

作者介紹：

Revd Dr. John Parry (約翰裴瑞博士牧師)

英國倫敦信心成長學習中心主任，退休宣教師

Continuing in God's purposes.

Revd Dr. John Parry

I bring the greetings of the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom and give thanks to God for the relationship that our denominations have had over very many years. Thank you for the invitation to speak at this conference. I am only deeply sorry that the present global pandemic prevents our meeting together in Taiwan but I also acknowledge that meeting in this way has also lessened the impact of our carbon footprints. Our faith requires careful stewardship.

I take as my title **Continuing in God's Purposes.**

The genesis of this lecture is in terms of asking the question of returned missionaries 'How did working and living in Taiwan influence your later ministry?' In most cases those who worked as missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of England and, later, the Council for World Mission found themselves in continued ministry, either lay or ordained, on returning to the UK after their work in Taiwan. I am interested in what impact life among fellow Christians but whose culture and life-style were very different had on my British colleagues. The interest comes out of my own experience as one who was born and educated in the UK but who was ordained into the Church of Bangladesh in the early 1970's.

In gathering information on this subject I was originally hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic in which lockdown prevented face-to-face interviews and access to archives in the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. As lockdown eased we discovered that my wife had cancer and so shielding was vital as she takes chemotherapy treatment. That said, I am grateful for the telephone conversations that have enabled me to gather material for reflection.

I base what I have to say on four statements made by friends and colleagues with whom I talked. Ours is a generation that saw a significant and vital change in the nature of global

mission particularly through the Council for World Mission. We were probably the last generation to be 'sent' as missionaries. In the early 1970s the African John Gatu made a call for a missionary moratorium. He was the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa and the call marked an end to the colonial mission paradigm. The year 1975 saw a Council for World Mission conference in which a major decision was made, that is that we should move from the concept of 'sending' and 'receiving' churches to a fellowship of 'partnership', of the exchange of personnel between sister, not mother-daughter, churches. This had a profound impact on us all and heralded, if not immediately a major change, then a potential for change in leadership styles and decision making in previously 'receiving' churches. Dominant missionaries were to be a thing of the past. I remember asking about a particular medical missionary who served in Africa. She was someone placed on a pedestal by Christians in the UK, highly regarded, and a 'mission hero'. 'Oh, she was awful,' said my missionary colleague, by then a URC minister, 'She ruled with a rod of iron and would not be gainsaid.' Such a working style was said to be 'the only way you could get things done'! John Gatu was right. His call brought a new understanding of the need for shared responsibility in mutually interdependent partnership, but it may have taken some time in some places to come to fruition.

I want to consider four statements and then reflect on their significance. I shall not name my correspondents since many of the reflections are my own based on conversations, not their reflections, but I am grateful for the stimulus they gave.

I left Taiwan 34 years ago, but Taiwan has never left me.

By way of background I think it's probably the case that the members of the United Reformed Church and the erstwhile Presbyterian Church of England in the early post-war years were mainly but not exclusively middle class in origin and nature. They were to be found in relatively comfortable suburbs, had been fortunate to have a good education, were articulate and experienced in their first professions. Two of them spoke in terms of usually taking things at face value, as I also had done, not asking too many questions and subscribing to what was to be known much later in IT language as WYSIWYG – what you see is what you get. In the UK there was a reasonable chance that one could 'trust' the system.

Imagine, then, what it was like to arrive fresh in Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s. There is at first the distinct incapacity with regard to language which means that even the most straightforward daily issues of food, travel and so on present one with an uphill struggle. Of

course, Taiwanese colleagues were always on hand to help and guide, but the immediate feeling is one of a lack of competence and a loss of independence. It takes some time for such a feeling to dissipate. But cultural shock is not confined to oral language. Body language can bring both confusion and embarrassment. Does one clear one's plate at a meal as one was taught to do in post-war Britain where no food was to be wasted, or signify that one's host had been wonderfully generous by leaving just a little food uneaten? Where was one to sit at table? How was one to greet people? Social customs can be a minefield of potential and hazardous unseemly behaviour.

Then there is the issue of the temples of other faiths and ideologies. In the 1960s there was little by way of experience of other faith communities in the UK. Few studied such matters and even in missionary training negative attitudes often prevailed. Thus as a missionary one was expected to see the Taiwanese 'other' as heathen, benighted and in abject darkness. After all, were not these people to be seen as the targets of missionary conversion?

And if one was a teacher, how was one to teach? In the little experience I had of teaching in Taiwan, I gained the impression that Confucian understanding encouraged one to respect the teacher and it was the teacher's job to provide answers. My attempts to encourage students to work things out for themselves backfired because of the potential embarrassment of giving the 'wrong' answer, so people kept quiet. Here was a distinct culture clash.

As time went on those who had been fairly uncritically accepting by nature began to find questions arising in their minds. Who could you trust? Why am I being constantly monitored and under surveillance? What can I say? Will my actions undermine the reputation and safety of the Church? Some of my correspondents arrived in Taiwan just as Dan and Joyce Beeby were being asked to leave. A new hermeneutic of suspicion arose in people's minds.

And so on returning to the UK after years of service in Taiwan one is confronted by the recognition that one was beginning to view life through quite different lenses. Years of behaviour influenced by cultural practice meant that one dealt with people in a different manner. The poverty that some in the medical profession had seen as they went into villages forced one on returning to recognise the need for the struggle for justice, the importance of not taking our national health service for granted, the commitment to establish a fairer deal for

all. Of course, you don't need to leave your own country to make such commitments but living abroad heightens awareness and determination.

For many, the experience of Taiwan widened their understanding of the Gospel. What is so striking of the work of the Church in Taiwan is that it is involved in all aspects of life, whether that be medicine, education, agriculture, care for young people and the elderly and so on. One is confronted by the Gospel being lived and practical, by the dignity of a serving ministry and by the Church's costly involvement in the call for justice and integrity in political life. Many of the people whom I interviewed had great admiration for the fact that the PCT had issued the 'Statement on our national fate' in 1971 and years later in 1985 had published the 'Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan'.

Whilst back in the UK the URC had certainly spoken out against injustice this did not replicate the costly nature of Taiwanese discipleship where the struggle could result in imprisonment and persecution. In the 1960s in Britain a book was published under the title of 'The Comfortable Pew'. We who returned to the West recognised how our home-churches were more likely to support the comfortable status-quo than to campaign for a world order closer to the nature of the Reign of God. Returning 'home' was a mixed blessing.

On returning home one also saw things through new eyes, one was more aware of what nowadays we call 'political spin' or 'fake news'. One no longer viewed life with uncritical eyes.

