

RECONSIDERING MARY CULLER WHITE'S VISIT TO WONSAN IN 1903

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There appears to be a general consensus among Korean church historians that the actual impetus to the Pyongyang Revival in 1907 may be traced back to the Wonsan Revival in 1903.¹ Also substantial, a large number of scholars agree that a prayer meeting initiated by two women missionaries ignited the Wonsan Revival of 1903 and that the revival took shape when Robert Hardie (1865-1949), a medical missionary, made a contrite confession as he delivered his message at the prayer meeting for missionaries. Hardie later publically repented before Korean Christians at the following Sunday worship service. These events have been confirmed by Hardie's own writings and the reports of other Methodist missionaries who then witnessed the Wonsan Revival.² Supported by this data, previous studies of the Wonsan Revival gave much attention to Hardie's repentance and subsequent revival meetings around the country, but relatively little attention, if at all, to the "two women missionaries," Mary Culler White

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¹Wonsan is located far east of Pyongyang by the sea in what is now North Korea. It was known for its beautiful scenery. The 1903 revival in Wonsan, while not as well known as the Korean-led Pyongyang revival of 1907, is an important event, initiated by the missionaries themselves which led to their own spiritual awakening.

²Robert A. Hardie, "God's Touch in the Great Revival," *Korea Mission Field* X:1 (January 1914), 22.

and Louise H. McCully, who led the initial prayer meetings.³ Considering that Hardie himself made a committed leap as a missionary during those prayer meetings, it is natural and legitimate to inquire about the two women missionaries who influenced Hardie through those meetings. For this reason I was encouraged and inspired to embark on a study of Miss Mary Culler White, one of the two women who led the prayer meetings. My hope is that this type of close examination of her life as a woman missionary will expand the research data for the early Revival Movements of Korea, and moreover contribute to the study of women in Korean church history.

Biographical information in Korean on White is sparse. For example, *A Comprehensive Survey of the Missionaries in Korea between 1884 and 1984*, published by the Institute of Korean Church History in 1994,⁴ supplies brief personal information including date of birth and death, education, and the fact that she was dispatched to China by the Southern Methodist Church of U.S.A. However, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* published in 1995 does not include any of this information—no mention of any dates, of any activities or of her whereabouts in China, except for the fact that she was a Southern

³Nak Joon Paik, in *Korean Church History* speaks of the Wonsan Revival as the origin of the Pyongyang Revival but makes no mention of women missionaries. Kyung Bae Min mentions White in his work although there is a question in content as it will be discussed later in the main text. He ascribes the outset of the Wonsan Revival to Hardie's repentance during the prayer meetings held by Swedish missionary Franson along with "Miss M.C. White, a Southern Methodist missionary to China," which later grew as a joint meeting with Presbyterians and Baptists [*The Korean History of Christianity*, new ed. (Seoul: Yonsei Univ. Press, 1998), 266]. *The History of the Christianity in Korea, Volume 1* published in 1991 by the Institute for Korean Church History (Seoul: Christian Library Assoc., p. 268), Yong Kyu Park's *Pyongyang Great Revival Movement* (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 2000, p. 41; 100th anniversary revised ed., 2007, p. 43), and Young Jae Kim's *Korean Church History* (Seoul: Jireh Books, 2004, p. 122) all state the connection between woman missionary White and the Wonsan Revival. These records contain important differences in contents, however, and the main text will deal with this issue. On the other hand, In Soo Kim's *The History of Korean Church* (Seoul: Presbyterian Univ. Press, 1998, p. 244), while designating Wonsan Revival as the origin of Pyongyang Revival, presents that the former started from the joint prayer meeting of Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists, led by a visiting missionary, Franson, with no mention of women missionaries.

⁴Seung Tae Kim and Hye Jin Park, ed., *A Comprehensive Survey of the Missionaries in Korea between 1884 and 1984*, vol. 18 (Seoul: Korean Church History Research Center, 1994), 522.

Methodist missionary to China and that she led prayer meetings at Wonsan in 1903.⁵

In learning more about White herself and the nature of her visit to Wonsan, the Methodist Library of Drew University in New Jersey, U.S.A., was extremely helpful. According to the records found there, White may have been a considerably “renowned” missionary contrary to how she was introduced in some Korean church history books. Briefly summarized, she was stationed in China for forty-three years and was forced to return to her home country due to the communization of China. Even after her return, however, she was actively involved in local church ministry, and introduced the ministry of her fellow missionaries and Chinese Christians through her writings, thus promoting mission to her church and denomination until her death.

