



A photograph taken at the 100th anniversary of the First Methodist Episcopal (now First United Methodist) Church of Lancaster, showing the sanctuary in which Henry Appenzeller and his family worshipped. Though it has since been renovated, visitors from Korea regularly visit the sanctuary today, and will often linger reverently within “the Appenzeller church.”

# *A Century After: The Legacy of the Appenzellers, Pioneer Missionaries to Korea*

Kent E. Kroehler

*Editor's note: Rev. Kent Kroehler is a clergy member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference, ordained in 1966, and has served as Senior Pastor of Lancaster's First United Methodist Church since 1986. The original version of this article was delivered as a lecture before the Phi Beta Clergy Club in Uwchlan Township, Pennsylvania, on February 5, 2004.*

Three amazing people stepped from a sampan to the rocky western shore of Korea on Easter Sunday, April 5, 1885. They were Horace Underwood, pioneer Presbyterian missionary, and Henry and Ella Appenzeller, pioneer Methodist missionaries. Presbyterians and Methodists argue happily about who stepped first on the rocks. Popular opinion notes that Underwood and Henry Appenzeller were gentlemen and, in that age, it was proper to let Ella go first. Actually, Appenzeller's first biographer and friend, William Eliot Griffis, wrote more authoritatively: "Like Mary Chilton, on the Plymouth boulder in 1620, Mrs. Appenzeller was the first to step on the Korean rocks."<sup>1</sup> Griffis records Henry's prayer, presumably recorded in his own diary: "May him whom this day burst the bars of the tomb bring light and liberty to Korea."<sup>2</sup>

The story of these pioneering missionaries caught my attention because of their membership and marriage in First Methodist Episcopal Church, Lancaster. Because of the traditions of this congregation that have kept alive the memory of Henry and Ella, and – even more so – because of the frequent visitors each year from Korea who want to see "the Appenzeller Church," my interest has been at first piqued, then awed by the lasting contribution of these extraordinarily ordinary people to the faith, culture, and politics of Korea.

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<sup>1</sup>William Eliot Griffis, *A Modern Pioneer in Korea: The Life Story of Henry G. Appenzeller*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1912), 98.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

Henry Gerhard Appenzeller was born February 6, 1858 in Souderton, Pennsylvania. His mother was from Swiss Mennonite stock and his father was a fourth generation Pennsylvania Dutchman. Their German Reformed faith was the norm for the area, and for their Protestant ancestors who fled from the German Palatinate following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685. His mother was a huge influence on him, gathering him with his two brothers on Sunday afternoons to read from the German Bible. She spoke very little English and Henry spoke only "Pennsylvania German" until he was twelve. Henry also learned German and used it all his life, even with Germans in Korea. He learned self-discipline as well, and kept a daily diary from about age twelve until his death. Later, he kept a separate diary regarding his attempts to woo Ella Dodge as his wife. After she had three children and was sick in bed, he tied a white ribbon around it and presented that journal to her as a gift of encouragement.

Henry learned the Heidelberg Catechism with its emphasis on personal faith. Through it, he learned the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a heady piety. Griffis writes that Appenzeller's father did not hold infant baptism in a welcoming light. Henry and his brothers were baptized when they made their own affirmation of faith. Henry was confirmed right after his baptism at home, in his parents' church, Emmanuel Reformed, near Souderton.

Henry was eighteen when he began preparation for college at what was then West Chester Normal School. His heady religion was transformed by a conversion experience that got to his heart. The Presbyterian Church was hosting a set of special services with an evangelist. Henry had a deeply personal spiritual experience on October 6, 1876, and he celebrated that date each year as his spiritual birthday. He initiated a prayer group that provided impetus for the YMCA in West Chester. He taught school for a year in Delaware County and for another year in Elizabethtown.

At his father's urging, he entered Franklin and Marshall College, a school deeply rooted in the Reformed Church. During his college years, he fell in with a bunch of Methodists and began visiting area churches. His diary shows that during a time of spiritual restlessness, he was attracted to the class meetings at First Methodist Episcopal Church. On April 16, 1879, he records that he was studying the minutes of the Philadelphia Conference and was impressed. The following Sunday, he joined First Church. He reflected: "This step is taken only after prayer and meditation for some time. Since my conversion on October 1 [sic], 1876, I have been among the Methodists most of the time and feel more at home than I did in the Reformed Church and I feel it to be my duty to join the ME Church, and what I

did today I did with an eye single to the glory of God.”<sup>3</sup> He noted the text of the sermon that Sunday: “Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

As an aside, Appenzeller was a character in a missionary novel written by James H. Gale, his colleague in Korea. Gale penned a conversation between the Appenzeller character (named “Foster”) and a Scottish friend, McKecheren. The Foster character informed his Scottish friend that he had been converted in a Presbyterian Church in West Chester. “There noo,” said McKecheren, “I kenned there was something about you; there’s



Henry G. Appenzeller

naething in the world like Calvinism to pit fibre intil a man’s banes, but whit way did ye backslide into Methodism?”