Settling down again was difficult. Now one had another language, another set of perceptions and worldviews, another culture in terms of music and art. One lived astride two cultures and had to ask who and what am I? 'I', as an entity was now something far greater than I had been. My being was caught up in the being of others. The Communion service became a celebration of my unity with God and my fellow Christians in another part of the world. I was part of the Body of Christ, playing my role amidst others who also brought their capabilities and talents. 'My' salvation could no longer be narrowly individualistic but was caught up with all God's creation awaiting, as Paul says, its own salvation.

I move on to reflect on to another person's experience: **I grew up in Taiwan.**

As I was starting my first 'job', as a Presbyter of the Church of Bangladesh, another colleague of the same age was taking up a new post in the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

working as a nurse. She used this phrase, 'I grew up in Taiwan'. It was not that she was inexperienced in her work, neither was she immature. It was much more a question of 'finding oneself'. So, what does that mean? We were both in our mid-twenties, and to some extent beginning to break away from the world-views and even the prejudices of our parents and those around us. We were entering into a new environment where one is challenged to reconsider that which we had previously taken for granted. The place of women and their role was changing considerably in no less a place than missionary circles. An illustration of this was the change made in referencing the wives of missionaries in the Presbyterian Church of England's yearbook. For many years single women missionaries were mentioned by name, but the wives of male missionaries were signified by an asterisk *. That's all. It didn't matter that they played a major role wherever they were stationed, they were simply an asterisk. One missionary wife spoke of her objection to this in General Assmebly. 'I am not an asterisk,' she said, 'I am a star.' Women in mission were now taking on roles of responsibility. My colleague was first employed as a nurse, but pointed out that so much more could be done to prevent ill-health if she worked as a health worker regularly visiting villages in the vicinity of the PCT hospital. A few weeks later she took up that role. It was an important insight into mission practice, a move from expecting people to come to 'us' to going to them. This was nothing new. St Paul's ministry was of that nature but it was an important break from the mission compound mentality espoused by our forebears. That same friend of mine lived in a house outside the hospital compound. She lived among the '*am ha-eretz*' as the Hebrew phrase has it – the people of the land, just as Jesus spent his time with the people of the land. She became herself, confident in her ability, striking out to make friends with those among whom she lived outside the mission compound. Further, conversations with neighbours opened up opportunities to speak about the Gospel without imposing it or forcing the conversation. More significantly she indicated that words cannot take the place of love and care. Here were shades of the concept of 'witness to the Gospel and , if necessary, use words'.

Finding oneself is also about finding one's roots. In the case of many missionaries in Taiwan one becomes both less and more British embracing a strange dichotomy in which one finds the importance of one's own language and culture but also recognises the importance of the culture of the host society. This was particularly evident for another colleague who is Welsh. She and her husband were brought up bi-lingually and had experience of the

resurgence of Welsh in Wales. For decades English had been forced on the Welsh people as the language of education. One was forbidden to speak one's mother tongue in the class-room. I was fascinated to see the way in which the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, without realising it, was taking up the same role with regard to Taiwanese as the Presbyterian Church of Wales had taken up with regard to Welsh. Both churches were determined not to let those languages be lost.

And yet here was a major dilemma. What language was the missionary to learn? Most learned Mandarin, the language encouraged by the government. It meant that missionaries often did not always understand what was going on in the synod meetings they attended. Yet Mandarin was becoming the *lingua franca* of the island and, as such, the medium of the communication of the Gospel. Similarly, it was the language used in university chaplaincy. My Welsh colleagues found themselves torn because they could see the potential for the loss of a language and culture as had nearly been the case in Wales. Issues of this nature challenge one to think again about one's own roots and culture. 'Growing up' is not just a matter of chronological age it is a matter of vision and understanding, of the capacity to deal with conflict both in outside life and within one's own mind. Such issues come into play as one finds oneself taking on new responsibilities.

Those of us whose early work experience took them overseas to sister churches soon found ourselves taking on responsibilities at an age which would have been considered too young in the 'home country'. It was part of the legacy of missionary work. The missionary was the one 'in charge', irrespective of age and experience. With this came privilege and prized accommodation. But things were changing. One returned missionary spoke warmly not only of the burgeoning move towards equality but spoke of the fine leadership evidenced in post war years. Perhaps this came about because the newer post-war missionaries did not sit apart from Taiwanese colleagues in synods as had previously been the case amongst missionaries but committed themselves to associating with their Taiwanese colleagues and recognising themselves as supportive colleagues and not directing superiors.

That same returned missionary who spoke of 'growing up' also said something else of significance. She returned to the UK to take up further studies but was invited back with the words: 'We'll find you something to do.' Now this may at first glance be very encouraging that one's presence and abilities are valued, but there's another side to this coin. I believe that missionary work usually needs specific purpose with one's function clearly identified. Mission history shows that there have been people whose lives have been frustrated by their

being transported thousands of miles away only to find that they find no specific purpose and consequent real fulfilment. This has particularly been the case for married couples where one partner's skills have been well used and valued but the other partner has wondered about his or her own purpose.

That said, one also has to recognise that being too prescriptive about the missionary's function can stifle the Holy Spirit as an alternative form of service is discovered and developed. Careful and prayerful thought must be given to the nature of the invitation and call.

And so, what of the return to the United Kingdom after mission service?

Given the responsibilities taken on whilst serving in Taiwan, it is hardly surprising that some who have returned have found themselves in leadership positions with the Church, either in terms of responsibility for ecumenical relationships or church administration, or in terms of taking ordination. Significantly, three women colleagues later felt called to, and trained for, ordained ministry.

They brought to their ministries a wider perspective developed by their experience in Asia at a time when some in Britain were challenged by what they saw as growing numbers of immigrants in their cities. These colleagues, like many returned missionaries, were able to act as bridges fostering mutual understanding and thus enabling the breaking down of racism that often is to be found in the United Kingdom..

It is not without significance that the Rev'd Dr Boris Anderson was one of the pioneers of encouraging interfaith dialogue in the UK. This was not simply within the United Reformed Church, in which with one of my predecessors in Bangladesh, he worked to establish the Mission and Other Faiths Committee, but also he was instrumental in the creation of the Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths in the British Council of Churches. It may seem a paradox that erstwhile missionaries may have been involved in interfaith dialogue but these were the very people who were capable of bringing the tools of reconciliation in an environment of potential division.

Experience of the costliness of discipleship in Taiwan also brought one of the returnees training for ministry to reflect on what she saw as an over-simplification of the Gospel and a naivety amongst her peers and teachers at her British theological college which seemed to imply that all would be well thanks to God's love. The reality of the hardships of life seemed to be overlooked. In Taiwan she had developed a theology of resilience – life is not

easy or straightforward, lousy things do happen. It was as if the Gospel was about Easter Sunday without the suffering that is Good Friday. One wonders if Christianity in the West overlooks this vital element in the Gospel story.

