Lesslie Newbigin, 1909–1998

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, a contributing editor of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN, died in London on January 30, 1998. He was 88. Widely recognized as one of the foremost missionary statesmen of the twentieth century, he was an ardent proponent of Christian unity. He was the youngest bishop to be elected when the Church of South India was formed in 1947. In this issue of the IBMR, his friend Dan Beeby, former Presbyterian missionary in Taiwan, shares his reflections given at Bishop Newbigin’s funeral.

Beginning with “Cross-Currents in Ecumenical and Evangelical Understandings of Mission” (October 1982), Newbigin’s essays appeared seven times as the opening feature of this journal. His final contribution, “The Dialogue of Gospel and Culture,” appeared in April 1997. Several other offerings and book reviews also filled these pages.

Newbigin made it abundantly clear by his lifelong ministry and in such essays as “Cross-Currents . . .” that evangelism, no less than unity in Christ, must be at the top of the church’s agenda. Maintaining that word and deed are inseparable, he resisted the urge to prop up evangelism with adjectives like “holistic” (IBMR, October 1982, pp. 146, 149). He emphasized that evangelism is “a joyful exercise to which we are all invited,” and “There cannot be any greater task, or any deeper joy, than to tell the world what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and to enable others to know, love, and serve him as Lord and Savior” (April 1997, pp. 52, 50).

In the 1980s Newbigin set a fresh agenda for the witnessing church with his “Can the West be Converted?” (IBMR, January 1987). He spoke from the perspective of an active retirement, serving as pastor to an inner-city, interracial parish in Birmingham, England. There he found “a paganism born out of the rejection of Christianity [which] is far tougher and more resistant to the Gospel than the pre-Christian paganism with which foreign missionaries have been in contact during the past 200 years. [It is] the most challenging missionary frontier of our time” (January 1987, p. 7). His touchstone question was this: “What would it mean if, instead of trying to understand the Gospel from the point of view of our culture, we tried to understand our culture from the point of view of the Gospel?” (p. 5).

Bishop Newbigin liked to recount the experience of village travelers in rural India, who sometimes set off down jungle paths before dawn. Those traveling eastward, toward the rising sun, were generally unaware that the glow of coming daylight was already reflected upon their faces; at the same time, it was strikingly evident to travelers coming from the opposite direction. Authentic Christian witness, Newbigin liked to say, is like that. Christians who travel toward the coming kingdom reflect its light in their countenances, as they live in the faith of God’s story, focused on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The metaphor fits Newbigin himself as, in one of his most important books, he challenged all of us to live out the Gospel in a pluralist society.
The Church of South India Golden Jubilee

John C. B. Webster

On September 27, 1947, just six weeks after India became an independent country, the Church of South India (CSI) came into existence. This new church, a union of former Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches, was an event of great ecumenical significance, providing both a model and much inspiration for union negotiations elsewhere in the world. On September 26-28, 1997, the Church of South India celebrated its golden jubilee in Madras (now Chennai) around the theme “Unite, Liberate, Celebrate.” Each of the twenty-one dioceses was invited to send 200 delegates to this churchwide celebration (2,600 actually registered), while the host diocese planned to send 20 from each of its 110 parishes. They were joined by guests from sister churches in India and abroad, including the archbishop of York, the moderators of the Church of Scotland, the United Reformed Church (U.K.), the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Association of Churches and Missions in Southwest Germany (EMS), the Church of North India, the vice-moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, the president of the United Church in Australia, and the metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. The main events were held in an enormous cathedral in Australia, and the metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. The main events were held in an enormous pandal (tent) alongside St. George’s Cathedral, where the initial union had taken place.

Those three days of celebration were the culmination of a series of earlier events. A study booklet on the jubilee theme was published in English and the four South Indian languages. There were separate retreats for bishops, clergy, and laity as well as a theological conference, rallies for children and youth, and regional gatherings of the Women’s Fellowship. September 14 was celebrated as Jubilee Sunday throughout the CSI. A Commission on Evaluation was also appointed and mandated to report on the state of the church to the CSI Synod at its regular biannual meeting in January 1998.

