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"To Capture Minds and Wills": *Establishing Christian Radio Broadcasting in Cold War South Korea*

Paul S. CHA

Abstract

HLKY was the first civilian-owned radio station in South Korea. It started broadcasting in 1954 and served as an important source of information for the South Korean population during the early decades of the new nation. Though it was a Christian station, HLKY's programming was not limited to religious topics; it devoted airtime to world news, dramas, music, and general educational programing. HLKY occupies an important place in the history of radio broadcasting in South Korea, but its origins and planning are still poorly understood. Drawing on heretofore largely unexamined archival sources, this article details the establishment of HLKY. Particular attention is paid to the missionaries who, under the aegis of the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America (FMCNA), led the planning and early administration of the station. The founding of HLKY reflected both struggles among the major mission societies to maintain ecumenical cooperation in the face of theological fissures and a desire to cultivate a form of Christianity that could address, in a practical manner, the social and economic decay that were pervasive around the globe in the post-World War II period.

Keywords: HLKY, Christian radio broadcasting, Cold War, Korean Protestantism, Korean War, communism, FMCNA, Protestant ecumenism

Paul S. CHA is Korean Foundation Assistant Professor in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures at the University of Hong Kong. E-mail: pcha@hku.hk.

Introduction

On December 15, 1954, HLKY hit the radio waves in South Korea for the first time. The historical significance of this moment cannot be overstated (Lee and Kang 2007; Lee 2019). Founded officially by the Korean National Christian Council (KNCC), HLKY was the first privately owned radio station in South Korea (Kang and Choe 2001). Though it was a Christian station, its programming was not limited to Christian topics, as it included time for world news, dramas, music, and educational programs (Lee and Kang 2007, 418–424). This station was one of the few that South Koreans could tune into during the 1950s and 1960s, and it acted as an important source of information that was not filtered through the South Korean government (Lee 2017, 14–16). The strategic importance of HLKY was such that Park Chung-hee's forces moved to take control of the station as a part of their silent and swift coup d'état on May 16, 1961. The influence of HLKY extended beyond its ability to keep the general populace informed. It also provided important opportunities for South Koreans to learn and practice a myriad of job skills—from sound board engineering to script writing, voice acting, and show producing. Yet despite the significance of this station, its early history, and in particular its planning and founding, has been largely overlooked by scholars.

Among the few exceptions are Lee Sung-min and Kang Myung-koo, who have argued that the radio station was the product of a close relationship between Christian forces, including both Korean Christians and Western missionaries, and government officials (Lee 2017, 14–16; Lee and Kang 2007, 412–418). The key assumption in their work has been that Christians were the natural allies of President Syngman Rhee, US officials, and the US army (Kang 1993; Park 2003). Christians are thought to have opposed communism both for ideological reasons (Lee and Kang 2007, 412–418) and because a large population of Korean Christians from north of the 38th parallel (Kang 1992; 1993; Yun 2015), who fled south both before and during the Korean War, had become fiercely anti-communist as a result of their experiences under the North Korean regime. Furthermore, missionaries allegedly combined a message of anti-communism with

concrete relief work during the Korean War, which created a positive image of this religion and Western civilization in general among the Korean masses south of the 38th parallel (Kang 1993; Haga 2012). By this line of reasoning, the purpose of Christian broadcasting was to combat communism (Lee and Kang 2007, 412–418).

Viewed in broad strokes, this depiction of the establishment of HLKY is not without merit, because a conventional interpretation of the history of Christianity and communism during the Cold War is that they were ideologically opposed (Herzong 2011; Stevens 2010; Stoneman 2017). As one scholar has put it, the Cold War was also a religious war, "a global conflict between the god-fearing and the godless" (Kirby 2013, 1). The framework that pits communism against Christianity derives from the longstanding convention of viewing the Cold War through a lens that splits actors neatly into two camps. More recent scholarship on the Cold War, however, has highlighted the necessity of avoiding simplistic binary frames and making space for global perspectives, especially those that do not privilege the state (Westad 2017; Brazinsky 2007). Heonik Kwon, for instance, has demonstrated that when historians consider how local actors negotiated the Cold War, as opposed to assuming that the masses simply adopted the state's ideological positions, more nuanced and complex pictures of this period emerge (Kwon 2010).

Taking Kwon's observations as a guide, this article focuses on the motivations and actions of the missionaries involved in founding HLKY. Though scholars and histories of HLKY have noted that these foreign actors took the initial steps in establishing this station (Armstrong 2003; Lee 2007), a detailed analysis of their involvement is lacking. But missionaries played a formative role in the initial planning and administration of HLKY. As the following pages will show, they were not a unified block: instead, they were diverse in their orientations, their interpretations of the needs in South Korea, and their ideas about how Christianity should be mobilized to meet those needs. Likewise, while missionaries were concerned about communism, their approaches to the challenge posed by this doctrine reflected a broader concern with the social and economic woes that confronted the modern world. For this reason, though their goals at times

overlapped with those of the governments of South Korea or the United States, missionaries diverged in the ways they sought to address not only the spiritual but also the material needs of South Korea.

