

Asia; Africa; Money

We are continuing for just a little bit in this session on topic 14, Christianity in Asia. We began talking about this in the previous lesson. Last time we focused on that main point to drive home the fact that Christianity in Asia has a long varied, and rich history. We used Sam Moffett's Volume 1 of his *History of Christianity in Asia*. We noted that when you look at the imperial world in Asia as of 2000 years ago, you really have four first-century empires: the Greco-Roman Empire, the Iranian or Persian Empire, the Chinese, and then the Indian.

Those of us who were raised and educated in the United States will have a strong emphasis in our education, almost an exclusive emphasis, on the heritage of the Greco-Roman Empire. That means we will be deficient, most of us, in our familiarities with and instincts of affiliation with these other world empires present in Asia 2000 years ago. But we need to dislodge ourselves a little bit from that confinement to be able to identify more fully with the Christian church around the world, including the Christian church of Asia. So we have to think about what was happening in the Iranian and Persian empires, the Chinese Empire, and the Indian Empire. We looked at the reality of an early first-century presence and then a continued presence of Christianity in India. Briefly we considered the development of the Asian church in general and how there was a break between the East and West with Nestorius and that controversy.

Moffett's next section is from Alopen to the Crusades. Alopen was not the very first Christian to reach China, but he is the first documented missionary to reach China. There is an historical monument that has been discovered and examined that is dated 635 AD, that is, the early seventh century. Now, we normally do not think of Christianity having a presence in China that early. We probably realize that Jesuits have been in China in modern times. And then certainly in the nineteenth century, Christianity came into Asia. But Syrian and Persian missionaries had already reached China, and Christianity flourished in many ways in the seventh century and onward. The fortunes went up and down in China over the ensuing centuries.

Now, one impending struggle that Christianity in China and general parts of Asia encountered was the spread of Islam. I have here a few maps that show the early growth of Islam from the 630s. This was basically simultaneous with Alopen and others reaching China. Islam began with Muhammad and then spread across North Africa and started spreading into Asia. This takes us up to about 750 AD. When you look at the next several centuries, you will see Islam spreading downward into Africa and down the east coast into various parts of Asia, including throughout the old Persian Empire and spreading into China and downward into India. Looking at 1400 up into 1900, you see a further spread of Islam and consolidation of its presence in Africa and throughout various parts of Asia. That will prove to make the political standing of the Christian faith often times tenuous, to say the least. And so the Christian faith in pockets of Asia, including in China, was affected greatly by the way that Islam grew. We noted earlier that the growth of Islam into Europe, both into Iberia and then into Eastern Europe also had an effect on Christianity in Europe over the centuries. Again, these are just very general maps encompassing centuries of growth and development.

Now, this next section, then, is from Genghis Khan to Tamerlane. And Moffett notes that with Genghis Khan in the 1200s you have the spread of the Mongol empire coming down through China into Asia. The Mongol Empire stretched over into Eastern Europe and became a worldwide empire in many respects. That would create over the next two or three centuries a Pax Mongolica, similar to what you saw in the Pax Romana in the early centuries of the Christian faith around the Mediterranean world. And

so here there was a period of relative peace. A few different rulers in different areas throughout Asia became Christian or at least sympathetic to Christianity. During this period Franciscan missionaries entered China for the first time. This means a reentry of Christianity in the 1100s and 1200s. And you get to see another growth of Christianity in parts of China with the Franciscans. But then Tamerlane, who was a fervent Islamic Mongolian leader, sought to do away with any other religious faiths throughout much of Asia where he was in control. That spelled a further eclipse of Christianity from much of Asia. Thus when you get to about 1500, Christianity in Asia basically looks like what it looked in its beginnings: a pocket in Syria, a few pockets in India, and hardly much of anything in between. In your readings of Moffett, you read some of his explorations and discussions as to why that occurred. These include a tenuous political position and theological controversies. One main reason he cites is that Christianity was never fully at home in certain areas that remain, for example, Syrian, and was therefore somewhat foreign in many places.

