

James Arthur Cogswell (1922-2021)

James Arthur Cogswell was born November 29, 1922 in Houston, Texas, the second of four children of Prentiss Arthur Cogswell and Germaine Louise Eugenie Berbouchet Fayoudet Gireud. His family moved when he was three to Little Rock, Arkansas, then several years later to Memphis, Tennessee, where he spent his formative years. Jim attended Southwestern-at-Memphis (Rhodes College) from 1938 to 1942, graduating as a pre-ministerial student with Honors in Greek. In the summer after graduation, at age 19, he served as interim pastor for the small Presbyterian Church in Collierville, Tennessee. In September 1942 he entered Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia.

Jim met his wife and lifelong partner Margaret Elizabeth Griffin (Peggy) while he was a sophomore at Southwestern. They were married on June 11, 1945, after he graduated from Union Seminary. At that time, they were already strongly committed to becoming missionaries to Japan. After Ordination to the Presbyterian Ministry on June 25, 1945, while awaiting the first opportunity to depart for Japan, Jim was called to become pastor at Eastlawn Presbyterian Church in Pascagoula, Mississippi. After a year in that ministry, Jim accepted a fellowship to begin study toward a Master of Theology degree at Princeton Theological Seminary. To build his academic teaching experience before going to the mission field, in January 1947 he went to Davidson College to teach Basic Bible. In January 1948 Jim and Peggy enrolled at the Far East Language Institute at the University of California in Berkeley in preparation for their departure for Japan. While there Jim finished his Th.M. dissertation for Princeton and was awarded his degree *in absentia* in June 1948.

Jim and Peggy sailed for Japan on December 17, 1948, arriving on New Year's Eve in Yokohama with their infant daughter Margaret Ann, born in 1947 in Memphis. They spent their first year in Kobe, studying Japanese. Jim also taught Beginning Greek at the Reformed Seminary there. In 1950 the family moved to Marugame on the island of Shikoku, where they joined in founding Shikoku Christian College in nearby Zentsuji. There he taught Bible and Beginning Greek, and later served as President and a member of the Board. Son James Arthur Jr. was born in Osaka in 1949. Daughter Sara Linda was born in 1952, in Kobe.

The family returned to Memphis in 1953 for their first furlough, then later moved to Richmond where Jim began work on his Doctor of Theology degree. His dissertation was published in 1957 as *Until the Day Dawn*, a history of the Japan Mission of the Presbyterian Church(US), later translated into Japanese.

In 1955 the family moved back to Japan, to the city of Toyohashi, an industrial city which had been leveled during the war. Here Jim's work was primarily evangelistic while also teaching English Bible classes at the local university. Son Daniel Herbert was born in 1957 in Osaka. In 1957 the family moved to the city of Nagoya, where Jim took up a faculty position at Kinjo University teaching Bible. During this period, he also served as Chairman of the Board at Shikoku Christian College and at Yodogawa Christian Hospital. He was on the Board of Counselors at Japan International Christian University and President of the Fellowship of Christian Missionaries in Japan during its Centennial Year, 1959. After the historically catastrophic Ise Bay Typhoon which hit Nagoya in September 1959, his work shifted to also include relief work in the devastated harbor district, a development that greatly influenced the subsequent direction of his life's work.

In 1960, the family returned to Memphis for their second furlough, at the end of which Jim was called to become Area Secretary for the Far East at the Presbyterian Board of World Missions. In 1961 Jim received his Th.D. from Union Theological Seminary in Richmond (later updated to Ph.D.) and was awarded a D. D. by Southwestern-at-Memphis (Rhodes College). In July 1961, instead of returning to Japan, the family moved to Nashville with heartfelt consternation at losing their close personal ties and daily life in a culture that had become so important to their identity.

In 1967 Jim and Peggy decided to return to the life of the church in this country and Jim became pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Tennessee, where he worked tirelessly as an advocate for civil rights and racial justice. In 1971 he accepted a call to become the first Director of the Presbyterian Task Force on World Hunger in Atlanta. Under his leadership the World Hunger Program of the Presbyterian Church (US) became the pioneer among major denominations establishing similar programs. When the National Council of Churches established a Task Force on World Hunger, Jim became its first chairman.

From this point, ecumenical involvements began to multiply. Jim became a board member for Church World Service, Agricultural Missions, Bread for the World, Heifer Project International, and several other ecumenical agencies dealing with the hunger issue. In 1974 he represented Church World Service at the United Nations World Food Conference in Rome. Long an admirer of President Jimmy Carter's work in human rights and global social justice, Jim valued his relationship with the Carter Center at Emory University and treasured his mitt signed by Jimmy Carter during a softball game at the Carter home in Plains. In 1983 Jim was asked to become Director of Overseas Ministry for the National Council of Churches in New York City. Five years later, in 1988, when Jim walked out of 475 Riverside Drive and into official retirement, he and Peggy moved back to their home in Atlanta.

Over the years, Jim authored several books growing out of his work. *The Church in Mission to a World in Crisis* was published as a study book on mission by the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education in 1969. *The Promise of the New: Studies in Matthew* was published by the Presbyterian Board of Women's Work in 1974. Jim edited the volume *The Church and the Rural Poor*, published by John Knox Press in 1975. In 1982 he prepared a chapter titled "Crisis of Confidence in U.S. Aid to Poor Nations" for the Bread for the World publication *The Causes of World Hunger*. In 1983, Friendship Press, the publishing agency of the National Council of Churches, published *No Place Left Called Home*, his ecumenical study book on the theme of "the world's uprooted."

Jim had a beautifully trained tenor voice that was featured in performances and church solos throughout his career. He was the tenor solo in Handel's *Messiah* performed by the Nagoya Symphony Orchestra and Chorus during the 1959 Christmas season, and again in their performance of Hayden's *Creation* in the spring of 1960.

In July 1995 Jim and Peggy moved to Black Mountain, North Carolina to join their many friends living in the Black Mountain and Montreat area. In 1999 they moved to the Highland Farms Retirement Community where they continued to lead active lives. During those busy days, Jim's special project was to help found the Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat. He served as Parish Associate for the Black Mountain Presbyterian Church from 1998 to 2000. He served on the Board for the Mountain Area Child and Family Center and worked on his

long-term project, a history of American Presbyterian involvement in sub-Saharan Africa, 1884-2000. Jim was an avid Atlanta Braves fan, never missing a broadcast. His loyalty was rewarded by this year's World Series victory, to his utter delight.

Jim died at home on November 18, 2021, just short of his 99th birthday. He was preceded in death by his beloved Peggy, in October 2012, at the age of ninety. He is survived by his four children, Margaret, Jim, Sara, and Dan, 6 grandchildren, and 6 great grandchildren.

Together, Jim and Peggy remained missionaries all of their lives, giving the best of themselves to others so that others might have the opportunity to discover and share in their life-affirming Christian faith. A memorial celebration of his life will be held at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church on Saturday, December 18, at 2:00 pm. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to The Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat or The Black Mountain Home for Children, both of which engaged in missions very close to Jim's heart.