The festivities in Madras began on Friday morning, September 26, with a flag-raising in the cathedral compound, the opening of an exhibition of Dalit paintings at a nearby CSI school, and the dedication of the Golden Jubilee Auditorium at the CSI synod headquarters. Several hundred people were present for this service of dedication and for the seminar that followed, entitled “Rethinking the Church’s Role in Development in the Context of Globalization.” Michael H. Taylor, director of Christian Aid in Great Britain, began by contrasting oikoumene, a global habitat that is a “ hospitable place for everyone,” with globalization, a competitive marketplace. “Our mission,” he said, “is to convert ‘globalization’ into ‘ecumenism.’” This is to be carried out by concerted efforts both to reform the global economic order and to resist the institutions of globalization at the local, national, and international levels. To do this, we need a global rather than a colonial or paternalistic church addressing the inequalities and powers of globalization in the name of the Gospel and of the poor. The two other speakers, K. Rajaratnam and Ninan Koshy, also saw globalization as negative in its premises and consequences. The former saw the church’s role as redressing the economic imbalances globalization had created, while the latter saw it, in terms of the vision in the Twenty-Third Psalm, as challenging globalization at the conceptual and programmatic levels of what we want to achieve through development.

After lunch the crowds began to gather, and the processions began to move toward the cathedral, where the first mass gathering took place at 5:00 p.m. There was a long line of school children, diocesan delegates, bands, buses, trucks, placcards, and floats. There was a lot of noise, decorations, cheer, and milling around on the well-illumined cathedral premises at refreshment stands, bookstores, and handicraft stalls. The opening service of praise and thanksgiving was followed by welcoming guests as well as receiving greetings from some of the CSI bishops. By this time over 5,000 people were present, and the emphasis was clearly on celebration.

Message from Lesslie Newbigin

Saturday, September 27, began with a service of Holy Communion, the first part of which was held in the pandal before shifting to the cathedral itself for Communion. As people settled into their seats, a six-minute recorded message was played from Lesslie Newbigin, who had been consecrated fifty years ago and was the only one of the original CSI bishops still alive. He described the service of unification and acknowledged that “the reason for union was simply obedience to our risen Lord, to his prayer that his people should be one.” In commenting further on John 17, he pointed out that “it is not unity of any sort, for any reason” that Christ prayed for “but this very specific unity in the truth, and the truth is Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ consecrating himself to the Father.” He then urged upon all present a deeper consecration to the cross of Jesus Christ, the Truth who had consecrated himself to the Father so that, in the face of the temptations of these changed times, that loyalty would transcend every other possible loyalty and we would be, would be seen to be, and would remain, one. In his sermon, David M. Hope, archbishop of York, also recalled the service of unification and, picking up on the jubilee theme, spoke of the church as herald (“celebrate”), servant (“liberate”), and communion (“unite”).

On Saturday afternoon there was a huge public meeting, which drew an estimated 10,000 people to the pandal. Most of the meeting was devoted to the presidential address of the CSI moderator and to greetings from many of the guests. Bishop Vasant P. Dandin spoke of the CSI as a community that belonged to Christ and witnessed to Christ; a healing, reconciled, and
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An Uneasy but Healthy Introspection

On Sunday, delegates and guests worshiped in local churches. Many of the foreign guests were invited to preach. In the late morning there was a panel on the subject “The CSI Beyond Fifty Years.” The two speakers—Bishops Victor Premasagar, a past moderator now retired, and M. Azariah, the current bishop of the Madras Diocese—initiated what proved to be a time of collective introspection that opened up to the public some of the problems that the CSI is facing: its failures in subsequent union efforts following 1947, its need for a new spirituality, elite domination in a church of the poor, male domination, a hierarchical organization that is disempowering, and the need for transparency and accountability among those in positions of leadership. “The political will to bring about change is lacking, especially at the top level.” Thus the celebrations ended on an uneasy but healthy note.

Not only did this celebration call to remembrance an important event in Indian and ecumenical church history, but its details also revealed much about the self-understanding and nature of the Church of South India. First, and perhaps most obvious, the CSI is a large and well-established church. It has stayed together over the years and is the largest Protestant church in India with, as its brochure indicated, 2.8 million members in 10,114 congr-
Lesslie Newbigin Remembered

Brought up an English Presbyterian, I can hardly remember a time when I didn’t know Lesslie as a legend. We first made contact in 1965 when our two sons conjointly had a difference of opinion with their headmaster and were not welcome in their school for a spell. Lesslie and Helen were in Geneva, my wife was in Taiwan, I was in New York, and tomorrow was my doctoral oral. With visions of our erring sons loose on London streets, Lesslie and I corresponded. On the occasion of my retirement in 1986, Lesslie reread my letter, which he had kept.

Where does our thanksgiving begin? Lesslie would have us begin with God. Then comes Helen, greatly loved and greatly loving. What other retiring bishop’s wife would, with two suitcases and a rucksack, have taken a bus from Madras to London?

We give thanks for a man of prayer. When he asked you how you were, you knew it was a prayer-backed question.

Thanks for Lesslie as Bible expositor. (Why is his commentary on John so little referred to?)