“Well,” said Foster, “I felt so glad and happy that I just had to shout Hallelujah, and you know they would never tolerate such goings on in a Presbyterian church, so I just had to backslide and be a shouting Methodist.”<sup>4</sup>

Daniel Davies, a more recent Appenzeller biographer, writes that “Appenzeller’s rebirth experience and commitment to revivalism placed him directly in the current of German Methodism represented by Philip Otterbein’s United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Association. If Appenzeller’s birth had occurred a generation earlier, when German would have remained his native language, he might have joined with one of those German-speaking Methodist movements rather than allying himself with the English-speaking Methodist Episcopal Church.”<sup>5</sup>

After Henry joined First Church, he became an assistant pastor while still in college. He served the East Mission of First Church, what later became Broad Street Methodist and now is known as Christ United Methodist Church. At the same time, he first had his sense of call to foreign

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<sup>3</sup>Griffis, 71.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Daniel M. Davies, “Henry G. Appenzeller: Pioneer Missionary and Reformer in Korea,” *Methodist History* (30:4, July 1992), 197.

missions. He heard a sermon on missions and gave \$2.50 to the cause. A week later, he told his diary, "The ambition of my life is to spend it entirely in the service of the Lord."<sup>6</sup>

During his college years, he met Ella Dodge, from Berlin, New York. She was a devout Christian and a descendant of William Dodge, who emigrated from Chester, England, to Salem, Massachusetts, in 1629. As she fell in love with Henry, she became an eager partner in a common call to cross the sea and serve Christ. Until she joined First Church, she had been reared as a Baptist.

After graduating from Franklin and Marshall College in 1882, Henry entered Drew Theological Seminary to prepare for pastoral ministry. Drew was an exciting place for Henry's keen mind and spirit. He loved his studies with Drew's great teachers. He invested himself in music and preaching. He took student appointments in several New Jersey towns. At Montville, he was blessed with the wise mentoring and support of a couple named "Father and Mother Hixon." When his good friend followed him at Montville, he "found nothing at loose ends, but everything in good order and well organized."<sup>7</sup> In his senior year, he preached at Green Village, near Madison, and his fellow students jokingly referred to that church as the "Fifth Avenue of Drew Seminary appointments."<sup>8</sup>

Part of the excitement at Drew came from the rapidly expanding global missionary movement of the late 19th century. Henry caught the spirit and applied to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church for service in Japan. The Board had no openings there, but decided in late 1884 to open a new field in Korea. Those were heady days for foreign missions, and the Methodist Board had no real plan for initiating a new mission in Korea. Korea was "the Hermit Nation" and had just signed a treaty with the US that encouraged friendship and commerce but lacked a religious freedom clause. Appenzeller's correspondence with the Board of Foreign Missions reveals that "On the law books, any Korean converting to Christianity would be executed."<sup>9</sup>

One influential member of the Board of Foreign Missions was concerned that Henry "possessed neither the diplomatic skills nor the maturity necessary to build Methodist congregations in Korea. But the Board, noting Appenzeller's experience as an educator... and his training for Methodist ministry at Drew Theological Seminary, on December 20, 1884,

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<sup>6</sup>Griffis, 81.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 78.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Davies, 198.

finally decided to send him and his bride, Ella, to Korea. They would join previously selected missionary doctor, William B. Scranton.”<sup>10</sup>

Henry and Ella were married three days earlier at First Church. They went home to Souderton for Christmas, and it was there that the offer of Korea came. They had a month to get their act together and complete all their farewells. Henry preached a farewell sermon at the Souderton Reformed Church, a congregation which was not quite so awakened to global missions. Griffis opined, “Unable to peer into the future, mother, father, and relatives wondered that a man, with such brilliant talents and flattering prospects at home, should go out among barbarians, *to bury himself*.”<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, Henry’s mother had a recurring fear that Henry would be drowned. She saw a vision that would come true, though not until after her own death.

On January 14, 1885, Drew Seminary held a farewell worship service. The bulk of the student body followed them to the train station, sensing that Henry was to be their representative in Korea. A month earlier, Bishop Fowler, in New York City, had ordained Dr. Scranton. The ordination process worked differently in those days. When Henry and Ella arrived in San Francisco two weeks later, Bishop Fowler ordained Henry as an Elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Henry wanted to join the Philadelphia Conference, but his records were inadvertently sent to the then Newark Conference.

