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# Guide to the R. Pierce Beaver Papers 1905-1962



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## **Descriptive Summary**

<b>Identifier</b>	ICU.SPCL.BEAVER
<b>Title</b>	Beaver, R. Pierce. Papers
<b>Date</b>	1905-1962
<b>Size</b>	4 linear feet (8 boxes)
<b>Repository</b>	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.

**Abstract** R. Pierce Beaver, Professor and Minister. The papers contain letters, course notes, missions reports, business documents, bibliographies, manuscripts, associated work by colleagues and students, and general missions literature. Though there is small collection of personal correspondence, the collection is mainly made up of institutional and academic treatments of missions and missions work. Most of this collection was compiled by Beaver during his time at the Missionary Research Library in New York and during his first few years as a professor of Missions at the University of Chicago's Federated Theological Faculty.

## **Information on Use**

### **Access**

The collection is open for research.

### **Citation**

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Beaver, R. Pierce. Papers, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

## **Biographical Note**

Robert Pierce Beaver was born on May 26, 1906 to Caroline Neutsch and Joseph Earl Beaver of Hamilton, Ohio. His father worked for the state Game and Fish Commission. After finishing high school in Hamilton in 1924, he went to Oberlin College, where he received a bachelor's degree and, in 1928, a master's degree in art. During his time there, he became engaged and was married to his high school girlfriend Wilma Manessier. After studying for two years (1931-1932) in Munich, he was ordained as a minister in what is now the United Church of Christ and went on to get a Ph.D. in history from Cornell in 1933.

Following his graduation, Beaver served pastorates in Ohio and Maryland, during which time he wrote his first book, *The House of God* (1935). In 1938, after five years of pastoring, his church selected him to be a missionary to China. In preparation for his service there, he studied language for a year at the College of Chinese Studies in Peking. When he was finished, he became a professor of church history and worship at the Central China Union Theological Seminary, where he taught for two years. Because of an illness, though, he was sent to Hong Kong in 1942, where he was interned by the Japanese for seven months. Upon his release, he returned to the United States to rejoin his family.

In the United States, Beaver quickly resumed speaking at churches and conferences and also resumed his post-doctoral studies. He then became a professor at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania for four years, where he taught missions and ecumenics. In 1948, he left Pennsylvania to accept a job as director of the Missionary Research Library in New York. While serving as the director of the MRL, he spent his spare time lecturing at various area seminaries, including the Union Theological Seminary. Encouraging the furtherance of reading and education among missionaries was a central concern of Beaver's.

As appreciated as his efforts were, Beaver left the MRL in 1955 and accepted a full professorship in missions at the University of Chicago, where his passion for scholarship and full-time teaching could be more fully employed. The offer was made on the strength of his scholarly contributions and missionary experience. While at the MRL, he had published articles about the relation of missions to a wide range of different themes, from single women missionaries to theological education. He had also shown a far-reaching appreciation of the complex relation between missions and local culture, writing on topics as diverse as the rise of monasticism in Africa and the possibility of a Buddhist revival. One can find a statement of his position on the missionary's role within his adopted culture in a later essay, *The Churches and the Indians: Consequences of 350 Years of Missions*. There, he says that contemporary mission theory should stress "the indigenization of the faith in any culture, an awareness by missionaries of cultural and religious values, and the closest partnership of national leaders and missionaries in the acculturation process. Culture and faith interact and produce something new."

The dean of the Divinity School, Jerald Brauer, described the impact Beaver had on the teaching of missions in Chicago as a revolution. He said, "[Beaver] interjected into the life of the community a whole new worldwide outlook which, though not totally absent in the past, had no focus either in terms of person or of the curriculum through which its full effects might be known" (quoted in Kang, *A Tribute to a Teacher*, 1971). While Beaver was at Chicago, he would also work with figures as notable in religious studies as Mircea Eliade and Joseph Kitigawa. Under this constellation of thinkers, the University of Chicago would become an international center for missions study and research.

