

# History and Activities of the Korean Society for Mission Studies

## President Hu-Chun, Lee of the Korean Society for Mission Studies

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The Korean Society for Mission Studies was officially established as an institution during the Korean Christian Association's general assembly held in the city of Yu-seong, on October 23-24, 1992. Professor Jung-Woon, Suh served in the first two-year presidency, and was succeeded by Professor Jae-Ok, Chun in the second, participant of this general assembly. As is widely known, there are two societies for mission studies in Korea; one is the Korean Evangelical Society of Missiologists theologically based on evangelicalism, and, the other is the Korean Society for Mission Studies with over 100 members, more ecumenically oriented, of which I am a member, party to the Korean Christian Association. Of course, a number of evangelical missiologists are actively involved in this society. Yet much to our regret, although our KSMS has several times invited the KESM as a whole to participate in the academic discourse, we have yet to collaborate.

Meanwhile Professor Jae-Ok, Chun who was serving in the second presidency of the society had the honor of being elected president of the International Association of Mission Studies. Such an occasion encouraged the members of the Korean Society for Mission Studies to join IAMS and enlivened academic dialogue.

Since 1997 the Korean Society for Mission Studies has held conferences for academic presentations every other month. The society has made academic progress by providing new members returning from their studies abroad with an opportunity to present their dissertations. On October 15th 1997 the first issue of the magazine *Missionstheology* was published, and this spring marked the release of the 8th issue. Notable features of the past *Missionstheology* issues include the following: "The Dialogue between Evangelicalism and Ecumenism" vol. 3 (1999), "Healing and Mission" vol. 4 (2000), "Mission and Diakonia" vol. 5 (2001), "Mission and Culture" vol 6 (2002) and finally "Mission and Church Growth" vol. 7 (2003). It is worth noting that especially the third issue regarding Evangelism and Ecumenism was motivated and published once we perceived the need for more dialogue after the debate sessions held among the missiologists from Missiology Society and Evangelical Missiology Society July 15 to 16th in 1999.

Also in 1999 there was a significant increase of members. Membership is broadened to include those who had returned after studying abroad, theologians of seminaries, and,

those working in research institutes, denomination headquarters, and local mission fields, ultimately expanding the base of dynamic academic discussion within our society. On April 20th 2001 we commissioned the publication of the missiology textbook, "Introduction to the Missiology," that was to be used in seminaries of all denominations in Korea. In 2003 the society translated and published the German publication, "Dictionary of Basic Missiological Concepts" (Theo Sundermeier hrsg., Lexikon Missionstheologischer Grundbegriffe, Dietrich Reimer Verlag 1987). This Korean version includes the supplementary chapters that appear in the English version as well as new entries that reflect specific circumstances in Korea.

Members of the Korean Society for Mission Studies have been very actively involved in writing and translating. Works such as "The Open Secret," "Missionstheologic," "Classic Texts in Mission and World Christianity," "Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission," "The Biblical Foundation for Mission" have been translated.

The Korean Society for Mission Studies, to host the 2004 XI<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial International Conference of the International Association for Mission Studies in Korea, formed an organizing committee to assertively pursue the idea, and applied for the position, but regrettably turned down for the honor. The Society is now is making preparations to host the 2010 World Missionary Conference which celebrates the centennial of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh. At the present what is unique about the meetings of KSMS convened every two months is that we visit the mega-churches in Korea and listen to the various positions of their pastoral staff, deepening the dialogue with local churches. Moreover as continuation of our efforts to stimulate the exchange of ideas and knowledge with other disciplines, following last year's suit, a comprehensive academic conference, with "Globalization" as theme, will be collectively hosted on the 3rd and 4th of this September. In this Conference participate five members of KSMS (Prof. Dr. Jae-Ok, Chun; Prof. Dr. Hu-Chun, Lee; Prof. Dr. Young-Dong, Kim; Dr. Young-Gi, Hong; Jong-Hyun, Jung). Finally, this October a new president will be elected, and it is our hope that this occasion will become yet another turning point for development of KSMS in the area of academics as well as administration.