

Guest Editorial

Contextualising the Commitments and Concerns of Dr. Karl Ludvig Reichelt in the 21st Century

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In this issue of *SMT* four articles are based on presentations at the School of Mission and Theology (Misjonshøgskolen, Stavanger) during the annual Dr. Karl Ludvig Reichelt Memorial Lectures and Study Day in 2008. This annual event was inaugurated in 2003, a hundred years after Reichelt left for China as a missionary for the Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS).¹ The purpose of the event is to engage in scholarly research and discussion on topics related to the fields of missiology and science of religion. A number of the papers and lectures which have been offered during these years have been published. Thus the event has become a research laboratory, raising issues which concern mission and religion, both of historical and contemporary natures. The substantial outcome of the Reichelt memorial lectures and study days is that they give opportunities to look more closely at their contents over the years and relate them to the commitments and concerns of the person in whose honour they are conducted. Hence this guest editorial comes in the form of historical analysis. Before dealing with the Reichelt annual events, however, we should look more closely at Reichelt's commitments and concerns in light of his life.

Dr. Karl Ludvig Reichelt – Missionary, Scholar, and Pilgrim

I have borrowed this three-fold characteristic of Reichelt – missionary, scholar, and pilgrim – from the title of Eric J. Sharpe's Reichelt biography.² These three relevant characteristics truly reflect Reichelt's commitments. But they may be qualified further or supplemented also by other of his

¹ The English name of NMS today is Norwegian Mission Society.

² Eric J. Sharpe, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt – Missionary, Scholar and Pilgrim*, Hong Kong: Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre, Hong 1984.

commitments and concerns, as we shall see below. Let me first briefly present Reichelt – his life and work – before focusing on his main engagements and concerns as missionary and scholar.

Karl Ludvig Reichelt is perhaps the most internationally renowned graduates of the School of Mission and Theology (MHS). He was a missionary to China for many years (1903-1947; Hong Kong 1951-52), taught New Testament at the Union Lutheran Theological Seminary in China, was a researcher of religion, and a theologian. Through his extensive writings he made the religious life in China known to the West. He was known as an inspiring preacher and lecturer, fully engaged in informing his audience about and motivating them for mission work among the Chinese. His hymn, ‘Din rikssak, Jesus, være skal min største herlighet’, inspired by a German hymn and written in 1912, has been one of the most treasured hymns on Christian commitment to mission in the Norwegian hymnal (*Norsk Salmebok* no 518 / *Sangboken* no 705).³ It reflects his deep conviction of being called and his commitment to God’s mission.

Reichelt was born 1 September, 1877 at the Fredlund farm in the parish of Barbu, near the city of Arendal. He died in Hong Kong on 13 March, 1952 and was buried in the Tao Fong Shan Christian Cemetery. His theological training he received at MHS from August 1897 to December 1902; he was then ordained in Oslo in the Church of our Saviour on 20 March, 1903 by bishop A. C. Bang.⁴ After a semester of medical studies at hospitals in Oslo in the spring of 1903 he left for China and arrived in Changsha on 1 November.⁵

In China Reichelt initially worked in the Hunan Province as a pioneer missionary in Ningxiang (1903-1911), thereafter as professor at the Chinese Union Lutheran Theological Seminary, which was established in 1913, where he taught New Testament (1913-1920). In 1922 he founded a mission which

³ ‘Die Sach’ ist dein, Herr Jesus Christ, die Sach’ and der wir stehen’. ...in a statement dated September 23, 1937, he acknowledged that the German hymn (and its tune) had in fact been in his mind at the time, but that it was his prototype only in the first couple of lines. The remainder was neither translation nor plagiarism.’ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁴ Eight of the theological candidates graduating in 1902 were ordained together. Reichelt gave the sermon in the worship service preaching on Acts 10:42-43.

⁵ For this and the following biographical information, see Notto Normann Thelle, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt – En kristen banebryter i Øst-Asia*, Oslo: Den Nordiske Kristne Buddhist-misjon, 1954.

was particularly aimed at reaching the learned, committed Buddhists. In the beginning this work was part of the NMS, but because it was controversial and caused considerable debate, Reichelt found it necessary to separate from the NMS in 1925 and establish an independent society. Since 1 January, 1926 this mission ceased to be affiliated with the NMS and has been known as the Christian Mission to Buddhists (CMB) – presently known as the Areopagos Foundation. From 1926 and until his death in 1952 his work was with the CMB at Tao Fong Shan.

