

**WYLIE H. FORSYTHE: REVOLUTIONIZING LEPROSY  
TREATMENT IN MODERN KOREA**

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**Abstract:** *Under Japanese imperial rule in the early 20th century, Korean people with leprosy lived in resignation, accepting death as inevitable and life as social outcasts with little hope for the future. The Japanese colonial government had no intention of caring for them. However, a ‘miracle’ manifested itself among these leper patients. An American missionary, Wylie H. Forsythe, ignited a ‘revolutionary event’ that began to improve the lives of lepers in Korea – changing the attitude and practice of dealing with lepers among missionaries and Koreans simultaneously. Thus, the main thesis of this study is to prove that Forsythe’s influence, broad and deep, inspired a national movement to establish a permanent dwelling place, equipped with healthcare, for lepers. In addition, this paper will address the harmonious possibility of co-existence between particularism (Protestant Presbyterian Christianity) and universalism (the general, yet crucial values of humanity) by examining the life of Forsythe.*

**Keywords:** leper, missionary, Japanese occupation, influencer, Calvinism.

In 1910, Korea became a Japanese colony, making the country essential in Japan’s entry into Southeast Asia<sup>1</sup>. During this time, Koreans were constantly grieving the losses brought about by the Japanese occupation<sup>2</sup>. This was especially evident among the poor and the sick who experienced more difficulties than others. In particular, lepers suffered greatly. As leprosy used to be perceived as a deadly epidemic, those with the disease struggled to receive proper care. Most were forced to hide in the mountains or sleep on the streets simply waiting for the day of their death. Unfortunately, the Japanese government was not able to address this problem, leaving thousands of Koreans without aid and comfort<sup>3</sup>.

Despite these hardships, a miracle took place. Wylie H. Forsythe, an American missionary instigated a revolutionary movement that directly improved the lives of lepers in Korea. He began to shape and change how people with leprosy were perceived and treated. Guided by his beliefs, Forsythe was an inspiration and a leader by example. His influence eventually led to the establishment of a permanent leper village and hospital in Korea.

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<sup>1</sup> D. Ryu, *Chosun and U.S. Missionaries in the Age of Enlightenment*, Institute of Korea Christianity History, Seoul, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> S. Kim, *A Study on Missionaries During the Japanese Occupation*, Center for History of Korea Christianity Studies, Seoul, 2006; A.D. Othman, “The role of the International Committee of the Red Cross in resolving international conflicts”, in *Journal of the National Academy of Legal Sciences of Ukraine*, 2021, vol. 28, no. 3, p. 154-161.

<sup>3</sup> J.K. Chung, “Christian Heritage Research in Yanglim Area and Its Usefulness”, in *The Second Study Symposium of Korean Christian Culture Studies*, 2016, no. 1, p. 45-47.

As Forsythe and the extent of his influence in the leper community has not yet been studied extensively, we will first analyze his theology and intuitive spirituality in relation to his activities to illustrate its social and religious implications.<sup>4</sup> We then examine Forsythe's personal life as well as his ministry. Specifically, we will highlight his outreach towards lepers, beggars, and even gangsters. Forsythe, however, was not solely responsible for the improvement of the lives of lepers in Korea, which is why we will also investigate his co-workers and disciples as they were instrumental in the development of Forsythe's vision. Consequently, we will show the influential legacy of Forsythe in the context of both history and theology.

The extent by which Forsythe's life and work was studied is limited. In 2018, a book about the life of Forsythe was published for lay Christians. Even though it provided descriptive material, it was not able to meticulously examine his influence<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, there was one brief paper that attempted to explain Forsythe's spirituality<sup>6</sup>. However, no study has been conducted on Forsythe from a broader historical and theological perspective. The present study intends to fill this gap.

### **Biographical information of Forsythe**

Born on December 25, 1873 in Lexington Kentucky, Forsythe began his medical career in his home state. He entered the Louisville Hospital College of Medicine in 1896 while participating in activities conducted by the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) and the Young Mens' Christian Association (YMCA). As a graduate of Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, he enjoyed studying and exercising and was able to relate well with his fellow classmates. On top of his academic responsibilities, Forsythe attended the Fulton Presbyterian Church – a well-known church in the region that encouraged a pious and noble life similar to John Calvin's in which they did not stop praying. Forsythe learned of a more matured and reformed faith that was based on the belief in the authority of the Bible and the necessity of evangelism. This soon became a common theme in his life.