At this point I need to bring in an observation made by another colleague: **I saw the importance of doing the little things with great love.**

The Patron Saint of Wales is St David who is reputed to have said, '*Gwnewch y pethau bychan.*' It means: 'Do the little things'. It is said that in the days of the Early Church the Gospel was spread as much by the ordinary Christian folk as by the big name Apostles. These latter people may have been articulate in terms of speaking about Jesus and establishing an early theological understanding of his being, but it was ordinary Christians who lived the way Jesus lived, whose openness and care for others impressed their neighbours and friends. When asked what it was that impressed her in terms of the life of the Christians in Taiwan one colleague said it was a recognition of the importance of simply walking with people. And it is that preposition 'with' that is equally important in an understanding that one works 'with' people and not 'for' people.

Most of my informants had returned to the UK by the time of the horrendous earthquake of September 21st, 1999, but what struck them was the way in which the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan responded to that traumatic event. It happened three days after one of my own British ministerial students arrived in Tainan Theological College. What impressed her was the way in which the whole college simply closed down and went to the most devastated areas offering what support they could. At a time when everything feels utterly uncertain very often it is the small acts of kindness that can make a big difference, helping in the search for survivors, cooking food, building temporary shelter, offering a listening ear, comforting the sick and bereaved. These are ordinary, simple matters which can be done by you or me. They don't require extraordinary skills. They are the ordinary things of which St David speaks, and they are done with love, great love. Students and staff put themselves out to help. They could have stayed in college, but actually they couldn't. Their faith prompted their response, drove them to help and serve others. Newly arrived in Taiwan, my British student had been full of homesickness and not a little fear. As she helped in the struggle to rebuild broken families and homes she learned the real nature of Christian care and compassion where service before self is the keyword. Homesickness ... there was no time for that.

What really impressed our student was the systematic way in which the PCT responded. There were three stages. The first was to visit the disaster areas distributing much needed resources and, where necessary, money. The second stage covering the remaining part of 1999 was to conduct memorial services, build prefabricated houses and provide spiritual and counselling services. The third stage was to last some four years during which time the 'Community Recuperation and Care Centre Project' enabled victims to rebuild their stricken communities. Here was the Church founded on James Maxwell's holistic mission replicating his work and providing selfless service which was not without its dangers.

Selfless service and risk was nothing new to the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. The stories of selfless missionary giving by such as the Landsborough family over two generations were well known amongst their fellow Taiwanese Christians and in differing, but similar ways such witness was to be found among PCT members. My colleagues recognised the importance of ministry within the community as a means of Christian mission and witness. Unless the church has built a good interaction with the local community its mission cannot be implemented adequately, It is vital to establish trust and transparency. I find a preoccupation with church growth to be dangerous where church growth is sought simply for the sake of growing numbers. I believe the church's purpose is not maintenance of its own existence and expansion. Its purpose, I would argue, is its involvement in the establishment of the Reign of God in this world. When that happens and is valued, then growth occurs. We must ask ourselves: What is our motivation? If it is ecclesiastical self-aggrandisement then perhaps we have failed to understand the nature of the church's function. One has to escape from a church-centric mindset.

Equally important is the manner in which Christians were to be seen dealing with people. Those who had been involved in medicine as doctors or health workers recognised that their function was not simply curing people but curing and caring, irrespective of status. On returning to the UK one found herself wanting to work with fellow Christians in a local Christian medical practice because their faith guided their care for the community. Another colleague returned to work as a health-care worker in an area of social deprivation. Her capability to meet people where they are irrespective of status and in a non-judgemental manner, something she had developed in Taiwan, meant that she was trusted and appreciated and felt at ease with those often rejected by 'comfortable' Christians such as the prostitutes who sought her help. The Gospel is open to all.

The fourth statement by an erstwhile missionary which struck me forcefully was that **the**

Taiwanese Church was a willing sacrifice.

In the UK in 1980 we read with admiration of the manner in which the Rev'd Dr C M Kao was prepared to face jail because of his advocacy of human rights and democracy and his willingness to help Shih Ming-te because of his involvement in the 1979 Kaosiung incident. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan had developed a strong sense of the importance of democracy, in no small measure thanks to the influence of missionaries. My wife and I were at Selly Oak Colleges at the time when the Rev'd Dr Dan Beeby and his wife Joyce arrived having been forced to leave Tainan because of Dan's advocacy of democracy. Political consciousness was never far from the minds of those at Tainan Seminary. During the days of Japanese occupation the college was closed rather than accept a Japanese Principal and many were imprisoned or beaten because they gave the so-called 'wrong' answer to the question 'Which is greater, Jesus or our Emperor?' At a later stage in post-war years many government officials did not realise the way in which Boris Anderson's wife, Clare, had been quietly involved in making students aware of the nature of democracy. A classics graduate, she taught Greek texts which seemed quite innocuous. In fact they were about democracy and it is said by some that the Presbyterian Church was one of the few places in Taiwan where the nature of democracy was properly understood and experienced in that congregational representatives met together, discussed, voted and abided by a majority decision.

This understanding of mission work in Taiwan being related to the whole person must be seen within the context of the fact that the first English Presbyterian missionary to Taiwan was James Maxwell who was a doctor who healed as well as preached. St Mark's Gospel especially emphasises Jesus' healing as well as his preaching ministry.

Whilst the medical work of the PCT has been rightly emphasised, one has also to recognise the courses at Tainan for kindergarten training and music and social work studies. One PCT minister once said that more people joined the church through being attached to church choirs than as a result of evangelistic campaigns.

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan rightly has a proud history of standing up for justice and integrity whether it was in terms of the maintenance of Taiwanese identity during the days of Japanese occupation or during the Second World War when the Church was alone, when survival took great courage, faith and wisdom. There is no doubt that we in the UK must pay our respects to our sister Church and thank God for the heroism of our fellow Christians.

Little wonder, then, that there were times when on returning to the United Kingdom

many missionaries were dissatisfied with the introversion of our home church with its preoccupation with itself and its own continued existence. This is, of course, not the case for all British Christians but probably reflects the concern about the decline in church attendance on the part of the majority and the spiritual search more for the salvation of the individual rather than the liberation of one's whole being and its relationship to fellow human-beings and creation.

So let me begin to reflect on the implications of the experiences of my colleagues who worked in Taiwan and on my own very limited experience of the island.