In 1939 Reichelt was awarded the St.Olav medal by the Norwegian King Håkon VII for his meritorious work, and in 1941 (31 October) he was created an honorary doctor at the Uppsala University for his comprehensive research on the religious life of the Far East.⁶ Apart from studying Reichelt's own (published and unpublished) works one may get a comprehensive understanding of his theology, theology of religions, and missiological orientation in several works by others. These include two licenciate and three doctoral dissertations; Filip Riisager, *Forventning og Opfyldelse* (1973),⁷ *Lotusblomsten og korset* (1998),⁸ Håkan Eilert, *Boundlessness* (1974);⁹ Rolv Olsen, 'Winds of Change' (2001) and '*Prevailing Winds*' (2008).¹⁰ Further, a Reichelt biography was published in 1984 by Eric J. Sharpe, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt – Missionary, Scholar and Pilgrim*.¹¹ Several decades earlier (1954) Notto Normann Thelle – Reichelt's close co-worker in the Christian Mission

⁶ A bibliography of Reichelt's publications was prepared by W. P. Sommerfeldt, *Misjonsprest Dr. Karl Ludvig Reichelt's forfatterskap*, (Sjuende-Mars-Bibliografiene) Oslo, 1947. The dissertations of Filip Riisager, Håkan Eilert, and Rolv Olsen also contain comprehensive documentation of Reichelt's authorship (see notes 8-10).

⁷ Filip Riisager, *Forventning og opfyldelse. Studier i Karl Ludvig Reichelts liv og missionsforståelse indtil 1925 – med særligt henblik på buddhistmissionens udskillelse fra Det Norske Missionsselskab*, (licentiate dissertation, University of Århus) [Århus:] Forlaget Aros, 1973.

⁸ Filip Riisager, *Lotusblomsten og korset. En studie i Karl Ludvig Reicheltsmissionsforståelse med særligt henblik på buddhistmissionens første periode som selvstændig organisation 1926-29*, (doctoral dissertation, University of Århus) København: Gads Forlag, 1998.

⁹ Håkan Eilert, *Boundlessness. Studies in Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Missionary Thinking with Special Regard to the Buddhist-Christian Encounter* (Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XXIV), Århus: Forlaget Aros, 1974.

¹⁰ Rolv Olsen, 'Winds of Change'. The Christian Worship Services of the Christian Mission to Buddhists, in Nanjing, and at Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Hong Kong, 1922-98. A Study of Effects of Contextual Changes on Attempted Contextualization of Christian Worship Services' (unpublished licenciate dissertation), Lund University, 2001; '*Prevailing Winds*' – An Analysis of the Liturgical Inculturation Efforts of Karl Ludvig Reichelt (doctoral dissertation; Studia Missionalia Svecana CIV), Lund: Lund University, 2008.

¹¹ Eric J. Sharpe, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt ...* 1984.

to Buddhists for many years – wrote a biography on him in Norwegian.¹² In more recent years several missiologists have studied various aspects of Reichelt's theology, theology of religions, missionary methods and spirituality. Among these are Notto Reidar Thelle¹³ and Thor Strandenæs.¹⁴ Unfortunately no Chinese dissertation has yet appeared on the missiology and contextualisation efforts of Reichelt. This is regrettable, since his work was predominantly done in a Chinese cultural context.

Engagement in theological education, New Testament studies, and ecumenical work

Although Reichelt started his work as a theological teacher and exegete of New Testament in 1913, his engagement in and commitment to theological education in China started much earlier. Together with representatives from his own (NMS) and other Lutheran missions Reichelt wrote a circular in 1907 'inviting representatives of the Lutheran missions [in China] to meet in connection with the Centennial Celebration of Protestant Missions held at Shanghai in May of 1907.'¹⁵ Two sessions were held in Shanghai, and another conference on Kikungshan (mountain, Southern Hunan), 28-30

¹² Notto Normann Thelle, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt...*, 1954; likewise reliable information on Reichelt's life is found in Notto Normann Thelle, *Fra begynnelsen til nu. Av den Kristne Buddhistmisjons Historie*, Oslo: Den Kristne Buddhistmisjons Forlag, 1939. Earlier (1942) the CMB supporter and board chairman, Birger Natvig, gave a lecture on Reichelt's life and work at the CMB summer meeting at Fiskum, Norway, which he later published (Birger Natvig, 'Dr. Karl Ludvig Reichelt og hans Livsverk', *Den kristne Buddhistmisjon* 17(1942) 9,96-97; 10, 108-109; 11, 105-117; 12, 125-127. A publication of 22 pages, containing the entire published lecture, and with the same title, came the same year ('Særtrykk av Den kristne Buddhistmisjon', Oslo [1942]) and could be purchased at the cost of 50 øre.