While he was at Chicago, he did some of his most remembered writing. Among the titles published during his tenure at Chicago was *Ecumenical Beginnings in Protestant World*

History: A History of Comity (1962), in which he put his academic abilities as a historian in the service of his vision of a non-sectarian church. He also wrote Church, State, and the American Indians (1966), in which he told the “glorious and often terrible” story of the history of the relationship between the Christian world and the native Americans, a story where “Every promising beginning was brought to a sad end by the injustice of white citizens to their red brethren.” And, finally, he wrote All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission (1968), in which he deals with what he later called the “first feminist movement in North America,” the surge of women missionaries that occurred after the Civil War, and where he despairs that the modern lack of female missionaries leads to a corresponding lack of typically feminine spiritual gifts on the missions field, “the power of the heart as well as the intellect, the important feminine intuition, her impatience with bureaucratic procrastination and endless discussion before action.”

In 1972 Beaver retired from teaching, entering the private life. But he quickly came out of retirement in 1973 to serve as director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center. He continued in this capacity until 1975, when illness prevented him from continuing. Afterwards, he also served as Board of Publications Chairperson for the American Society of Missiology (1979-1982).

Robert Pierce Beaver died on November 20, 1987 in Tucson, Arizona. He was 81.

### **Scope Note**

The R. Pierce Beaver Papers cover the period 1905 to 1962, but are mostly comprised of documents dated between 1948 and 1959. The collection contains letters, course notes, missions reports, business papers, bibliographies, manuscripts, associated work by colleagues and students, and general missions literature. The time-frame during which most of the material was assembled corresponds to the time in Beaver’s career that began with his taking a job in New York with the Missions Research Library and ends in his third full year as professor of Missions in the University of Chicago’s Federated Theological Faculty. The only documents that predate his 1948 arrival at M.R.L. are old missions bulletins and the correspondence of the Bureau of Missions (Box 3, Folders 1-2).

The collection is organized into four series:

Series I contains Beaver’s personal papers including correspondence sent or received between 1946 and 1957, as well as papers from Beaver’s 1950 trip to Europe.

Series II contains material related to coursework and related manuscripts including a collection of papers and manuscripts relating to courses Beaver taught in Missions and Church History.

Series III contains Beaver's professional papers including records and reports which pertain to Beaver's various professional affiliations as well as some correspondence with those organizations.

Series IV contains manuscripts written by others and mass literature.

The division of the collection into these four series is somewhat arbitrary for two reasons. First, since Beaver's organizing principle was mostly topical, he sometimes includes his own manuscripts with related courses and sometimes includes them with his business papers. Second, many of the institutions that Beaver was a part of are complexly inter-related. For example, the Department of Foreign Missions was a part of the National Churches of Christ in the United States, but by itself also a member of the International Missionary Council. The National Churches of Christ in the United States (N.C.C.), on the other hand, was associated with of the World Council of Churches as its international body. Instead of imposing this complicated hierarchy onto the papers, though, and instead of purging his business papers to isolate his manuscripts, the original folder divisions of the Beaver collection have been left largely intact. The only re-organization they have undergone is a separation into the above categories and internal alphabetical arrangement.

## **Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

## **Subject Headings**

- Beaver, R. Pierce (Robert Pierce), 1906-
- International Missionary Council
- Missionary Research Library (New York, N.Y.)
- World Council of Churches
- University of Chicago. Divinity School
- Missions
- Church history
- Ecumenical movement

## **INVENTORY**

### **Series I: Personal Papers**

#### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 1**

Correspondence 1946-1957

- Barton, Frank W., 1946-1957
- Beaver, Margaret, 1946-1957
- Bebee, Charles N. (2 items), 1946-1957
- Bizik, J.J. (2 items), 1946-1957