Radio: Communism, Evangelism, Humanitarianism

Even before the end of World War II, and hence before the Cold War had reached the Korean Peninsula, former missionaries to Korea remarked on the potential usefulness of radio for evangelism. For example, Edwin Koons, a longtime missionary in Korea with the Northern Presbyterians, spent much of the war in the United States working for the Office of War Information. He noted the important roles that radio played in the war effort and argued that this technology could be a tool to spread Christianity in Korea (Koons 1944). Concrete progress toward the realization of Koons' vision did not begin until 1947. When it did, the project did not fall under the direction of any one denomination. Instead, the construction of HLKY was the product of Protestant ecumenism.

Since at least the late 19th century, a call for ecumenical cooperation had been gaining strength within Protestantism worldwide. As a part of this movement, the mainline Protestant denominations in North America formed the Foreign Mission Conference of North America (FMCNA) in 1893. For the FMCNA, operating as a united body brought both advantages and challenges. For example, together the mission societies could undertake large-scale and capital-intensive programs such as the construction and running of radio stations. At the same time, however, efforts at union required that participating societies overcome their denominational and theological differences to find common ground. What was the purpose of missions? What was the most effective way to conduct evangelism? What was the purpose of social relief programs? These questions were sensitive and potentially divisive, especially because of the debates between fundamentalism and modernism that had roiled religious life in the United States in the 1920s and 1930s (Longfield 1991; Hart 1994) and led to numerous church schisms and denominational splits.

The issue of modernism versus fundamentalism was an underlying concern in the FMCNA's use of radio technology. To take a different perspective, the FMCNA was not the only American Protestant group seeking to use the airwaves. Timothy Stoneman has shown that evangelicals, many of whom had left the mainline denominations, readily embraced radio as a means of spreading the "fundamental" truth of the gospel, both at home and abroad (Stoneman 2017, 1143). This movement gave rise to a number of parachurch organizations, the most famous and successful of which was the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC).[1] As Stoneman details, from a relatively humble beginning, FEBC grew to become one of the largest private broadcasting companies in the world by the 1980s. Key to its growth were the close ties that FEBC formed with US officials: it often established stations in territories under US influence, and its leaders framed their fundraising efforts not only as a way to defend Protestantism against the spread of modernism, but also in terms of a need to combat the perilous spread of communism (Stoneman 2017, 1139–1140). In this manner, the history of the spread of FEBC aligns closely with the view of Kirby and others that the Cold War was also a religious war that pitted Christianity against communism.

In contrast, the FMCNA was comprised primarily of the traditional mainline denominations, and it differed from FEBC in its engagement of radio in both approach and scale (Stoneman 2017, 1153). Sensitivity to the tensions generated by the modernism versus fundamentalism debates is necessary to understand the significance of the FMCNA's approaches to communism, its proposed solution, and its promotion of radio. The FMCNA shared with many US evangelical groups a belief that communism posed a challenge to Christianity, and it called on its Committee on Research and Consul (CRC) to investigate why communism was so popular and how the FMCNA should adjust to counter the ideological propaganda being spread by communist forces. In 1947, the CRC established a steering

1. The FEBC received a permit from the South Korean government to establish a radio station in 1954. The station, HLKX, hit the airwaves in December 1956.

committee to investigate Marx, Lenin, and Stalin,[2] and by late 1948, the committee had produced a set of working papers. Among the various presentations and papers, a common refrain was that the popularity of communism stemmed not from its economic theory but from its promise of social change and its effectiveness in addressing material problems (Barnett 1949). Poverty, disease, and the political unrest caused by such factors as economic inequality, imperialism, and racism were rampant worldwide (Albright 1948). People around the globe sought stability and, in the case of those living in colonial or post-colonial situations, independence and self-rule. Communism, in this context, was simply another *ism* that offered practical solutions to the numerous social problems that afflicted the world.

The FMCNA opposed communism, but not simply because of a Cold War belief that communism and the Soviet Union sought to wipe out Christianity and the United States. Instead, the CRC interpreted the rise and popularity of communism and the spread of Soviet power as physical manifestations of underlying social and political ills ([N.A.] 1949a). A fight against communism alone would not address the root conditions that had given rise to this ideology. Thus, the FMCNA recommended that missionaries focus not on being *anti-communist*, but rather on being *pro-Christian* and putting "Christianity in practice in reality." If Christianity were to prevail, it needed to address material concerns. In speaking of the need to provide basic humanitarian relief in the wake of the destruction caused by World War II, one missionary observed that starvation was an obvious impediment to the spread of the gospel. The provision of food and supplies was necessary "not to purchase attention but to make a hearing even possible" (Boynton, Fisher, and Cross 1947).