The day after his ordination, Henry and Ella got on the good ship *Arabic* with Scranton and his wife and daughter and mother, and set out across the Pacific. They arrived in Yokohama, Japan, twenty-three days later. Henry later described their voyage in a letter to a friend at Drew:

The blue sky (except when we had a storm) above us and from two to four miles of water under us; the ocean calm and quiet as a mill-pond in fair weather, rose to terrible grandeur and awful sublimity in a gale; wonders of spouting whales, flying fish, and schools of porpoises; the phosphorescence at night, ubiquitous gulls and the fun of burying a day, February 6 [1885], under the 180th meridian formed our chief sources of pleasure. But these would gladly be exchanged for a small patch of ground.<sup>12</sup>

The whole party stayed in Yokohama until March 22. They had been following the news from Korea and knew that Seoul was a place of

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Griffis, 98.

<sup>12</sup>Quoted in Davies, 199.

fires, riot, and battle. China and Japan were at odds over Korea. The China-backed conservative party conflicted with the Japan-backed progressive party, and both exterior nations were tempted to fight a war on Korean soil. Even the king of Korea was threatened, and the missionaries knew that their safety rested heavily on his treaty with the United States. News came that there was a lull in the fighting, and Henry and Ella boarded the Nagoya Naru for Inchon, then called Chemulpo. They left the Scrantons in Japan temporarily. At Kobe, they were joined by Horace Underwood, from the Presbyterian Mission. Underwood did not know the Appenzellers and had been told "that the American Consul, Mr. Appenzeller, was on board on his way to Korea." Henry wrote in his diary "What next?"<sup>13</sup>

They changed ships, stayed in Nagasaki for four days, and left for Korea. They arrived first in the southeast at Pusan, but Appenzeller always saw their landing at Chemulpo on Easter April 5, 1885, as the official beginning of the Methodist mission in Korea. At the Chemulpo harbor, they were encouraged by the sight of the USS Ossipee, a US man-of-war. They went ashore by a sampan, taking an hour to cover the several miles. They went that night to a Japanese hotel. Henry was surprised that they were quite comfortable with English style service. Ella wrote to her father that she found the accommodations less pleasant.<sup>14</sup>

The very next day, they were visited by the captain of the Ossipee who told them that missionaries in Seoul might be outside the protection of the US flag. He asked them to leave Korea and refused to promise protection.

As it turns out, Ella was now two months' pregnant. Either Henry's ordination or their first few days on the blue Pacific had provided the romantic setting. Henry was ready and willing to face the danger but he and Ella decided she should not be exposed to it. Three days later, they sailed back to Japan, leaving Underwood to face the political unrest.

They stayed a little more than two months in Japan, waiting for news that it would be safe to go again to Korea. In late June, they arrived again in Chemulpo, finding very rugged servants' quarters for \$25 a month. By the end of July, they had journeyed north to Seoul and found permanent housing.

Their first year was occupied by fixing up their house, learning Korean (a frustrating experience because there were no Korean/English dictionaries), and welcoming the first Caucasian baby born in Korea, Alice Rebecca Appenzeller. The joys of parenthood were outweighed in some ways by the first impressions and experiences in Seoul. In late September,

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<sup>13</sup>Davies, 199.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 201.



The Appenzeller family. Left to right: Ida, Alice, Henry, Henry D., Ella and Mary.

Henry looked back on their early months in a letter home. About the role of women, he wrote: “The most remote and best protected rooms in the house are occupied by women. Here these poor souls eke out a miserable existence practically imprisoned for life.” About their home, he wrote: “The interior of our houses when we took possession of them was simply horrible. There is no adjective sufficiently strong to express the filth and stench. We are told that they are 200 to 300 years old and one of our ladies is uncharitable enough to insist that they had not been washed or cleaned in the meantime.”

About the men, he wrote: “That the Korean is lazy there can be no doubt. He hates work and despises those who labor.” About their reception by the Koreans, he wrote: “I said above the great mass of people care nothing for foreign ways. This is true, but it must not be inferred from this that they are hostile to us; far from it. On the contrary, we have received nothing but uniform kindness.”