For Lesslie as theologian. One of his biographers sees him as one of a handful of the outstanding Christian thinkers of the twentieth century.

For Lesslie the missionary statesman who was first a missionary, the missiologist who took his missionary thinking into his theology, his epistemology, his political and social thinking, and his limericks.

For Lesslie the brilliant, rapid writer. (The Other Side of 1984 was written in just over a week.)

For the world-famous preacher, perhaps happiest in an Indian village and Winston Green, Birmingham.

As Presbyterian bishop, as teacher, as raconteur. (“Did you ever hear the one about John Baillie and Karl Barth?”)

As speaker to children. Not too long ago, some children in Selly Oak were helped to see the world upside down when the aged bishop stood on his head! Not a single one of his many doctorates or CBE fell out of his pockets. His episcopal dignity was intact.

As spellbinding lecturer on many topics, often with the same great themes, but always you heard them for the first time.

As traveler fearful of wasting a minute. He wasn’t often late, but sometimes like Waterloo it was a damned close run thing.

As ecumenical prophet bearing the cares of all the churches on his soul.

As ecclesiastical civil servant wanting to be in a pulpit or preaching in a street.

Lesslie, once at a high table in Cambridge, sat next to the man who had been vice chancellor in the roaring sixties of student revolt. When Lesslie confessed that he was John Newbigin’s father, the vice chancellor murmured, “A worthy opponent.”

One of the many biographers of Lesslie should entitle their work “Lesslie in Armor” and structure it round Lesslie’s numerous struggles and conflicts. They began early. Many were on his mind in the last months, and a yet-unpublished book may produce more. Sometimes he persuaded, sometimes he didn’t, but I cannot imagine there is any protagonist who would not say, “A worthy opponent.” Like son, like father.

His identification with India gave him a deep understanding of its religious faiths. This and his total commitment to Christ produced a contribution to interfaith dialogue that cannot be ignored. As on so many major issues, agree or disagree, approve or disapprove, you have to face him. There is no honest way round. We disagreed on two things: how long it took to the railway station or airport, and Margaret Thatcher, which we never discussed.

Some of us are tolerant because we have so much to tolerate in ourselves: a sin-based tolerance that sometimes tolerates the intolerable. Lesslie’s tolerance was cruciform, giving him a sternness in his mercy. He could afford to be severe, but the severity was healing.

He gave one the self-honesty to know one was the monkey on his barrel organ, but yet the monkey felt a little leonine. Although you were four feet high, you felt basketball tall and inspired with a proper confidence. Treating you as an equal, he would even say he was indebted—and really believed it.

He couldn’t say no to any opportunity to serve, writing numerous introductions to other people’s books and covering the globe to lecture, preach, broadcast, and debate. He knew everybody and talked easily with the great, but easiest with the humble, poor, and lost. When he dropped a name, it was always the name of Jesus.

Like Barth, he could sum up his theology in “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” I have puzzled over how the knowledgeable St. Paul could say he knew only one thing: “Jesus Christ and him crucified” and have often thought that the Christian life is the endeavor to fathom that text. Lesslie helps me immensely. Able to write and lecture on so many subjects and always with illumination, the heart of it all was so very simple: Jesus, Lord and Savior, Jesus true, Jesus public truth, Jesus universal truth, Jesus the Truth with the Father and the Spirit.

To know Lesslie was to live in the light of the resurrection and to be enabled today to say good-bye with the full assurance that God is with him and he with God. We are allowed to be sorry for ourselves—the family for a wonderful husband, father, and grandfather; some of us for a mentor, a colleague, and a friend; all of us for an exceptional man—but we are not allowed to be sorry for Lesslie. We know (and of course all knowing begins with faith) that he is having the time of his new life. He basks in the light of the true Enlightenment. His mansion in his Father’s house is crowded. He’s probably already met Joe Oldham and Archie Craig, Robert Macky, Visser’t Hooft, Polanyi, and of course Augustine. Now he is being measured for his light debating armor in case Descarte, Locke, and Kant are there.

Lesslie never touched anything that he did not adorn, illuminate, and advance. His influence before 1983 was enormous, but with The Other Side of 1984 and its successors, I believe there was something totally new, long roots but new. A new mission for a new cultural situation. A new analysis, new eyes, new things to be done.

For Lesslie as theologian. One of his biographers sees him as one of a handful of the outstanding Christian thinkers of the twentieth century.