So you have Christianity with a long 1400- or 1500-year history in many or at least some parts of Asia. But at the end of that time, Christianity was thwarted in its growth, going back to where it was almost in the very beginning. Then there was the modern mission movement. I like to see the modern mission movement stretching over the past 500 years. In the literature it is usually described as encompassing the last 200 years, starting with William Carey in 1792. I think there are advantages to seeing it as a continuous movement basically over the past 500 years. During this time, Christianity came out of Europe and then later North America. We know that Christianity came out of Europe. Under Portuguese control, missionaries came around Africa to parts of Asia. Then, under Spanish control, missionaries came to the Americas. They then spread across America to the Philippines. It is really in places like Japan where Spanish missionaries and traders and Portuguese (or at least those under Portuguese protection) missionaries and traders met. And then soon English and Dutch traders went around the world. In the eighteenth century, Moravian missionaries and other Pietists went out, Lutheran missionaries going to India, for example. And then the nineteenth century is when the British and Germans and French Catholics and North Americans started to go to all other parts of the world.

So that is a very clear movement of the modern mission movement, including a reentrance of the Christian faith into parts of Asia. And again, in phase one of the Gospel's reentry into Asia, Portugal led the way, and Spain in a limited way if you think about the Philippines. And then in phase two in the nineteenth century, Russia played a strong and important role in the Gospel's spread eastward into Asia. During this time Russian missionaries saw tremendous success in Eastern Asia, in Japan, and in what we now call Alaska. Those are like the trophies of Russian expansion in the nineteenth century. And then later we have various Protestant and Scandinavian missionaries, along with the others whom we just mentioned. Much of what we see in various parts of Asia today in terms of Christianity is a direct result of that modern mission movement.

Many Asian Christian writers have pointed out that while modern Christianity has come into Asia from the West, the Christian faith has Asian roots already. There is this ongoing wrestling throughout most all parts of Asia at making Christianity indigenous, making it feel at home. In the attempt to make it feel at home, they will go back 2000 years and see that the Christian faith had Asian roots already. The Christian faith truly is for the whole world. Christianity is not a Western religion. Now, often times they say that to compatriots within their own settings who will argue against Christianity, because it is a foreign and mainly Western religion. Therefore Christians often times have to point out the Asian roots of Christianity and that Christianity is made for all sorts of people—that is what God is about.

In his discussions on Gospel practice, Ramachandra points toward how in many parts of Asia the Christian church is in the position today of a social-political minority. Many Christian communities are

in situations of deep poverty, like in the Philippines, for example. You can go almost anywhere, and it is through communities of Christian people, living out the Christian faith in justice and mercy and longing for peace, that the community goes forward. Christians are not in a position of affluence in most cases and do not have great social-economic positions. Korea would be one possible exception. There, about a third of the population is Christian. Thus you have numbers of influential political and business leaders who are Christian. The Christians there, despite bumps in the economic road over the past couple of years, have had the economic strength to be able to send out Korean missionaries. This economic power has coupled with the zeal of the church in Korea to send missionaries out all over the world.

Should we include the Portuguese and Spanish missionaries as part of the spread of the Christian faith, because their colonization involved depression of indigenous peoples? Did they really bring Christianity? Well, to speak briefly to that, because we will talk more about it later, the Portuguese did not colonize. There was a difference between what the Portuguese did and what the Spanish did. Brazil was different from what the Portuguese did in Africa and Asia. The Portuguese did not have the resources to colonize, and they did not have the will to colonize. And the peoples whom they met both in Africa and in Asia were not able to be colonized. Thus they were only able to establish small trading posts along the coast, generally speaking. The Spanish obviously did bring a certain ferocity to their conquering of peoples in the Americas and in what came to be known as the Philippines. Under the Spanish there was a great deal of oppression of the indigenous peoples. Certainly many under the influence of Portuguese and Spanish political rule and missionaries were baptized into the Roman Catholic Church. If we step back and look at the wider Christian picture, under the Spanish and Portuguese at least in terms of religious studies classification, people entered into the Christian church. How much was genuine Christian faith we do not know. I definitely believe that in many, many cases, there was genuine Christian faith that was developed and birthed and grown. I believe this for a number of reasons. How as Protestants we evaluate all that can get tricky. But when you couple that with what happened in the nineteenth century and the definite colonization that occurred in Africa and Asia primarily by Protestant countries, you have to ask yourself the question that many people have asked, "With that colonization, how much of that was Christian expansion, civilization expansion, political-economical expansion?" And undoubtedly there is an entanglement there as well.