¹³ Notto Reidar Thelle, 'Reichelt's misjon og livsverk' ('The mission and work of Karl Ludvig Reichelt – a challenge to our time?'), *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* 49 (1995) 1, 33-52; 'Karl Ludvig Reichelt – pioneren som kom inn fra kulden. Behov for en kritisk vurdering', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon*, 52 (1998) 4, 195-216; 'A Christian Monastery for Buddhist Monks: Part I: Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Sacred Mountains', *Ching Feng, New Series* 6 (2005) 1, 1-35; 'A Christian Monastery for Buddhist Monks: Part II: Buddhist Rhetoric in Christian Liturgies', *Ching Feng, New Series* 8 (2005) 2, 131-177.

¹⁴ Thor Strandenæs, 'Liturgien – mellom universell form og lokal kulturytring. Reichelts iturgiske tenkning', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* 49 (1995) 1, 1-31, 'Gudstjeneste og kontekst' in: *Veien videre: Den Nordiske Kristne Buddhistmisjon 75 år*, (eds.) Ernst Harbakk and Filip Riisager, [Oslo:] Den Nordiske Kristne Buddhistmisjon, 1997, 60-84.

¹⁵ Gustav Carlberg, *The Changing China Scene. The Study of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Its Church and Political Setting over a Period of Forty-Five Years 1913-1958*, Hong Kong: Lutheran Literature Society, [1959], 16.

August, 1908. At both conferences Reichelt was active in the deliberations and even preached the sermon for the holy communion service which closed the second event. He spoke on the theme ‘Unity’, and used as his text Acts 17:26: ‘And He made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation. ‘It was an inspiring occasion. The hearts of all were lifted to higher ideals of common service and to greater visions of work to be accomplished by concerned effort.’¹⁶ Also Reichelt was involved in the following preparatory work for the Central China Union Lutheran Theological Seminary which was opened on Saturday, 29 March, 1913. Altogether 26 students were enrolled and for the next seven years Reichelt taught New Testament.

Thus ecumenical engagement in mission work was one of Reichelt’s early characteristics – both in relation to other Lutheran missions and other Christian denominations. An example from later in his life suffices to show this. When he left for Hong Kong to establish a new headquarter for the Mission to Buddhists in 1929 it was natural for him to solicit the advice and help of colleagues in the Basel Mission, the London Missionary Society, and the Anglican Church of Hong Kong. Thus, it was the (Anglican) dean of Hong Kong, the Very Rev. A. Swann, who laid the foundation stone at Tao Fong Shan on 28 July, 1931. Later bishop Ronald O. Hall and Dr. Sturton, of Hong Kong and Hangchow respectively – both Anglicans – became his loyal friends and allies in further planning the work at the centre; he continuously built networks with clergy and members of other denominations, particularly the Anglican Church.¹⁷

During his years at the Lutheran Seminary Reichelt published in Chinese an introduction to the New Testament (1915)¹⁸ and commentaries on Paul’s letter to the Galatians (1918),¹⁹ the letter of James (1918), and the Gospel

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁷ In 1937 he had presented plans to his home board for engaging a British missionary for the Church Missionary Society at Tao Fong Shan, but the plans did not materialise due to World War II. Eric J. Sharpe, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt...* 1984, 152f. Also he was received as a guest by the Archbishop of Canterbury, (Emil Birkeli in the Obituary of Reichelt, *Vårt Land*, March 26, 1952).

¹⁸ Second, revised edition appeared in 1925.

¹⁹ Second edition appeared in 1925.

of John (1919).²⁰ The text was prepared by Reichelt, while the translation done by his close co-worker Luther Li.²¹ Reichelt also prepared the first six chapters of the Gospel of Mark, but the work was taken over by his NMS colleague, Olav Dalland and completed by him (1922).²² Later in his life, when the Lutheran Theological Seminary resided at Tao Fong Shan, Reichelt also gave lectures in New Testament. A small publication was published thereafter, entitled *Structure and Character of John's Gospel*,²³ based on his lectures on John's Gospel in the spring of 1951.