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gations within 21 dioceses. It also has 1,930 schools, 38 colleges, 51 vocational polytechnic schools, 104 hospitals and clinics, and 512 hostels for poor children. Whether or not this represents significant growth through evangelism is a moot point, but its numerical and institutional strength has given it a well-recognized place within South Indian society, as was acknowledged at the public meeting. It is therefore not surprising that its golden jubilee generated a lot of good feeling and pride among the participants at this large and happy gathering. Moreover, the CSI was playing host not only to its own membership but to an appreciative world in a warm and generous way. All the delegates and guests received food, housing, and gifts to take home. On Saturday the Madras Diocese provided 7,000 lunch packets to those who attended the morning Communion service.

Second, the Church of South India is also a well-connected and respected church within ecumenical circles. The large number of overseas and Indian guests, many of them holding high positions within their churches and agencies, bore eloquent testimony to that fact. There were, however, no official representatives of the Roman Catholic Church—a surprise, since Protestant-Catholic relations at the local and diocesan levels are often very good in India. It was also obvious that the CSI leadership took these partner church and agency relationships very seriously, for they certainly played a prominent part in the festivities throughout the three days. Historic relationships were affirmed, and partner voices were heard in key public events as well as in times of private conversation with the CSI leadership.

There is also much to be learned from what was conspicuously absent in these celebrations. For example, what was on display in Madras was the urban church rather than the rural majority. Only one layman apart from the general secretary was given a leadership role in the major gatherings. Women dominated only the choir and cultural programs at the end of each day, as if their role in the church was merely decorative. Young people could express their exuberance only in the processions. Even the clergy were reduced largely to passive roles, leaving the bishops very much at the front and center. One got the impression that the dominant color of this jubilee was not gold but purple!

From a Union Church to Anglican

This imbalance is symbolic of a deeper reality within the CSI. What began as a genuine union of different churches in 1947 has become over the intervening fifty years an Anglican church. There is little of Methodism, Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism left in the CSI, except in memory, whereas Anglicanism is very evident at the levels both of symbolism and of church politics. Clergy dress and the place of the bishop in the ceremonial life of the church are the most obvious symbols of this transformation. The same is true of the Book of Common Worship, which is used in urban congregations, while “free worship” tends to prevail in rural congregations, where the literacy level is low. At the political level, a great deal of power is concentrated in the episcopacy at the diocesan and especially synodical levels.

This transformation is not due to a clever conspiracy by some fanatical Anglicans seeking to take over the CSI. Anglicanism had some important advantages at the outset. If the estimates of Rajaiah D. Paul are correct, virtually half of the original members of the CSI were Anglicans; half of the original bishops were Anglicans, and the Anglican Church had the prestige of having been the established church. At a deeper level, Indian society is profoundly hierarchical in nature, and the model of the monarchical missionary has not yet become a distant memory. Also, most studies of Indian politics show that it is based upon patron-client relationships. It is therefore not surprising that common Indian attitudes and modes of behavior should affect the life and work of the church, enhancing the prominence and power of the episcopacy well beyond what was originally intended. The CSI is, after all, a profoundly Indian church. Moreover, during the past two decades the struggle for survival in India generally, for improving or at least maintaining one’s place in society, has become much more intense and ruthless than before. Consequently, the command of all available resources, including church resources, has become more urgent, and power more centralized, than previously. This development has raised considerably the stakes in church elections, especially at the highest levels, and as was pointed out during the closing seminar, it has significantly diminished any political will those at the top may have for making meaningful change. The problem is widely recognized, as this statement by a national consultation held in July 1997 at United Theological College, Bangalore, indicates:

We are deeply concerned over the abuse of power, corruption and nepotism manifested at all levels of the Church’s life. Episcopacy, which is designed for a pastoral and teaching ministry, has become, by and large, an administrative office. Power has come to be concentrated in the hands of the Bishops. Ecclesiastical leadership, . . . linking itself with institutional powers and lay persons with vested interests, dominates the decision-making process. The congregational participation in the administrative structure is made ineffective, if not non-existent.

This transformation from a union to an Anglican church also affects the capacity of the Church of South India to deal with the more pressing unity issues it now faces. For all intents and purposes, the question of ecclesiastical union has been resolved, but the social unity of the CSI is becoming increasingly a problem. The most obvious form of this is caste rivalries between Dalits (those previously called untouchables) and non-Dalits, although it may take the related form of the priority of the urban versus the rural churches. There have been deliberate splits on this issue over the past fifty years, and breakaway churches have been organized. The question thus is whether, in these times of intense economic competition, a hierarchical leadership, one based on a patron-client model, can reorient the CSI to become the “healing, reconciled and reconciling community” the mod-

What was on display at Madras was the urban church, not the rural, and the clergy, not the laity.

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erator claimed it to be, or whether other priorities will necessarily take precedence.