FMCNA's promotion of radio as an efficacious tool for evangelism was grounded in this broad consensus that the social and political unrest that shook the world after World War II was the main challenge to the spread of Christianity. Importantly, the leaders of FMCNA held that communism was not the only such challenge. The rise of science and the apparent secularization of societies had called into question the place of

2. Winn Fairfield to Friends, March 18, 1947, RG 27.3.12, Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS).

this religion in the Western world. A thriving Christianity would need to address material concerns. The leaders of FMCNA believed that radio, as well as film and other audio-visual technology, could spread knowledge on such subjects as horticulture, home economics, and even basic medicine efficiently and quickly over vast territories. Radio, in their view, had the potential to expand, if not increase, the transformative power of Christianity and missions. Speaking of the need for new means of communicating to the masses and demonstrating the ability of Christianity to effect positive social and economic change, the FMCNA noted that "secular and anti-Christian forces" were effectively using images and radio for "propaganda and teaching" (Ebright 1948). With these new technologies, they were winning over the people. Radio seemed to offer its users a way to "speedily" convey their messages over great distances, and missionaries needed to quickly adopt this new technology if they were to compete with the multitude of forces seeking to "capture the minds and wills" of those residing in countries like Korea (Ebright 1948).

Establishing HLKY

The Radio, Audio-Visual Education, Mass Communication Committee (RAVEMCCO) of the FMCNA directed the establishment of HLKY. In July 1947, the committee sent a special delegation to inspect both radio and audio-visual usage in Asia. They spent three days in Korea, meeting with missionaries and leaders of the Korean Christian communities. Likely because of the presence of the US Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) and the relatively strong presence of Protestant Christianity, RAVEMCCO identified Korea as a location where radio and audio-visual technology should be developed in Asia (Cross 1947c). In response, the KNCC moved to implement these recommendations. Importantly, mission societies were given membership in this institution and were the primary promoters of radio and audio-visual technology in South Korea. As will be shown below, establishing a radio station was expensive, even for the FMCNA with its pooled resources. Not surprisingly, Korean churches,

which were still rebuilding after the end of the colonial period, were not interested in undertaking such a capitally intensive investment.

Running the KNCC committee on radio was E. Otto DeCamp, a Northern Presbyterian missionary. Born to missionary parents in Korea in 1911, DeCamp had worked as a missionary in his own right on the peninsula from 1937 to 1941. The Government-General of Korea arrested and deported DeCamp in 1941 for protesting the order to bow at Shinto shrine ceremonies. Near the conclusion of World War II, DeCamp entered a discussion with Edward Adams, a fellow missionary, regarding preparations for returning to Korea. Anticipating the importance of radio, Adams suggested that DeCamp take a course on radio broadcasting. After consultation with the Northern Presbyterian Board of Missions and Franklin Mack, who would eventually become the director of audio-visual education for RAVEMCCO, DeCamp spent 1946 taking courses at New York University.[3]

DeCamp returned to Korea in the fall of 1948. He was appointed chair of the radio committee of the KNCC and pursued a two-track strategy for Christian radio broadcasting. The first was to use the Korean Broadcasting Station (KBS). A government agency, KBS was South Korea's only radio station. But using government airwaves proved problematic; airtime was not purchasable, but was instead granted by the director of KBS. When DeCamp first arrived, the KNCC had only fifteen minutes of airtime on Sundays. These periods were typically used for short sermons.[4] The KNCC made a bid for more airtime, but the station chief was uninterested in religious programming. DeCamp believed, however, that more creative programming would be of interest to both the station chief and a general Korean audience. He sought to create more diversified content by teaching English (using the Bible as the main text), producing radio plays, and developing other culture-related programs. Yet even when they won more airtime, DeCamp and the

3. E. Otto DeCamp to Herrick B. Young, July 29, 1946, RG 140.18.10, PHS. In the Christian Broadcasting Station's official history, DeCamp is described as having studied at Columbia University (CBSsa pyeonchan wiwonhoe 2004, 27). However, in his private letters, he stated that he was to study at New York University.

4. DeCamp to S. Franklin Mack, March, 1949, RG 140.16.29, PHS.

KNCC had to submit to the restrictions KBS placed on their content.

The second track was to establish a private Christian radio broadcasting station. In January 1949, DeCamp and William A. Linton—who represented the Southern Presbyterian mission—visited Yun Suk-gu, Minister of Communication, to receive government licenses to construct private broadcast stations in South Korea. Yun indicated that permits would be given upon application. In late May, the Ministry of Communication approved the KNCC's application, but the license was set to expire by the end of 1949, meaning that the station needed to be up and running by the end of the year. In addition, though the Ministry of Communication had approved the construction of the station, a permit from the Office of Public Information also had to be secured.