After graduating from medical school, he joined the U.S. Army as a contract surgeon during the American and Spanish War. As soon as he was discharged from the military service and he became an intern at New York Women's Hospital. On July 12, 1904, he was appointed as a medical missionary

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4 B. Carter, M.Y. Omelicheva, "Liberalism and religion: Amplifiers of war between democratic and non-democratic states?", in *Democracy and Security*, 2018, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 300-319.

5 G. Yang, *Living Forsythe*, Serving the People, Seoul, 2018.

6 J. Cha, "Searching the Origin of Christian Spirituality", in *Theological Understanding*, 2002, no. 23, p. 177-217.

by the American Southern Presbyterian denomination to be sent to Korea. His first mission in Korea was to serve Koreans in the Jeonju area. In 1905, however, he was attacked by armed thief-gangsters and had to return to America for treatment. He came back to Korea in 1909 and stayed at the Mokpo Presbyterian Mission Station until 1911. He was no longer able to work because he was infected with the country's endemic disease, sprue. He returned his home country in 1911 and died of sprue in 1918.

### Forsythe's theology

*Forsythe's Modified Calvinism.* While Forsythe's soteriology was heavily influenced by his time with the SVM and YMCA, which both adhered to the revival methods of Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899), he was considered a modern Calvinist. The revival movement centered on Moody embraced Charles Finny's revised Calvinism<sup>7</sup>. With regards to salvation, there were differing opinions. Calvin's theology of predestination believed that human beings are already saved, regardless of their actions or beliefs. On the contrary, Finny, who was a Presbyterian, believed that although salvation was for all mankind, it does not come automatically. One can be saved through one's sincere efforts and by governing the desires of the body which is naturally and inherently sinful with the help of God<sup>8</sup>. This aid comes in the form of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the hearts of believers; it is the result of constant prayer, sincerity, and eagerness<sup>9</sup>.

Forsythe was able to embody his soteriology as he prayed constantly and faithfully. Everyone around him testified this: "He literally burned out for God. Untiring, unceasing, always agonizing in prayer, he bore the sorrows and sins of the world on his heart in such a way that the Koreans who knew him to this day speak of him as "Jesus again among us". No one was ever allowed to leave his presence without a word of prayer, and no one who ever heard him pour out his soul to God can ever forget his broad sympathies, and how his great heart took in literally all parts of the world, as he prayed intelligently and earnestly for the needs of the different fields, and individual workers at home and abroad<sup>10</sup>. Few had learned in the school of prayer as he had"<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> C. Finny, *Revival*, Word of Life, Seoul, 1998.

<sup>8</sup> K. Begalinova, M. Ashilova, A. Begalinov, "Religious extremism in Kazakhstan: Threats of spreading and means of opposition", in *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 2020, vol. 21, no. 4, p. 124-131.

<sup>9</sup> J.K. Chung, *Evangelical Movement*, Kwangshin University Press, Gwangju, 1998.

<sup>10</sup> V.L. Yarotskiy, Yu.D. Dreval, S.O. Zaika, "System signs of statutory regulation of occupational health and safety in the republic of Poland", in *Journal of the National Academy of Legal Sciences of Ukraine*, 2021, vol. 28, no. 3, p. 238-247.

<sup>11</sup> Mokpo (Center for Christian Research) (ed.), *Mokpo Christianity Historical Sources*, Mokpo Center for Christian Research, Mokpo, 2016.

Second, the issue of evangelical transmission. It was not enough to pray all the time and attend church without fail according to Forsythe. He reasoned that a true believer must make it their mission to save the souls of non-believers. If the salvation of mankind is not predestined by God, then believers are obliged to save others by introducing them to Christ.