This raises a final question begged by the golden jubilee celebrations. Can the CSI provide the leadership in the ecumenical arena for the ongoing search for Christian unity many of the overseas guests seemed to be looking to the CSI for? During those three days there was no clear voice from within the CSI pointing the way forward for the CSI itself or for Christians in general. A young theologian said afterward that what was seen and heard in Madras was the voice of the "senior center" of the church, of those who can "glow and reminisce," of those who "had their chance and blew it. . . . Now those of us who were born into the CSI have a responsibility to make our voices heard." Both the obvious strengths of the Church of South India and such restlessness within it are hopeful signs for the next fifty years.

Notes

1. The uniting churches were the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon (Anglican), the Methodist Church in South India, and the South India United Church, which itself was a union (in 1908) of Congregational and Presbyterian churches that the southernmost group of churches connected with the Basel Mission later joined. The remaining Basel Mission churches joined the Church of South India, some in 1958 and the rest in 1968. The Nandial Diocese of the Anglican Church joined the CSI in 1975.

2. The CSI Women's Fellowship celebrates its own golden jubilee in 1998.

3. Bishop M. Azariah's estimate that "over the past five decades almost 200 percent has been added to the baptized membership even if the majority were biological additions" is probably accurate ("The State of the Union of the CSI, Its Prospects at the Threshold of Its Golden Jubilee Year," People's Reporter, September 1–15, 1996, p. 3). But there are several problems with estimates of this kind. One is that the base figures for 1947 are only estimates and may well be on the high side. Rajah D. Paul put them at 1,010,000 at the time of union (The First Decade: An Account of the Church of South India [Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1958], p. 209). This is probably high, because fifteen years later the diocesan totals added up to only 1,146,316, a mere 13.5 percent increase (Renewal and Advance [Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1963], p. 210). A second problem is that there are no figures on how many new members are converts from other faiths, thus forcing Azariah and others to make what are at best educated guesses. The third is that where organized opposition to Christian evangelism is strong, membership figures may be deliberately deflated in order to avoid provocation. Fourth, in some areas many Dalits seeking the Scheduled Caste benefits they are denied because they are Christians remove themselves from the church rolls, even though by faith they remain Christian, attend worship, and give to the church regularly.

4. Two women presbyters were among those serving Communion in the pandal on Saturday morning. The Synod of the Church of South India approved the ordination of women in 1975. Bishop M. Azariah estimated that there are currently about forty ordained women in full-time ministry within eight of the twenty-one CSI dioceses. This figure represents less than 2 percent of all CSI pastors ("State of the Union"). While this represents an improvement, the total number of women in full-time pastoral and/or evangelistic work as Bible women, diocesan women workers, and in other capacities has declined quite dramatically over the past fifty years. Women do serve as church officers as well as members of local Pastorate Committees and Diocesan Councils. A few have been selected to represent their dioceses at meetings of the synod, and that number appears to be increasing. See John C. B. Webster et al., From Role to Identity: Dalit Christian Women in Transition (Delhi: ISPCK, 1997), pp. 36–37.

5. "It is estimated that, after nearly five decades, the Book of Common Worship is being used fairly widely in as many as over 1,000 pastorates. This leaves about 200 pastorates who still find it difficult to give up their pre-union denominational preferences in their ways of worship" (M. Azariah, "State of the Union," p. 3). It should be borne in mind that many pastorates that are predominantly rural may include a town congregation.

6. These were 220,000 Methodists (22 percent), 290,000 Congregationalists and Presbyterians (29 percent), and 500,000 Anglicans (49 percent) (Paul, First Decade, p. 209).

7. Of the fourteen original bishops, seven were Anglicans (Elliott, Hollis, Jacob, Joseph, Muthaly, Selwyn, and Smith), three were Methodists (Gurushanta, Thorp, and Whitaker), three were Congregationalists (Kulandran, Legg, and Sumitra), and one was Presbyterian (Newbigin) (Bengt Sundkler, Church of South India: The Movement towards Union, 1900–1947, rev. ed. [London: Lutterworth Press, 1965], p. 341).

8. Dr. R. Yesuratnam described the church hierarchy of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and laity as a chaturvarsa system, with the laity and women as the shudras, the bottommost caste ("Liberation from Jubilee Perspective," South India Churchman, July 1997, pp. 7–8. In like manner, Dr. Stanley J. Samartha pointed out that "even those who criticise the hierarchical caste system as Brahmanical have failed to protest against the gradual transformation of episcopacy into a Brahmanical system" ("Vision and Reality: Reflections on the Church of South India—12," People's Reporter, September 1–15, 1997, p. 4).