Those of us who have been privileged to work with our fellow Christians in differing parts of the world have so often had our eyes opened to differing ways of witnessing to the Gospel and, very often, the difficulties of living in an environment that did not necessarily welcome the challenge that is inherent in the Christian faith. We talk of the Gospel as 'Good News' and that it is. Yet the inherent demands that it makes for selflessness, justice, integrity and equality are not good news to some. So to speak of such a Gospel can bring difficulties and persecution. Over the years the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has experienced this. But it has also experienced appreciation and support for its witness and its faithfulness.

There is much that we in the West – the erstwhile 'sending' churches – can learn from our partners.

Let me start with the nature of church practice. For generations the churches in the West exported the Gospel packaged in Western culture. I illustrate this with a story from one of my Methodist students who was being driven along a road in Kenya when he came across a clap-board church which looked every bit like a New England church building. He thought this indicated the influence of American missionaries, but no, it wasn't the work of American missionaries but Korean ones. They'd been taught what a 'proper' church building looked like and in their turn insisted the same design should be used in Africa! There was no recognition of the African climate and consequent architectural styles. That's one side of the Western Christian baggage

Huang Pekho makes an interesting analysis of the development of theology in Taiwan indicating that there were four distinct periods. The first from 1865 until 1950 he characterises as a 'receiving period' when Taiwan was seen as a land of mission with the Church pretty much under the governance of the western missionary societies and mission was about the dissemination of western Christian teachings which were, in effect, alien to the

reality of Taiwanese society. The second period was from the General Assembly of 1951 when Taiwanese leaders encouraged the church growth movement particularly among the less affluent in the island. The third period started in 1971 with the 'Statement of our National Fate' awakening PCT members to involvement in the struggle caused by their socio-political predicament. The fourth period started with the issuing of the 'Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan' where the Christian faith was expressed in truly contextual terms. It was a time when the church came of age and theology was not confined to individual spirituality but encouraged and enhanced critical awareness of the Gospel's challenge to the whole of our daily lives. Small wonder, then, that my erstwhile missionary colleague spoke of the naivety of both staff and students when she underwent training for ministry in the United Kingdom. As I come to think of it in my own college we did not really explore contextual theology until the 1990s.

I welcomed being introduced to the work of Chuang Ya-tang of Jing Yi University by my colleague Li Hau-tiong bok-su in which he points out that theology should start not with a concept but by experience, that it needs to be done from below and not be imposed from above, that it belongs to the people not the theologians and that it is to serve the oppressed and not the oppressor. Returning missionaries showed us that theology is lived and practised rather than simply a matter of studying the big books.

Text has to be transformed into a 'Living Word' asserts the Rev'd Dr Li Hau-tiong. To this end one is involved in grass-roots living. Three of my correspondents practised this, two in terms of continued medical work on return to the UK and the third as a University Chaplain and then, in retirement, as a 'greeter' at her local supermarket. We're back to the concept of 'the little things' but the important matter is to be seen in terms of the dignity that is implied in greeting and must always be part of one's dealings with people whatever the context. She may not have been working in the name of the church, but she was demonstrating Christian care and concern in the ordinary things of life.

Herein is something that harks back to the life of the church in Taiwan. Taiwanese theologians have implicitly indicated an important element in the message of the Willingen Conference of the World Council of Churches' International Missionary Council in 1952 where delegates discovered that mission depends on God's own activity and where the interpretation of world events is one of the determining factors in mission. The concept of *mission dei* (God's mission) dominated subsequent mission practice. The result was that the Church is to be seen as a witness to God's reign – a realm of love, justice, peace and joy.

The Church is neither the starting point of mission nor the goal of mission. Yet all too often Christians have behaved and worked as if the church is the goal.

Three things were learned from the 9.21 earthquake. Li Hau-tiong outlines them in terms of first of all holistic care. People had lost loved ones, suffered mental fear, physical hurt and material loss. So often we Western Christians in these circumstances turned to prayer or made donations to relief organisations. From afar we watched the Taiwanese church turn prayers into pragmatism offering not just material relief but human support through the process of listening and rebuilding. It was significant that a church that knew suffering shared in the suffering of others.

The second matter was in terms of community work. When I first went to Taiwan I was shown so many community work projects, and whereas politicians often used community work as a means of social control the church was able to introduce its values of love, justice, empowerment and getting a better deal for the disadvantaged. Because the church was firmly embedded in the community it already had the community's trust.

Thirdly adversity brought people of differing faith communities together. People suffer together irrespective of their faith or ideology and people work together to alleviate the consequences of natural disasters. It was significant that many who had worked in Asia were to find themselves very much involved in interfaith dialogue on their return to the UK. Such colleagues knew that people of other faiths and ideologies were not to be demonised. They were fellow human beings. God so loves the world, not just those who think themselves 'on his side'.

If one may be allowed to bring an insight from the Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama it is not without significance that the written characters for 'crisis' are a combination of the characters for 'danger' and 'opportunity'. How remarkable it would be to develop a theology of the Cross out of that insight.

What struck me as I spoke with my colleagues was until recently the paucity of the insights from the World Church taught in Western theological colleges. I was able to introduce World Church Studies into my own college and there's similar input in the Universities of Birmingham and Edinburgh. But look around many of our libraries and discover that most theology is still taught from a Western perspective and the books in the library reflect that. I am more than ever convinced that until such time as world church studies become part of our ordination curriculum our church in this part of the world will

remain locked in a western captivity. Our partnership is of the essence.

Such partnership is now part of a two-way process in which the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has been involved in the support of a University Chaplain first of all in Manchester for many years and then in London. The nature of the work has very much depended on the person appointed and at one stage was geared to the support of Taiwanese students most of whom were engaged in post-graduate degrees. Later, a predominantly Mandarin speaking chaplain widened the scope of the chaplaincy's work and so mainland Chinese students were gradually attracted. From the perspective of the British churches the establishment of good relationships across borders was valuable and reflected an element of mission work that had hitherto been missing.

I chose as my title the phrase: *Continuing in God's purposes*. In doing so I wished to hark back to the volume written produced by Edward Band celebrating one hundred years of the English Presbyterian Mission (1847-1947), called *Working His Purpose Out*. A second book was written by Reginald Fenn covering the period 1947 to 1972, called *Working God's Purpose Out*.

The Presbyterian Church is part of the Reformed Traditions characterised by five major elements and so I bring this address to a conclusion by considering how God's faithful servants have reflected those elements in their lives and work both in Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

The real starting point in the endeavour is that we as Christians work *Sola Gratia*, by God's grace alone. I know what it is like to get off a plane in a foreign country, gasping for breath in tropical heat with years of work ahead in a strange environment with little, if any, of the language and even less understanding of what seems to be a bizarre culture. You may be on your own. You may have your partner with you. You may be welcomed, possibly overwhelmed, by the local church members or an 'old-hand' missionary, but that sense of loneliness hits you. And then you come to your senses. The Christian message is about the grace of God. You are not alone, neither are you to rely on your own inner strengths. In a place like Taiwan Christians have recognised and relied on God's grace. They could not have lived without it. Imagine the shock of Dr Kao hearing that he was sentenced to seven years imprisonment. Like Bonhoeffer he survived by God's grace. And that was the same for many of his colleagues.