What about the comment that many churches in Asia are in danger of syncretizing the Christian faith? Syncretism is always a possible reality wherever the Christian faith exists. Undoubtedly in parts of Asia, as in other parts of the world, syncretism occurs. I would call us back to that particularization versus universalization of the Christian faith tension that will always be present. Where the universal characters of the Christian faith are forced to combat the particularization of the Christian faith, there you will see syncretism occurring. I doubt that it would occur more in Asia than in other parts of the world. I see no less of a particularization-syncretism tendency in the Christian faith in this part of the world. In Africa you see the same sort of mixing. Again, how we understand what actually is happening becomes an important question. I do not mean to dispel the reality of syncretism or do away with the need to critique syncretism. But it is as someone has said, "No one ever calls themselves syncretistic."

Okay, let us go to topic 15, Africa. The first question is why would we look at Africa? When you look at the growth of the Christian church worldwide and where Christians now are throughout the world, African Christians make up a sizable percentage of the worldwide Christian church. Many people have said that, statistically speaking, especially sub-Saharan Africa is perhaps the most Christian area in the world. There is a big difference between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. And then within sub-Saharan Africa, there are differences, of course. Generally speaking, it would be West Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa. I will remind you of a couple of particular countries in Africa, and you can look at a number of other ones: in Kenya and Nigeria, the Christian affiliation of the population is

phenomenal. More than half the population of Nigeria is Christian. I have been in various parts of sub-Saharan Africa three different times now. To be there on a Sunday is just amazing; people are just streaming to go to worship services. It is rather incredible. Even if you are not a Christian in Nigeria, on Sunday you do not do anything. This just points toward the widespread Christian influence in Nigeria. On Sundays, even if you are not Christian, you feel that influence from the wide impact of the Christian faith.

I want to point you to the diagram of the Christian church growing serially. I think we have mentioned this here before. In a serial fashion, the Christian faith was in the early years focused on the Eastern Mediterranean and then spread throughout the Mediterranean and Roman Empire. Again, do not let these maps with their focus on what was happening in the Western world fool you into thinking that nothing was happening with Christianity in Asia and Africa. We talked about Asia already, and we will talk about Africa further in a minute. But you see the Christian faith spreading in the East, especially with the spread of Islam moving out of North Africa or being forced out largely (though not totally). This is similar to the phenomenon in the Eastern Mediterranean with Christianity spreading into Central, Western, and northern Europe over the centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire. Then in the past 500 years we see the Gospel spreading to various parts of the world, especially in places like sub-Saharan Africa. There is a dark space of absence of significant Protestant activity before 1910. But we can look at where Protestants have spread and Protestant advances since 1910. After 1966, you can see the extensive Protestant activity throughout Central and South America, various parts of Asia, much of Central Asia, Europe, and Central Africa. Do you know of something significant that happened in 1910 in terms of world mission history? I think we have mentioned it. There was a big conference. It was in Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Mission Conference of 1910. That is often pointed to as a watershed in modern mission history, for any number of reasons.

