

Holiness as Healing: Is there a Cure for sin? What kind of cure is it? What are its implications for OMS related missions in Asia and in the World?

An abstract for a study by Leroy E. Lindsey, Jr., Ph.D.,
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Whether we embrace eastern or western theories of healing and wholeness, a relevant question for missions today is: Is there a cure for the human malady? How does the Christian message—specifically, the Wesleyan-Holiness understanding of it—have anything different to offer today's seeker, especially in terms of a cure?

Juji Nakada's burning desire was for freedom from the sickness of sin. He wanted to be whole, free! Would Nakada find the answer in Christianity? Most Christians he knew at the end of the 19th century gave him the same, flat answer: "No, you will continue to sin." What he understood was, "Even Jesus cannot cure one from sinning in this life." But then he found a different response: there is no need to keep sinning; there is a remedy! Nakada had found the cure, and it was called "holiness"! As part of the articulation of this discovery, Cowman, Kilbourne and Nakada founded the society now called OMS International. Its related institutions, national and international movements are heirs of the view of salvation as providing an extreme cure for sin.

The OMS founders saw salvation available to all as "full", and as such it provides the cure for evil in the human condition by removing its cause, and then providing a well-balanced full life. In therapeutic terms, when eradication measures are required, and are both possible and available, no one usually settles for palliative treatment. But physical analogies can be misunderstood, and misapplied. Is this the best analogy to use in eastern thought? Is sin really a "malady" to be "eradicated"? How? Are these even the right questions to be asking? What kind of cure did OMS founders originally teach? What is its positive articulation? What kind of cure are we seeking, teaching, offering, living today?

Isn't it just possible that a return to the classic concept of salvation as a radical remedy for sin might not only illuminate the present need, but also the vocabulary and the methodology for making clear its cure in the 21st century both in our theological expression and in our mission?