The present article seeks to answer two main questions along with subsidiary ones which were discovered during the process of surveying and comparing the records on White. It is hoped that such a study would add accuracy and detail to the historical record about missionary White, but also to correct mistakes in the record. In the process this study also expects to comprehend better the lives of women missionaries dispatched from the western hemisphere in the beginning of the twentieth century. Women like White left American society where the ministerial opportunity for females had been severely limited—although advanced in comparison to that of China or Korea—and traveled halfway around the world to save lost souls. Having been able to carry out ministry more independently and effectively (in the sense that they overcame the gender stereotype) in the mission field,⁶

⁵Christian Library Association, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* (Seoul: Christian Library Association, 1995), s.v. “M.C. White.”

⁶In the early nineteenth century most western women in the mission field were male missionaries’ wives and their role was greatly limited to that of tending to their household. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, however, a large number of unmarried woman missionaries joined in on the foreign mission. Such change became possible along with the expansion of women’s rights in European and American societies in latter part of the nineteenth century, but, at the same time, the fact that the mission fields offered broader ministerial responsibilities and greater opportunities for leadership seems to have had strong appeal to the unmarried female missionaries whose ministry in their own countries had been still restricted to certain statuses and roles – although women of course were still the “second-class citizens” even in the mission fields. See Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, Hae Guen Park, trans., s.v.

these women missionaries laid a significant foundation for the life and ministry of modern women.

Comparison of Records about Missionary White and Her Visit to Wonsan in 1903

Yong Kyu Park has written three books on the subject related to the Pyongyang Revival. The first is *Pyongyang Great Revival Movement*⁷ (hereafter referred to as “the first book”), the second is *The Story of the Great Revival in Korea: Resuscitating Korean Church and People* (“the second book” hereafter), and the third is the commemorative revised edition of the first book, published on the 100th anniversary of the Pyongyang Revival (“the third book” hereafter). In his second book, he introduces the Wonsan Revival in these words:

In August 1903, a remarkable revival movement started in Wonsan. The matrix of the Great Wonsan Revival was unknown women missionaries. Although Robert A. Hardie has been widely known as the central figure of the Wonsan Revival, the ones who actually ignited the fire of prayer, which laid the foundation for this revival movement, were missionary Mary Culler White of the Southern Methodist Society and missionary Louise H. McCully of the Canadian Presbyterian Society, both of whom are not well-known to Koreans. *White was a missionary in China who moved her station to Wonsan in 1900 due to the Boxer Uprising in China*, and McCully was a woman of prayer stationed in Wonsan by the Canadian Presbyterian Church for her mission work.⁸

Park’s introduction of missionary White above generally concurs with the description in his first book, which describes the Great Pyongyang Revival with more data and content. However, an important difference may be observed. In dealing with who White was and why she was in Wonsan in 1903, Park’s first book describes her as a missionary “visiting” Korea, whereas the second book reports that she “moved her station to Wonsan in 1900 due to the Boxer Uprising in

“Biography Series of Missionaries” (Seoul: Christian Digests, 1990), part 3, chapter 9. In case of Southern Methodists, although no official ranks were given to women, the annual conference recognized Woman’s Missionary Society in 1878 and put it in charge of mission for women, thus providing a chance to grant women with more specific ministry and status.

⁷Yong Kyu Park, *Pyongyang Great Revival Movement* (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 2000; 6th reprint 2004).

⁸Yong Kyu Park, *The Story of the Great Revival in Korea: Resuscitating Korean Church and People* (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 2005), 34. Emphasis added.

China.” Without elaboration, the second book suggests that White began her mission work in China but later moved her mission to Wonsan, Korea, much like Louise McCully, the other woman missionary who in fact did just that.

In the third book, as in his second book, he attributes Hardie's spiritual experience to the prayer meeting initiated by White and McCully.⁹ However, this time he does not suggest that White moved her station from China to Korea. Considering that this book is the latest edition, a temporary conclusion may be drawn that Park views White as a missionary who 1) was visiting Korea instead of moving her station from China to Korea, 2) the reason for which had to do with the Boxer Uprising in China.

What are other historians saying about this? Aside from Park's second book, other Korean church history books describe White's visit as a simple one. However, there are discrepancies with the date of White's visit, with the relationship between her visit and the Boxer Uprising, and with her ministries.