They responded reflecting the second Latin tag: *sola fide* – by faith alone. Let me suggest that faith here is about trust in the purposes of God as much as doctrinal belief. Such trusting faith means that irrespective of present circumstances one lives in the very real hope that God's purposes will prevail. The third element is *sola scriptura*. The scriptures are our guide to life. They make us what we are, the people for whom the Cross of Christ opens up new life – a life of selflessness shown through caring for others. We live such life not for our own sakes, not for the kudos it may bring, but we live life to God's glory reflecting his love, not ours – *soli deo gloria*. And finally we find *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* – that the Reformed Church must keep on reforming. My colleagues who worked with the members of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan found these elements in the life of your denomination. They found great comfort and inspiration amongst their Taiwanese colleagues and what delights me is that quietly they continued to challenge our home churches to witness to the love of God in all aspects of our lives reflecting that holistic mission that is so characteristic of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. e gives thanks to God and pray that all our work is done to God's glory.

懷抱上帝的目的，持續努力

Revd Dr. John Parry

中文摘要：

我以曾擔任孟加拉宣教士牧師的身份，經由此演講我想討論海外宣教士面對的「文化學習、適應與認同」的過程。教會派遣宣教士赴海外，從早期「給予、接受」的模式，發展成「彼此間夥伴關係」是較能符合當地實際需要的變化，以「彼此間是姊妹」取代「母女」的形式，更能實踐基督的生命與福音真諦。

台灣基督長老教會多年來努力地進入社區，建立當地的委身服務體系，例如 911 地震時，台南神學院停課，全力進入災區陪伴受災者，募集資源，對於當時參與救災來自英國的年輕宣教士，是極為重要的自我成長與學習。

參與草根的生活，是宣教士面對跨文化時可以實踐的生活方式。

我帶來英國聯合歸正教會的問候
並感謝上帝（保守）
我們（教會）之間長年的關係
謝謝邀請我為這場會議演講
我唯一深感遺憾的是當今全球疫情
使我們無法在台灣親身相聚
但我也肯定這樣的會面方式
已減少了碳足跡帶來的影響
我們的信仰奠基於細膩的「管家心」
我的主題是「懷抱上帝的目的，持續努力」
這場演講的緣起
是對歸國宣教士的一個提問：
（在台灣的工作與生活如何影響日後的服事？）

多數情況下，曾擔任英國長老教會宣教士
亦或是宣教委員會的成員們，
當他們結束台灣的工作返回英國後，
不論是否接受新派任，
我好奇這些基督徒是否因為
海外不同的文化與生活形態差異而受影響？
這樣的好奇來自我個人的經驗
我在英國出生，接受教育
但在 1970 年代早期被派任到於孟加拉的教會工作
在收集此主題相關資料的過程中
起初我受到武漢肺炎的阻礙
封城讓面對面訪談變得不可能
我也無法進入倫敦大學亞非學院的資料庫
隨著封城鬆綁，卻發現我太太得了癌症
目前她正在接受化療，防護變得無比重要
儘管如此，我很感激能透過電話交談

來取得值得深思的資料
我所發表的內容
是根據我所訪問的朋友和同事
提出的四句話組成
我們這個世代
見證了全球宣教本質上的重大轉變
特別是透過長老會世界宣教委員會的派遣
我們或許是最後一代的「被差派」的「海外宣教士」了
1970 年代初期
有一位名叫約翰嘉圖的非洲人
他呼籲暫停宣教
約翰嘉圖是東非基督長老教會的秘書長
他的這項呼籲象徵殖民傳教典範走到了終點
1975 年世界宣教委員會會議上做出重要決定
即我們必須從教會間「施」與「受」的概念
轉移到「夥伴」關係
應該以姐妹般互動交流替代「母女」般的教會交流
這給我們所有人帶來深遠的影響和啟示
從前那些作為接受方的教會
在領導風格和決策上
就算不是馬上發生重大變化
也展現了轉變的可能
主導一切的宣教士就要成為過去
還記得我曾問起一名在非洲服務的醫療宣教士
她在英國備受基督徒推崇
聲望甚高，人稱「宣教英雄」...
「哦，她很糟糕」，我的宣教士同事說
那時同事擔任聯合歸正教會的牧師
「她採取高壓政策，容不下他人意見」
這樣的工作風格卻被包裝成

「唯一能完成任務的辦法」
約翰嘉圖是對的
他的呼籲讓人們有了新的理解
必須透過互相依存的夥伴關係，共同承擔責任
但也許在某些地區要花些時間才能獲致成果
我想來研究這四句話
並省思它們的重要性
我不會點出通信者的姓名
因為其中許多是我個人的省思
那些省思源自我和他人的對話
卻不是他們本人的省思
不過我很感激他們給予的啟發
第一句話是：「我 34 年前離開台灣，但台灣一直在我的心裡」
根據這樣的背景
我想應該是聯合歸正教會
或早年的英格蘭基督長老教會
他們戰後初期主要...雖然不是完全
是由中產階級組成
這些人住在相對舒適的郊區
幸運地接受了良好教育
能言善道，專業經驗充足
例如：兩人間對談通常以表象評斷事物
我也曾是如此，不問太多問題
並且相信「眼見為憑」
後來這成了資訊科技的術語
在英國
要人們「信任」一個體系是有可能的
但想像一下
在 60、70 年代抵達台灣會是什麼感覺
首先，你顯然不會說當地的語言

意味著即便是最直接的每日議題
食物、行旅等等的，都會帶來挑戰
當然了，台灣同事們會隨時幫忙和指引
但你很快會有無能和不由自主的感受
這感覺要過一陣子才會消散
然而文化衝擊不僅限於口語
肢體語言也是困惑和尷尬的來源 - 如果你沒搞懂的話
像是這樣一件小事：
該吃完盤裡所有的菜
只因為在戰後的英國
我們被教導不可以浪費食物？
還是為了讓主人知道他的招待夠慷慨了所以留下一點食物不吃？
該坐在餐桌的哪個位置？
人們是怎麼打招呼的？
該如何出示你的訪客卡？
我在台灣很快學到
不能單手出示證件，要雙手
社會風俗可以是一個地雷區，充滿各種危險而不得體的行為
另外還有其他信仰和意識形態的問題
1960年代的英國
沒有什麼接觸其他信仰社群的經驗
很少人做過這類的研究
甚至宣教培訓中常對此帶有負面態度
所以，不意外地宣教士會把台灣人看作他者
或是異教、愚昧、且深陷黑暗的人
畢竟這些人不就是宣教改信的對象嗎？
而如果你是老師，又該怎麼教學生？
在台灣短暫的客座教學經驗中
我意識到儒家是推崇尊師思想的
因此，老師有責任提供答案