The percentage of non-Caucasians in Christianity has increased markedly over the years, especially since the middle of the nineteenth century. Now non-Caucasians, especially Africans, make up the highest percentage of Christian peoples in the world. Thus it makes sense demographically to look at Africa as a main component of seeking to understand Christianity. There are many studies that are going on about Africa—about African Christianity and about Africa in general. There is an electronic network that is developing called “Introduction to the Dictionary of African Christian Biography.” It seeks to record, before earlier generations leave us, the lives and events of the early part of the twentieth century in Africa. Here the lives of pivotal figures are documented, and the testimonies of eyewitnesses of critical events are recorded. This is one work that is being coordinated by Jonathan Bonk. He is the director of the Overseas Ministry Study Center in New Haven Connecticut. That is the group that puts out the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. Bonk is heading up this particular project. He may have passed it off to others by now, but he is certainly the one who got it going. This site includes all sorts of articles on just religious studies in general in Africa. It is likely that you are familiar with all the various studies in the universities in the United States on African religions. Often they are called ATRs, African Traditional Religions. In the past couple of generations, some African Christian theologians have brought the issue of what to do about African traditional religions to the forefront of much of the Christian church. They have presented us with the need to study them academically and spiritually, and to explore what they mean for Christianity in Africa. The issues addressed by this project are very prominent and widespread.

Early African Christianity really grew in the horn of Africa and an early Christian kingdom developed in Axum, near present-day Ethiopia. That became an early “Christian kingdom,” if you will. The memory of this lingers in European consciences. And when many of the Portuguese traders were going around Africa, they were often in search for the Christian kingdom in Africa. It is important to remember that

not only does African Christianity have a long history, but Africa in general has a long history. Many of the anthropological and geological studies (which as Christian people who believe in the Bible, we have to sift through the dating methods they used), many point to human beings actually arising in Africa. Where exactly God created Adam and Eve and put the Garden of Eden, where people developed from early on, is difficult for us to say. But certainly from the biblical records, a lengthy, long history of Egypt is recorded, as well as long early histories in northern Africa following Carthage, etc. The kingdom of Axum or Ethiopia became Christian in around 300 AD. Ghana in West Africa was an ancient kingdom under a dynasty by the name that the former Gold Coast chose for the name of present-day Ghana. Ghana was named when Gold Coast became the first independent country in modern Africa in 1957. That set in motion, of course, independence movements throughout the Nigerian region. Thus Africa has lengthy histories, lengthy kingdoms. It is not as though when Europeans started showing up 500 years ago they found only jungles and monkeys. These, as you know, can be the images that many of us have inherited.

Now I will go through an outline fairly quickly. It is an outline from an article by Andrew Walls in the *Journal of African Christian Thought*. This article is from its first issue, June of 1998. From your readings you will note that it is important to remember that African Christianity traces its overall history back to the very beginning of the Christian faith. It is not as though Christianity in Africa began 200 years ago. It goes back to the very beginning. That is important not just simply for historical accuracy, but it is important also in the consciousness of many African Christians. This is a brief chart of some of the major African Indigenous Churches (AICs) that have arisen in the early twentieth century and late nineteenth century. The first one listed here started in South Africa in 1892 and took on the name of "Ethiopian Church." One reason they would have done that even though they are in South Africa is because that communicates a long-standing ancient African Christian identity. This is because of the beginning of Christianity with the Ethiopian eunuch. In your readings of Lamin Sanneh, he points out that there is the awareness that Jesus was taken to Egypt in Africa when he was an infant. There is the strong awareness in the place of Ethiopia of the direct contact between peoples in Africa and biblical Israel that goes back to Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Because of that there are many Christian groups that want to go back, in a direct connection, 3000 years with their history. Just naming their church the Ethiopian Church somewhere in Africa other than Ethiopia shows that strong connection. This can be a way AICs distance themselves from those coming in from outside Africa. Thus it is important for many reasons to recognize that early history.