For example, volume one of *The History of the Christianity in Korea*, published by the Institute for Korean Church History, states:

In 1903. . . The Methodist missionaries working in Wonsan area convened a prayer meeting at the visit of M.C. White who was a missionary in China. This meeting soon grew to a joint prayer meeting with the participation of Presbyterian missionaries, some Korean Christians, and even guests from “Dong-ah Christian” (Baptists). The meeting continued to be held in Chang Chun Church in Wonsan. In the course of their prayers, Canadian born. . . missionary Hardie uttered a prayer of repentance, confessing his incompetence as a missionary. . . . Another factor which induced such confession of repentance was a particular prayer meeting joined by a missionary who had visited Korea during her mission work in China. Mission work in China had never been easy even from the beginning, but things became worse for the foreign missionaries after the Boxer Uprising in 1900. It was therefore impossible to carry the call to mission without considerable endurance and suffering. Upon hearing from missionary White of such hardships, the missionaries in Korea could not help but to repent contritely over their lives and mission works.¹⁰

⁹Yong Kyu Park, *Pyongyang Great Revival Movement: Commemorative Revised Edition on 100th Anniversary* (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 2007), 43.

¹⁰The Institute for Korean Church History, *The History of the Christianity in Korea, Volume 1*, 268-9. Such description has its source in *Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Korean Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1903*, s.v. “R. A. Hardie's Report,” (pp. 25-28).

Without mentioning the date of White's arrival in Korea, the record above conveys that her visit to Korea began a series of prayer meetings, which later expanded to include Presbyterian and Baptist missionaries as well as Korean Christians, and in which missionary Hardie repented, igniting the Wonsan Revival movement. The connection between White's report of the Boxer Uprising, particularly of the consequent adversities in the Chinese mission, and Hardie's repentance about his attitude of "white supremacy" (양대인자세 洋大人姿勢) is a conspicuous factor that no other book mentions. It is possible that such connection led Park in his second book to suppose that White transferred her mission station to Korea as a result of the Boxer Uprising.

As mentioned, there are discrepancies on the date of White's visit as well. Kyung Bae Min says,

In the winter that year [1903], together with Swedish reverend Franson, who was visiting Korea for a short while, and with Miss M.C. White, a Southern Methodist missionary to China, the Methodist missionaries in Wonsan spent a week devoted to prayer and Bible study. Afterwards, they united with the Presbyterian and Baptist missionaries and church members, holding worship in Chang Chun church every night for a week. During this time, Dr. R.A. Hardie, a Canadian Southern Baptist missionary. . . .¹¹

There are two problems with Min's description. The first is the starting date of the Wonsan Revival. Rather than "the winter that year [1903]" as stated in the quote above, the missionaries' prayer meetings were held in the summer that year, i.e. from August 24th to 30th. Second, contrary to the citation above, Reverend Franson and missionary White did not hold prayer meetings or Bible studies together. Franson was missionary from Scandinavian Mission Federation who like White was stationed in China, and it was only in October 1903 that he visited Wonsan. He stayed at Hardie's residence for a week and led revival meetings for the missionaries and the church members in Wonsan.¹² Therefore, he could not have led prayer meetings together with White who, according to Hardie's record, had visited Wonsan in August that summer.

¹¹Kyung Bae Min, *The Korean History of Christianity*, new ed. (Seoul: Yonsei Univ. Press, 1998), 266.

¹²J. S. Ryang, *Southern Methodism in Korea: Thirtieth Anniversary* (Seoul: Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Korea, 1929), 25.

On the contrary, Young Jae Kim explains in his *Korean Church History* about White and the Wonsan prayer meetings as follows:

For a week, a few Methodist Missionaries held Bible studies and prayer meetings led by Miss M.C. White who was timely in making a visit to Korea from her mission work in China. Soon afterwards, those same missionaries, this time joined by Presbyterian and Baptist missionaries as well, held evening worship services for a week, led by another missionary working in China, Franson of Scandinavia. Local church members of the Wonsan area also participated in this gathering. Among the missionaries present there was a medical missionary, Hardie, who had been hosting Franson in his residency since the previous week.¹³

According to the record above, there is no doubt that White led prayer meetings during her short visit to Korea. However, Young Jae Kim, like Kyung Bae Min, tells us a largely different description about when exactly Dr. Hardie repented. In spite of this minor difference, both agree, against Yong Kyu Park and the Institute for Korean Church History, that the prayer meetings were led by Franson together with “those same missionaries.”¹⁴ In sum, the following questions arise from the existing Korean church history books about White’s visit to Wonsan: (1) Did White come to Korea for a simple visit or to transfer her mission post? (2) On what dates and for how long did White stay in Wonsan in 1903? (3) Were these prayer meetings multi-denominational? (4) Did Hardie repent during the prayer meeting with White or with Franson? Framed around these questions, I propose to reconstruct White’s visit to Wonsan in 1903 in order to answer some of these questions based on Park’s third book, the latest publication regarding the Wonsan Revival Movement, and on some primary sources.