Thus his commitment to theological education and New Testament studies was coupled with ecumenical cooperation and a concern for Christian unity. This may be further exemplified by the willingness of Reichelt to partake in the establishment of a Lutheran church paper (the 'Righteousness of Faith Paper', 1913–), for which he was in charge (for 3 ½ years) of the earliest editions.²⁴

Christian worship, hymnody and spirituality

Reichelt early became involved in working on Chinese Lutheran liturgies and a Chinese Lutheran hymnal. He contributed toward preparing the Chinese order of worship which was used by the NMS in Hunan in the period 1908-

²⁰ Unfortunately W.P.Sommerfeldt (*Karl Ludvig Reichelt...*1947, 6) wrongly informs that the year of publication for the Gospel of John was 1917, and later authors have relied on his data and perpetuated the mistake. However, Notto Normann Thelle (*Karl Ludvig Reichelt...* 1954, 47) gives the correct years for this publication and the other NT related works by Reichelt (including their revised editions).

²¹ Book reviews of Reichelt's books were done by his NMS colleague, Andreas Fleischer (on *Introduction to the New Testament*, *Nordisk Missions-Tidsskrift* 1915, 241; on *St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians*, *Nordisk Missions-Tidsskrift* 1920, 43-44; on the *Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, *Nordisk Missions-Tidsskrift* 1920, 43).

²² These books were all published by the Religious Tract Society of North and Central China (Hankow & Tientsin) and were spread widely. Thus, in 1933 we find that they were still on sale in China (*A Classified Index to the Literature of the Protestant [sic!] Christian Churches in China Published for the Christian Publishers' Association of China*, Shanghai: Kwang Hsueh Publishing House, 1933; Nos 225.2 (NT Introduction); 226.5 (Gospel of John); 227.4 (Galatians); 227.91; (James); and 226.3 (Gospel of Mark by Olav Dalland).

²³ [Hong Kong:] Lutheran Board of Publication [1951] (Cat. No. H.K.. 285).

²⁴ Gustav Carlberg, *The Changing China Scene...* 1959, 45. *Xin Yi* ('righteousness by faith') is the Chinese name for Lutheran(s), and *Xin Yi Bao* is correspondingly 'the Lutheran Paper' – a newspaper which is continuously being published today, now by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong.

1920.²⁵ In the period 1912-1920 one can read his annual reports to the NMS missionary conference in Hunan, and to the home board, on the preparatory work on a joint Lutheran liturgy as well as a hymnal in Chinese.²⁶ Reichelt was on both committees. As part of this work Reichelt drafted a special liturgy for the Chinese memorial spring festival for the dead, the *Ching Ming Jie*.²⁷ The liturgy book was published in 1920,²⁸ the hymnal in 1924.²⁹ Having established the CMB in 1922 he went on to make liturgies for the community life at Ching Fong Shan (1928)³⁰ and Tao Fong Shan (1936),³¹ in cooperation with his co-workers.

The work on liturgies and hymnals are expressions of Reichelt's deep commitment to Christian spirituality. In 1926 he held a lecture for pastors in the Church of Norway entitled 'Kristelig meditation' (Christian Meditation),³² where he pointed to the importance of a regular, ordered spiritual life for ministers of the church and pointed to its relevant sources. During his years in China he had observed devoted Buddhists practising meditation, was familiar with such practices in the history of the church, and encouraged his Norwegian colleagues to make use of these sources in their life and ministry. Also in 1926 he published a ritual of prayer for distribution and use among the friends of the CMB.³³ On a number of occasions he spoke and wrote on

²⁵ (Hunan Lutheran Church), *Xinyihui Libai Guitiao*, Changsha (Hunan): Hunan Xinyihui, 1908. This liturgy book was the result of the work of a preparatory committee consisting of three NMS co-workers, J. A. O. Gotteberg, Andreas Fleischer, and Reichelt.

²⁶ Thor Strandenæs, 'The Making of a Chinese Lutheran Hymnal'. *Theology & Life* 5, Hong Kong 1982, (English Section) 78-101; 'Liturgien – mellom universelle form og lokal kulturytring. Reichelts liturgiske tenkning', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* 49 (1995) 1, 1-31.

²⁷ Det Norske Missionselskap, 'Referat fra konferensen i Chagsha 7-17 februar 1917'; cf also Thor Strandenæs, 'Liturgien...' 1995, 10f.

²⁸ (Lutheran Church of China), *Xinyihui Libai Yishi He Shengli*, Hankow: Zhonghua Xinyihui Yinhang, 1920.

