



c e l e b r a t i n g **A S I A N**
h e r i t a g e m o n t h

Pentecost & the Presence of Asians at Acadia

OVERVIEW

May is celebrated in Canada as Asian Heritage Month. As part of this celebration we invite your reflections on the presence of Asians at Acadia and in Canada, as well as links between spirituality and ethnicity with special reference to China and India. The Manning Memorial Chapel celebration includes reflections by Acadia President and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Peter Ricketts and Ms. Carissa Campbell, Coordinator International Student Advising & the Wong International Centre. We acknowledge the gift of Asian connections in music. We hear stories of Acadia students and graduates of Asian heritage and reflect on these stories in light of theological and interdisciplinary perspectives on Bible translation and Christian Mission. The Christian observation of Pentecost begins on May 31, 2020 and we invite you to reflect all on these things over seven days or moments.

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DAY 1

Diversity and inclusion are key elements in Acadia University's history and among its core values.

Acadia President and Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Peter Ricketts affirms these key elements in the celebration of Asian Heritage Month stating:

Diversity and Inclusion

Acadia University students not only receive a world-class education but also get exposed to people, cultures, and ideas from across the globe because we celebrate our diverse community. Even in its founding in 1838, Acadia recognized the need to break down barriers to education. Over time, this came to include different religious backgrounds, genders, economic backgrounds, and race. Today, we have a student body from more than 70 countries. Recognizing and celebrating the heritage of all our students and alumni matters because we consider everyone an integral part of the Acadia community. The many contributions of our Asian family members are perhaps best defined by the namesake and founder of our International Student Centre, Gene Wong ('49, HON '96). He travelled from his homeland China for the Acadia experience, something he cherished throughout his successful career. He recognized the need to support all students to encourage their participation in higher education at Acadia. As Acadia moves forward with our strategic planning for the future, we continue to diligently pursue inclusive education opportunities because we recognize how much it enriches the experience for all of us. It is an honour to acknowledge and celebrate Asian Heritage Month.





QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ❖ How have you interacted with people of Asian ancestry at Acadia?
- ❖ How has your spirituality (relationship to God/Higher Power, your understanding of yourself, relationships with others, connection with nature, interpretation of suffering, etc.) been influenced by Asian cultures?
- ❖ What would you like to explore further about spirituality and Asian culture?

Prayers DAY 1: Litany of Thanksgiving for Asian Heritage Month

This litany is used at Tsurukawa Church located in the city of Machida, a part of Tokyo Prefecture and of the West Tokyo District of the United Church of Christ in Japan. Translation by Rob Witmer.



<https://www.united-church.ca/worship-special-days/asian-heritage-month-1>

DAY 2 LISTENING



云上太阳 The Sun Above the Clouds

<https://youtu.be/FnjEZHJQLZ8>



彩虹下的约定 The Covenant Under the Rainbow

<https://youtu.be/pdWI7VM2O9I>



宝贵十架 Precious Cross

<https://youtu.be/0YJZUyVOQVY>



Maalika - Gregorian Chant meets Raga

Sahara Jane with Manning Chapel Choir

<https://youtu.be/4mBHpnH1e-E>



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ❖ How did you respond to the different pieces of music? Were there feelings of sadness, anger, confusion, joy, peace, warmth, curiosity, other? No emotions at all?
- ❖ Can you include these feelings in your prayer/meditation/reflection?

Prayers DAY 2

Pray using the following guide:

I am thankful for...

I ask God to help me with...

I am sorry for...

I ask God to forgive and heal...

I have hope and sense God's power when...

Pray *The Lord's Prayer* in your first language...

DAY 3

Meditating with the Bible: Asian Heritage and Pentecost

Mandarin translation for Acts 2:4

他们就都被圣灵充满，按着圣灵所赐的口才说起别国的话来

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (Acts 2: 4 NRSV)

Acts 2:4 Read in the Tamil Translation

<https://youtu.be/4zsCPPqaD5s>



Bible Reading Acts 2: 1-41

Asian Heritage month coincides with the month in which the observance of Pentecost begins in the Christian Church. Pentecost begins this year on May 31 and renews the annual celebration of the Church that focuses on God's Holy Spirit. In Acts 2: 1 – 41, the origins of Pentecost are described. The disciples of Jesus were together celebrating the Jewish harvest festival known as the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15 – 21). A sudden sound like a violent wind was heard, followed by the sight of tongues that seemed like fire which divided with a tongue resting on each of the disciples. They then began to speak in different languages and the devout worshipers who had gathered from many parts of the world, including Asia, heard the disciples speaking in each person's native language.