In 1903, missionary White arrived in Korea from China and joined a Canadian Presbyterian missionary, Louise Hoard McCully, already ministering in the Wonsan area. They together prayed asking the Holy Spirit to indwell abundantly not only in them but also in all other missionaries working with them.¹⁵ Furthermore, White suggested joint

¹³Young Jae Kim, *Korean Church History* (Seoul: Jireh Books, 2004; reprint, 2006), 122.

¹⁴In context, it seems fitting to interpret “those same missionaries” as two or three Methodist missionaries residing in Wonsan.

¹⁵R. A. Hardie, “God’s Touch in the Great Revival,” *Korea Mission Field* Vol. 10 (January, 1914), 22.

prayer meetings to the women missionaries, Carrol, Knolls, Hounshell, and McCully, some of who were assigned to Wonsan by the Southern Methodist and the Canadian Presbyterian Boards of Mission under their Comity Agreement. And revival meetings including Bible studies and prayers were held from August 24th to 30th, transcending different denominations.¹⁶ Convicted by powerful grace, Hardie, who was invited to lead these meetings, openly and willingly admitted and confessed that the failure of his ministry was to be blamed on his pride and attitude of supremacy. And this moved and inspired everyone who was with him, which paved the way for the revival to come.¹⁷ Moreover, he made public his repentance in front of the members of Chang Chun church at the following Sunday service, and, charged by even greater conviction during worships led by Franson who visited that Fall, Hardie toured the entire peninsula, leading the revival circuit.¹⁸

However, the answers so far are still not sufficiently satisfactory because of the silence in regards to the circumstances surrounding White's visit to Korea, especially in relation to the Boxer Uprising in China. Did White decide on her own to visit Korea? Was she invited by someone? In 1890, the Presbyterian Mission Board invited John Nevius, who had long been a missionary in China, to hear his mission experiences, and thus, the so-called "Nevius method" was adopted as the basis for Korean mission and church administration. Was White's visit arranged for a similar purpose as to learn from experienced missionaries from China? If her visit was related to the Boxer Uprising as Park suggests, it is reasonable to expect White to have come earlier and with other missionaries.

Louise H. McCully was a Canadian missionary sent to China, who later escaped to and thereafter remained in Korea due to the Boxer Uprising in 1900. She led Bible studies and education campaigns as the first president of the Korean Christian Women's Society, installed daytime Bible classes in Hamhueng region at the end of 1903, established Martha-Wilson Women's Bible School in 1908, and

¹⁶ *Official Minutes and Reports of the Annual Session of Korea Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, 1903, 26, 53, 57.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Official Minutes and Reports of the Annual Session of Korea Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, 1904, 25.

returned to Canada in 1934.¹⁹ Considering that McCully sought refuge in Korea right after the Boxer Uprising and that she eventually moved her mission station to Korea, the probability is high that White's presence in Wonsan was mistakenly assimilated with McCully's experience. If no assimilation took place, a reasonable explanation is needed as to why White visited Korea in 1903 when the uprising in China was to an extent quieted.

Who Was Missionary White?

To understand White's visit to Korea more precisely I trace out White's life story. Mary Culler White was born in Perry, Georgia, United States, on May 12, 1875, to Emma Carolina Culler and George H. White, and grew up in Hawkinsville, Georgia. White initially intended to study fine art at Wesleyan College, but was inspired toward mission work after reading a challenging line: "What the world needs is not paintings but to save souls." Sponsored by Hawkinsville First Methodist Church where she had been serving as a Sunday school teacher, she entered Scarritt Bible and Training School in 1899. The training school for prospective missionaries and female deacons was founded in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1892 (with Maria Gibson as the first principal) by the American Southern Methodist Society in order to meet the increasing demands made by the Methodist Woman's Society for effective training programs for female deacons.²⁰ In 1923, the school moved its location to Nashville, Tennessee, and changed its name to Scarritt College for Christian Workers, accepting male students as well.