Christianity does continue in Africa, in Northeast Africa, spreading down somewhat into Africa over the centuries. But it is undeniable that with the entry of Roman Catholic missionaries under the protection of Portugal, you see fresh and, in many cases, new encounters with the Christian faith in places in Africa. I have a chart listing where some of the early Protestant and early prominent Roman Catholic missionaries went in various places around the world. Here you can see an Italian missionary going to Ethiopia in the nineteenth century. This does not really mention what was happening in the 1500s and 1600s, because the main Portuguese ministers or priests who went out then would have simply been chaplains to Portuguese military posts who set up there in various areas along the coast. There was at that time no sense of needing to minister to and reach out to Africans, to see them become Christians. As you see, the slave cartels developed along the coast of West Africa, and you do not see any sort of ministry to or desire to reach out to African Christians.

One exception to that would have been a young African himself, named Capitein. As slave ships pulled away from the coast at various points in West Africa, the different European ships would intersect each other and steal slaves or goods. Capitein was taken away from a Portuguese slave ship and eventually ended up in the Netherlands. This young man was taken under the wing of a minister there and educated

theologically. He was the first African to receive a theological degree in Europe. He was born in 1707 and died at the young age of 30. He returned to Africa, to the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) and settled there near Elmina Castle. There he sought to have some outreach to Africans. He even wanted to take an African wife for himself. But the consistory back in the Netherlands said, "You cannot do that. A civilized person like you who has been educated cannot marry a heathen woman like that." So they sent in a Dutch girl so he could be properly married. He got married and then died at the young age of 30.

But that is one exception to the rule that there was nearly no ministry among Africans by Europeans up through the eighteenth century. But once you enter the nineteenth century with the further encroachment of European powers into Africa, various Roman Catholic missionaries begin to come. This happened as Italy moved into Ethiopia, as France moved into North Africa, and so forth. Then, of course, intimately connected with the coming of the Europeans, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade developed. Now, this was not the first slave trade in the world, and it was not the first slave trade in Africa. There were slaves being taken across the Sahara Desert by Muslim traders. There were slaves going back and forth between Asia and Africa. But this one has particularly horrific proportions with estimations of 12 million or so Africans who were sold over the course of a few centuries. They were taken away from Africa over to Europe and the Americas at first, and then more and more to the Americas to work the sugar plantations and cotton crops. That, of course, decimated many areas of Africa and had horrific long-term economic implications. How the West is to deal with that today is an ongoing topic of discussion.

In the midst of that, it is interesting to note that after they reached the Americas and at other points different African people did become Christians in the midst of horrific conditions. The first Protestant church begun in Africa was actually begun by African-Americans. That story goes back to the Revolutionary War in the North American colonies when the British promised freedom to certain African-American slaves for fighting on the side of the British against the rebelling colonists. They were promised freedom. They were told that once the rebellion was put down, they would have their own land and be able to have a certain measure of citizenship. Well, after the unthinkable happened and the rebellion succeeded, where were these pro-British, African-American, freed slaves supposed to go? They were not really welcome in the colonies, so they went up to Canada, which was still British territory then, and settled in Nova Scotia. There Christian communities were established. However, the weather was not terribly agreeable to many of them, and that was one motivation for them to move. But there was also a missionary motivation that inspired a huge community of thousands of Christians to go from Nova Scotia to Sierra Leone in West Africa. Sierra Leone had been established by the British as a relocation point for all slaves who were freed. This happened right in the middle of the British efforts to end the slave trade as a whole. And it is those Nova Scotian, African-American Christians who began the first Protestant church in sub-Saharan Africa in 1792. This story adds to the beauty of the overall story of the Christian church.

You see strongly connected to the Protestant missionary movement in Africa in the late 1700s and early 1800s a strong alignment with the liberationist movement to do away with the slave trade. The horror of the slave trade helped establish moral fervor and the crusade to have it abolished throughout all countries. That eventually happened in the early 1800s. During this time, they were trying to come up with ideas of what could be put in the place of the slave trade economically. The slave trade had been entrenched so long that if you just simply did away with it, what would happen to local African economies? This is when certain ideas that Buxton and others came up with began to circulate. These included ideas like bringing in commerce and civilization somehow to take the place of the slave trade.

