

The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 12

Finding Aid for

Personnel Policies of Foreign Mission Boards Records, 1955

19. Did your experience as a missionary strengthen or weaken your belief in the work of foreign missions? Strengthen (✓), Weaken (), No Change ().

Explain

Christianity teaches brotherhood, good will and would bring peace to our world, if we all practiced our teaching.

Foreign Missionary Record #1600. Credit to MRL12: Personnel Policies of Foreign Mission Boards Records, box 5, folder 6, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Kristen Leigh Southworth, April 2012
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Summary Information

Creator: Missionary Research Library
Title: Personnel Policies of Foreign Mission Boards Records
Dates: 1955
Abstract: Records contain completed questionnaires from foreign missionaries, churches, and mission boards that were collected by the Missionary Research Library in 1955 to research factors related to selection, training, placement, and withdrawal of missionary personnel.
Size: 5 boxes, 2.5 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 12: Personnel Policies of Foreign Mission Boards Records, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City New York.

History

The Missionary Research Library (MRL) was created by John R. Mott in 1914 after the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910. It was created in response to the need for a central resource to provide information for the development and preparation of missionaries, as well as a documentary source for the history of mission work. Mott stated that his intention was to create “the most complete and serviceable missionary library and archives in the world,” one that would be interdenominational, ecumenical, international, and rich in source material. Active missionaries consulted the library’s materials while on furlough and missionary boards, organizations, and individuals regularly donated materials. By 1929, the library contained more than 70,000 books and pamphlets, including many scarce materials. Originally located at the Madison Avenue headquarters of the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America, MRL moved to Union Theological Seminary’s Brown Tower in 1929.

In 1953, the MRL Committee on Research in Foreign Missions of the Division of Foreign Missions issued a statement entitled, “A Proposed Study of the Rate and Causes of Missionary Turnover.” Under the direction of R. Pierce Beaver, this committee of missionaries, personnel secretaries, teachers of missions, and others defined the scope of a two-part research project entitled, “A Study of the Turnover of Missionary Personnel.” Part one of the study was a statistical analysis of board records, gathered by three tabulation sheets completed by participating boards. Part two gathered demographics, experiences, and opinions related to missionary turnover through questionnaires that were sent to mission board administrators overseas, national church leaders, and former missionaries. Constant H. Jacquet, Jr., chief researcher for the National Council of Churches and one of the nation’s top religious statisticians was placed in charge of the study. A detailed analysis of the results of this research study were compiled by Kenyon E. Moyer and published by the MRL in 1957 under the title *A Study of Missionary Motivation, Training, and Withdrawal (1932-1952)*.

Financial difficulties which had plagued MRL for years continued until 1967 when it was fully integrated with the Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary. The Burke Library became part of the Columbia University Library System in 2004.

Sources:

From the materials in the collection, as well as:

- Coote, Robert T., "Finger on the Pulse: Fifty Years of Missionary Research," *The Free Library* 01 July 2000, [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Finger on the Pulse: Fifty Years of Missionary Research.-a064262975](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Finger+on+the+Pulse:+Fifty+Years+of+Missionary+Research.-a064262975) (Accessed 12 April 2012).
- Handy, Robert C., *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
- Moyer, Kenyon E., *A Study of Missionary Motivation, Training, and Withdrawal (1932-1952)*, New York: Missionary Research Library, 1957.
- Other News To Note Deaths, "Constant H. Jacquet Jr.," *Orlando Sentinel*, 19 October 1990, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1990-10-19/news/9010190307_1_jacquet-yearbook-of-american-canadian-churches (Accessed 12 April 2012).

Collection Scope and Content Note

The records contain completed questionnaires from 24 foreign churches (pink forms), 15 foreign missions boards (green forms), and 902 missionaries (yellow and blue forms). They are organized in order of their code number, found in the bottom left-hand corner of each record. The majority of the questionnaires were filled out anonymously. A copy of the original letter enclosed with the missionary questionnaire is attached to record #1158, and states that "the code number on your questionnaire has meaning to one member of our staff only, and it is necessary to us in our accounting and analysis of returns." This code meaning is not known.

The **board questionnaires** collect data concerning factors related to withdrawals, including the use of psychological testing and/or training, and its perceived impact on missionary success. The **church questionnaires** collect data from national church leaders about their responsibilities relative to the boards, the future need for various types of missionaries, the differences in missionary attitudes and policies before and after World War II, factors related to withdrawal, and the relationship of prior training to missionary success. The **missionary questionnaires** collect personal data on respondents including age, gender, field location, years of service, missionary task, and current occupation. Other information collected includes the factors leading to the decision to enter missionary service, what training was received before and after entering the field, whether provisions, salaries, and living arrangements were sufficient, the effect of the experience on their Christian faith and their belief in missionary work, reasons for leaving, and whether the support they received from their administrative board was adequate.