For another view, First Church archives are fortunate to have copies of two letters from the US Legate in Seoul to his parents and family in the US. In 1884, the first US legate to Korea, Lucius H. Foote, resigned. His repeated requests for teachers, advisors, and military instructors in a newly-opened Korea went unheeded by the US State Department. In an

economizing move, the Congress also reduced his rank. A US Navy historical document on Korea describes this transition:

...custody of the legation fell to a young naval officer, Ensign George Foulk, who became deeply concerned with the future of Korea and for three years struggled to uphold both the integrity of that country and the dignity of the United States. By the time of his recall Foulk had gained the highest favor, and the desire of the Korean King to name him personal adviser in foreign affairs was frustrated only by heavy pressure from the Chinese government.<sup>15</sup>

George C. Foulk wrote on August 18, 1885:

A missionary and his wife named Appenzeller, have come here, with some others. They all but put themselves under my wing as they call it and came to pay their respects. I was surprised that Mrs. Appenzeller comes from Lancaster, Pa., and is regular Pennsylvania Deutcher, with the long familiar drawl and queer accent. She has a tremendous mouth, but otherwise is quite pretty. Mr. A. is from Buck's [sic] County. All these missionaries are the greenest, most useless people in a way, I have ever seen, though very respectable and nice in many ways. I must say I am disappointed in missionary work. Heretofore I have wrangled always against talk against them. Now I have much to do with missionaries and I find that the amount of miserable, petty jealousy among them is very great. I help a Presbyterian, at once the Methodists get glum and object. There have been times when they did not speak to each other, women and men alike. All their growls they bring here to settle. They have unlimited money apparently and are extravagant; every missionary in Seoul, nine of them now, has a more elegant household outfit than any minister present. Their lives are easy and luxurious. This may be all right, but it don't gee with the stories and tears and begging one hears at home to draw the small boy's pennies out of him. All that I've seen here is sure certain evidence and I am miserable disgusted and sorry that Christianity is thus represented. The Japanese Minister Yoshida's definition of missionary work is exact: "Missionary work is an institution to provide a respectable, easy livelihood and a vocation to a number of men and women not over gifted with brains, or knowledge of religion."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>James S. Field, Jr., *History of the United States Naval Operations: Korea*, (Washington, DC: US Navy Historical Center, 2001), chp. 2.

<sup>16</sup>Letter of August 18, 1885.

Only a month later, just before Appenzeller wrote home with his first full report, Foulk mailed his next letter home. This time he had some evaluative comments about American mission boards.

My chief trouble, and not a little one it is too, is on account of the confounded Missionaries who have come to Seoul. Every man of the three of them has brought to this miserable unsettled country a young wife who is about to give birth to a child. Two have small babies, unweaned, and the mothers have no milk. With stupendous stupidity, the mission boards of America have sent such ignoramuses to this country, when they say, "We thought we could get wet nurses easily, as in Japan." Oh, fools, double fools, are the jackasses who sent such people here. They can do no good, can speak no oriental language, are gauky, ignorant of the world at large, and have come saddled down with babies to a land where any night people might rise and end them and their babies! Had the mission board sent missionaries to Japan or China, who have had some experience with oriental people, it would have been better. As it is, these are new, from America, know nothing about the small gossip of their homes. They are helpless and every day I am besought to help, to help get servants, talk to their servants, settle quarrels, and now to get wet nurses. I got a nurse, had to one of my men (bannermen) to trot out his wife. It is almost impossible to hire women for any purpose in foreigners' homes, as the Koreans think such association with foreigners is injurious, in their superstition.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of their obviously shaky beginnings, it took these pioneers only a few months to begin their mission in earnest. They had a bold vision to convert a nation, to establish values of independence and democracy and modernization for Korea, and to win people to Jesus Christ in the style of an evangelical Protestant faith. Davies says about Appenzeller's mission:

He believed God ordained the United States to spread Protestantism and Protestant American culture throughout the world to prepare for Christ's return and the Kingdom of God on the earth. He harbored the belief that the Anglo-Saxon culture, including the English language, represented the pinnacle of religious culture... Appenzeller practiced cultural imperialism but not political imperialism. He rejected the notion of Manifest Destiny, which called for the use of military force to spread the American empire or to advance Protest-

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<sup>17</sup>Letter of September 15, 1885.

antism... He worked to make Korea Protestant through persuasion, not through government coercion nor by military conquest. The Kingdom of God could only be built with spiritual weapons.<sup>18</sup>

Appenzeller's first decade or so in Korea was filled with political turmoil and personal demands. The Chinese and Japanese were in active conflict, with threats from Russia who wanted a port on the east side of the Korean peninsula. The fledgling independence movement was supported by Henry through the publishing house he created. In September 1900, he was ordered home for medical reasons. His weight had dropped from 180 to 131 pounds. A few years later, Scranton described him this way: "The Appenzeller some of us knew twenty years ago and the Appenzeller who left our midst recently were indeed one man in natural qualities and persistence of characteristics, but in general appearance quite dissimilar... He was... bent in form, worn in features and an old man, though only in middle life."<sup>19</sup>

He and his family took a steamer home by the westward route. They saw Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Aden and Suez. They spent time in Italy's cities, went on to Berne for some genealogical work, then through Heidelberg and Cologne, Belgium and Paris. Griffis writes, "It was with full emotion that A. stood in Wesley's pulpit and also saw the tombs, of Clarke, the commentator; Watson, author of the *Institutes*, and of the Wesleys, both the poet and the church-builder... A.'s diary is full of ejaculatory prayers, such as 'Spirit of our Fathers descend mightily upon us!'"<sup>20</sup>