10. The original Plan of Union defined the bishop as "shepherd, not as lord either in act or in title," and described the functions of the office as including pastoral oversight, teaching, supervision of public worship, "ordination of ministers and authorization to ministers to officiate and preach," and "oversight of the discipline of the Church." These functions are repeated in the CSI constitution, with leadership in evangelism added; in addition, the constitution also confines the administrative duties of the bishop to presiding over the diocesan council and taking part in the proceedings of diocesan committees, while explicitly prohibiting separate controlling authority over the finances of the diocese ("The Plan of Union," in Greater Peace, Closer Fellowship, Fullness of Life, ed. Lily Amirtham and Sam Amirtham [Chennai: Church of South India, 1997], pp. 442–43; The Constitution of the Church of South India, with Amendments up to and Approved by the Synod of January 1972 [Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1972], pp. 23–26).


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Evangelical Foreign Missionaries in Russia

Peter Deyneka and Anita Deyneka

Although the efforts of a few missionaries, such as Dr. Frederick Baedeker and Lord Granville Radstock, promoted the growth of Protestantism in the nineteenth century, comparatively few foreign evangelical missionaries engaged in ministries to Russia until the late 1980s. As religious freedoms fluctuated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Russian czarist government and state Orthodox church opposition hindered the growth of Protestantism and the expansion of evangelical missions in Russia. In 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution set Russia on a course of official atheism that by the 1930s had erected barriers to foreign missionaries and brought restriction and repression to Soviet citizens of all religious convictions.

Even during the most severe periods of religious persecution, however, foreign Protestants attempted to support their co-believers behind the Iron Curtain, entering the USSR clandestinely with Christian literature and providing other assistance from outside, such as short-wave Christian broadcasting. Foreign missionaries were revered by Soviet believers for this assistance, and they were equally reviled by the Soviet government.

By 1989, with the presidency of Mikhail Gorbachev and his policies of perestroika and glasnost, Protestant missionaries began to enter the Soviet Union openly. In October 1990 a new law on religion not only provided unprecedented freedom for Soviet religious believers but opened the doors of the USSR to foreign missionaries. The dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and the formation of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) swung open the doors to Russia even wider.

Warmly welcomed at first by Soviet citizens from all strata of society, the trickle of Protestant missionaries that had entered the USSR before the late 1980s soon swelled to a stream, with evangelists arriving from the United States, Canada, Korea, Germany, Sweden, and other countries. They came as individuals and also were sent by churches and organizations. Ultimately, “they came by the thousands. As the Soviet Union became more tolerant of religion, Western Christian missionaries streamed into Russia. Backed with millions of dollars, they were fueled by the fervent desire to win Communist souls and repair the spiritual damage of seventy years of enforced atheism.”

Mark Elliott, director of the Institute for East-West Christian Studies, estimated that from 150 ministries working in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in 1982, the number rose to 311 in 1989, then 691 in 1993, and to nearly 1,000 in 1997, with approximately 561 of the groups actively working in the former Soviet Union in multifacted ministries.

Commendation and Appreciation

As the foreign evangelical mission crusade to Russia advanced, many Russians, including religious leaders such as Grigori Komendant, former president of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of the USSR, expressed appreciation and gratitude. “Praise God, there are those who came to us, sought out our churches and our brothers and sisters, and stayed to labor together with us as partners in the work of spreading the gospel message…. They labor not to plant American-style churches, but churches in the spirit and tradition of our fellowships and our people.”

Alexander Sorokin, editor of a Christian quarterly published in St. Petersburg, noted the blessings the foreign mission movement brought. “Thousands of missionaries have now come to Russia to help its spiritual revival, and I deeply appreciate their time and deeds. May God bless them! I saw people whose lives were completely changed by the Lord Jesus Christ through these missionaries.”

Acknowledging that criticism of foreign Protestant missionaries by the Russian Orthodox Church had been considerable, Father George Chistiakov, priest of the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian, praised the efforts of both Protestants and Catholics. “Who is it that helped us, Orthodox people in Russia, to survive 75 years of Communist dictatorship? And who today has helped us to rebuild our churches, publish books, support the poor and needy, and find clothing, medicines, and food for them? Catholics and Protestants. The Lord calls us to help people who are in trouble and not to a war among ourselves.”

Condemnation and Conflict

Even as foreign evangelists received praise for their mission in Russia, a variety of voices soon criticized and condemned them. Michael Bourdeaux of Keston Institute, for example, discerned the positive in the modern missionary crusade but also deplored the negative. “It is astonishing to observe how, after the world had by and large ignored or misrepresented the religious needs of the Soviet Union over several decades, suddenly these needs became a fashionable cause. Embedded in this was the goodwill of innumerable people who humbly and genuinely wanted to help Russia re-establish the roots of its faith. [But] their quiet dedication was often swamped by the insensitivity of others.”