Having completed the training program to become a missionary, White was dispatched in 1901 by the Southern Methodist Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (hereafter referred to as WFMS) and was stationed in Suzhou, China (or "Soochow" as it was spelled at that time). American Southern Methodist Society then had sent missionaries to Shanghai, Hangzhou ("Hoochow" as it was spelled then), and

¹⁹Seung Tae Kim and Hye Jin Park, ed., *A Comprehensive Survey of the Missionaries in Korea between 1884 and 1984*, vol. 18 (Seoul: Korean Church History Research Center, 1994), 363.

²⁰"Living the Legacy: The Continuing Journey of Women in Mission, 1869-2002," <http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/history/legacy.html> (accessed in 17 February 2007).

Suzhou. White concentrated on evangelistic ministry and made evangelistic tours around villages, riding on a houseboat which she named "Mississippi," as the boat was financed by a mission fund from Mississippi. Her boat was intriguing enough to attract the villagers' attention, thus often opening the way for evangelism.²¹ She is known to have dressed like the Chinese, living and dining together with them as well. White educated and trained Chinese household women into "Bible Women,"²² and she evangelized with them.²³ When Miss Susie Williams, a missionary in charge of the Industrial School, got married and had to relocate,²⁴ the school came under White's charge and she began to teach sewing and embroidery. Reminiscing of this period, she later remarked, "Miss Williams got a husband and I got a headache,"²⁵ suggesting that teaching students at the Industrial School was quite a challenge. White soon saw her artistic talent, which she had given up to become a missionary, being invaluable as she taught embroidery to her students.²⁶ According to the WFMS report of 1903, White is introduced as the person in charge of the Industrial School of Davidson Memorial School, and one who was trusted by missionary Atkinson, the general supervisor of the Suzhou mission field.

When World War II broke out and the Japanese seized Suzhou, White was held in a concentration camp for seven months. In 1943, she was forced to return to the United States, concluding forty-three years

²¹Robert W. Sledges, *Five Dollars and Myself*, (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, 2005), 268.

²²"Bible Women," who contributed greatly to the protestant mission and revival movement in Korea, were originally initiated by Mary Lambuth, an American Southern Methodist missionary dispatched to China, and later adopted in Korea. Sledges, *Five Dollars and Myself*, 268.

²³Mary Culler White, ed., *Golden Jubilee, 1886-1935: Commemoration Volume of the Fiftieth Anniversary, China Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Shanghai: Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1935), 87, recited from Sledge, *Five dollars and Myself*, 235.

²⁴In February 1903, Miss Williams was transferred from Suzhou to Shanghai when she married another missionary, Dr. A. P. Parker. *Twenty-fifth Annual Report Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, M.E. church, South, 1903*, (Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1903), 7.

²⁵Lucy Mathews Shepard, "This is Your Life: Miss Mary Culler White", September 1973. *United Methodist Church Mission Biographical Series: Bishops-Missionaries*, ID 2412: 00219-220.

²⁶Ibid.

as missionary to China. Upon returning home, she enrolled in the Henry Grady School of Journalism at Georgia University, where she studied journalism among young students fresh from college. With her composition skills refined, she began writing books, introducing her second home of China. In all, she wrote five books about her experience in China, including *I Was There When It Happened*²⁷ (about her days in a Japanese concentration camp), *Just Jennie*²⁸ (about the life of her predecessor and co-missionary, Virginia M. Atkinson), and *Meet Mrs. Yu*²⁹ (about a Chinese Christian).³⁰

In 1951, Hawkinsville First Methodist Church, the church that dispatched White, dedicated a new building and named a small sanctuary after White, also the first speaker to deliver the message on its pulpit. White passed away on May 18, 1973, at the age of ninety-eight.³¹

Why Did White Come to Korea?

Now we have come to the second crucial question, why did she come to Korea? The Southern Methodist WFMS held an annual meeting on May each year, in which the various reports from mission fields were read and the matters of sponsorship to those fields were discussed. In 1904, the twenty-sixth annual meeting was held in Jacksonville, Florida. The mission fields sponsored by the Southern Methodist WFMS at that point were China, Korea, Brazil, Mexico, and Cuba. The twenty-sixth missions report starts with general briefings about the mission fields that have seen notable growths—that the

²⁷*I was There ... When It Happened in China* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1947).

²⁸*Just Jennie: The Life Story of Virginia M. Atkinson* (Atlanta: Tupper and Love, 1955).