²⁹ (Lutheran Church of China Hymn Book Committee, *Song Zhu Sheng Shi (Hymns of Praise)*, Shekou, Hubei: Lutheran Board of Publication, 1924.

³⁰ *Dongya Jidujiao Daoyouhui, Libai Yishi he Shengli (Janyongben)*, Nanjing: Dongya Jidujiao Daoyouhui [CMB], 1928.

³¹ *Dongya Jidujiao Daoyouhui, Libai Yishi he Shengli (Janyongben)*, Dongya Jidujiao Daoyouhui [CMB], Hong Kong: Rev. ed., 1936.

³² Subsequently published by the Chinese Mission to Buddhists (Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Kristelig meditation*, Oslo: Buddhistmisjonens Forlag, [1926]).

³³ Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Tilbedelsesritual for Buddhistmissionens vennekrete*, Oslo: [1926].

Christian spirituality, meditation, worship and prayer-life.³⁴ His own life was carried by a conscientious and profound Christian spirituality both in private devotions and communal worship.³⁵ Because of his strong interest in meditation – both Christian and Buddhist – he was asked by the University of Oslo at the age of 70 to be the first examiner in the public defence of the doctoral dissertation of (later bishop) Tord Godal in 1947 on meditation and its significance for cognition.³⁶ In the same year appeared his first volume (of three) on Eastern religiosity and piety, called *Fromhetstyper og helligdommer i Øst-Asia / Men of Religion in the Far East* – this volume being a religio-psychological investigation, with meditation as its key focus.³⁷

Religious studies, mission and dialogue

Throughout his years in China (including Hong Kong) Reichelt was deeply engaged in practical missionary work as well as in religious studies. The latter became ever more important for him as the years went by, but started as early in 1905 when he visited the great and ancient Weishan monastery.³⁸ Thereafter he regularly visited numerous monasteries and temples within and outside of China, and engaged in religious studies and dialogue. Thus, during his stay in Norway in 1912 he gave six lectures on Chinese religions at the University of Oslo. These were later published as a handbook on Chinese religions.³⁹ In 1922 came a book by Reichelt on Chinese Mahayana

³⁴ E.g., Karl Ludvig Reichelt, 'Buddhismisjonens ritual', *Nordisk Missions-tidsskrift* 19 (1930), 275-287; 'Vår julefest', *Den Kristne Buddhistmission* 7 (1932) 3, 44-45; 'Pinse-dag', *Den Kristne Buddhistmission* 7 (1932) 8, 122-124; 'Den kristne form for meditasjon', *Tao Fong Magazine* 1 (1934), 23-31;

³⁵ Notto Normann Thelle, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt: En kristen banebryter i Øst-Asia*, Oslo: Den Nordiske Kristne Buddhistmisjon, 1954, 56-62.

³⁶ Tord Godal, *Meditasjonen og dens betydning for erkjennelsen*, Oslo: Land og Kirke, 1947. Reichelt's opposition was later published (Karl Ludvig Reichelt, 'Meditasjonen og dens betydning for erkjennelsen. Opposisjonsinnlegg ved pastor Tord Godals doktordisputas 22. mai 1947', *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift* 48 (1947), 213-226).

³⁷ Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Fromhetstyper og helligdommer i Øst Asia*, Vols I-III, København, G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1947-1949. Only the first of these were translated into English: Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Men of Religion in the Far East* (English Translation of *Fromhetstyper og helligdommer i Øst Asia*, Vol I, by Sverre Holth), London: Lutherworth Press, 1953.

³⁸ Notto Normann Thelle, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt...* 1954, 35-39.

³⁹ Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Kinas religioner. Haandbok i den kinesiske religionshistorie*, Stavanger: Det Norske Missionselskaps forlag, 1912 (revised edition 1922).