- Boyer, Rev. Clarence, 1946-1957
- Casselman, Rev. A.V., 1946-1957
- Catton, Ione (2 items), 1946-1957
- Chamberlin, J. Gordon, 1946-1957
- Church Missionary Society, 1946-1957
- Corbett, Charles H., 1946-1957
- Davis, J. Merle, 1946-1957
- Dickey, Norma H., 1946-1957
- Dyer, Randolph H. (4 items), 1946-1957
- Ebersole, Mrs., 1946-1957
- Fairfield, F.W., 1946-1957
- Goodsell, Magill, 1946-1957
- Hall, Harvey P., 1946-1957
- Hawley, Willaim N., 1946-1957
- Hendelson, William H. (2 items), 1946-1957
- Hotel Regina, 1946-1957
- Houglan, Kenneth R., 1946-1957
- Lacy, Creighton, 1946-1957
- Latourette, Kenneth S., 1946-1957
- Leibner, Erich E., 1946-1957
- Leonard, Ruth, 1946-1957
- Marquis, Sarah, 1946-1957
- Martin, Ruth (12 items), 1946-1957
- McKee, Dean G. (2 items), 1946-1957
- Neshausen, Carl, 1946-1957
- Obenhaus, Dr., 1946-1957
- Olds, Glenn A. (2 items), 1946-1957
- Pelster, William R., 1946-1957
- Penn, Donald R. (3 items), 1946-1957
- Person, Laura, 1946-1957
- Pyke, J. H., 1946-1957
- Shaw, Emma Bailey, 1946-1957
- Societe des Missions Evangeliques, 1946-1957
- Thaubauel, Marie, 1946-1957
- Van Dusen, Henry P. (8 items), 1946-1957
- Wenger, Warren D., 1946-1957

**Box 1**

**Folder 2**

European Trip (correspondence, brochures, fragments, tracts, etc.), February - October, 1950

**Box 1**

**Folder 3**

European Trip (correspondence, brochures, fragments, tracts, etc.), February - October, 1950

**Box 1**

**Folder 4**

European Trip (correspondence, brochures, fragments, tracts, etc.), February - October, 1950

## **Series II: Coursework and Related Manuscripts**

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 5**

The Ancient and Medieval Mission (Church History 395), syllabus and reading list, undated

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 6**

Bibliography Materials, undated

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 7**

Bibliography Materials, undated

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 8**

Bibliography Materials, undated

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 9**

The Christian World Mission, outline for a suggested bibliography of approximately two-hundred books for theological seminaries and mission boards, undated

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 10**

The Christian World Mission Today, syllabus and reading list, undated

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 11**

Development of Missionary Motivation and Theory in America (Church History 416), syllabus and reading list, undated

### **Box 1**

#### **Folder 12**

Eastern Religions, manuscripts and notes

- Buddhism after the Buddha, undated
- The Dhammapada, undated
- Popular Southern Buddhism, undated
- Confucius, undated
- Japanese Buddhism, undated
- Chondogyo and Korea, April 1962

### **Box 2**

#### **Folder 1**

Methods and Problems of Modern Missions

- The Missionary and His Reading, undated
- Methods and Problems of Modern Missions, class list, 1951-1952
- Report on Channeling Literature to Missionaries on the Fields, by William Henry and Theodora Culver Gleysteen, 1946
- Ecumenical Christianity, Missions 272, reading list, undated

### **Box 2**



**Folder 2**

The Modern Missionary Enterprise (Ecumenics 87, Missions 224, Missions 11), course notes and materials, undated

**Box 2****Folder 3**

The Modern Missionary Enterprise, related memoranda and correspondence with Union Theological Seminary , undated

**Box 2****Folder 4**

The Principles of Missions, outline and related manuscripts

- Missions in the Old Testament, undated
- The Origins of the Church, undated
- The Present Situation, by Louise Pettibone Smith, undated
- God's Good News: The Biblical Basis of the World's Missionary Obligation, by Paul S. Minear, undated

**Box 2****Folder 5**

The Program of Inter-Religious Studies and Understanding at the Federated Theological Faculty, statement of purpose, undated

**Box 2****Folder 6**

Protestant Missions throughout the 19th Century (Church History 397), syllabus and reading list, undated

