

Director's Note

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Center for Global Christianity & Mission



A Note from the Director

This issue of the CGCM News is devoted to the career and contribution of the Rev. Dr. Gerald H. Anderson, one of the most esteemed alums of the Boston University School of Theology. June of 2022 not only marks Jerry's 92nd birthday, but the centennial of the Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC), that he led for 26 years. To celebrate these milestones, the first Gerald H. Anderson Lecture, delivered at the OMSC at Princeton Seminary, is on Dr. Anderson as "maestro" of contemporary mission studies. The timeline we have provided on Jerry's life and work only scratches the surface of his leadership in launching mission studies as a contemporary academic discipline, and in facilitating the emergence of the field of World Christianity during the 1990s. Dating from his time at Boston University, Dr. Anderson's work has thrived at the nexus of ecumenical social concern for Christianity as a public religion, evangelical passion for the gospel of Jesus Christ, and prophetic engagement with changing contexts and trends for the *missio Dei*—the mission of God. We at the Center for Global Christianity and Mission are honored to call Jerry Anderson mentor, alum, supporter, inspiration, and friend.

Dana L. Robert, William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor
and Director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission

Honoring the Life & Career of Gerald H. Anderson (b. June 9, 1930)

Jerry Anderson majored in Business Administration and Accounting at Grove City College to help him manage the business side of his popular 13-piece dance orchestra, but before he graduated, he felt God call him to ministry. He sold his business and went to the Boston University School of Theology to prepare for ministry.

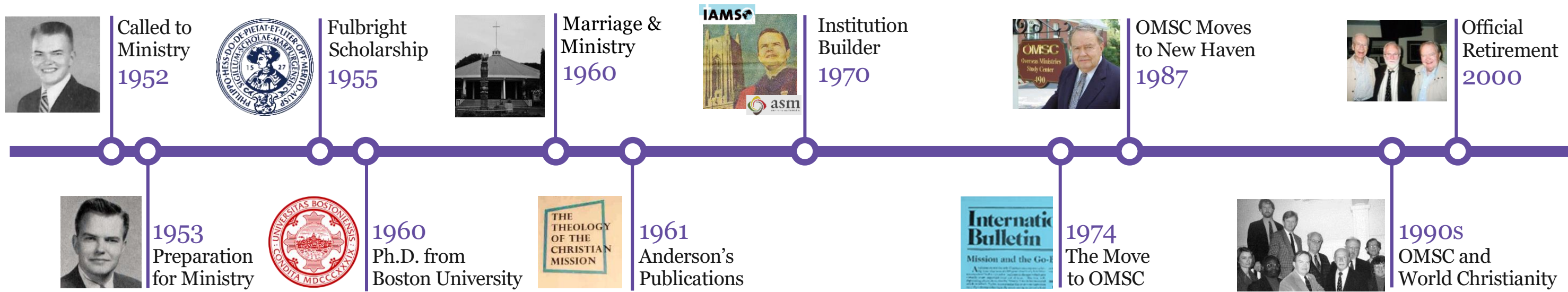
After graduation, Anderson's first appointment was in Alaska to a three-point charge. The post came with a vehicle, but his log cabin had no electricity or running water. That summer, he was notified that he would soon be studying in Germany on a Fulbright Scholarship. In 1958, he completed his first publication, a comprehensive bibliography of mission theology, while still a graduate student.

In 1960, after obtaining his Ph.D. from Boston University, Jerry married Joanne Pemberton. That fall the Methodist Board of Missions sent the newlyweds to the Philippines where Joanne taught at the Harris Memorial School for Deaconesses and Jerry taught Church History and Ecumenics at Union Theological Seminary. They had two children, Brooks and Allison.

In 1970, the Andersons returned to the U.S. and Jerry became the president of Scarritt College in Nashville, TN. Not only did he strengthen the college, but he also used it as a platform to build institutions to support the academic study of mission. In 1972, Anderson helped create the International Association for Mission Studies and he organized an event at Scarritt that created the American Society of Missiology. Anderson served as the first president of the ASM. He also engaged in extensive publishing on mission theology, Asian theology, and mission documentation.