Forsythe defines a practicing believer as someone having compassion, forgiveness, and promotes peace – all of which are human responsibilities. Believing that God will do all this for humans is a misunderstanding of His will. God is omnipotent and can do everything for Himself, but He refrains from doing so. Rather, God uses His people to exhibit His power and will. More than anything, He wants His people to live just as Jesus did and practice the compassion and forgiveness that Christ embodied. Also, Forsythe's peace-loving and non-violence were repeatedly articulated: "It is high time the people should demand that the extravagant and criminal squandering of the people's money on battleships and armies and navies should cease. The money thus squandered should be spent to save life. The price of a couple of battleships, which in a few years are thrown down on a junk heap if not sunk or destroyed, would finance a movement of this kind"<sup>12</sup>.

Implications of Forsythe's Theology. Armed with his reformed theology, Forsythe's particularism established his belief that his purpose was to share the Christian gospel with others. He adhered to this principle throughout his life without compromise. Forsythe's universalism allowed him to embody the general values of humanity. He was neither a religious fanatic nor a cultural imperialist who forced people to follow American way of Christian life.<sup>13</sup> He emphasized time and again not to use militaristic endeavors to accomplish any desired goals. His criticism on Western imperialism, which had been used in the forms of military aggression, was so intense that he did not support Japanese imperialism either. His peace-loving way of life applied to his evangelism; he never looked down upon Koreans and their culture. He respected human freedom in regard to choosing any particular religion. In serving sick Koreans, he as a medical doctor never discriminated any persons. He accepted the Korean sick patients regardless of their religion and social status. Also, he was more than willing to utilize human rationality in dealing with both spiritual and secular world. He encouraged his fellow Christians to approach the biblical messages by using their rational reasons. This rationality

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<sup>12</sup> W.H. Forsythe, *International Health Division*, 1913. Available at: <https://rockfound.rockarch.org/international-health-division>.

<sup>13</sup> D.A. Radu, A.S. Szalontay, A.M. Ciobanu, I. Untu, D. Temelie-Olinici, A. Bolos, R. Chirita, "The socio-cultural and confessional dimension of delusional ideas content in the spectrum of non-organic psychotic disorders", in *Revista De Cercetare Si Interventie Sociala*, 2021, vol. 73, p. 326-337.

extended to his medical treatment as we will see soon<sup>14</sup>. Most importantly, he tried to follow the universal values of humanity which manifest in ways of mercy, forgiveness, healing, and sacrificial love<sup>15</sup>.

### **The Ministry of Forsythe in Korea**

Forsythe served in Jeonju for about two years (1904–1906) and Mokpo for another two years (1909–1911). About three years from June 1906 to March 1909, he spent his time in the U.S. to treat his painful illness that he attained from Mangol, North Jeolla Province. Whenever Forsythe had the chance to share the gospel with non-believers, he did. He prioritized evangelism above all and he shared the gospel with a passion that no missionary could compare to<sup>16</sup>. His missionary friend once witnessed, “He [Forsythe] tells people all day, even at home late at night, on the streets, in the inn, in the fishing boat, in the ferry, to welcome Jesus everywhere”<sup>17</sup>. Forsythe’s passion led his colleagues to worry about his well-being as he would often skip meals and lose sleep just so he could spread the Word.

Forsythe, together with William M. Junkin (1865–1908), began to serve at an orphanage in March 1906. The orphanage was the third of its kind in Korea and the first in the Jeolla province<sup>18</sup>. It was, however, not supported by the Jeonju Mission Station, so the two missionaries embarked on this service at their own expense. Forsythe took homeless children and beggars under his wing and showed compassion towards them.

During his time in Korea, even Forsythe went through several challenges. In 1905, he was attacked in the home of Gyeong-ho Lee in Mangol. Lee, who was also attacked by the same robbers the day before, was seeking treatment from Forsythe. In the second attack, Forsythe was gravely injured from a knife wound in his back. He was rushed to Seoul and was subjected to five months of treatment at the Severance Hospital.

Forsythe’s compassionate and forgiving nature was in full display when he pleaded for the robbers’ release when they were caught<sup>19</sup>. He even appealed to his missionary coworkers to forgive their assailants. As this news spread throughout the Jeonju area, some of the robbers’ families began to attend church. Furthermore, many aristocrats and wealthy people in Jeonju became

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<sup>14</sup> Yu.V. Baiun, “Problems of development of the medical industry in Ukraine in the context of the decentralisation reform”, in *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series “Economics”*, 2021, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 86-95.