Henry and Ella and their four children arrived in New York in late December. Some of his old friends from Drew hardly recognized him. "It was evident to me," said his classmate, Robert Watts, "that the Korean climate was too severe for him. I urged him to take work in his Conference, the Philadelphia; but he replied 'I have given myself to Korea and a few years more or less do not so much matter. I am more needed there than at home. I shall probably go to heaven from the Hermit Kingdom. It is no less near there than in America.'"<sup>21</sup>

Henry stayed only nine months on this second furlough when he felt the call to return to Korea. He and Ella decided that he should do so alone, leaving her and the four children in Lancaster. In an interesting coincidence, he went by way of Buffalo to see the Pan American Exposition there. He was there on September 4, 1901, the same day as his biographer, William Eliot Griffis, though they did not know each other. Two days later,

<sup>18</sup>Davies, 434-435.

<sup>19</sup>Quoted in Griffis, 253.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 258.

President and Mrs. William McKinley visited the Exposition, and McKinley (whom Appenzeller highly admired) was shot by an assassin.

In June 1902, Appenzeller was accompanying Bishop David Hastings Moore and others to a village church. The Japanese were constructing a railroad that crossed the road to the village several times. Henry and his party chose to walk on the railroad bed and were mistaken by the Japanese workers for Russians. They stopped the jinrikisha (a type of rickshaw) that carried the Bishop. The Bishop used his walking stick to rap the knuckles of the Japanese man, thinking that he would react like the Chinese and defer to him. Instead, the Japanese worker was enraged, yelled for his friends, and a nasty fight ensued. Both Appenzeller and his colleague were struck by rocks or sticks and suffered torn skin and profuse bleeding from facial wounds.

The story is interesting in its own right, but it had a larger consequence. Appenzeller was due to sail to the south for a meeting of the Bible translation committee. Because he required time to nurse his wounds, he sailed a week later on the Kumagawa. At about ten o'clock, as Appenzeller and others prepared for bed, the Kumagawa was rammed by a sister ship, the Kisogawa. Others escaped but Appenzeller was lost as the ship sank swiftly. Some reports indicated he spent his last minutes trying to save a Korean woman and a little girl. Griffis writes: "The news was cabled to New York, but the officers of the Mission Board waited in hope, during several days, before announcing the reality to Appenzeller's family, trusting that some word of his reaching shore might be received, but none came."<sup>22</sup> At age 44, Henry Gerhard Appenzeller fulfilled his own prophecy: "I shall probably go to heaven from the Hermit Kingdom. It is no less near there than in America." His death, however, did not end his influence. Let me examine briefly four aspects of his legacy that endure.

## 1. ESTABLISHING INSTITUTIONS TO SERVE THE MISSION

Henry and Ella were committed to the missional use of institutions, especially those related to education. Henry established a school (for boys) in Seoul in February 1887. The Korean king named it PaiChai Hakdang, meaning "Hall for Rearing Useful Men" and also translated "Cultivating Human Timber." There are more than 50,000 PaiChai alumni now. Also in 1887, Henry established the Chong Dong, or First Methodist Church, in Seoul. In 1890, he created the Trilingual Press at PaiChai. "This Korean, Chinese, and English press became the home of important publications, including the *Korean Christian Advocate*, the first Korean-language Christian

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<sup>22</sup>Griffis, 279.

newspaper, and the *Independent*, which became the focus of PaiChai's commitment to Korean independence."<sup>23</sup> Henry made a lasting impact on Korea by assisting with the translation of the Bible into Korean. The Board of Bible Translation was established in 1886 as a cooperative venture between Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries. He also opened a bookstore in 1894.

Ella worked with Mrs. Scranton to establish Ewha Hakdang (now Ewha Women's University) for Girls in 1886 with one student. The school was also given its name, "pear blossom," by the King of Korea, likening its graduates to the pear blossoms that were so abundant nearby. Ewha Women's University is now the largest women's university in the world with 21,000 students in 14 colleges and 13 graduate schools. It has produced 140,000 graduates.