²⁹*Meet Mrs. Yu: The True Story of an Outstanding Chinese Christian* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1948).

³⁰Other books by Mary Culler White are *The Days of June: The Life Story of June Nicholson* (Kingstree, S.C.:Kingstree Lithographic Co., 1952) and *The Portal of Wonderland: The Life-Story of Alice Culler Cobb* (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1925).

³¹The data aforesaid about missionary White has been put together around the newspaper articles from the microfilms in Drew University Methodist Library, the author introductions on the cover of the books written by White, and the reports from mission fields.

number of converts is increasing in each mission field, that the mission schools are flooded with applications, and that girls are given opportunities for education and for job training, making possible for them to sustain their family. However, it also appears that rapid expansion of flourishing mission ministries here and there became a source of burden as well as of gratitude for the WFMS. The following excerpt taken from the beginning of the mission report discloses honestly the WFMS's financial burden and its difficulties in supplementing missionaries:

While rejoicing over what God, through this organization, has accomplished, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that our representatives are overburdened, are breaking down, because the work presses upon them so heavily. They are distressed, too, for fear reinforcements longer delayed may injure the glorious success they have met. The situation is critical indeed. At home our membership is not increasing as it should; candidates for foreign service are few, and those offering themselves are not yet fully equipped, and collections inadequate. These things cause apprehension. Only four graduates this year from the [Scarritt Bible and] Training School applying for foreign work, while China itself needs four new missionaries at least.³²

Furthermore, in communicating the predicaments of missionaries facing delayed supply of personnel and support, this annual report stresses the fact that excessive sacrifice should not be demanded of these missionaries:

The problems confronting us in Songdo meet us elsewhere, and the highest success cannot be expected until the missionaries are housed in buildings with average conveniences at least, and not in rude rented quarters, crowded to excess. The first years – the trial years of our organization – have passed, and the self-denial and suffering of the missionaries should also be things of the past.³³

The report concludes with a word of gratitude and a rather resolute message that they must keep carrying on, trusting always in God's presence, because there is no time to retrocede to human participation in God's ministry.³⁴ Among the subsequent attachments we find the letters from individual missionaries in each field and the updates of the Suzhou mission to which White belonged. In 1903, the Davidson

³² *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1903-04* (Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1904), 6.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

Memorial School moved to the western region and the woman missionaries' residence and work became concentrated in west Suzhou. In the Suzhou region, there were five unmarried woman missionaries (including missionary Atkinson) along with three married (wives of missionaries). Although Atkinson was responsible for the general education of Davidson Memorial School and for Bible and literacy classes in particular, White was in charge of the Industrial School.³⁵ White's individual report is filled with firm faith that the students in her class will someday receive salvation. The accounts of the pupils she taught take up much space in her report. She reports that the students, mainly young girls, are taught embroidery, lacework, and knitting, and that now they are able to yield wonderful products. She also conveys her hope that the income from selling these works in China and in America would contribute to the financial independence of the school. She then says that her ministry is not limited to female students but also includes male students.

In the course of her report, she adds the following to the end and finally says something about how she ended up visiting Korea:

In reviewing the year, I cannot fail to mention my delightful vacation in Korea, where I was privileged to look into the faces of those I had worked with and loved in America, to talk with them of the things of God, to form new friendships to my lasting good, to be uplifted by a meeting in which God came very close to us, to see the glorious opportunity of the Church in this empire, and to drink in health from multitudinous mountains and a shining sea. Thank God for it all!³⁶

According to White's Suzhou report, she went to Korea for her summer vacation in 1903, and had an opportunity to renew the fellowship with her friends whom she knew from America, and to recharge spiritually through revival meetings. One cannot presume from the report that the Boxer Uprising gave any reason for White to retreat to Korea. The women missionaries stationed in Suzhou report of only successful ministry in 1903 and no difficulty with the Boxer Uprising. White neither retreated to Korea to evade troubles associated with the Boxer Uprising nor permanently relocated her mission station to Korea. Of course, it is conceivable that White shared her experience

³⁵Ibid., 21.

³⁶Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1903-04 (Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1904), 27.

of the Boxer Uprising and about the hardship suffered by the missionaries in China around that time. But at any rate, prior to the summer of 1903, White faithfully served as missionary in China and only came to Wonsan that summer on vacation, experiencing spiritual renewal there. After her visit to Korea, she returned to Suzhou and carried out a very dynamic and inspired ministry in China for forty more years.