<sup>15</sup> D. Pylypenko, “Editorial”, in *Astra Salvensis*, 2019, no. Supplementary 1, p. 9-10

<sup>16</sup> G.T. Brown, *The Revival in Korea*, Living Waters, Bellflower, 1919, p. 235.

<sup>17</sup> G.T. Brown, “Progress of the Million Movement: A Visitor’s Impression”, in *The Missionary*, 1910, no. 8, p. 397-399.

<sup>18</sup> G. Yang, *Living Forsythe*, Serving the People, Seoul, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

more accepting of Christianity as a religion, thus allowing the Christian mission to move about unhindered<sup>20,21</sup>.

Aside from the Mangol incident, the conversion of Bo-han Lee – the eldest son of Kyung-ho Lee – was yet another piece of evidence affirming how influential Forsythe was. As a devout believer of Neo-Confucianism, Kyung-ho Lee wished for his son to follow in his steps. He politely declined Forsythe's invitation to follow him, but Bo-han's curiosity led him to become a student of Forsythe. Initially, Bo-han was not eager to learn Forsythe's dogmatic theology. However, as they spent more time together, he was moved by the genuine compassion and forgiveness constantly exhibited by Forsythe<sup>22</sup>. Bo-han then continued to follow Forsythe's example and soon became known as a saint or the father of beggars and orphans in North Jeolla Province. Like his teacher, Forsythe, Bo-han helped social outcasts regardless of their beliefs.

The story of Mangol event and the conversion of Bohan can be explained in terms of universalism that Forsythe showed to the Koreans in North Jeolla Province. Forsythe had a strong character and a force of great will, but this power was directed at the weak and helpless – abandoned children, beggars, and leper patients. Compassion and forgiveness are the life of higher religions including Christianity. They are like two faces of the same coin. Forgiveness creates a miracle that turns evil into good. If one constantly attacks the enemy without forgiveness, the enemy finds an opportunity to attack back<sup>23</sup>. Thus, fighting brings about another fight and creates a life of tension and fear. There can be no peace here. The only way to stop this chain reaction of evil is forgiveness. At Mangol, Forsythe sincerely forgave those who tried to kill him, and many Koreans in Jeonju who had no mind at all to accept Christianity still called him a saint with great reverence. He was admired by these people not because of his religion but because of his universal act of genuine love.

### **Establishment of the basis of Korean Leprosy Ministry**

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<sup>20</sup> G.T. Brown, *Mission to Korea*, Dongyeon Press, Seoul, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> A. Dalelbekkyzy, Z.-G. Bisengali, A. Toleubayeva, A. Zhanat, K.M. Baitanasova, "National code: Metaphysics and unity of historical consciousness", in *Analele Universitatii din Craiova - Seria Istorie*, 2019, vol. 35, no. 1, p. 105-118.

<sup>22</sup> G. Yang, *Living Forsythe*, Serving the People, Seoul, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> B.Zh. Smagambet, A.A. Tlespayeva, A.B. Musabayeva, "Social memory: From oblivion or construction to cultural trauma", in *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 2021, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 1-13.

When Forsythe returned to Korea in 1909 after receiving treatment in the U.S., he was assigned to the Mokpo Mission Station. That same year, a friend of his, Dr. Clement Owen, was suffering from pneumonia. Forsythe was in Gwangju on his way to treat him when he heard a sorrowful cry from a woman. She was all alone on the side of the road in Yeonsanpo. She had been completely abandoned and alienated from Korean society because of her condition, leprosy. Forsythe took pity on her and brought her to the Jejung hospital run by the Gwangju mission Station. During this time, Owen passed away. Forsythe then dedicated himself to treating the woman. Despite the abhorrent nature of the woman's disease, Forsythe cared for her without fail. Even when other patients in the hospital protested against her treatment for fear of contagion, Forsythe continued to assist her in a kiln near the hospital.<sup>24</sup> Dr. Wilson, the chief of the hospital, also took part in the treatment.