In 1984, the Korean Church began celebrating its centennial. Edward Poitras, a career United Methodist missionary to Korea and then professor of church history at Seoul Methodist Seminary, wrote in *New World Outlook*: "There are many ironies in our Methodist history... In Korea one irony stands out in this centennial year of the granting of permission to enter and begin Protestant mission activity. Henry Appenzeller's first work, PaiChai school for young men, which not only opened Korean education to the world's tradition of learning, but also contributed so greatly to the Korean Independence Movement, has just this year abandoned its original site. And at that historic place, instead of the Methodists maintaining some memorial to a hundred years of continuity in witness, the Korean National Police have moved in with part of their administration. One cannot help calculating what Henry Appenzeller might say."<sup>24</sup>

## 2. TRANSFORMING THE ROLE OF WOMEN

It would be easy to underestimate the influence of Alice, her mother Ella, and numerous other women missionaries on the culture of Korea, particularly with regard to the role of women. Lula E. Frey preceded Alice as president at Ewha. In 1910, she wrote in a magazine article:

For years the Korean woman has been content in her ignorance, for she has not known there was any higher plane for her, but now she has begun to climb, she will not be satisfied till she reaches the

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<sup>23</sup>Edward W. Poitras, "The Legacy of Henry G. Appenzeller," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (October 1994), 177.

<sup>24</sup>Edward W. Poitras, "Redeeming the Time: The Life and Witness of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller," in *New World Outlook* (September 1984), 15.

top and stands beside her brother... If it is true that the fate of nations rests upon women, surely time and money cannot be better expended than in giving her a full share of educational advantages... In Seoul alone there are twenty schools for girls where less than five years ago there were none aside from mission schools. Of course this change in public sentiment is due to the change of mind on the part of fathers, brothers, and husbands. This change seems no less marvelous to those who recall the attitude taken only a few years ago. Formerly, the only way by which we could get pupils for our schools was to take advantage of poverty, and promise to feed and clothe the girls. Today our schools might easily be filled by those who can pay...

We missionaries are largely responsible for the start the Korean woman has taken on the upward climb. May it not be both a privilege and a duty to help her? Shall we let those only provide for her need, who will give her education without Christian teaching? ...Though educators, as missionaries, education is not our objective, and none of us would be satisfied with less than the moulding of Christian character; without Christianity there are dangers which western learning may bring and what we desire is that they should long for, and acquire knowledge not to improve their position alone, but to benefit others, having the power to aid and influence them for good.<sup>25</sup>

Alice reiterated this view 22 years later in a prayer request made to the women of the Southern Methodist church. She asked them to pray:

First, that the College may continue to grow in pioneering for Korean women's education, the gateway by which women enter into the paths of 'abundant life.'

Second, that every course and every activity taught and carried on in the College may uphold and enhance the kingdom of righteousness in Korea.

Third, that the College may discover and develop outstanding leaders whose lives and activities may count in the rebuilding of human society.

Fourth, that every student, every teacher and every worker in the College may conscientiously strive to live more like Jesus every day.

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<sup>25</sup>Quoted in Rosemary Skinner Keller, ed., *Spirituality and Social Responsibility: Vocational Vision of Women in The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 198-199.

Fifth, that the new buildings may become real symbols of harmonious cooperation of the East and the West, prompted by love for humankind and zeal for the Kingdom. That every gift, however great or small in economic value, may represent the highest type of love and loyalty to the cause of women's Christian education in Korea.<sup>26</sup>

### 3. INFLUENCING NATIONAL POLITICS

Edward W. Poitras, while Professor of World Christianity at Perkins School of Theology, wrote: "Long before the emergence of an internationally recognized Korean independence movement in 1919, Appenzeller became firmly committed to Korean independence and autonomy."<sup>27</sup>

Very early on, Appenzeller felt that Japan might actually help Korea flourish, but he saw quickly the detrimental effects of Japanese control. In fact, his sense of mission was driven by the mix of Christian evangelism and American democratic values. Poitras adds: "Despite the strongly individualistic emphasis of much of Appenzeller's perspective, he had a powerful sense of social justice. The vision he had for Korean society was Western in its values and structure, yet the principles of love and justice were consistently related to biblical themes."<sup>28</sup>

The impact on Korea's political independence began with the PaiChai School and may be best illustrated by the example of one individual. Syngman Rhee was born in 1875. When he was nineteen, everything changed. Thousands of unhappy farmers were mobilized into a national uprising by a political group. The Korean government asked for China's help, and China obliged by sending 4,000 troops. Japan was waiting for something like this to happen, and they responded militarily. The Sino-Japanese War was on. Rhee was intellectually ready to consider something from the West.

His friend Shin, a student at PaiChai School, invited Rhee to join him. PaiChai now had 100 students. His mother cautioned him about this Western school because she had nurtured him in Buddhism and was suspicious. In his autobiography, Rhee later wrote about the West: "Let them change the order of heaven and earth, I shall never give up my mother's religion."<sup>29</sup> He did enter PaiChai after a long struggle and wrote about his first experience in mandatory chapel:

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<sup>26</sup>Keller, 198.

<sup>27</sup>Poitras, IBMR, 178.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 179.