The Radio Committee of the KNCC busily proceeded to apply for this second permit, determine where to locate the broadcasting studio and the radio transmitter, and raise the funding required to bring this plan to fruition. In this work, the committee encountered a number of delays, which—though perhaps frustrating—turned out to be beneficial in the long run. In regard to the permit, after a bit of resistance, the Office of Public Information gave its approval in July 1949, after Syngman Rhee intervened in the KNCC's favor.[5] While searching for a location and researching the technical aspects of establishing a broadcast station, DeCamp consulted radio technicians and engineers attached to WVTP, the US army radio station in Korea. Based on these consultations, DeCamp initially estimated the cost to establish a radio broadcast station to be $43,000. This figure included transforming the fifth floor of the Christian Literature Society (CLS)

5. Lee Sung-min has noted that there exists disagreement over the times the permits were issued. The dates range from June to December 1950. Based on newspaper reports in July stating that permits had been issued, he suggests that at least one permit (likely the one from the Ministry of Communication) had been issued by June. He suggests that the December 1950 date reflects the issuance of the permit from the Office of Public Information (Lee 2007, 47). However, DeCamp reported that the Ministry of Communication had issued its permit by May. Given the July newspaper report and the unlikelihood that DeCamp would have proceeded to build the radio station prior to receiving government approval, it is likely that the second permit was received in July.

building ($15,000), located in Seoul, into a studio; installing a five-kilowatt transmitter ($20,000); and operating expenses for the first year ($8,000) ([N. A.] 1949b).

By July, DeCamp realized that his original figures had grossly underestimated the likely costs. That month he met with Manual John Ogas, who had recently arrived as a radio engineer with the Economic Cooperation Administration of Korea. Ogas, who would provide DeCamp with valuable technical advice about which types of equipment to purchase, where to locate the towers, and which frequencies to use, estimated that a one-kilowatt transmitter could be installed for $70,000. This was nearly $30,000 more than the original estimate. However, a one-kilowatt transmitter would be unable to reach either the northern or southernmost borders of the Korean Peninsula. For DeCamp, who believed that one of the purposes of radio was to broadcast into North Korea during a period when missionaries could not physically cross the 38th parallel, this option was not ideal. A five-kilowatt transmitter would have been better, but Ogas estimated that it would cost at least $120,000.[6] While the Northern Presbyterians committed $40,000 and the Methodists, after some cajoling, matched this amount, securing the remaining $40,000 proved to be a challenge. The most obvious source of funding was the Southern Presbyterians, but for reasons that will be discussed below, they were willing to contribute only the token amount of $5,000.

By September 1949, the Korea Committee of the FMCNA had secured pledges for $85,000 to be used for the radio project and had approved DeCamp's proposal to retrofit the fifth floor of the CLS Building. In addition, the FMCNA approved the building of a transmitting station at or close to Chosen Christian University, the forerunner of Yonsei University.[7] With

6. DeCamp to S. Franklin Mack, July 29, 1949, RG 140.1.27, PHS.
7. S. Franklin Mack to DeCamp, October 5, 1949, RG 140.1.27, PHS. The placement of the transmitter on the campus of Chosen Christian University may have been aimed at appeasing George Paik (Paik Nak-chun). Paik desired that the station be built on his campus, in anticipation that it could benefit a future communications major. But the campus was not centrally located in Seoul, and DeCamp and the committee believed that the station should be located close to where the *talent* (e.g., musicians, actors, engineers, etc.) lived. The transmitting

money and approval in hand, DeCamp proceeded with the construction of the studio. Before purchasing radio equipment, however, DeCamp engaged in lengthy negotiations with the Ministry of Finance about waiving import duties for this project. With duties estimated at $10,000, an exemption would mean a significant savings and would affect what could be purchased. In December 1949, the Ministry of Finance agreed to provide an exemption.[8] With the exemption in hand, DeCamp and RAVEMCCO fielded new bids from companies to build a station in South Korea. In the end, on March 3, RAVEMCCO accepted a bid from Radio Cooperation America (RCA), then one of the world's leading companies in radio equipment. The total cost of the equipment, not including installation, was just over $41,000.[9]

The start of the Korean War put an immediate halt to the construction of the Christian radio station. Fortunately for the KNCC, the shipment of the radio equipment had not left the US as of early June, in part because RCA had failed to prepare a proper bill of lading.[10] As a result of this delay, the radio equipment was still at sea when the Korean War broke out on June 25. The shipment was rerouted and eventually warehoused in Kobe, Japan, where it would remain until 1954.