Buddhism,⁴⁰ which in 1927 was translated into English translation and subsequently appeared in three later editions.⁴¹ He continued publishing works relating to religious studies. Between 1947 and 1949 his three volume comprehensive study on Fromhetstyper og helligdommer i Øst Asia / Men of Religion in the Far East appeared. Then, in 1948, came his Norwegian version of Laotse.⁴²

Reichelt throughout his life gave numerous lectures and meditations on mis-siologically related themes, such as theology of religion, mission and tolerance, syncretism, etc. Some of these were collected and published in 1931,⁴³ and then revised, re-edited and published anew in 1946.⁴⁴ Reichelt's work among Chinese Buddhists, and his theological motivation for this engagement soon became known outside of China. For many of his contemporaries Reichelt became controversial, both with regard to mission methods and fundamental theology. It was particularly Reichelt's inclusivist orientation in his Christian theology of religions which provoked protest among other missiologists.⁴⁵ Thus Hendrik Kraemer in his book, *The Christian Message in the Non-Christian World* (1936/1946), particularly mentioned Reichelt's work of contextualization and criticised its theological presupposition,⁴⁶ a critique which Reichelt took up with Kraemer in his conversations with him at the conference of the International Missionary Council held in Tambaram in 1938. In the Swedish translation of Kraemer's book his critique of Reichelt was modified.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Fra Østens religiøse liv. Et indblik i den kinesiske Mahayana-Buddhisme*, København: G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1922.

⁴¹ Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism*, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1922 (2nd ed. 1928; 3rd revised and enlarged ed. 1930; 4th revised and enlarged ed. 1934).

⁴² Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Laotse*, Oslo: Gyldendal norsk forlag, 1948.

⁴³ Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Fra Kristuslivets helligdom. Foredrag og meditasjoner*, København: G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1931.

⁴⁴ Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Fra Kristuslivets helligdom. Avhandlinger, foredrag og meditasjoner*, København: G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 2nd ed., 1946. In this edition his first chapter of the 1931 edition on 'The religion and the religions' (my translation) was removed and two other chapters included instead. These were on the importance of religious studies for (mutual) international understanding, and for personal development, respectively.

⁴⁵ For an evaluation of Reichelt as a theologian see: Regin Prenter, 'Theologen Karl Ludvig Reichelt', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* 32 ((1978) 1, 1-20.

⁴⁶ Hendrik Kraemer, *The Christian Message in the Non-Christian World*, London: Edinburgh House Press, 1938, 322; 401f (2nd Ed. 1946); cf also Eric J. Sharpe, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt...*1984, 156-159 and Notto Normann Thelle, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt...*1954, 89-90.

⁴⁷ Hendrik Kraemer, *Kristendomens budskap i en icke-kristen värld* (translated from English by Elin Silén), Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonstyrelses Bokförlag, 1940.

Socio-diaconal concern

Last but not least it is important to mention also Reichelt's socio-diaconal engagement and concern. Throughout his entire life in China Reichelt met needy persons whom he shared food with, beggars whom he gave money to, unemployed whom he helped to find work, and the sick to whom he offered medical care. The needs of others concerned him and, because of his genuine love for the Chinese, he was always intent on helping them – being a genuine philanthropist.⁴⁸ The half year of medical and nursing studies in Oslo which Reichelt took prior to leaving for China was obviously useful and of great help to him during his ministries. His colleague in the CMB for over three decades, Notto Normann Thelle, has given the following account in his biography of Reichelt:⁴⁹

He often found his medical skills useful. Over and over again the help which he could offer the sick and suffering opened the doors to new homes and hearts. The challenges he took were incredible. There were opium addicts who had hung themselves, and whom he was brought to and managed to resuscitate. There were all kinds of wounds and injuries. There was the mandarin [Chinese official] who for years had suffered from dangerous wounds on his legs, and whom Reichelt treated. The illness was healed, and the mandarin received new hope, courage and gladness, and was exuberant in his thankfulness to God and human beings. Difficult situations might also occur, such as when Reichelt himself was out travelling, and some Chinese came to Mrs. Reichelt and asked her to come immediately and make a dead person rise again to life.

In the above presentation I have not been able to include all details on books and articles written by Reichelt. What I have included are important and representative publications and should suffice to give the necessary documentation for the points I have made. Further documentation of his writings may be found in the above mentioned licenciate and doctoral dissertations on Reichelt, in the biographies on him, and in the bibliography of his works. From what I have presented it is evident that there is more to say about Reichelt than that he was a missionary, scholar and pilgrim. By showing his engagement in practical missionary work, theological education and New Testament studies, ecumenical participation, his focus on meditation and spirituality, on liturgies and hymnody, his contribution to contextualisation of Christian faith in China, his missionary methods and missiological studies,

⁴⁸ Notto Normann Thelle, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt...* 1954, 86.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 40 (my translation).

his religious studies, visitations to temples and monasteries, and his socio-diaconic commitment, it has been possible to expand the understanding of what it meant for him to be a missionary, scholar and pilgrim. It is on this background that the annual Reichelt event at the MHS has been developed – continuously supported by generous economical funding by the Areopagos Foundation over this seven year period since 2003. When planning for each event the commitments and concerns of Reichelt have been a fruitful guide, where each topic has been considered both in light of these and of the contemporary challenges to missiological and religious studies. Thus a contextualisation of the heritage from Reichelt has been aimed at and – as far as I can see it – achieved.