**Box 2****Folder 7**

The Protestant Missionary Enterprise Today (ABC 844) and Missionary Principles and Methods (ABC 822), materials and related manuscripts, undated

- The Theology of Missions, undated
- Another Theology of Missions, undated

**Box 2****Folder 8**

Roman Catholic and Orthodox Missions, 15th to 20th Century, undated, (Church History 396), syllabus and reading list, undated

**Box 2****Folder 9**

The Young Churches in the 20th Century (Church History 391), syllabus and reading list, undated

**Series III: Professional Papers****Box 2****Folder 14**

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Report from Overseas Planning Consultation, October 1957

**Box 2****Folder 15**

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, additional reports and discussions, November 1957

**Box 2**

**Folder 16**

American Lutheran Church Board of Foreign Missions, material for General Handbook on Missions, 8 October 1949

**Box 2**

**Folder 17**

Association of Professors of Missions, Missionary Vocation, proceedings of the Fourth Biennial Meeting, 16-17 June 1958

**Box 3**

**Folder 1**

Bureau of Missions, University of the State of New York, general correspondence, 1905-1906

**Box 3**

**Folder 2**

Bureau of Missions, University of the State of New York, general correspondence, 1911-1913

**Box 3**

**Folder 3**

Buddhism Program publicity, August 1957

**Box 3**

**Folder 4**

Committee on Ecumenical Relations (Riverside Church), memoranda, minutes and related correspondence, 1949-1954

**Box 3**

**Folder 5**

Committee on World Literature and Christian Literature, Toward a Strategy for Lit-Lit's Second Decade, 8-9 September 1955

**Box 3**

**Folder 6**

Committee on World Literature and Christian Literature, brochure and related manuscripts, undated

- Reading the Bible Today, by D. T. Niles, December 1954
- The Christian as Citizen, by John C. Bennet, undated

**Box 3**

**Folder 7**

Division of Foreign Missions, N.C.C., reports and related correspondence, 1951

**Box 3**

**Folder 8**

Division of Foreign Missions, N.C.C., pamphlets and reports, 1953

**Box 3**

**Folder 9**

Division of Foreign Missions, N.C.C., pamphlets and reports, 1951-1954

**Box 3**

**Folder 10**

Division of Foreign Missions, N.C.C., Executive Board papers, 2-3 June 1955

**Box 3**

**Folder 11**

Division of Foreign Missions, N.C.C., Far Eastern Conference papers, 6-8 May 1953

**Box 3**

**Folder 12**

Division of Foreign Missions, N.C.C., Staff Council Retreat, 16 October 1954

**Box 3**

**Folder 13**

Federated Theological Faculty, related manuscripts

- Some Observations on a Visit to Religious Centers in India and Other Parts of Asia from December 6, 1956 to March 24, 1957
- Recommendations to the Committee on the Haskell and Barrows Lectures, May 1957

**Box 4**

**Folder 1**

Federated Theological Faculty, The Resurgent Religions of Asia and the Christian Mission, Papers of a Seminar for Mission Board Executives and Professors of Missions, by R. P. Beaver, et. al., 7-9 April 1959

**Box 4**

**Folder 2**

Federated Theological Faculty, student lists, 1955-1957

**Box 4**

**Folder 3**

Federated Theological Faculty, bills and correspondence about office furniture, 1956-1957

**Box 4**

**Folder 4**

Fellowship of the Professors of Missions, papers and related correspondence, 1948-1955

**Box 4**

**Folder 5**

Foreign Missions Conference of North America, A Study of Foreign Missions Financing 1919-1948, 30 September 1949

**Box 4**

**Folder 6**

International Missionary Council: papers and reports related to the I.M.C. study The Missionary Obligation of the Church, 1950-1952

**Box 4**

**Folder 7**

International Missionary Council: papers and reports related to the I.M.C. study The Missionary Obligation of the Church, 1950-1952

**Box 4**

**Folder 8**

International Missionary Council: papers and reports related to the I.M.C. study The Missionary Obligation of the Church, 1950-1952