A few more facts regarding White's visit to Wonsan are specified in other reports from the minutes of the seventh annual meeting of Southern Methodist Korean Mission Board, held in September 24, 1903. Although missionary Hardie's report does not mention White, he writes that "a visiting member of our China mission" suggested and prompted Bible study sessions for a week, during which the Holy Spirit ministered with a powerful presence, leading Hardie to realize that at the root of his ineffective mission had been his failure to trust in the promise of the Holy Spirit.³⁷ Missionary Gerdine writes,

[God] has fully met His promise and I can say that during no other year have I been so conscious of His nearness and His constant guidance. We had during last month in Wonsan, a week of waiting upon God in the study of His word and in prayer. Besides our workers there we had with us Miss Hounshell of Seoul and Miss White of China. We were all of one accord in our desire for a new vision of our Master, and it was vouchsafed to us. It is indeed true that "this is all we're needing, strength, joy..."³⁸

And Arrena Carroll, a resident missionary in Wonsan, reports that a series of Bible studies was held at her home from August 24th to 30th, the week when missionaries Hounshell and White were staying with her. She says there were "showers of blessings" during those sessions and that there were Canadian Presbyterian missionaries present there as well. Carroll goes on to profess that, as long as the missionaries hold on firmly to the promise given by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit may pour out His mighty power to the Koreans, to whom they were ministering.³⁹

Lastly, missionary Hounshell's report conveys that she went to Wonsan together with missionary White and that they spent three weeks there, staying at the residencies of their friends and missionary

³⁷"R. A. Hardie's Report" in *Minutes of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Korea Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, 1903 (hereafter *Minutes*), 26.

³⁸"Report of J. L. Gerdine" in *Minutes*, 31.

³⁹"Report of the Boarding School and General Work in Wonsan" in *Minutes*, 53.

colleagues. She then describes Wonsan as a place full of beautiful natural scenery, and she reports of observing the good progress of the mission work there. She goes on to mention week-long Bible study sessions. She testifies that the Holy Spirit was vividly present there and that she newly surrendered herself to the Lord, keenly realizing she had not been fully consumed with the power of the Spirit.⁴⁰

Two Supplementary Questions

So far, we have sought to answer two questions, namely who missionary White was and why she came to Wonsan in 1903. To the second question which is our main interest of research we conclude as follows: on her second year as a missionary, White departed from her mission field, Suzhou, and joined missionary Hounshell, who was then ministering in Seoul on a trip, to spend her summer vacation in Wonsan with some Southern Methodist women missionaries. During her sojourn in Wonsan, she and McCully, a Canadian Presbyterian missionary, proposed to conduct Bible studies for the missionaries in Wonsan. Throughout the prayer meetings held at missionary Carroll's residence during the period from August 24th – 30th, White played a catalytic role in a revival, inciting herself, the missionaries in Wonsan, and Korean Christians to repentance and spiritual renewal. Once again, while unmistakably recognizing missionary Hardie as an integral figure whose penitence during these prayer meetings spurred him to lead the Wonsan Revival Movement all over the country up to the 1907 Revival, the main records so far of Korean church history show little interest in missionary White (or other women missionaries) who played a part in eliciting Hardie's repentance. Either she is not mentioned at all or introduced with incorrect information.

Now, I would like to discuss two supplementary questions raised in the process of responding to the main inquiries. The first question pertains to why White, a missionary in China, chose Korea of all places as her vacation destination. In her own words, White attests about her vacation in Wonsan that she "was privileged to look into the faces of those [she] had worked with and loved in America, to talk with them of the things of God, to form new friendships to [her] lasting good, to be

⁴⁰"Report of Miss Hounshell" in *Minutes*, 57.

uplifted by a meeting in which God came very close to [them], to see the glorious opportunity of the Church in this empire, and to drink in health from multitudinous mountains and a shining sea.”⁴¹ Even so, one may question, “Isn’t Korea too far from Suzhou for a vacation at the time?” Suzhou or Hangzhou was famous for superb natural landscape. It is easy to suppose that there would have been many places in the vast land of China, perfect for a vacation. Why Wonsan? And how long were missionaries allowed to be on vacation? Was there any other purpose for White to travel such a long way to Wonsan?