It was not guaranteed that the construction of the station would be restarted. After United Nations forces retook Seoul in the fall of 1950, the missionaries assumed that the war would be a quick affair. DeCamp and the radio committee inspected the premises in Seoul and were pleased to find that although the CLS building had been damaged, the fifth floor, where the studio was located, was largely unscathed. Likewise, the transmitting station—though stripped of copper wiring—was also mostly unharmed. DeCamp believed that construction of HLKY would recommence soon. But after Chinese forces entered the conflict and the war quickly turned against the United Nations forces, DeCamp became more hesitant and cautious about restarting the program.

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station on Chosen Christian University's campus could also be of value for the university's engineering program.

8. DeCamp to Mack, January 20, 1950, RG 140.1.27, PHS.
9. Mack to Edward L. Schatt, March 3, 1950, RG 140.1.27, PHS.
10. Mack to DeCamp, June 9, 1950, RG 140.1.27, PHS.

Even after the signing of the armistice, it was unclear whether the radio station would be completed. To begin with, though the radio equipment had been purchased before the start of the war, there were still substantial costs involved in completing the radio project. In early 1954, DeCamp estimated that an additional $53,000 would be required to cover such costs as storage of the equipment at Kobe, shipping to South Korea, and repairs of the damage to the station incurred during the war ([N.A.] 1954). RAVEMCCO immediately wired $17,000 to South Korea from its available funds. It was also able to secure a pledge of $15,000 from the Northern Presbyterians, $5,000 from the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions, $5,000 from the Women's Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodical Episcopal Church, and $5,000 from the United Church of Canada. This meant that $6,000 remained to be secured.[11] While it may have been a relatively small sum, DeCamp also estimated that the first year's operating budget would be $29,000. On the assumption that the KNCC would supply $5,000, he requested from RAVEMCCO support for the remaining $24,000 ([N. A.] 1954). Thus, an additional $30,000 was required to ensure not only the construction but also the running of the station for the first year of its existence. The most RAVEMCCO could guarantee for operating expenses, however, was $12,000.

Though he was unsure about the long-term viability of the station due to uncertainty about the funding for operating expenses, DeCamp proceeded with the completion of the radio station. In April, the Ministry of Communication issued a new permit, and the Ministry of Finance again exempted radio equipment from import duties. Once the equipment arrived, the installation was handled by an engineer dispatched by RCA (DeCamp 1954a). On October 30, the station began testing its broadcast signal (DeCamp 1954b). The first official broadcast of the station started six weeks later, on December 15, 1954.

11. Martin to DeCamp, April 12, 1954, RG 140.1.28, PHS.

A Christian State?

One explanation for the South Korean government's approval of HLKY has emphasized the close partnership that existed between the Rhee regime and Christian forces (Lee and Kang 2007, 412–418). This line of reasoning draws on the scholarly and popular belief that Christians supported the South Korean state in the early years of its existence. For instance, Cheng-Pang Lee and Myungsahm Suh have argued that despite the relatively low percentage of Korean Christians at the time of the Korean War, many of the leaders of the newly established and US-backed South Korean government were Christians—and in particular Protestants. Syngman Rhee himself was well known for being one of the first generation of Korean elites to convert to Methodism. Lee and Suh argued that for these reasons, South Korea can be considered close to a "Christian state" (Lee and Suh 2017, 479). Because of this supposed orientation, the South Korean government is thought to have been predisposed to support the missionaries and Christian-related programs. The communist "threat" solidified this partnership or alliance; Rhee and his government saw in Christianity a natural enemy of communism. By promoting Christianity and projects like HLKY, Rhee could strengthen his regime.

To a degree, this assessment is accurate. As discussed above, DeCamp and Linton both met with Yun and received personal assurances that the Ministry of Communication would grant permits; Rhee then intervened when the Office of Public Information was slow to approve the establishment of HLKY (Lee 2017, 14–16); and the Ministry of Finance waived import duties on the radio equipment being shipped from the United States. Likewise, DeCamp worked closely with radio engineers working for US governmental agencies stationed in South Korea to plan the construction of HLKY.

However, though the interests of missionaries and government officials often overlapped, they were not identical. For example, in October 1950, DeCamp reported to Mack that a civilian agency with unofficial ties to the US government had approached him to ask if he would assist in transporting the radio equipment stored at Kobe to Seoul and finishing construction as soon as possible. According to DeCamp, Horace H. Underwood was

working for this agency during the Korean War and heard that it desired to establish a radio station in South Korea. Underwood suggested that it work with HLKY instead of attempting to start a new program. Finding the agency amenable to this plan, Underwood approached DeCamp, who discussed the proposal with his colleagues in the field. DeCamp then contacted Mack. Key to the proposal was the agency's desire that its involvement and support remain a secret, but that it be allowed to use airtime in the evenings to promote democracy and an anti-communist message once the station was up and running.[12] Though DeCamp and his fellow workers in South Korea viewed the proposal favorably, the leaders of RAVEMCCO expressed hesitation. Forming a close association with an agency connected to the US government and acting in secret could establish a dangerous precedent and undermine the integrity of HLKY ([N.A.] 1950). Mainly for this reason, DeCamp chose not to pursue this partnership. As this decision suggests, while the FMCNA, RAVEMCCO, and DeCamp may have had close ties to government officials, missionaries were autonomous actors and possessed motivations and interests separate from those of the state—interests and motivations that went far beyond fighting communism or promoting democracy.