**Box 4**

**Folder 9**

International Missionary Council: papers and reports related to the I.M.C. study The Missionary Obligation of the Church, 1950-1952

- Folder10: International Missionary Council: papers and reports related to the I.M.C. study The Missionary Obligation of the Church, 1950-1952

**Box 5**

**Folder 1**

International Missionary Council, reports and related correspondence, 1955

**Box 5**

**Folder 2**

International Missionary Council, papers and correspondence related to I.M.C. Conference at Willingen, 1952

**Box 5**

**Folder 3**

International Missionary Council, papers and correspondence related to I.M.C. Conference at Willingen, 1952

**Box 5**

**Folder 4**

International Missionary Council, papers and correspondence related to I.M.C. Conference at Willingen, 1952

**Box 5**

**Folder 5**

International Missionary Council, manuscripts

- Willingen Reflections, (no author), 1952
- Untitled manuscript on the ecumenical movement, undated

**Box 5**

**Folder 6**

International Missionary Council, Continental Missionary Consultation, (no author), 1951

**Box 5**

**Folder 7**

International Missionary Council, Bulletin of the I.M.C., 1945-1947

**Box 6**

**Folder 1**

Missionary Research Library, various reports, exhibit descriptions, and documents, 1945-1955

**Box 6**

**Folder 2**

Missionary Research Library, various reports, exhibit descriptions, and documents, 1945-1955

**Box 6**

**Folder 3**

Missionary Research Library, various reports, exhibit descriptions, and documents, 1945-1955

**Box 6**

**Folder 4**

Missionary Research Library, Missions and Post-War Planning, volumes 1-21, October 1942 - November 1947

**Box 6**

**Folder 5**

Readers Service, Readers Service Bulletin, Numbers 10-15, January 1950 – February 1951

**Box 6**

**Folder 6**

Student Volunteer Movement, papers, 1953-1956

**Box 6**

**Folder 7**

Student Volunteer Movement, For This Hour, by E. H. Johnson, 26 March 1951

**Box 7**

**Folder 1**

World Council of Churches, general brochures and mass literature, 1954

**Box 7**

**Folder 2**

World Council of Churches, general brochures and mass literature, 1954

**Box 7**

**Folder 3**

World Council of Churches, general brochures and mass literature, 1954

**Box 7**

**Folder 4**

World Council of Churches, speeches, reports and working papers for the Second Assembly in Evanston, IL, 1954

**Box 7**

**Folder 5**

World Council of Churches, speeches, reports and working papers for the Second Assembly in Evanston, IL, 1954

**Box 7**

**Folder 6**

World Council of Churches, speeches, reports and working papers for the Second Assembly in Evanston, IL, 1954

**Box 7**

**Folder 7**

World Council of Churches, directories, 1954

**Series IV: Writings of Others (Manuscripts and Publications)**

**Box 8**

**Folder 1**

Asia Manuscripts

- Concerning the Theological Situation in Asia, by W. A. Visser 't Hooft, 1950
- Memorial of Premier Tanaka to the Japanese Emperor, translated by L. T. Chen, 1927
- Christian Theological Education in China, (no author), undated

**Box 8**

**Folder 2**

Catholic Periodicals of Theological Interest, by Francis L. Sherrin, 15 November 1958

**Box 8**

**Folder 3**

Christian Practice 293, essays, 1950

**Box 8**

**Folder 4**

The Missions as a Theological Problem, by Dr. Karl Hartenstein, translated by O. Magis et. al., 1952/53

**Box 8**

**Folder 5**

Some Christian Leaders of Present Day China, by Katherine R. Green, undated

**Box 8**

**Folder 6**

Various reports and papers on topics in Asian missions

**Box 8**

**Folder 7**

Various reports and papers on topics in Asian missions

**Box 8**

**Folder 8**

Publications on Pentecostalism, 1952-1953

**Box 8**

**Folder 9**

Publications on the Dominican Republic, 1950-1952