Many Orthodox, including Patriarch Alexei, condemned the activities of foreign evangelists. “When the territories of central and eastern Europe were opened for the public missionary endeavor and evangelism, the peoples rooted in millennial Orthodox traditions became objects of proselytism for numerous zealots calling themselves missionaries and preachers who came from outside to the new markets.” Following international protest after he asserted that Mormons and other non-Russian religions were “filth and scum,” presidential candidate Alexander
Lebed apologized at a news conference in Moscow. At the same time, however, he stated, "Regarding strangers on our territory . . . I’m categorically against them," and he reiterated his opposition to "foreign" religions on Russia’s soil. 8

Opposition to foreign evangelists and also indigenous Protestants, who have been increasingly relegated to the category of nontraditional religion since 1993, has not been confined to words. Especially since 1993, the Russian Orthodox hierarchy, extreme nationalists, and Communists lobbied for revisions of the liberal 1990 Law on Religion in order to restrict the religious activities of foreigners and, to some degree, also the activities of all religious groups not affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church. In September 1997 such a law was passed by both houses of the Russian parliament and signed by President Yeltsin. While it is still uncertain how this new law—which contravenes international human rights agreements that Russia has signed, and even clauses in the nation’s own constitution—will be interpreted and implemented by the Russian government, it seems certain to restrict the activities of foreigners more than those of nationals.

In addition to federal legislation, as many as one-quarter of the regions in the Russian federation have enacted legislation or issued executive orders relating to the regulation of foreign religious organizations. 9 Most regional legislation on religion contains requirements concerning registration, procurement of places of worship, and restrictions on certain religious activities that discriminate against foreign and minority religious groups. 10

Although relations between Russian Orthodox and Western evangelical missionaries have grown increasingly antagonistic, Russian evangelicals initially welcomed their Western counterparts with open arms, readily requesting assistance from foreign Christians and reiterating how grateful they were for such help. Such a reception was not surprising, considering the long and deep relationship between Western and Russian evangelicals, even during the most repressive years of Communism.

However, even as the contact of evangelical missionaries with many national Protestants has continued close and strong, some Russian evangelicals have also grown increasingly critical of their cobelievers; they have become more discerning in deciding with which foreign missionaries they will work. In their "Open Letter of the Missionary Coordinating Council to All Western Missionary Organizations" (1993), national Christians from ten countries of the CIS thanked Western missions "from our heart for your love to our peoples . . . during decades when Christ’s Church in our country had been an object of persecution and could not accomplish Christ’s Commission in the full measure without your help." But the statement also criticized Westerners who overwhelmed the indigenous church. "In Moscow alone, over one hundred Western organizations were registered. And each one wants to accomplish its program by using the existing church infrastructure, which is still so weak that it cannot resist this pressure, neither organizationally nor spiritually. . . . Indigenous missionary organizations cannot compete with strong Western missions and the best people prefer to work for Western organizations and, naturally, for better payment. . . . Finally, instead of receiving assistance and support from Western missionaries, local missions [find that they] have to defend their own vision of missionary service." 11

Guidelines for Evangelical Missionaries

Clearly, the role of foreign evangelical missionaries in Russia is controversial. Appreciated and applauded by many, they are criticized and condemned by others, including members of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian government, the Russian Protestant church, and even some Western missionaries themselves. Some Russians plead for more missionaries to come. From the perspective of other nationals, all foreign evangelists should stay out of Russia.

In 1997 Mark Elliott estimated that the Western and Korean missionary force in the former Soviet Union numbered 5,605, of whom approximately 1,962 were career missionaries. While the number of foreign missionaries in Russia and elsewhere in the CIS is regarded by some as overwhelming, less than six thousand missionaries among a population of approximately 300 million people is scarcely saturation. 12 Anatoli Pchelintsev, director of the Institute of Religion and Law, an organization with extensive contacts with both national and foreign Christians of all confessions, states, "Russia still needs Western missionaries, but we need the right kind of help." 13

Is there a profile of an ideal foreign missionary in Russia? Is such a paradigm possible to create? Does the nature of the evangelistic enterprise necessarily engender controversy? It seems that for evangelical missionaries the more successful they are (by the criteria of their own definition of evangelism), the more their activities will be regarded as proselytism. Ultimately, the only totally trustworthy evaluation of past and future evangelical missionary enterprise in Russia is divine. While this is not discernible with certainty by fallible followers of Christ, consensus from all sides regarding evangelical missions does reveal some attitudes and actions to be more desirable than others. The following suggestions, gleaned from many sources, are a step toward guidelines for foreign missionaries in Russia.