Importantly, radio was only one program instituted by missionaries sent by societies working with the FMCNA. Others ran programs addressing rural reconstruction, urban blight, and public health. Their focus on broad social reforms created areas of tension with government officials, both South Korean and American. Indeed, while many former missionaries worked with the US military government in the period immediately following Japan's surrender to Allied forces in August 1945, they often did so for reasons of expediency: the quickest way to return to Korea was to work for the US military. Even so, many others questioned the wisdom of forging too close a relationship with the USAMGIK. Indeed, the mission boards at times staked out positions that military officials must have viewed with suspicion. For instance, the Korea Committee of the FMCNA passed a resolution criticizing any policies that would lead to a "separate and independent

12. DeCamp to Mack, October 10, 1950, RG 140.1.27, PHS.

southern Korea." It continued by calling for the militaries of both the United States and Soviet Union to withdraw from the peninsula and for a true election to be held, under the watch of the United Nations, as soon as possible (Cross 1947a). As this resolution suggests, some missionaries believed that close ties with the USAMGIK presented problems, as the military government was not popular in Korea and was clearly not effectively practicing or teaching democratic principles (Cross 1947b).

In a similar fashion, US officials and military officers were selectively supportive of missionaries and Christian projects. For instance, in 1949, the standing committee of RAVEMCCO indicated that the US military had until recently hindered its efforts to establish a Christian broadcasting station in South Korea (DeCamp 1949a). Furthermore, even after receiving official approval for HLKY, at times DeCamp found that official support fell short of expectations. For instance, in October 1950, DeCamp approached United Nations Command, led by Douglas MacArthur, regarding the use of military transport to ship radio equipment to Incheon. MacArthur would only approve shipment to Pusan ([N.A.] 1950). DeCamp found this offer to be inadequate, as transporting the equipment from Pusan to Seoul was filled with risks, primary among them being theft.

MacArthur's response was not an aberration. Government support was neither unquestioning nor unwavering, even for projects that could be used to counter propaganda advanced by communist forces. In fact, HLKY was not the only proposal for the establishment of a Christian radio station. As noted above, when DeCamp first met with Minister of Communication Yun Suk-gu, he traveled with D. J. Cumings. At the meeting, there were two requests for permits to build a radio station. The KNCC/RAVEMCCO request, led by DeCamp, was for Seoul. Cumings, in contrast, represented the Southern Presbyterians, who desired to establish a separate station to the south. At this initial meeting, Yun indicated that permits would be granted for both. However, only DeCamp's proposal ultimately received approval. For reasons that are unclear, the Southern Presbyterians' application was rejected repeatedly.

As suggested by the Southern Presbyterians' efforts to build a separate radio station, the missionaries had concerns and motivations in establishing

HLKY that cannot be reduced to Cold War politics. Furthermore, they were not unified. A closer examination of the efforts to restart the radio program after the outbreak of the Korean War reveals cracks in the language of solidarity that had, until that point, allowed RAVEMCCO to marshal the funds and support to bring the equipment for a new station as far as Kobe, Japan roughly fifteen months after receiving initial approval from the South Korean government for the station. It would take another four and half years after the outbreak of the Korean War for the station to be completed.

The bid to restart the HLKY project encountered resistance for two intertwined reasons. The first was money. As discussed above, establishing a radio station was expensive. The major donors for the station were the Northern Presbyterians and the Methodist Episcopal Church. In both cases, the organizations diverted a portion of the funds they had accumulated during World War II to the *restoration* of the Korea mission field. Because the area north of the 38th parallel had been taken over by communist forces, funds that originally had been earmarked for work in this portion of the peninsula were lying unused. With the formation of separate governments on the Korean Peninsula in 1948, these funds were repurposed to establish HLKY. In the summer of 1951, DeCamp once again moved to restart audio-visual education, but he met with protests from his fellow missionaries. The outbreak of the Korean War had suddenly created a humanitarian crisis, and missionaries—from Methodists to Presbyterians—were clamoring for scarce funding. In this climate, many of DeCamp's colleagues suddenly argued that radio and audio-visual evangelism was a waste of resources. For instance, expressing his opposition to restarting these programs, Charles A. Sauer lamented that they would take funding away from worthier projects. He opined: "When you have seen the utter destruction, when you have seen the people crying for food, for medicine, for a roof over their head… then you realize that you simply cannot take the money that would go for these vital things and put them into a program such as you have outlined."[13] Not until 1953 did it appear that the radio project could be restarted. Even then, though, the same protests that radio could neither feed nor shelter the

13. Charles A. Sauer to DeCamp, June 30, 1951, RG 140.1.27, PHS.

hungry and homeless were raised.