Some of the major concerns expressed by missionaries on their questionnaires were denominational factionalism, the misuse of money, imperialism and the need to separate Western culture from the Christian message, lack of Christian values among missionary communities, bigotry, lack of missionary experience among board members, and the unwillingness of missionaries to learn from and appreciate other cultures and religions.

“Christianity must be de-Westernized,” insisted respondent #1131. “We must serve people of other lands as Christ served those around him. We must divest ourselves of Western materialism.” Respondent #1225 wrote, “As I learned to appreciate Indian cultures and Indian religions I saw that the whole philosophy of the missionary movement is alien to my understanding of Christ’s teachings.” The following excerpt from respondent #1383, who had spent 17 years in China, offers an example of some of the more common concerns:

17. Would you advocate simpler living on the part of the missionary? Yes (X),
 No (), Undecided (). Explain Houses missionaries live in
~~I lived in one that could have been a country~~
club. should conform in architecture to surrounding building.

18. Did your experience as a missionary strengthen or weaken your Christian faith?
Strengthen (), Weaken (), No Change (X).

19. Did your experience as a missionary strengthen or weaken your belief in the
 work of foreign missions? Strengthen (), Weaken (X), No Change ().
 Explain Too many missionaries are paternalistic. Too many equate
Christianity with Americanism. Too few are really identified as
Jesus was with the common people as one of them. There is
~~too little appreciation for the fact that missionaries can receive as well as~~

20. Did your concept of foreign missions change radically? Yes (X), No (). give.
 Explain I went with the idea I was to help poor
heathen. China had a culture that was old before Am. was
born. I learned that after I lived there. From the beginning
~~I presented alone with my students foreign questions and~~
~~other imperialistic demonstrations of foreign power~~
~~including my own country.~~

21. What were your reasons for leaving missionary service? I returned
to U.S.A. to be married. Leaving China was not
easy.

Nevertheless, the majority of respondents indicated that they found missionary work to be spiritually edifying. Respondent #1295 wrote: “With better understanding and appreciation of other religions, I am still convinced that Christianity is the ultimate answer to all the hopes and aspirations of the best in every faith. My concept of ‘heathen’ and ‘non-Christian’ has changed to that of ‘friend’ and ‘seeker after truth’. Christians of other lands are definitely co-workers.”

Processing

Metal clips, staples, and tape were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed.

Contents List

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Letter to Missionaries, Tabulation Sheets and Instructions, Blank Surveys
		Board Questionnaires
1	2	M0003-M0009, United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS)
1	3	M0011-M0023, Board of Foreign Missions of the United Presbyterian Church
1	4	M0024-M0029, Board of Foreign Missions of the Lutheran Church
1	5	M0031, Board of Foreign Missions of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church
1	6	M0033-M0040, National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church
1	7	M0043-M0052, Interboard: Board of Missions of the Evangelical United Brethren Church, Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
1	8	M0056-M0059, General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church
1	9	M0064-M0066, Board of Foreign Missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church
1	10	M0069-M0078, General Brotherhood Board, Church of the Brethren
1	11	M0079-M0083, Board of Foreign Missions of the United Lutheran Church
1	12	M0086-M0115, Board of Missions of the Methodist Church
1	13	M0117-M0122, Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America
1	14	M0123-M0130, Board of World Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the US
		Church Questionnaires
1	15	0003-0121
		Missionary Questionnaires
1	16	0001-0053
1	17	0054-0096
1	18	0097-0138
1	19	0139-0163
1	20	0164-0197
2	1	0198-0225
2	2	0228-0265
2	3	0266-0297
2	4	0298-0321
2	5	0322-0348
2	6	0349-0382
2	7	0383-0417
2	8	0418-0453
2	9	0454-0488
2	10	0489-0532
3	1	0533-0561
3	2	0562-0614
3	3	0615-0657
3	4	0658-0690

Box	Folder	Contents
		Missionary Questionnaires (cont'd)
3	5	0691-0736
3	6	0737-0773
3	7	0774-0802
3	8	0803-0842
3	9	0843-0899
3	10	0900-0927
4	1	0928-0956
4	2	0957-0991
4	3	0992-1025
4	4	1026-1054
4	5	1055-1089
4	6	1090-1130
4	7	1131-1164
4	8	1165-1214
4	9	1215-1270
4	10	1271-1304
5	1	1305-1345
5	2	1346-1386
5	3	1387-1438
5	4	1439-1509
5	5	1510-1573
5	6	1573-1610
5	7	1611-1638
5	8	1639-1682
5	9	1683-1721
5	10	1722-1775