The significance of this story includes, an affirmation of diversity and the importance of each person's language and culture, the creative power of God's Spirit working to manifest new possibilities, as happened in the story of creation when the Spirit of God moved over the face of the water, bringing light, life and order. (Genesis 1: 2.). Pentecost also recalls the belief that God's Spirit bestows gifts and

enables a life of purpose for women, men, old and young. (See for example Joel 2:28 and 1Corinthians 12).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Introduction:

Bible Societies have been translating the Bible into the first languages of people all over the world. Based on research in Linguistics, Anthropology, Psychology, Education, Postcolonialism and other academic disciplines, Bible translators and exegetes have concluded that the most powerful way to communicate the Bible is in a person's first language. *The Jamieken Baibl Documentary* is one instance in which the arguments for translations of the Bible were marshalled.

 You are invited to reflect on Acts 2: 1-41 using the affirmation below:

Affirmation: God Speaks my Language

God Speaks my language - listens to me and whispers to me words of power in the language of my heart:

the language I heard in the first years of my life; the language of my mother's lullabies, the language of the spices in my food; the language of the touch of care, the cadences of security; the language of the smells of home; the language of the animals and plants, of the moon and the stars, of the seasons of planting and growth and harvest all around me: the language of my heart

God speaks my language.

the language of my deepest expressions of rage and outrage, of being crushed, of dread, of rejection, of pain, of jealousy, of numbness... and the language of delight, of courage of relief, of abounding energy, zest for life; the language of love, and faith, and of hope and more hope...whether in soft-hued or striking shades, in whispers or sound surpassing a thousand decibels: the language of my heart


God speaks my language.

the language of my ancestors in which I first said mother, father, sister, brother, cousin, uncle, aunt, grandmother, grandfather; the language of the songs, the stories, the proverbs, the wisdom of my people, the language of the achievements and rituals of my ancestors from many seasons ago....: the language of my heart

God speaks my language.

And God speaks their language too.

(Marjorie Lewis 2020/05/23)

 How do you assess the arguments for the translation of the Bible into local languages, outlined in the documentary at the link below?



Jamieken Baibl Documentary (27 Minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tZmjauVatA>

Prayers DAY 3

Pray using prayers based on Acts 2: 1 – 41 at the link below:

The Revised Common Lectionary A Service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library:

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayers.php?id=47>

Pray *The Lord's Prayer* in your first language

DAY 4

Canada Snapshot

The declaration of May as Asian Heritage Month by the Canadian government highlights the presence and contribution of people of Asian ancestry to the development of Canadian society. The government website explains it in this way:

CELEBRATING ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH: STORIES OF ASIANS IN CANADA

Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity for all Canadians to learn more about the many achievements and contributions of Canadians of Asian descent who, throughout our history, have done so much to make Canada the amazing country we share today. The theme for Asian Heritage Month 2020, "Asian Canadians: United in Diversity", was inspired by the long and rich history of these Canadians who continue, even today, to enrich our country and make it a more vibrant, inclusive and compassionate society. Let us celebrate in May the incredible diversity that is our strength.

Asian Heritage Month (Government of Canada)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/asian-heritage-month.html>



United Church of Canada Snapshot

Religious observances of Asian Heritage Month include efforts by the United Church of Canada (UCC). The UCC's observance includes a history of Asians in Canadian society and in the church. A brief history of the challenges of respective groups of Asians and their stories of resilience, their outstanding contribution to the church can be found in the video below:

Struggle & Grace: Asian Heritage in the United Church (6 Minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wizwayz7U9g>

The UCC also uses interdisciplinary analysis in reflecting on the dynamics of achieving goals of being inclusive and respectful of differences. One tool that they include is the 'Cultural Iceberg' developed from the work of Hall (1976) and Weaver (1986). Some cultural differences are obvious including ethnicity, language, clothing. But most of the aspects of culture (e.g. core values, attitudes, beliefs, priorities) are not so obvious. Being inclusive and respectful require a desire to know more about others and the willingness to take the risk of developing deeper relationships with others outside of our immediate circle.

The Cultural Iceberg – The United Church of Canada

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/27598037/the-cultural-iceberg-the-united-church-of-canada>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ❖ How have I related with people of ethnicities different from my own, at Acadia and beyond?
 - ❖ What actions do I want to take based on Asian Heritage Month and my religious / spiritual / philosophical reflections?
-

Prayers DAY 4

Pray using the following guide:

I am thankful for...

I ask God to help me with...

I am sorry for...

I ask God to forgive and heal...

I have hope and sense God's power when...

Pray *The Lord's Prayer* in your first language...