我鼓勵學生自己找出答案，但失敗了
由於擔心答案錯了會很尷尬
所以學生們保持沈默
這是很明顯的文化衝擊
隨著時間過去
那些之前算是天生包容度大的宣教士朋友
腦海中開始浮現疑問
你能信任誰？
我為什麼總是被監控監視？
有什麼是我可以說的？
我所做的事會破壞教會的名譽和安全嗎？
有些和我通訊息的人
剛好在丹恩和喬思貝布利被迫離開前抵達台灣
人們的心中升起了新的懷疑
服務台灣多年返回英國
大家認為這些人會以不同的目光檢視人生
在多年的文化薰陶下
人是會以不同的方式和社會互動
醫療神職人員走進村落看到了貧窮
這使得他們在回國後
體認到爭取正義的必須性
不將國民健保視為理所當然的重要性
並致力讓全民享有公正的待遇
這是她心目中的首要任務
當然了，你不需要離開祖國
才能做出這些承諾
但是海外生活確實能加強覺知和決心
對許多人來說
臺灣經驗加深了他們對福音的理解
台灣教會最驚人的是

它參與了生活的所有面向
不管是醫藥、教育、農業、青年關懷、老年關懷等等
宣教士所面對的挑戰
是福音活出了生命、被實踐、並且務實
是服侍事工長出了尊嚴
是教會付出昂貴代價
在社會和政治生活中
呼籲秉持正義和正直
許多我所訪問的人
都非常敬佩台灣基督長老教會
在 1971 年發表國是宣言
還有多年後在 1985 年發表「台灣基督長老教會信仰告白」
雖然當時的英國聯合歸正教會
也有針對不公義而發聲
卻比不上台灣基督徒可能付出的代價
在那裡，抗爭可能導致囚禁和迫害
1960 年代的英國
發行了一本名叫「舒適的座位區」的書
我們這些返回西方世界的人
理解到家鄉的教會更可能認同舒適的現況
卻不會為了某種更接近上帝治理本質的世界秩序而抗爭
「回家」是一種複雜的恩典
因為回家後我們就能用新的角度看人事物
並且較能注意到「政治迴旋」或是「假新聞」
我們不再用鬆散的眼光看待生活
要再次安頓變得困難
沒有人會想用他者的語言、認知和世界觀
或是文化去詮釋音樂和藝術
然而當一個人橫跨兩個文化而生活
就必須問，我是誰？

現在的「我」作為一個實體
比從前的我更加遠大了
「我」的存在，困在他人的存在之中
聖餐禮不但慶祝了我們和上帝的合一
也慶祝了世界另一端我的基督同伴們
我是基督身體的一部份
在群體中扮演我的角色
而那些人也貢獻了他們的能力和天賦
我的救贖再也不是狹隘的、個人的
而是和上帝創造的萬物同在
如同保羅所說，萬物也在等待救贖
再來省思另一個人的經驗吧
她曾公開表示，「我在台灣成長」
「我在台灣成長」
我做第一份「工作」
擔任孟加拉基督長老教會的牧師時
一名同年的同事也接下新職
在台灣基督長老教會做護理師
她用了這形容詞「我在台灣成長」
並不是說她對自身工作不熟悉，或是她不成熟
這比較是「尋找自我」的問題
所以了，這意味著什麼呢？
我們當時都是 25 歲左右
某種程度上開始破解
從前父母、身邊的人們、老師
所教給我們的世界觀甚至是偏見
我們進入了一個新的環境
必須重新思考我們從前視為理所當然的一切
女性的位置和角色有相當程度的改變
不僅限於宣教士圈

一個例子是在英國長老教會的年鑑中
提及宣教士的妻子時
多年來，單身的女性宣教士都是以名字列表
但男性宣教士的妻子只用星號來標注
一個星號，僅此而已
不管她們在當地扮演多重要的角色
她們就只是個星號
一名宣教士的妻子在大會上表達抗議
「我不是一個星號」她說
「我是真正的新星」
宣教的女性在當時已有承擔重責
我的同事起初是做護理師
但她指出還可以做好多事來防止人們生病
- 只要她能以醫療工作者的身份
固定拜訪她所在的台灣基督長老教會醫院附近的村落
幾星期後她承擔起這個角色
這是宣教工作中很重要的一項見解
從期待人們來找我們，變成我們主動去找他們
當然了，這也不是新鮮事
聖保羅的宣教本質就是如此
但這是針對我們前輩的宣教心態的重大突破
我這位朋友住在宣教士區外圍的一間房子裡
她和希伯來文所說的「當地人民」住在一塊
就像是耶穌花時間和「當地人民」在一起
她活出了自我，對自己的能力有信心
主動和她那些宣教士區外的人們做朋友
甚至她和這些鄰居的談話
給了她談論福音的機會
卻不會有做作或是勉強感
更重要的是，她認為文字無法取代愛和照顧

而原先「福音見證」的概念是
「如果有必要，就使用文字」
「尋找自我」也和尋根有關
對許多在台的宣教士來說
他們的英國根源同時變淡也變濃了
擁抱著陌生的二元對立
在那當中體認自身語言和文化的重要性
卻也承認當地社會的文化之重要性
這在一名威爾斯來的同事身上特別明顯
她和她的丈夫都是接受雙語教育長大
並經歷了威爾斯語在威爾斯地區的復興
幾十年來，威爾斯人被迫接受英語教育
不能在教室裡說自己的母語
我爸脖子上被掛了「不准說威爾斯語」的牌子
你不能在教室裡說屬於自己的語言
我深感著迷的是台灣基督長老教會
他們甚至沒有意識到自己在捍衛台語
像是威爾斯長老教會捍衛威爾斯語那樣
兩個教會都決心不要讓這些語言消失
然而，這當中有個嚴重的難題
傳教士該學習哪個語言？
大多數學了國語，即政府所鼓吹的語言
但這就意味著宣教士不總是理解
他們所出席的教會會議發生了什麼事
因為會議是用台語進行的
然而，國語正在成為島上的通用語
也就是傳布福音的媒介
它也是大學裡隨行神職人員所使用的語言
我的威爾斯同事們感覺被撕裂
因為他們注意到有個語言和文化可能會消失