Word spread of what Forsythe was doing. People flocked to the hospital to see the patient with leprosy. Moved by the sight of Forsythe holding the woman as she limped and struggled at the kiln, Mrs. Owen offered up her late husband's bed for the woman. Since then, Mrs. Owen only referred to Forsythe as a "Good Samaritan"<sup>25</sup>. Eventually, the woman died, but not before she told Forsythe, "You have treated me so kindly, but we Koreans are never nice to people like me."<sup>26</sup> This show of indiscriminatory compassion led to a remarkable campaign of repentance among missionaries in Gwangju and some Gwangju citizens alike. "It was like seeing the Lord", they said<sup>27</sup>. They were in awe of Forsythe who dealt with the woman with leprosy with such devotion and compassion. Yang pointed out that Forsythe's sensitive spiritual ears did this: "Forsythe was attacked by the robbers on a nightmarish night in Mangol, and was severely wounded in one ear and head. The voice of God, so intense in his lost ear, sounded as a groan of a woman who was faint. In this regard, the wounded ear could well hear a cry of deep wounds to the soul. Forsythe got off the horse and put her on the horse and became a horseman himself. The master of the horse was not himself, but God, and he was nothing but a servant of God. Forsythe heard Jesus' voice saying, "What you did to this woman was to Me"<sup>28</sup>.

This explanation is quite reasonable in so far as Forsythe's selfless Christian dedication toward human being is concerned. Yet we should not

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24 O. Savayda, "Ukrainian mentality between mentalities of the peoples of the world", in *Social and Legal Studies*, 2021, no. 2(8), p. 161-165.

25 G. Owen, "The Leper and the Good Samaritan", in *The Missionary*, 1909, no. 8, p. 408-412.

26 *Ibidem*.

27 S. Cherniavskiy, M. Hribov, A. Korzun, "Usage of the foreign experience of mass disorders' counteraction in Ukraine", in *Scientific Journal of the National Academy of Internal Affairs*, 2021, vol. 118, no. 1, p. 8-23.

28 G. Yang, *Living Forsythe, Serving the People*, Seoul, 2018.

forget another dimension of Forsythe's medical philosophy, which he asserted: "Leprosy is a preventable disease, and with proper effort, it could be eliminated in Eastern lands as it is in America"<sup>29</sup>. Forsythe did not see leprosy as an incurable disease. He instilled the belief that diseases such as leprosy were curable through proper treatment and encouraged his patients to continue hoping for recovery<sup>30</sup>.

However, Forsythe was not able to stay and witness Korea's first hospital for leprosy established. He had to go back to his home country after being catching the Korean endemic disease called sprue. On May 9, 1918, at only 44 years old, Forsythe died in Louisville, Kentucky. While he was alive, Forsythe stressed the need for proper education to eliminate many serious diseases: "... to teach the people how to care for themselves in the matter of house, food, clothing, sanitation, and also to provide for the proper treatment of disease, and especially the prevention of contagious diseases is absolutely necessary at this time. The effort should be made to eradicate the foci of infection of such diseases... annually cause multitudes of needless deaths"<sup>31</sup>. His vision and dream to effectively treat leprosy at a proper place with the right atmosphere and tools were actualized by his missionary colleagues and Korean disciples.

### **Leprosy towns and hospitals in modern Korea**

When the news spread that there was a place exclusively for lepers to be treated, patients from several different regions began to flock to *Jejung* hospital. Dr. Robert Wilson, Elizabeth Shepping, Pastor John Talmage, and Heung-jong Choi all embraced Forsythe's spirit of compassion. They worked together as a team to care for Koreans suffering from leprosy. Dr. Wilson and Shepping's connection to Forsythe went way back to their time in New York in 1908. While Wilson was an otolaryngology doctor and Shepping was a nurse, they were both encouraged by Forsythe to join him in missionary work in Korea. Shepping, in particular, respected Forsythe as a lifelong spiritual mentor. Later, Shepping recalled: "Forsythe said that Korea needed nurses with hospital

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<sup>29</sup> W.H. Forsythe, *International Health Division*, 1913. Available at: <https://rockfound.rockarch.org/international-health-division>.