<sup>29</sup>Chong-Sik Lee, *Syngman Rhee: The Prison Years of a Young Radical*, (Korea: Yongsai University Press, 2001), 9.

I chose one of the back row seats and curiously scrutinized everything in the room. A tall gentleman on the platform [Mr. Appenzeller] was speaking to the audience in Korean more or less unintelligible to me. Of course, I did not attempt to listen to him, and if I listened to anything at all, it was in order to criticize it or to argue against it. The strange thing, however, that struck me most strongly was that a man who died about nineteen hundred years ago could save my soul. "How is it possible," I said to myself, "that the people who are doing all these marvelous things, as I understand, really believe in such a foolish doctrine as this?"<sup>30</sup>



Syngman Rhee in later life

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His mentor at PaiChai became Philip Jaisohn, a teacher only eleven years older than Rhee. In 1884, Jaisohn had been involved in an attempted coup that had been stopped by the Chinese troops. He and others had escaped to Japan, but the Chinese had executed their families, wives, and children. He returned home in 1895, after the Japanese reasserted control, and was a cause celebre. In addition, he brought a wife with him, a tall, Irish woman! Jaisohn taught geography, history and political science. While the missionaries previously had avoided those subjects in the past, unsteady environment, Jaisohn had no caution. He got Rhee involved in a debating club, the debate topics turned quickly to present realities, the debates were opened to the general public, and a powerful catalyst resulted. Rhee honed his skills and offered the commencement address in 1897. All the national officials were there, except the king. It was held at Chongdong Methodist Church. Appenzeller's English paper reported on it a month later:

This embryonic valedictorian took for his subject, 'The Independence of Korea...' National independence only will offer the field needed for the training these young men are receiving, and the spirit which seemed to animate the entire occasion was that the national independence must be made a real, permanent and lasting fact.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Quoted in Chong-Sik Lee, 10.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

In the Korean-language edition, Jaihson added that “the PaiChai faculty and students sang ‘the Song of Independence’ ...and ‘National Anthem’ ...at this occasion. The English edition referred to these songs as ‘Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing’ and ‘national anthem set to the music of America.’”<sup>32</sup>

The debating society started a short-lived newspaper in six months, published by Appenzeller’s Tri-Lingual Press. Financial problems and internal problems in the debating society ensued. Rhee aligned himself with the wrong side, and he was expelled from the society two months after he had been elected president. Rhee and his friends created another newspaper and it continued until the 1910 takeover by the Japanese. Rhee became a radical activist for independence and was involved with a political movement that went awry. As a hunted man, he foolishly agreed to accompany Dr. Harry Sherman, an American doctor, to translate for one of his patients. Rhee was arrested and wound up in prison. He spent five years and seven months there. It was a hell-hole. Rhee wrote later: “For seven months I wore around my neck the cangue, a wooden collar weighing about 20 pounds, and to add to my agony, I sat with my feet locked in the stocks and both hands handcuffed.”<sup>33</sup>

It was there, that Rhee finally had the Christian conversion he had resisted all his adult life. Someone smuggled a small New Testament to him, and Rhee had someone watch for the guards while he read it.

In the dark prison cell some of the prisoners were waiting with anguish the hour of death while some others were being carried to the gallows and while all others were suffering endlessly without any ray of hope, as if Satan himself were on the throne forever. In such hours and under such circumstances, each of us felt he was suffering for the salvation of others, and the story of injustice and false accusation suffered by Jesus seemed so real and true that each one of us experienced a strangely warm feeling in our hearts. This gave us a strong conviction that even if this may not be the truth, Christianity is the only religion which can help change the hearts of our people of that period who were so selfish and individualistic that they care nothing for the welfare of their fellow men.<sup>34</sup>

Another biographer writes: “His conversion to Christianity... was much more profound than a mere intellectual agreement with its principles.

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<sup>32</sup>Chong-Sik Lee, 10.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 47

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 49.

The figure of Jesus became for him a living inspiration. A feeling of the infinite compassion of Christ entered into his soul and gave him a positive and unquestioning assurance that he, too, was under the care of God and that his life, however roughly it was ordered, was a part of God's plan for humanity."<sup>35</sup>

Inside the prison, Rhee honed his political opinions. Outside, Underwood and Appenzeller and others petitioned for his release. They got his life sentence commuted to 10 years and finally to release.

Rhee, now converted as a Christian, went to the US and received his Ph.D. He returned to Korea – now under Chinese rule – and plunged deeper into the movement for independence, clashing with the powers that be. He left in 1912, and seven years later was elected president of a Korean Provisional Government, spending the best years of his life in exile. After World War II, he returned home, now divided into Soviet and US zones of occupation. He was 73 when he was elected president of the newly founded Republic of Korea. Unfortunately, the early substantial influence of Appenzeller and the PaiChai school failed him. His government was full of corrupt people and his regime grew increasingly autocratic. In April of 1960, student demonstrations forced his resignation.