It is easy to discredit some of those ideas, but you have to remember the context that people were in, trying to solve the problem of how to build up economies in local settings.

When you move into the colonial phase, you have to remember that, technically speaking, the colonial era in Africa began relatively late. It was not until the 1880s that European powers began to assume colonial power. Most European nations were not looking for that. They were looking to develop economies and trade. King Leopold II of Belgium, however, really pushed the envelope in Central Africa with his desire to acquire a monopoly on the rubber trade. This competition forced other European nations, Britain and France in particular, to push ahead with their economic interests. That is how the whole colonial phase began. That is when Europeans met in Europe and sat around a mahogany table to draw out these political boundaries of African colonies. In many cases, these boundaries made no allowance for where tribes lived and how they were divided up. The problems resulting from this exist with us still today. When you think in macro historical terms, the colonial era from the 1880s until the 1950s or 1960s was relatively short. But much missionary activity took place during this era under colonial rule.

At least as far as the British missionaries were concerned, often times the stiffest opposition they faced in reaching out to new people came from colonial authorities. British colonial authorities wanted to maintain order and peace. Missionaries wanted to reach out into new territories, including, when you look at a place like Nigeria, Muslim areas. But the colonial authorities who had to operate on a very small budget anyway were concerned about unrest developing. They just wanted to maintain order and keep the commercial interest satisfied. Therefore they passed laws and regulations preventing the missionaries from going into the Muslim areas. That is just a side note. Now, all the complex dynamics of the important place that education and schools played for peoples throughout Africa being educated in basically either English or France (with some Portuguese) resulted in Anglophone Africa and Francophone Africa. The issues from this are still with us today.

With decolonization, the church in Africa and individual churches in Africa faced whole new issues about what to do with the modern nation states that developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. There was a certain cultural renaissance at this time, a kind of celebrating things that were African. Having thrown off the colonial yoke, they now sought to reaffirm who they were as Africans, including as African Christians. *Things Fall Apart* is the title of a well-known book that talks about the struggles that many African countries undergo with political leaders who come into control who are not ready to do so. They, by right of holding financial and military resources, basically just assume power. This book is by Chinua Achebe, a world-renowned Nigerian author. *Things Fall Apart* was perhaps his first widely known novel. He has written others, such as *No Longer at Ease*. I would encourage you to read him. When I have asked my African friends, "What can I read to understand modern Africa and its problems and issues?" He has been the author that many people have pointed me to. He notes the breakdown of many traditional values, the encroachment of modern economies and urbanization, coupled with military havoc and the painful developments of democratic rule and all the struggles within the world economy that African economies find themselves encountering. These are ongoing issues, as you know. Certainly within the Cold War it only compounded problems, particularly since the United States and the Soviet Union just competed for loyalties. By food granting and military and economic aid, the military leaders acquired the harbor.

Another dynamic in considering Africa in general and African Christianity in particular is that often they have traditional, longstanding Asian relations as well as strong Western relations. This is especially true when you look at East Africa and the problems that developed in Uganda in the 1970s when Idi Amin started throwing out all foreigners. Most of the foreigners he threw out were Asians. He threw out many

Asians and Indians in particular, Indians whom the British had brought in beginning in the late nineteenth century to oversee the construction of railroads and the development of banks. They did this because Africans were not thought to be able to do that sort of skilled labor. And so the Asians, whom the British had had awhile to train and who were thought to be smarter than Africans, were brought in by the British. And even to this day, and especially in Idi Amin's day in the 1970s, it was the Asians who had top economic positions in society. So Idi Amin just threw them out. Since then they have come back in to Uganda. There are similar dynamics in Kenya. And now people like Joseph Motoki, an African Kenyan, are trying to urge the African Kenyan churches to realize their missionary calling to reach out to Asians in Kenya. Up to this point, most African Kenyans, who have a strong Christian presence, have kind of had the posture, "Well, the Asians have their own religion." But now that issue is being pushed.