就像是在威爾斯地區那樣
這類的議題
迫使我們再度思考一個人的根源和文化
「成長」說的不只是年齡的增長
也關乎視野和理解，以及處理衝突的能力
於外在生活和內心世界皆然
這類議題會隨著一個人擔下新的責任而浮現
我們這些早期因為工作而派駐姊妹教會的人
很快就發現我們擔下責任時的年紀
在母國會被認為太過年輕
但這是宣教傳統的一部份
宣教士被看作是「主責」的那個人
不管年紀和經歷如何
隨之而來的是特權和昂貴的住宿
不過這件事正在改變
一名歸國的宣教士
不但真切地提起他們努力朝平等邁進
也提及戰後年代所實踐的細膩領導風格
也許這一切會發生是因為
戰後的宣教士不會和台灣同事在會議上分開坐
他們和先前的宣教士不同
他們甚至努力和台灣同事建立關係
也認為這些同事能提供支援
不會自認是台灣人的長官、老闆
這名提到「成長」的歸國宣教士
還說了另一件重要的事
她回到英國是為了進修
卻被邀請回到教會
因為「我們會給你找點事情做」
這也許聽起來很鼓舞人心

因為她的存在和能力受到重視
但這事還有另一個面向
我相信宣教工作通常伴隨著特殊的目的
宣教士的功能也需明確界定
宣教歷史上，曾有人感到人生受挫
因為他們被送到數千哩遠的地方
卻發現缺乏目標，當然也無從建樹
對已婚的夫婦來說特別是如此
一人的技能獲得充分利用和重視
另一人有時卻懷疑自己的目標在哪裡
話雖如此，我們也必須體認
宣教士的功能要是界定得太清楚
在不同形式的服侍獲得發現和發展時
是可能扼殺聖靈的
這類的邀請和籲求
必須以謹慎而帶著禱告的思維為基底
好了，宣教服侍結束後回到英國該做些什麼？
基於這些人在台灣服侍時所承擔的責任
不意外他們回國後會成為教會的領導人
不論是負責大公關係或是教會行政
甚或是聖秩儀式
重點是，後來有三名女性同事覺得受到召喚
於是受訓從事了按牧的職事
她們將在亞洲時所發展出的寬廣視野帶進職事
而那時在英國的人
則看著越來越多的移民湧進城市而倍感挑戰
這些同事，如同許多歸國的宣教士
有能力擔任橋樑，培養共識
也因此協助打破了
在英國隨處可見的種族主義

同等重要的是
波利斯安德森牧師
在英國是鼓勵不同信仰間對話的先鋒
不單是在英國聯合歸正教會內部
安德森和我在孟加拉的一個前輩
共同建立了「宣教和其他信仰委員會」
「英國教會協進會與其他信仰者關係委員會」
安德森也是創始者之一
也許這看來矛盾
雖然這兩名宣教士參與了不同信仰間的對話
但也正是他們
為面臨分裂的教會環境引進了和解的工具
門徒訓練在台灣所費不貲
這也使得其中一名訓練人員
或該說是歸國人士
反思她所看到的「福音的過度簡化」
以及她英國神學院的同儕和教師間的天真心態
他們天真地認為，只要相信耶穌
並感謝上帝的愛，萬事就能美好
現實生活的困難似乎被忽略了
在台灣，我的同事發展出一種「堅毅神學」：
生活並不容易也不直接，爛事確實會發生
好像在這個國家裡，福音只等同復活節禮拜
而耶穌受難日也沒有苦難
你會懷疑西方的基督信仰
是不是忽略了福音故事中的大重點
現在我必須帶入另一個同事的觀察
她說「我體認到懷著大愛做小事的重要性」
「我體認到懷著大愛做小事的重要性」
我跟她都是威爾斯人

威爾斯的守護者是聖大衛
他有句話很出名
在威爾斯話的意思是「去做小事」
據說在早期的教會
福音大半由一般基督徒傳播
不只是知名的使徒在做
使徒也許擅長說明耶穌的事蹟
並且建立了早期對耶穌的神學認知
但一般的基督徒活出了耶穌的生命
他們對別人的開放和照顧
讓他們的鄰居和朋友印象深刻
當被問到她對台灣基督徒的生活有什麼印象
一名同事說，這些人深知與人同行的重要性
不論是使用或理解「與」這個介詞
而不是「為」，都非常重要
許多提供我訊息的人回到英國前
剛經歷了 1999 年那可怕的 921 大地震
但真正震撼他們的是
台灣基督長老教會對這場災難的反應
那是我一名英國宣教士學生
剛抵達台南神學院三天所發生的事
她很訝異地發現神學院全面關閉
就為了前往重災區提供支援
在那樣不安定的時刻
小小的善舉往往能創造大不同：
協尋生還者，煮飯，打造臨時庇護所
做個聆聽者，安慰生病和悲痛的人
這些平凡簡單的事，你我都能做
它們不需要高超的技巧
它們是聖大衛所說的普通事務

卻是出於許多的愛去做
學生和職員傾全力幫忙
他們大可以待在學院裡，但他們待不住
他們的信仰促使他們做出回應
推動他們去幫忙和服務他人
我那初抵台灣的英國學生原先非常想家
但毫無畏懼
她幫助人們掙扎著重建家園
她體認到基督照護和悲憫的真正本質
「服侍他人，優於重視自我」是關鍵
想家..後來就沒時間去想了
我們的學生真正感到印象深刻的
是台灣基督長老教會那有系統的回應方式
分成三個階段
首先是前往受災區發放急需的物資
有必要時則發錢
第二階段延續到 1999 年底
是提供追悼服務，建造組合屋
並提供靈性和諮詢服務
第三階段後來維持了四年
實施「社區重建和照護中心計畫」
使受災戶能在打擊後重建社群
教會建立在馬雅各的全人宣教之上
仿效他的事工，提供無私的服務
儘管風險是有的
無私的服務和風險
對台灣基督長老教會而言並不陌生
像是蘭家兩代宣教士無私付出的故事
在台灣基督徒社群中廣為流傳
不盡相同但仍相似的是，這樣的見證

也能在台灣基督長老教會成員身上找到
我的同事認同社區事工的重要性
這是基督徒宣道和見證的一個方式
除非教會和當地社區建立了良好互動
否則它的事工將無法良好地執行
建立信任和透明是非常重要的
關於教會的壯大，有個想法很危險
教會的壯大不能只看成員數量增加
我相信教會的目標
不是維持自身的存在和擴張而已
我會說，它的目標是參與並建立
上帝對這個世界的治理
當這件事發生了並獲得重視
成員自然會變多
我們必須問自己：
我們的動機是什麼？
如果是出於教會的自我強化
那麼也許我們並未理解教會真正的功能
必須跳脫以教會為中心的思考方式
同等重要的是基督徒對待他人的態度
那些擔任醫生或健康照護者的醫療從業人員
體認到他們的功能不只是治癒民眾
而是治癒加上照料，王公庶民皆然
回到英國後
有人想要加入其他基督徒
在一家當地的基督教診所工作
因為信仰指引他們來照料社區
另一名同事回國後
在一個資源匱乏的地區擔任健康照護者
她那平等接待民眾