Dr. Karl Ludvig Reichelt Memorial Lectures and Study Days at the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger

The next part of this article is a presentation of the themes which have been addressed during lectures and study days in honour of Karl Ludvig Reichelt in the period 2003-2008. Having the above presentation in mind, one may easily detect in the following how the themes have been inspired by Reichelt's life, commitments and concerns. I shall refrain from commenting on these as I give my presentation, but only state from the outset that they appear as efforts of contextualising Reichelt's commitments and concerns in a new millennium. Although the themes and topics are generally related to missiology and science of religion they deal with sub-topics in these fields which give them interdisciplinary colour and orientation. Hence they cover various aspects of religious studies – relating to past and contemporary society – such as research on Buddhism, on interreligious dialogue and religion in the cyberspace; and of missiology, such as methods of mission, contextualisation, mission and dialogue, theology of religion(s), Christian spirituality, biblical interpretation and bible translation, studies in Buddhism, and on Karl Ludvig Reichelt himself.

The focus in 2003 was on 'The Life and Theology of Karl Ludvig Reichelt'. The guest lecturer and Nordic Reichelt expert, Dr. Filip Riisager,⁵⁰ dealt

⁵⁰ As mentioned above (note 7), the Dane Filip Riisager wrote his Lic.Th. and D.Th. dissertations on the theology and missiological thinking of Reichelt – covering the period up until 1929. He has since been doing research on Reichelt's theology and life after 1929, and a third volume, reflecting this period is forthcoming.

with the topic in a double lecture later published in two articles.⁵¹ The topic was further elaborated on from two different perspectives in research papers delivered at the study day. Firstly, by Professor Notto Reidar Thelle: ‘The Meeting between Christianity and Buddhism in China: Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s Religio-historical and Religio-theological Profile’. Secondly, by associate professor Ole Bjørn Rongen: ‘Karl Ludvig Reichelt as an Intermediary of Chinese Culture and Religion’ – later published.⁵²

The theme for the year 2004 was ‘Interreligious communication – possibilities and limits’. In the context of the study day Egil Lothe and Rolv Olsen dealt with the topic from a Buddhist and a Christian perspective, respectively. Rolv Olsen gave the memorial lecture on ‘Reichelt on Buddhism – Buddhists on Reichelt’ – later published.⁵³

Two topics were focused on in 2005, both presented by Dr. Vinoth Ramachandra. The first – during the study day – was on ‘Postcolonial Theory and Christian Theology’; the second – the memorial lecture – was on ‘The Scandal of Jesus: Christ in a Multireligious Context’.

Also 2006 had two foci – religion on the internet and religion in China. The first was addressed in the memorial lecture by Dr. Morten Thomsen Højsgaard, ‘Religion on the Internet’.⁵⁴ Dr. Højsgaard has edited books on the digital church, religion and cyberspace and on faith in God in Denmark.⁵⁵ During the study day the participants were introduced to ‘Religious Studies and Dialogue on the Internet: Relevant Portals and Methodological Considerations’. The presentations were given by associate professor Gerd Marie Ådna (of the MHS) and cand.mag. Peter Fischer Nilsen (of the Areopagos

⁵¹ Filip Riisager, “Lær meg å skue med ditt blikk...” – Karl Ludvig Reichelts liv og tenkning, 1”, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* 59 (2005) 2, 67-84; “Lær meg å skue med ditt blikk...” – Karl Ludvig Reichelts liv og tenkning, 2”, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* 59 (2005) 4, 211-228.

⁵² Ole Bjørn Rongen, ‘Kina-formidleren Karl Ludvig Reichelt’, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* 60 (2006) 1, 57-80.

⁵³ Rolv Olsen, ‘Reichelt om buddhismen – buddhister om Reichelt’, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* 58 (2004) 4, 195-212. Rolv Olsen in 2008 earned his Ph.D. from the University of Lund on a dissertation relating to Reichelt’s efforts of contextualising liturgy (cf. note 9).