In 1974 Jerry became associate director and in 1976 director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center. During his 26-year tenure, Anderson pioneered innovative multicultural programs. In response to changing patterns in mission, he moved the OMSC from Ventnor, NJ to New Haven, CT, where its intellectual programs could intersect with the Day Missions Library at Yale Divinity School. When he took over OMSC, 90 percent of the residents were North American missionaries on home assignment. By the time he retired that number had been inverted: 90 percent of the residents were missionaries from outside the United States.

At OMSC, Anderson shaped the hub of a network that gave birth to the field of world Christianity. As editor of groundbreaking publications, Anderson formed mission studies as a global movement. After retirement, he continued serving on various mission and educational boards and writing about Christian mission today.



“My intellectual life began my first day at the School of Theology,” Anderson reports. In the final year of his B.D. program, Charles Forman—the new Professor of Missions at Yale Divinity School—gave a guest lecture. The brilliance of the speaker caught his attention, creating the first spark of interest in mission.

Before returning to the U.S., Anderson extended his stay in Europe and studied at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, and spent a semester at New College, Edinburgh, where he took courses from T. F. Torrance, James S. Stewart, and John McIntyre. He completed his Ph.D. at Boston University under the direction of Dr. Edwin Booth while commuting from Providence, RI where he was serving as an Associate Pastor.

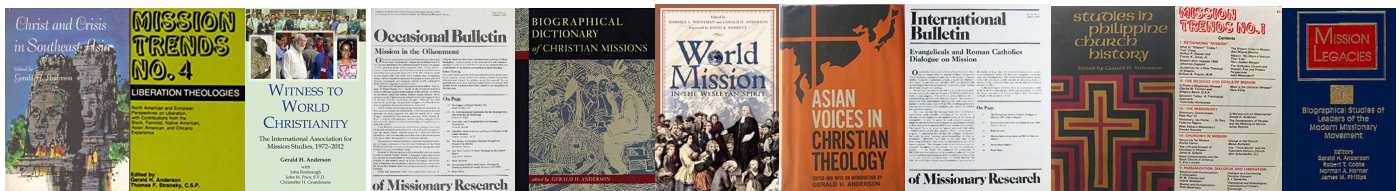
Once during his commute on the train to Boston, Anderson bumped into the Dean of Boston University's Marsh Chapel, Howard Thurman. When Thurman heard about the book Anderson was putting together on *The Theology of the Christian Mission*, he encouraged the young scholar to reach out to his own publisher. The book, which in addition to a masterful introduction to the subject from Anderson's own dissertation, contained chapters from the likes of Karl Barth, Oscar Cullmann, Hendrick Kraemer, Paul Tillich, Alexander Schmemmann, and Max Warren. McGraw Hill, the largest publisher in the U.S. at the time released the book in 1961, and sent the author's copy to the Philippines. Anderson would go on to edit 15 more books and author more than 130 articles.

In 1974, Jerry spoke at the Overseas Ministries Study Center. While there, R. Pierce Beaver invited him to move to the OMSC and indicated he could likely succeed Beaver when he retired. In 1976, when Anderson succeeded Beaver, he immediately negotiated to take over the *Occasional Bulletin from the Missionary Research Library* and converted the almost moribund journal into the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*—the world's most widely circulated missiological journal.

As early as the 1970s, Anderson wrote that by the year 2000, the majority of the world's Christians would be from the global South. In 1989, Anderson convened a small group of scholars to consider what would need to happen to support new studies of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The result was the Research Enablement Program that funneled financial support from the Pew Foundation to over one hundred different scholarly projects. The OMSC also co-sponsored the Yale-Edinburgh Conferences in mission history and world Christianity.

Highlights from Gerald H. Anderson's Bibliography

The published works of Gerald H. Anderson have shaped the field of Mission Studies, Missiology, and World Christianity. Along with over two decades of editorial oversight of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Dr. Anderson has published 17 books and monographs and over 140 articles, with a small selection featured below. To view Gerald H. Anderson's complete bibliography, visit <https://www.bu.edu/cgcm/gerald-h-anderson-bibliography/>.



Selected Books

- The Theology of the Christian Mission*. Editor. New York: McGraw-Hill; London: SCM Press, 1961.
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- Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism*. Co-editor with Thomas F. Stransky. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1981.
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- "My Pilgrimage in Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 29, no. 3 (2005): 139-43.



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