不論地位、也不批判的態度
是在台灣發展出來的
這也意味著她受到信任和讚賞
並且和那些「自滿」的基督徒
所排斥的人相處愉快
比如來找她幫忙的妓女們
事實上她和妓女們相處自在
和自滿的基督徒們倒沒那麼自在
福音是開放給所有人的
第四句宣教士所說的話讓我大感震撼
「台灣的教會是真心奉獻犧牲」
1980年，在英國的我們敬畏地得知
高俊明牧師已做好入獄的準備
只因為他提倡人權和民主，又願意幫助施明德
施先生參與了1979年的高雄（美麗島）事件
台灣基督長老教會發展出強烈的民主使命感
這大部分要歸功於宣教士的影響
我和我太太在賽利橡樹學院的時候
丹恩貝布利和他的太太喬思剛被迫離開台南
因為丹恩提倡民主
政治意識一直都存在台南神學院的人的心裡
日本據台時期，學院寧願關閉
也不要接受日本人做校長
許多人入獄或是挨打
面對「耶穌和我們的天皇，誰比較偉大？」
他們給了「錯誤」的答案
後來，在戰後的歲月裡
許多政府官員都沒注意到
安德森的太太克萊兒
已默默地在培養學生對民主本質的認知

古典學出身的她
傳授著看似無害的希臘文本
但實際上文本討論的是民主
有人說基督長老教會是台灣少數
能充分理解和體驗民主本質的地方
公理會的代表在此聚會、議事、投票
並遵從多數的決定
台灣宣教工作和全人之間的關係
得從以下這個脈絡去看：
馬雅各是第一個來到台灣的長老教會牧師
身為醫生的他，一邊傳教一邊救人
聖馬克的福音特別強調
耶穌的治癒和他的宣教同等重要
而雖然台灣基督長老教會的醫療事工獲得表揚
我們更必須肯定
台南神學院所主持的幼兒園人員訓練
以及音樂和社工研究
一名長老教會的牧師曾說
越來越多人是因為唱詩班加入教會
而不是為了福音運動
台灣基督長老教會有著光榮的歷史
為公義和正直挺身而出
更在日據或二戰期間維繫台灣認同
那時的教會很孤單
需要莫大的勇氣、信念和智慧才能生存
我們這些在英國的人
無疑該向我們的姐妹教會致敬
並感謝上帝讓基督弟兄姊妹發揮英雄精神
不意外地，有時回到英國後
許多宣教士會對國內教會的保守感到不滿

因為它對自身的現在和未來有許多成見
這當然不適用於所有的英國基督徒
但或許反映了教會對教徒出席率降低的憂心
較重視尋求個人的精神救贖
而不看重全人式的解放
或是和其他人與創造物之間的關係
讓我來省思我的同事的經歷所蘊藏的內涵
我們這些
有幸在世界各地和其他基督徒共事的人
視野通常變得開闊，這不僅因為見證各種福音
也往往因為身處在
一個不見得歡迎基督信仰挑戰的環境裡
我們說福音是「好消息」，這是真的
但是它要求我們無私、公義、正直、平等
這對某些人並不是好消息
所以，談論這樣的福音可能會導致困難和迫害
台灣基督長老教會多年來就是經歷了這些
但它也因為見證和忠誠，而獲得感激和支援
我們這些西方來的「派駐教會」
有很多事該向夥伴們學習
讓我來檢視教會的作為
數個世代以來
西方教會以整套西方文化為基底來宣揚福音
我會用一個循道會學生的故事來說明
有次他在肯亞開車，看到一間板牆屋教會
幾乎像是新英格蘭的教會建築
他認為這意味著美國宣教士在此發揮影響力了
但不是的，那不是美國宣教士蓋的，是韓國人
有人告訴他們「正規」教會建築的樣式
於是他們堅持在非洲也要採用相同的設計

這完全沒考慮非洲的氣候和建築風格
這是西方基督宣教包裝的一個面向
另一個是黃伯和
對台灣神學發展所提出的有趣分析
他指出了四個不同的時期
1865 到 1950 年是「接受期」
台灣被視為受到西方宣教士社群統理的宣教地
宣教重點是宣揚西方基督教義
但實際上那背離了台灣的社會現實
第二個階段是從 1951 年聯合國大會算起
台灣的基督徒被鼓勵去認同教會增長運動
特別是那些在當地較不富裕的人
第三個階段始於 1971 年
「國是宣言」喚醒了台灣基督長老教會的成員
讓他們和人民共同突破社會政治困境
第四階段始於「台灣基督長老教會信仰告白」
此時的基督信仰已扎根於社會脈絡中
教會終於成熟，神學不再限於個人精神的追尋
卻鼓勵我們去深刻意識到
福音在生活各層面所帶來的挑戰
因此不意外地
我當時做宣教士的同事
提到職員和學生是多麼天真
那時她正在英國接受宣教訓練
想想我自己的學院也是到 1990 年代
才開始真正探索處境化的神學
我的同事李孝忠說得很對
活道...文本必須轉化為活道
必須參與草根的生活
而我那些回到英國的同事們

確實在那樣的狀態中
他們參與了當地的醫療事務
或是做了超級市場的接待員
我們必須去體認到
這些都是宣教的一部份，卻不屬於教會
我不喜歡教會這個詞
這是上帝的宣教，上帝的使命
這是我們所必須示範的實踐
是透過台灣基督長老教會事工所學習的
是我的同事在台灣宣教時的親身體驗
對我來說，台灣基督長老教會所反映的
是歸正派傳統的本然特色
我們因為上帝的恩典而存在
我們因為信仰而存在
我們相信上帝的恩典，所以忠誠地回應
我們因為認同經文而存在
那是我們唯一真實的指引
我們相信我們所有的事工
都必須榮耀上帝，「唯獨歸榮耀於上帝」
我們也認為就像是台灣基督長老教會
歸正教會必須持續改革
以回應當下的環境
感謝上帝
這是我的宣教士同事所做的事
也是我的宣教士同事持續在做的事
儘管他們已離開台灣很多年了
願上帝賜與我們所有恩典以追隨他的意志
並切身地活出他的使命

專題演講網址 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnAdPywSfug&feature=youtu.be>