⁵⁴ He earned his degree from the University of Copenhagen where he wrote his dissertation on Network Religion in the 21st Century. He is editor of church and faith in Denmark’s largest Christian newspaper (*Kristeligt Dagblad*, Copenhagen) since 1 December, 2005. He is also external lecturer at the Department of Religion, University of Copenhagen.

⁵⁵ *Den digitale kirke* (Anis, 2003), *Religion and Cyberspace* (together with Margit Warburg, Routledge, 2005), *Gudstro i Danmark* (together with Hans Raun Iversen, Anis, 2005).

Foundation). The second focus – on religion in China – was first introduced through viewing excerpts from the DVD movie, ‘The Cross: Jesus in Kina’. Subsequently cand. theol. Ernst Harbakk (of the Areopagos Foundation) read a paper on ‘Religion in China: A Presentation of the Religious Development in the People’s Republic during the last Decade, and Keys for Understanding its Religious Legislation’.⁵⁶

Christian spirituality was the main theme in 2007, exemplified by (Chinese) Christian spirituality and the spirituality of Thomas Merton. The latter topic was addressed during the study day, first by the Norwegian journalist Liv Riiser, ‘My meeting with Thomas Merton – or: why I have fallen in love with a dead monk’ and by Dr. Ekman Tam (of the Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, Hong Kong), who gave two presentations on Merton, ‘Why are Christians in the West attracted to Zen Buddhism? A Case in Thomas Merton’ and ‘What do we get from reading Thomas Merton?’ Dr. Tam also gave the memorial lecture, ‘Christian Spirituality in the City.’

Finally, in 2008 the Reichelt event concentrated on ‘Global and Contextual Perspectives in Bible Translation and Interpretation.’ The memorial lectures were given by Professor John Samuel Mbiti, ‘Challenges of Language, Culture, and Interpretation in Translating the Greek New Testament’ and by Professor Rasiah Sugirtharajah, ‘Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Advantages and Limitations’, respectively. During the study day two papers were read, one by assistant professor Anne Lise Matre (of the MHS), ‘The role of Mali Muslims in Team Translation of the Bible’, and the other by professor Thor Strandenaes (of the MHS), ‘Impact of Chinese Bible Translation on the *Han* Chinese Language: The Case of Dictionaries’, respectively. The Reichelt event was co-ordinated with the public defence of the doctoral dissertation of Kari Storstein Haug – now associate professor of missiology at the MHS. Her dissertation is on Thai Buddhist reading and interpretation of Old Testament wisdom texts.⁵⁷ In her trial lectures she focused on Christian spirituality in a Thai context and on the role of theology in preventing and

⁵⁶ The Rev. Ernst Harbakk has for almost four decades served in ministry to the Chinese, first as a missionary and representative in (Taiwan and) Hong Kong for the Norwegian Missionary Society, and then at Tao Fong Shan, Hong Kong for the Christian Mission to Buddhists/The Areopagos Foundation, and subsequently as its Secretary for Asia.

⁵⁷ Kari Storstein Haug, ‘As you sow, you will reap’: *Interpreting Proverbs 11:18-31, Psalm 73, and Ecclesiastes 9:1-12 in Light of, and as a Response to Thai Buddhist Interpretations. A Contribution to Christian-Buddhist Dialogue* (School of Mission and Theology Dissertation Series – 7), Stavanger, 2008.

overcoming HIV/AIDS and its stigmas in African societies.⁵⁸ In this issue of *SMT* four of the contributions to the 2008 Reichelt memorial lectures and study day are included – Haug, Matre, Mbiti, and Strandenæs. Those of Mbiti and Haug were delivered as lectures, those of Matre and Strandenæs as research papers.

Karl Ludvig Reichelt was a lifelong missionary and scholar serving the Chinese. The heritage which later generations have received from him, through his many publications, commitments and concerns, have inspired present day missiologists and researchers of religion to make use of this heritage as an inspiration to meet contemporary issues and challenges. The annual memorial lectures and study day(s) in his honour have – so far – become a valuable source of research and scholarly exchange in the task of addressing the needs of our time. Due to the contributions by the many who have given memorial lectures and presented research papers, and to the support by the Areopagos Foundation, these events have indeed proved to be a dynamic contextualisation of Reichelt's own commitments and concerns.

⁵⁸ The titles of the lectures were, 'Cultural Affirmation or Innovation? Christian Spirituality in Its Thai Cultural Context' and 'African Christian Strategies in Relation to the HIV/AIDS Pandemic.' An edited version of the latter lecture is presented in this issue of the *SMT*.