By the long-standing trade routes, Islam was brought into South Africa. The Dutch who brought Malaysian slaves to southern Africa were Muslims. That is how Islam made its initial entrance into South Africa. There are all sorts of interesting side lights to the ongoing story of Christianity's role in Africa. Along a certain border running through Central Africa, perhaps preeminently exhibited by Nigeria, Christians and Muslims are coexisting—sometimes not peaceably, but normally peaceably and constructively. In Ghana, where I have been probably more than anywhere else in Africa, there is a peaceable coexistence, and there are equal contributions to schools and universities. What wonderful lessons they can teach the rest of the world! Those are ones we need to consider. The vibrancy of Christianity in Africa is certainly something to recognize as well as the long history of Christianity in Africa. Despite some of the images that many of us have inherited of Africa, we need to recognize and feel their vibrancy and creativity. The huge revivals that have taken place in Africa and the diversity within African Christianity is just incredible. We need to tap into that and recognize that African Christianity in many ways is a world leader. And African Christianity is just a fact of the Christian church in the world today.

Much, if not most, of the cross-cultural missionary outreach in modern Africa by Christians, especially during the twentieth century, has been done by African Christians. White missionaries have played an essential role, and we have seen heroic efforts by European and North American missionaries. But the reality is that Europeans could not go inland. They would have gotten sick and died, or they would have been killed. There is story after story after story of missions who send missionaries out, and they come back in a box shortly after, if they come back at all. Who is it that has the fervor and the capability to carry out cross-cultural missionary activity in inland Africa? It is the African Christians. They are the ones who forge ahead and move inland. Thus much of the cross-cultural activity in inland Africa is being done by African Christians.

As a current example in Ghana (and our brothers from Africa could tell us about many others in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and elsewhere), many people from the north, which has either traditional religion or Muslim areas, are coming to the south, which is more developed, looking for work. They come to the south, living in shanty town areas in the capital city of Accra, and they become Christians there. Now the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana, which is the strongest in the south, has cross-cultural missionary outreach. They are equipping them to go along the trade routes and take the Gospel back to the north. Largely it is a yam trade. Yams are grown up north and then brought down south to be sold. Then the trucks go back up north to pick up more yams and bring them down. So Christians just follow that trade route and take the Gospel back to the north. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana has one or two people come into their church or ministering up north, so they are seeking to facilitate and train. They also have to deal with language learning, because there are totally different languages in the north and south. That is a dynamic cross-cultural missionary outreach that is going on, and that sort

of thing is going on all over the place in Africa. So much of the cross-cultural missionary enterprise today is occurring in that direction.

What impact in Africa is the AIDS epidemic having on the church, and what impact is the church having on the epidemic? My knowledge of that is pretty fragmented. I know instances of people who are giving real attention to that from the Christian side. My understanding is that it is having its impact in the church perhaps not as much as in the wider society because of stricter morals among Christians. But I do not have enough specific information to answer the question very intelligently. Speaking from Ethiopia, in the beginning stages the church has maybe seen the AIDS epidemic as something that should not be touched. They see it as bad and want to keep their distance. Often the church has not known how to reach out to society. But non-governmental organizations and governmental organizations have realized that because of stricter sexual morals in the church they need to work with the church and through the church as a long-term solution. The church is beginning to awaken to its responsibility.

Are the Christians in Africa reaching out to different tribal groups that are found in Africa? The blanket answer to that is yes. The example I mentioned from Ghana is an example of that. Wycliffe is at work in cooperation with African Christians, and African Christians are coming into Wycliffe as well to help. You have to look at the tremendous diversity within such a huge area. One more name in African Christianity that you need to know is Samuel Ajayi Crowther. He grew up in this region, was captured from a slave ship, and was relocated to Sierra Leone. He actually spearheaded missionary efforts in the late nineteenth century from Sierra Leone into the Niger region. He became the first African Anglican Bishop in the 1800s. Samuel Crowther is a name that any modern history of the Christian faith will have included as a very prominent figure.