<sup>30</sup> O.O. Parlag, V.T. Maslyuk, E.V. Oleynikov, I.V. Pylypchnets, A.I. Lengyel, "Structure of mass-yield distributions of <sup>232</sup>Th photofission product by brake radiation at energy 17.5 MeV", in *Scientific Herald of Użbhorod University. Series "Physics"*, 2021, vol. 49, p. 54-60; B. Flores, T. Tran, "Use of neural networks in the formation of a high-quality smoothed audio signal", in *Scientific Herald of Użbhorod University. Series "Physics"*, 2021, no. 49, p. 35-42; S. Venkatesan, S. Saji, "Reflections on the visceral: Metaphors and illness experience", in *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 2020, vol. 12, no.1, p. 1-11.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*.

experience. His words were immediately thrust into my heart, and I was very happy to think that my short career would be useful in expanding the kingdom and horizon of God ... I applied for the Korean mission with great joy. The Lord needed me for the country and for the people of Korea”<sup>32</sup>.

Choi was also an excellent disciple of Forsythe. His real conversion came when he met Forsythe and he never looked back. He testified to this fact: “One day in 1908, I happened to meet [Forsythe] with a terrible woman leper that I could not bear to see... He asked me to pick up the cane that the leprosy had dropped... but I hesitated to do it. The cane was covered with terrible smelly pus... and dirty blood”<sup>33</sup>. When I looked at the patient who had the two missing fingers which were torn apart, I was naturally sucked into the tendency of great hatred. At this time, I was a man lacking even brotherly love, let alone the spirit of Jesus’s love. Only then did I reproach myself for my poor faith... the next moment the hot emotion shook my heart. So, I picked up the cane and gave it to the patient. Although I was a church-goer, I did not know the true beauty of love. I realized the secret of love only when I saw the genuine compassion of Forsythe”<sup>34</sup>.

While Dr. Wilson was responsible for overseeing the hospital construction and treatment for the patients with leprosy, Pastor Talmage and Shepping helped establish a church for the lepers and Choi was in charge of running the leper village. For this purpose, he donated a huge piece of land located in Bong-seon county in Gwangju upon which the village and hospital specifically catering to lepers were built.

The hospital specifically of lepers had a humble beginning as a shelter for a mere 45 people at Korea’s first modern clinic at Bong-seon county. The hospital saw a steady increase in population until 1924 when it reached almost 600 patients. As leprosy became more and more common and the leper population increased, the Gwangju City government forced the Gwangju Mission Station to move their practice elsewhere. Thus, Yecheon, a far southwestern area of South Korea, became their area of operation<sup>35</sup>. In 1928, the move was completed and an open and inviting community exclusively for lepers was established.

In order to help the cause, Choi worked closely with Shepping, and in 1928, he organized an movement to eradicate leprosy in the national level. This organization, however, was not able to have a huge impact due to the lack of

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<sup>32</sup> G. Yang, *Living Forsythe*, Serving the People, Seoul, 2018.

<sup>33</sup> I. Chala, D. Feshchenko, O. Dubova, O. Zghozinska, L. Solodka, I. Sokulskyi, “Blood lipid profile as a diagnostic marker of acute pancreatitis in dogs”, in *Scientific Horizons*, 2021, vol. 24, no. 1, p. 14-21.

<sup>34</sup> H. Choi, “The 50 Years’ Outline of Leper Ministry”, in *Honam Daily News*, 1960. Available at: <http://www.kwangju.co.kr/>.

<sup>35</sup> J. Cha, *Son Yang-won*, KIATS Press, Seoul, 2008.

cooperation from the Japanese government with regards to fundraising campaigns. Choi filed a petition with the Governor-General of the colonial government to resolve the issue but received no response. Thus, Choi and Shepping began a collective action against the government. In 1933, they led a group of 150 people suffering from leprosy and walked from Gwangju to Seoul in a demonstration of their solidarity<sup>36</sup>. Upon hearing the news, patients with leprosy from all over Korea joined in this protest. By the time they reached the Governor-General's office in Seoul, the crowd had grown to almost 500 people aligned to Choi's cause. Their demonstration forced the Governor-General to sit in a meeting with Choi. Choi demanded two things: the Sorok island in South Jeolla province will be fully improved for the entire Hansen patients in Korea, and the exclusive hospital for treating leprosy along with other cultural facilities will be established in the same area<sup>37</sup>. The Governor-General yielded to Choi's demands and soon, the Sorok Island became the first permanent leper community in Korea. Finally, Forsythe's vision came into fruition.

