).

[3] ___ Jong-Chol An, "No Distinction between Sacred and Secular: Horace H. Underwood and Korean-American Relations, 1934-1948," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 23:2 (December 2010): 225-246.

[4] ___ For example, see Moshe Davis et al., "America and the Holy Land: A Colloquium," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62:2 (September 1972): 3-62.

[5] ___ Emma Sarepta Yule, "The Permit Nation," *The Outlook* 128 (August 10, 1921): 576-577.

[6] ___ James Ernest Fisher, *Pioneer of Modern Korea* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1977), 265.

[7] ___ Jong-Chol An, "No Distinction between Sacred and Secular," 230-233.

[8] ___ James Ernest Fisher, *Pioneer of Modern Korea*, 45.

[9] ___ Regarding Bunce' activities, see James I. Matray, "Bunce and Jacobs: U.S. Occupation Advisors in Korea," in Bonnie B.C. Oh ed., *Korea Under the American Military Government 1945-1948* (Westport: Praeger Publishers 2002): 61-78