DAY 5

Voices of Asian Students at Acadia

Here at Acadia, Asian students and alumni/ae have expressed their spirituality while studying at Acadia, by being members of religious groups, by affirming their worth and the value of their culture, by the use of their experience of culture shock and suffering to motivate them to help others. They are also participating in groups at the University and in the wider community that contribute to the fostering of respect and peace among people of different backgrounds.

Here are stories of different members of the Acadia community, who are of Asian Heritage:]

Contribution of Chinese to Acadia University

Dr. Gene D. Wong

Carissa Campbell, Coordinator, International Student Advising & the Wong International Centre said this of Dr. Gene D. Wong:

As we join our friends in celebrating Asian Heritage Month, we would like to recognize the tremendous contributions that students and alumni of Asian heritage have made to make

Acadia the wonderful community that it is. We consider the Wong International Centre to be the heart of diversity on campus, where students can find support, social inclusion and community. In celebration of Asian Heritage Month, we would like to recognize the generous support of Dr. Gene D. Wong ('60), Acadia's first graduate of Chinese descent. Through Dr. Wong's generous support, the Wong International Centre was established. When Dr. Wong first arrived at Acadia, there was no official to help him cope with culture shock and the loneliness that comes with being separated from friends and family on the other side of the world. There was no place for him to go to meet with other international students. Acadia is now a place of diversity, with students representing over 60 countries from around the world. But before this, Dr. Wong blazed a trail to Acadia and made the journey easier for generations of international students to come. We are eternally grateful to Dr. Wong for his support of Acadia's international students, and rejoice in celebrating Asian Heritage Month, honouring his tremendous contribution to Acadia.

You can learn more about Dr. Wong and the Wong International at the website below:

Wong International Centre

<https://www.acadiau.ca/international/wong-international-centre.html>

Chinese Students and Recent Graduates Reflect on the Acadia Experience



Chuhan Xiao and Yikai Zhao
Wife and husband Acadia Graduates in
Psychology and Computer Science Respectively
<https://youtu.be/Fd-V0cj4k0A>



Qiaodan Luo
Acadia Computer Science Student
<https://youtu.be/H1ZCfEeV3C0>

A Student from India Reflects on the Acadia Experience



Ajay Immanuel
Manning Memorial Chapel Assistant
and Student at Acadia Divinity College
<https://youtu.be/dkbiMf0d0jE>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ✿ What do you think is significant and of value about your culture?
 - ✿ What aspects of knowledge from Asian cultures are linked with your academic programmes and co-curricular activities at Acadia?
 - ✿ How do you integrate your faith/spirituality with your academic life?
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Prayers DAY 5

Pray using the following guide:

I am thankful for...

I ask God to help me with...

I am sorry for...

I ask God to forgive and heal...

I have hope and sense God's power when...

Pray *The Lord's Prayer* in your first language...

DAY 6

Postcolonial and Interdisciplinary Musings on Christianity in India and the Acadia Experience

Snapshots of two movements linking the Christian Church in India and Canada are presented as resources for reflection using interdisciplinary and postcolonial perspectives. The snapshots are of Bessie Lockhart, Acadia graduate and Baptist Missionary to India from 1916 to 1955 and the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (known also as the Mar Thoma Church) which started as a mission of St. Thomas the Apostle to India around 52 CE. The Mar Thoma Church established a worshipping presence in Toronto since the 1970s and now has 9 listed congregations in Canada.

Snapshot: Bessie Lockhart Acadia Graduate & Missionary to India

Bessie Lockhart, Acadia Graduate of 1916 and trained teacher became a Missionary to India. Information about Bessie by two different writers, one from the early twentieth century and the other an Acadia student conducting research almost a century later offer the opportunity for deeper reflection on interdisciplinary studies and postcolonial analyses with respect to Christian Mission. Bessie was born in Upper Falmouth, Nova Scotia in 1890. She served as a missionary to India for over forty years sponsored by the United Baptist Missionary Women's Missionary Union and the Canadian Baptist Foreign Mission Board. She died in New Minas in 1985 at 95 years old.