## Conclusions

Forsythe's real life in Korea was only about four years. It may be too short periods to make a historical assessment of what he did. But he had done many great things that no other man has achieved in hundreds of years. It was his spiritual influence. Now we will close this study by putting his influential legacies in order. Forsythe stayed in Korea for only a total of four years. Granted, it may be too short a time to assess the impact of his actions, but he was able to accomplish so much through his spiritual influence. Forsythe began by laying the foundation for the treatment of lepers in Korea. By helping the woman who had been ostracized by her family, he led by example causing many others to follow him. A new campaign arose among missionaries and Koreans simultaneously in Gwangju. Eventually, the newfound awareness and subsequent repentance led to the first community for lepers in Gwangju; it even expanded further into treatment for other incurable diseases.

Due to the increasing attention being given to patients with leprosy, the community flourished when it relocated to Yecheon. A more systematic treatment for leprosy came to be and soon, lepers could be treated by experts in the disease in the Sorok Island. The permanent community for lepers could

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<sup>36</sup> G. Yang, *Are You Happy?*, Serving the People, Seoul, 2016; N.Yu. Kondratenko, H.V. Marchenko, S.O. Stezhko, "Psychological and pedagogical principles of development of communicative competence of future journalists based on linguoculturology", in *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series "Pedagogy and Psychology"*, 2021, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 113-120.

<sup>37</sup> I. Ostash, "Cultural diplomacy in the Middle East (on the example of Lebanon)", in *Foreign Affairs*, 2021, no. 1-2, p. 22-26.

not have been possible if it were not for the efforts of Wilson, Choi, Shepping, and others. Dr. Wilson, in fact, was in charge of all Korean lepers during the U.S. military regime. Through all these, Forsythe's influence was highly visible as he laid the foundation for this movement. Forsythe's influence was attributable to his spirituality; his life was a guide for people to follow and learn from. His spirituality had two central values: love God and His people. He exhibited how to love and experience God through reading the Bible and prayer. Forsythe's love for people was apparent in his ability to forgive as revenge only begets retaliation.

Among the missionaries in the Gwangju Mission Station, the Americans demonstrated competency and effectiveness in organizational management. They collected donations from other countries and distributed it fairly. Some of the patients tried to befriend these missionaries to receive favor but it was not genuine as they did not embody Forsythe's piousness. While others went to hunt to relieve their stress, Forsythe stayed behind to care for whoever needs him. Specifically, Mary Dabson and Florence Root struggled to live as Forsythe did. His ability to maintain his pious life made him more influential.

The revival of the church would not have been possible without cooperation. The New Testament church is called Ecclesia. Its meaning literally states that a church is to be formed by two or more people (Matt, 16). As a single person cannot form a church, it requires cooperation to form a believer's community. Forsythe himself was very sensitive to the importance of working with a team. The beauty of the team ministry is the chance to deny own's ego, respect others, and live together with a common purpose.

A scholar once argued that Forsythe emphasized the importance of the immediate because he was an instinctive and emotional man. This statement can be quite problematic when the original documents of Forsythe are examined. Forsythe was never an instinctive and emotional person, especially in his understanding of the Bible or in his interactions with others. He even warned of approaching the Scripture without using reason. Perhaps this statement came from the fact that Forsythe seemed to be superior among other American missionaries in Korea when it came to his spiritual vision and intuitive attitude of loving on people. He did not value his interests above others in dealing with people.

Finally, the harmony between Forsythe's particularism and universalism was extremely evident as he lived his life. This issue is significantly important because there diverse religious cultures in which every religion tries to emphasize its uniqueness. In this respect, we can learn from Forsythe that we may maintain our religious faith without compromise while dedicating ourselves to promoting humanity by loving our neighbors and transcending our religious culture. Like Forsythe, we can affirm to use our rationality based on universalism – compassion, forgiveness, and peace.