#### 4. REARING MISSIONARY CHILDREN

Henry and Ella made a lasting mark on Korea and the Methodist Church there by rearing their four children with a love for global mission and Korea in particular. Alice Rebecca Appenzeller was born November 5, 1885, as the first Caucasian born in Korea. At her death, she was the longest-lived native Caucasian. She was tutored in Korea by her mother until 1900, came home to Lancaster and graduated from the Shippen School (now Lancaster Country Day School) in 1905, and earned her BA from Wellesley College in 1909. She earned an MA from Teachers College at Columbia University and did other studies at Harvard and Columbia.

Alice taught at the Shippen School until 1914 and then was commissioned a missionary of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Church and assigned to Ewha University. From 1917 until 1922, she served as vice-president at Ewha and then served as president of Ewha for 17 years. In 1939, she turned over the presidency of Ewha to Dr. Helen Kim. This transfer of power to the first Korean woman president was thoughtful and strategic. Appenzeller said to Dr. Kim: "Some are born great,

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<sup>35</sup>Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth* (New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1962), 62.



Alice Appenzeller, at her desk at Ewha University in the 1930s

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some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. You are in the third category. You will take the presidency whether you like it or not.”<sup>36</sup>

Alice’s colleague, Elisabeth M. Lee, in a Memorial Address at First Church following Alice’s death said:

Alice returned to that land of Morning Calm in the turbulent years of foreign aggression [Japanese occupation]. As a teacher at Ewha, she led girls in democratic Christian ways which in turn made them martyrs in the cause of independence. Through thick and thin, always with a contagious poise and confidence in the ultimate outcome, she helped young Koreans to believe in God and in themselves, to prepare themselves for that good day in the future when they should be free to lead their own country.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Keller, 197.

<sup>37</sup>Memorial Address, April 23, 1950.

In 1940, the Japanese government expelled all missionaries from Korea. Alice served as professor and Dean of Women at Scarritt College. Then in 1943, she went to Hawaii to serve as pastor, since she had been ordained in the Korean Methodist Church. She returned to Korea in 1946 and served until her death in 1950 as Honorary President at Ewha. She was stricken with a cerebral hemorrhage as she spoke at 11:00 AM chapel. She died later that day. Her funeral gave witness to the depth of her influence in Korea and the affection with which she was held. Elizabeth Lee wrote:

Her passing became the occasion of genuine national mourning... One hundred and three organizations and institutions representing educational, religious, social and cultural interests appointed delegates on a committee to plan and carry through the funeral service in Chung Dong Church. It was the church which her father had organized, where Alice was baptized as the first white child born in Korea, and in which she was ordained to the ministry. The President of Korea [Syngman Rhee] attended and spoke as did also the American ambassador... From the West Gate [of Seoul] to the cemetery [about 2 miles] the people were out early that morning, voluntarily cleaning up the streets and filling in the holes in the broken road... Carrying water from distant wells, either on their heads or backs, women and girls kept watering the streets until the procession was over.<sup>38</sup>

Miss Alice was an amazing woman.

Henry Dodge Appenzeller was the second child of Henry and Ella. He was born in Seoul, then returned with his parents on their furlough in 1900. He graduated from Princeton in 1912 and then from Drew Theological Seminary. He was disqualified for military service in 1917 and then decided to return to the land of his birth that same year. He married in 1918.

Henry served as principal of the PaiChai Middle School for twenty years until the 1940 evacuation and was in Hawaii on December 7, 1941. He served as an Army Intelligence officer during World War II, and then returned to Korea for the State Department for a short time. He served churches in Honolulu and Los Angeles and then returned again to Korea in 1951 on loan from the Methodist Division on Foreign Missions to direct the relief effort supported by Church World Service. He died in New York City in 1953 after losing a battle with pernicious anemia.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

Ida Hannah and Mary Appenzeller were the third and fourth children of Henry and Ella. Ida was born in Korea and Mary in America. I have no information about them.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Appenzellers were heroic figures, crossing the Pacific to a closed culture as pioneers, a pattern more typical of that time than we realize. Founding institutions that have such far-reaching influence, and some of which endure with amazing longevity, are features of global mission in many places.

The Appenzellers were also flawed human beings, demonstrating good judgment and bad. By today's standards, they carried the admixture of their own national character and culture with their mission theology. That cultural characteristic probably infects every missionary and, though raised in their awareness, can never be altogether avoided. In the end, we may stand in admiration and awe of the contributions of the Appenzellers to the transformation of Korea.

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