The answer to these questions lies in how the Southern Methodist Church began its Korean mission on the heels of the Northern Methodist Church’s Korean mission in 1885. American Southern Methodist missionaries ministering in China considered expanding their missional boundary to Japan and Korea. Clarence F. Reid and Chi Ho Yoon were instrumental in getting the Southern Methodists to embark upon a Korean mission. Reid, a veteran missionary who had been ministering in China since 1878, traveled to the northern part of China in 1894 at the request of mission headquarters to scout for a region with a cooler climate than Shanghai or Suzhou. Reid’s assignment was to look for a place where missionaries, who had difficulty adapting to the climate of southern China (e.g. Shanghai and Suzhou), could minister under a more agreeable climate while maintaining their laboriously-acquired Chinese. However, Reid was not able to find any appropriate location in northern China which was already occupied by other denominations. And this was why he turned his attention to Korea. Seeing that, though many missionaries were already in Korea, regions outside Seoul were still uncharted and unclaimed, Reid actively proposed starting a mission in Korea. His proposal backed by the first Korean Methodist, Chi Ho Yoon’s plea for missionaries, sped up the Southern Methodist Church’s decision to establish a Korean mission.⁴²

Although Reid’s proposal for a Korean mission was a digression from his original assignment “to seek out mission post in northern

⁴¹ *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Methodist Episcopal Church, South for 1903-04*, (Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1904), 27.

⁴² Sledge, 250.

China where Southern Methodist missionaries may work," it nevertheless brought about a successful result from a missional perspective as a whole.⁴³ The records lead us to the cautious and suggestive conclusion that Southern Methodist mission posts in Korea originally arose as alternative locations for the missionaries of southern China who either could not adapt to the climate or needed a place to retreat to.

How long, then, did the missionaries spend for their vacation? The following is the stipulation of the Southern Methodist WFMS:

In order to conserve health and strength every missionary is advised to so arrange her work as to allow, every year, at least one month of vacation, in which there shall be a cessation of regular work, and which shall be spent, if possible, away from her station.⁴⁴

Considering that the mandate above calls for a vacation of "at least one month," White would have spent at least three weeks in Seoul and Wonsan after a week's travel time back and forth from Suzhou and Wonsan. In light of the fact that missionary Jennie Atkinson (under whose supervision White later worked) had sought refuge in Japan during the Boxer Uprising,⁴⁵ it appears plausible to suggest that American missionaries stationed in China frequented Japan or Korea as a place of retreat, just as Reid initially proposed.

Furthermore, did the Boxer Uprising have any possible bearing on missionary White's visit to Korea? According to White's book, in 1900, the year in which Boxers, manipulated by Empress Cixi, were venting their anger at the foreigners in China, missionary Jennie Atkinson remained in Suzhou. Suzhou was considered relatively safe since its provincial government, unlike that of other regions, had decided to protect foreigners. However, the area was not completely secure from the anti-foreign tide that was sweeping across other parts of China. Hence, in early July, Atkinson escaped to Nagasaki, Japan, where the Southern Methodist mission center was located, together with other

⁴³By 1910, the members of Southern Methodist Church in Korea counted 6,000, which was more than the members in China and Japan added together. *Ibid.*, 254

⁴⁴*Sixteenth Annual Report of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for 1893-1894*, (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1894), 140.

⁴⁵White, *Just Jennie*, 32-33.

missionaries, a native Chinese teacher named Lee and his family, and the children under her foster care. There in Nagasaki, they ran a temporary Chinese school. When the Boxer Uprising subsided in December of that year, Atkinson and her company were able to return to Shanghai. The American authorities then permitted them to go back to Suzhou within a month. Upon their return to Suzhou, they found that there had been no occurrence of violence, plunder, or murder in Suzhou while they had been away in Japan. So they were able to easily resume the ministries they had suspended and left.⁴⁶ Then in 1901, White arrived in Suzhou a month prior to Atkinson's fortieth birthday (November 8). White later recounted Atkinson's ministry in the year 1901 after the Boxer Uprising:

After the Boxer uprising it became evident that a change had come over the people of China. Fewer children called out "Foreign devil," and more non-Christians attended church. The blood of the martyrs had again become the seed of the church.⁴⁷

In the end, a causal relationship between the Boxer Uprising and White's visit to Korea cannot be demonstrated. If she did refer to the Uprising while she visited Wonsan, she must have been relating what she had heard about other parts of China from her senior missionaries. Her remarks would have been something along the line of the account cited above. Therefore, we may conclude that the connection made between White and the Boxer Uprising by some of the existing studies of Korean church history is a mistaken assimilation of McCully's reason for being in Korea at the same time.

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⁴⁶Ibid., 31-34.

⁴⁷White, *Just Jennie*, 36.

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