Let us move on to our next topic: money. The readings you have done in Jonathan Bonk's book, *Missions and Money*, cannot help but provoke some sort of reaction. These comments are from the forward to the book, written by an African (remember the diverse meaning between that term, similar to the term "American"): "The book [Dr. Bonk's book, *Missions and Money*] challenges us not to resignation, but, through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit, to struggle to remove a dangerous contradiction from Western missionary endeavors. Dr. Bonk encourages us to adopt the incarnational model of mission, rejecting the easy power and prestige of affluence by an act of deliberate self-emptying." Jonathan Bonk grew up in Ethiopia as the son of Mennonite missionaries. He is currently the director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut. This center is right down the street from Yale Divinity School. It is a very important study center, and they put out the very influential journal, the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. In his book, Bonk points out the difference between having stuff and needing stuff or thinking that you need stuff: the attitude versus the actual reality of having things.

Quickly, let us go through what he says in this chapter. He talks about the nineteenth- and twentieth-century "womb" as he calls it, the development of lifestyles of affluence. This is the cultural and historical environment that many of us have as our backgrounds. This lifestyle is fed by the Eurocentric belief in progress and an unending development and increase in wealth. He also talks about the attitude of the "white man's duty," as it came to be called, the sense of Christian duty regarding non-Christian people, to lift them up, to go to other countries and take everything we have to offer as Westerners. Then he talks about changes in post-World War II Europe and the changes in the United States after the Vietnam War. The wars in general brought Western confidence to a crashing halt in many ways. You have the decline of the Christian faith in Europe. And from the 1960s onward, you have realizations of major changes in North American society. The global realities of the Cold War and the change of the Cold War were the global realities of a worldwide economy and the interconnectedness of the economy

to where people have to be aware of the rest of the worldwide economy. Some of the most internationally aware people whom I have ever met are Midwestern American farmers, because it really matters to them what is happening in Brazil, for example. He also mentions the perceptions that people have had of European life and of United States life and questions that have arisen. He notes that for many Americans who go and live somewhere else for a significant block of time, when they come back to the United States, they feel very much like strangers in their own land.

Then Bonk raises some questions about consumerism, affluence, and mission-sending church relations. He raises a question, "Is it really true, economically speaking, that perpetual growth is possible?" He talks about life patterns that people have. And then he makes an interesting point about the mutual self-justification that goes on between North American missionaries and their supporting churches. Supporting churches want to take good care of their missionaries. The image of the missionaries getting the used tea bags and the old clothes is an old joke now. This is true within the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) circles and Mission to the World (MTW) circles in particular. An MTW missionary is supported at the average rate of a PCA pastor. And having been an MTW missionary for 15 years myself, I would say it is a fairly good package. You will not get rich, but it is a fairly comfortable package with benefits, money for your child's education, insurance, retirement, your salary, etc. And as one of my former colleagues pointed out to me when he left MTW to go pursue something else, "You do not realize what a good package it is until you try to match it with something else." The PCA wants to take care of its missionaries. These people are important, we care for them, and we want to show we love them. But Bonks says if there are people who ought to be able to come back to the United States and be prophetic about the affluent lifestyle here, it ought to be the missionaries. But how is the missionary who is supported at a fairly comfortable level going to do that? You are just going to choke yourself if you do that. And therefore the missionaries do not speak out against the affluent lifestyle, and there is this mutual assuring of each other that it is all right that goes on between supporting churches and the missionaries. That is Bonk's argument here: the comfortable support of missionaries helps perpetuate the problem that we encounter.

This is not the last time we will talk about this. We will look at other things Bonk says and discuss them further. It is a complicated situation, and Bonk says that missionaries who do go and live in less affluent situations are in a position to be prophetic about affluent lifestyles. So I think he would say, "Yes, missionaries ought to speak against the affluent lifestyles that people in America currently live in."

Here is a question to think about while you are reading: how is it that Jesus Christ is the same Jesus Christ and yet to certain degrees He is understood differently by different Christian people? How can that be?