

Christian Charity in the Age of the Welfare State

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Wishes to be in panel 5, if possible

Ingunn Folkestad Breistein: *Christian Charity in the Age of the Welfare State*. The paper will focus on economy in the field of Christian charity; namely the work of missionary and nurse Annie Skau (1911-1992) in mainland China (Shaanxi province) and in Hong Kong. Annie Skau used the economic principles of the so called “faith missions” in her work; never asking people directly for money, but involving God in the economic needs of the work. She stands in the tradition from Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission (Austin 2007), and how the faith missions understood the Bible and God’s will as to how mission should be done. Annie Skau attended a school for Missionaries that China Inland Mission was running in London before she went to mainland China as a missionary for the Missionary Covenant Church of Norway (MCCN). Annie Skau was also a part of the awakening meetings in the MCCN where the preacher Frank Mangs was the central figure. The awakening movements in the 1930s such as the Oxford-movement and the Mangs-awakening, both preached that God would lead Christians also when it came to smaller and greater issues in everyday life and in the way Christian work was run. Thus, the understanding of economy was a smaller part of a bigger world view: how God would lead Christians in all things.

Although she hardly had any money or wages of her own (she received a small salary from MCCN), Annie Skau and her colleagues were able to build the hospital Haven of Hope in Hong Kong. Her position in was that of a matriarch both the leadership of the hospital in general, and also regarding the economy. The way she ran the hospital has similarities to the way an extended family is organized. When she describes her work, she uses family terms when it comes to both colleagues and patients (Michaelsson 2003). The article will enlighten the relationship between economy and Christian faith in the mission field in the Age of the Welfare state. I will discuss how Annie Skau communicated with her donators that came both from Norway but also other parts of the world, who the donators were (more women than men, mainly rich people or people with a modest or low income?), as well as how the money were collected.