The second reason for the resistance to the project had to do with beliefs about its effectiveness. Both DeCamp and Mack believed that most missionaries in Korea still clung to more *traditional* methods of evangelism—namely print media. Put differently, many of the early pioneers and advocates of radio and audio-visual technology for the mission field viewed these tools as new forms of literacy, useful for both evangelism and mass education; these technologies would supplement, if not eventually phase out, print culture (Parker 1948). In this manner, radio and audio-visual technologies were potentially threatening to those who worked with more established methods of evangelism, such as Christian publishing. In addition, they were expensive to establish and maintain. Thus, when finances became tight, some missionaries questioned their necessity. Significantly, Sauer and his supporters did not oppose either repairing the CLS building or restarting print forms of evangelism, both of which of course drew money away from direct forms of humanitarian relief. Sauer was not, in short, opposed to investing in evangelism. But he was suspicious of the efficacy of radio and audio-visual technology. Indeed, he stated that he would support DeCamp's original proposal if these technologies proved "profitable" and if they did not "interfere" with "more important things."[14] Faced with the choice between projects like the reconstruction of CLS and radio, missionaries like Sauer chose the former. Confronted with this situation, Mack pushed aggressively to protect the fledgling radio project in South Korea. In fact, when DeCamp had first encountered resistance from Sauer and his fellow missionaries, in 1951, Mack had written to DeCamp to offer his advice and assessment. Mack bluntly remarked that RAVEMCCO had "tacitly accepted the moral responsibility for approaching the church with regard to the long term needs of Korea" and that missionaries needed to "let the dead bury the dead."[15]

The issue of diverting funds for the construction of a Christian broadcasting station also evoked broader questions regarding the purpose

14. Charles A. Sauer to DeCamp, June 30, 1951, RG 140.1.27, PHS.
15. Mack to DeCamp, July 25, 1951, RG 140.1.27, PHS.

of *missions* and whether the FMCNA was too theologically *liberal*. As noted above, when DeCamp first met with South Korean officials about the establishment of a radio station, he was accompanied by Linton of the Southern Presbyterian missions. One reason for the Southern Presbyterians' desire to establish a radio station separate from that of RAVEMCCO stemmed from differences in theological orientation. Since the 1920s, the rise of Liberal Theology in the United States had fractured attempts at Protestant ecumenism. Issues of theology became particularly heated in Korea during the 1930s because of the Japanese colonial government's demand that all Koreans, regardless of religious orientation, bow at Shinto shrines. This order included students who attended mission-run private schools (S. Kim 2012). When the command was first issued, the Southern Presbyterians refused and shut down their educational institutions (Ryu 2013; An 2009). In contrast, the mission societies of the Methodist Church and the United Church of Canada, both of which contributed to restarting work on HLKY, acquiesced and had their students bow at shrines.

Though Northern Presbyterians on the whole refused to bow at shrines and moved to close their schools, they were divided in their attitudes. A number of missionaries who were adamantly opposed to shrine ceremonies eventually severed their association with the Northern Presbyterian Missions and joined the recently established Independent Board of Presbyterian Missions. After World War II ended in 1945, the missionaries who returned to Korea, though seeking to work in partnership, operated under this cloud of trauma and division caused by the order to bow at shrines. The fractures that had developed within the Christian community, and in particular among missionaries, over Shinto Shrine obeisance ran deep and made themselves felt during the attempt to establish HLKY.

DeCamp chose not to join the missionaries who split with the Northern Presbyterians. He was widely known, however, for being conservative in his theological orientation. In fact, DeCamp's conservatism was a concern for the Northern Presbyterian Foreign Missions Board, which initially hesitated to assign him to Korea after 1945.[16] In general, the Board considered

16. Harold Voelkel to John Smith, July 24, 1948, RG 140.18.12, PHS.

carefully the overall composition of returning missionaries. It feared that returning missionaries would once again engage in an internecine conflict over the issue of who had acquiesced to the demand to bow at shrines and who opposed. As noted above, these debates during the 1930s had led some to sever their ties with the Northern Presbyterians and join instead the Independent Board of Presbyterian Missions, which had been established John Gresham Machen. In the case of DeCamp, Harold Voelkel, though supportive of his appointment, admitted that his arrival would mean that a majority of Northern Presbyterian missionaries in Korea would believe, along with the Independent Board and the Southern Presbyterians, that the Northern Presbyterian Board was too theologically liberal.