A 1933 publication which mentions the life of Bessie Lockhart, gives a glimpse of an energetic and committed Christian whose service to God included being a Missionary to India. The book notes that during her sojourn at Acadia, Bessie Lockhart was a member of the YWCA. The Acadia YWCA annually raised one hundred dollars to support her in India. Bessie sent back letters to Acadia. In her correspondence, Bessie spoke of the ways in which she valued her time as a student at Acadia. A published 1921 College document contains the following quote from Bessie,

“I daresay people thought that Acadia students of my day were pleasure seekers, but I never met a more earnest company of people in my life, and never anywhere have I received so much spiritual uplift as at Acadia. The classroom lectures were full of the spirit of service. I would rather be an Acadia girl than a graduate of the grandest College in the land.”¹

But were Bessie's good intentions without flaws? A 2016 thesis on Bessie Lockhart took a somewhat more critical, modern look at her approach to Christian Mission The 2016 **thesis by Sarah Patricia Atkinson**, was entitled, “*You would hardly think it to look at them*”: *Visual Representations of Colonialism in Bessie Lockhart's Scrapbooks*. (<https://bit.ly/3cZ2itu>)

Atkinson, in her thesis uses Lockhart's photographs and scrapbooks as key sources to analyze the complex dynamics of faith, gender and the status quo of colonialism which were among the intersecting dynamics in

the missionary enterprise. As a woman, Bessie was not eligible for ordination by the church. She and her contemporaries embraced a passionate faith that included a willingness to engage in heroic mission with assumed elements of sacrifice and suffering. Her photographs, commentaries on India and letters were reflective of colonialism. Atkinson explains it in this way:

The very essence of missionary work has its roots in colonialism. In this context, colonialism means the construction of “otherness,” and the motive of a dominant people to change the behaviours or beliefs of what they see as an “other,” or subordinate people. (p. 47)

1. A.C. Chute with W.B. Boggs, *The Religious Life of Acadia* (Kentville, Nova Scotia: The Kentville Publishing company Limited, 1933), P. 201.

Snapshot: Early Developments and Contemporary Aspects of Christianity In India

India has been linked to significant theological developments in the history of Christianity. The Tamil language has one of the earliest Bible translations in which European Christians were involved, dating back to 1706. One of the earliest Christian churches, the Mar Thoma Church, traces its origins to the missionary work of the Apostle Thomas. The Portuguese arrived in the west coast of India in the sixteenth century CE and forced the Mar Thoma Church to accept the rule of the pope in Rome. In 1655 the Mar Thoma Church declared its independence from Rome and in subsequent centuries established relationships with other religious groups. One such significant relationship was with British Missionaries at the beginning of the nineteenth century CE which led to the establishment of schools and Seminaries and advanced the work of Bible translation into the Malayalam language. The denomination is a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and has congregations in Canada.

Currently, the Mar Thoma Church maintains close relationships with other Christian denominations in India and globally as it pursues its commitment to ecumenism. The Canadian Mar Thoma Church, Toronto is the oldest congregation in Canada. Services are led on alternate Sundays in the Malayalam and English languages. The website provides information about the worship services, youth, children and evangelistic programmes as well as information about COVID-19 and links to the congregation's live-streamed Sunday Service. More information about the Mar Thoma Church can be found at:

The Canadian Mar Thoma Church Toronto

<http://www.canadianmarthomachurch.com>

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (WCC)

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/mar-thoma-syrian-church-of-malabar>



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- ✦ What helpful and unhelpful approaches do you detect in the past and the present by devout Christians, when sharing their faith with others?
- ✦ In which aspects of Acadia's religious and spiritual life do you think there is scope for greater interdisciplinary engagement?
- ✦ How do you think your religious/spiritual/philosophical commitments might be viewed a hundred years from now?

Prayers DAY 6

Pray Using the lyrics of the hymn, Spirit God, be our breath, by Bruce Harding found at the link below:

More Voices. "Embracing Change"

<https://www.slideshare.net/linneagood/spirit-god-be-our-breath>

Pray *The Lord's Prayer* in your first language...

DAY 7

“I will remain quietly meditating upon the point in which I have found what I desire without any eagerness to go on till I have been satisfied.”

(St. Ignatius of Loyola quoted in Jacqueline Syrup Bergan and S. Marie Schwan. *Forgiveness a Guide for Prayer*. Winona, Minnesota. St. Mary's Press. 1985. P.6.)

Taking a Second Look

❖ Review the session of the previous six which evoked the strongest emotions in you, or no emotion at all. What were your feelings then? What new insights do you have as you reflect on the session again?

❖ Would you like to discuss one or more of these sessions with the Acadia Chaplain and/or some friends? You can contact the Acadia Chaplain via email at **marjorie.lewis@acadiau.ca** or by telephone:
902-585-1203 (Office)
902-599-2436 (Cell)

Prayers DAY 7

Pray using the following guide:

I am thankful for...

I ask God to help me with...

I am sorry for...

I ask God to forgive and heal...

I have hope and sense God's power when...

Pray *The Lord's Prayer* in your first language...





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