DeCamp's conservatism may have been one reason Sauer and the Methodists viewed the HLKY project with suspicion.[17] In contrast, DeCamp's firm conservatism meant that the Southern Presbyterians regarded him as a trustworthy figure. He was thus privy to the real reason for their reluctance to join RAVEMCCO's efforts to establish HLKY and their desire to establish their own station. In a strictly confidential letter to Mack, DeCamp explained that the Southern Presbyterians were leery of the Methodists, who seemed to cleave to a theologically liberal position. The Southern Presbyterians did not wish to enter into a partnership that involved the Methodists.[18] In sum, the missionary community was divided, even as it publicly announced a commitment to working in union and cooperation. These divisions were the reason the Southern Presbyterians viewed RAVEMCCO and the work of their colleagues with suspicion. They also indicate tensions within the missionary community over the function that HLKY, which sought to use the radio waves to spread secular knowledge as well as the gospel, should serve in South Korea.

17. When first informing Mack of the proposed partnership with the civilian agency to complete the building of HLKY in a speedy manner, as discussed above, DeCamp stressed that "even Sauer" agreed to the proposed alliance (Decamp to Mack, October 10, 1950). As this statement suggests, tensions existed between Sauer and DeCamp over visions for HLKY and Christian work in the field.
18. DeCamp to Mack, July 29 and August 25, 1949, RG 140.1.27, PHS.

Conclusions

Missionaries led the construction and early administration of HLKY. The reason for their influence was largely financial. The equipment required to establish a radio station was costly. Furthermore, at the outset, HLKY was not permitted by the government to generate revenue by selling airtime for advertisements. Instead, the station relied on subscriptions, charitable contributions, and sponsorships, which came predominantly from the United States. Simply running the station was expensive and exceeded the Korean churches' financial capacity during the 1950s. Indeed, even the FMCNA had to advertise in the United States for sponsorship of airtime to support HLKY in its early years of existence.[19] DeCamp's position in and power over HLKY reflected this dependence on foreign funding.

To view DeCamp and the missionaries' influence over radio from a different perspective, in October 1949, while HLKY was still in its initial planning stages, the Korea Committee of FMCNA met to discuss radio in Korea. One central issue under discussion concerned control, a point on which the Southern Presbyterians expressed particular sensitivity.[20] On the one hand, the committee reaffirmed that the KNCC should oversee the future radio station and that Koreans should be given "the fullest possible voice in the operation." On the other hand, it also stated that though Koreans might push for the position of chair of the station, "American missionaries would have a very large part in the *actual supervision* of operations" (emphasis added).[21] DeCamp concurred with this opinion and bluntly stated that with all the "interest, enthusiasm, and money coming from America and the Mission Boards," he did not expect Koreans to mount a challenge for control of HLKY.[22] As DeCamp's comment suggests, HLKY was, at least at the outset, a project driven by missionaries, and they maintained their positions of leadership and control over this station.

19. Martin to Mack, May 6, 1954, RG 140.1.28, PHS.
20. Mack to DeCamp, October 5, 1949, RG 140.1.27, PHS.
21. Mack to DeCamp, October 5, 1949, RG 140.1.27, PHS.
22. DeCamp to Mack, October 14, 1949, RG 140.1.27, PHS.

After the conclusion of World War II, missionaries and mission societies returned to the Korean Peninsula to re-establish ties to local congregations and to restart their work. These individuals and organizations were not merely observers of the division of the country, the formation of separate states, and the Korean War; they were active participants in the construction of a new nation. Missionaries shared many concerns with Korean Christians and government officials, but they operated with their own unique set of motivations. Thus, special attention to these non-Korean Protestant actors is required when approaching the history of Korean Protestantism. Yet, existing scholarship has largely overlooked or underemphasized their roles. When missionaries are examined, they are presented in a simplistic manner. Scholars have cast missionaries as being staunchly anti-communist, a reaction to the Cold War and the division of the peninsula, and concerned with social relief efforts, which stemmed from a reaction to the destruction wrought by the Korean War (H. Kim 2004). While certainly important factors, missionaries—the majority of whom hailed from the United States—brought to (South) Korea contemporaneous theological, social, and political concerns swirling in the US. These concerns were subtly embedded in the construction of HLKY and informed the interactions among the various mission societies and their interactions with both local officials and Korean churches.

Importantly, HLKY was just one of the more ambitious endeavors undertaken by the mission societies and faith-based organizations working in union in South Korea. They directed numerous social reconstruction projects that were not aimed at merely stemming the spread of communism, but rather at addressing the multitude of social and economic maladies plaguing South Korea. In examining how Korean Protestants worked to (re)construct South Korea, especially after the Korean War, attention to the roles by these foreign actors is critical to understanding the development of Korean Protestantism during the second-half of the twentieth century, as it struggled to address the religious, political, social, and economic conditions of the country.

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BLA Burke Library Archives
GCAH General Commission on Archives and History, United Methodist Church
PHS Presbyterian Historical Society

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