Appreciate Russian culture. Paul Semenchuk, an American of Russian heritage who has served thirty-five years as a missionary to Russians with Trans World Radio, urges Westerners who want to minister in Russia to honor the country’s culture. "We triumphantly invade Russia without any preparation, not having read one Russian book, not even one book about Russia. We need to read their classical writers and poets if we want to understand Russians. . . . We will never reach the soul of the Slav if we don’t familiarize ourselves with their history, literature, [and] art." 14

Avoid Westernization of the Gospel. Grigori Komendant, president of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Ukraine, states, "The West needs to be more realistic in recognizing that Russia is not a Third World country. The church has been here a long time, and we are not interested in the Americanization of our church." 15 Paul Semenchuk likewise reminds Westerners: "Russia is not a savage, unexplored territory—ready for our adventurously, enterprising invasion, conquest, domination and exploitation. Russians—believers or not—will never accept a Western mode of Christianity. . . . When our Western values are projected on the Russian scene, they generate all kinds of tension, offense, negative thoughts and feelings, unhealthy attitudes." 16

To reach the soul of the Slav we must familiarize ourselves with Slavic history, literature, and art.
education in the CIS, sponsored by Overseas Council on Theological Education, the Institute for East-West Christian Studies, and Russian Ministries, a sampling of comments by nationals indicated the desire for partnership with the West while at the same time avoiding Westernization. "We want to know what is going on . . . what is available"; "We do not want everything to be given to us, but we must know what is available"; "We do not want ready-made Western Christianity to be dumped on us"; "We would love to have the tools, and then we will work it out for ourselves." 17

Respect the rights of all religions and cooperate with other Christians whenever possible. Foreign missionaries—even when their own legal and religious rights are violated—must model respect for all religions. If national and foreign evangelicals are to expe-

**Noteworthy**

**Mission Scholarship Grants**

The Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut, announces the 1998 grantees of the **Research Enablement Program**. Nineteen scholars representing India, New Zealand, Nigeria, the People's Republic of China, South Africa, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the United States received awards for projects in the study of the world Christian movement. The Research Enablement Program is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and administered by OMSC. The grants, which will be dispensed for work in the 1998–1999 academic year, total $297,000.

**Gerald H. Anderson**, OMSC's director who also serves as director of the REP and chair of the Review and Selection Committee states, "The task of the Committee becomes increasingly difficult as the program attracts a growing number of scholars engaged in the interdisciplinary study of the world Christian movement, especially promising younger scholars from the non-Western world."

This year the REP received 130 applications from 37 different countries. Twenty percent of the applicants were women, and over fifty percent were citizens outside Europe and North America. The grantees represent a variety of ecclesiastical communities.

The REP is designed to support both younger scholars undertaking international research for doctoral dissertations and established scholars engaged in major writing projects dealing with the world Christian movement and its interaction with the public sphere, especially in the non-Western world. The 1998 grantees listed by category are as follows:

**Postdoctoral Book Research and Writing**

- **Daryl M. Balia**, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa: "Purveyor of Culture: The American Zulu Mission in South Africa, 1835–1912"
- **Andrew E. Barnes**, Arizona State University, USA: "Making Headway: Christian Missions and the Introduction of Western Civilization in Northern Nigeria"
- **Philip J. Gibbs**, Holy Spirit Regional Seminary, Papua New Guinea: "Melanesian Spirituality Project"
- **Michelle V. Gilbert**, independent scholar, USA: "The Letters of Theophilus Opku, a Nineteenth-Century Gold Coast Pastor"
- **Phyllis M. Martin**, Indiana University, USA: "Catholic Women and Missionary Nuns in Twentieth-Century Congo"
- **Christopher O. Oshun**, Lagos State University, Nigeria: "Prayer and Healing: Determinants of Aladura Spirituality"

**Clifford W. Putney**, Bentley College, USA: "The Missionary Gulicks: An Evangelical Dynasty, 1827–1963"

**Peter Riddell**, London Bible College, UK: "Christians in Indonesia and Egypt: The Impact of the Islamic Resurgence"

**K. Thanzauva**, Eastern Theological College, India: "Christianity and Tribal Culture in India: A Study of How the Tribal Culture Has Influenced and Indigenized Christianity in India"

**Nianqun Yang**, Peking University, People's Republic of China: "Medical Missionaries and Social Change in China, 1830s–1930s"

**International Research for Doctoral Dissertations**

- **Charles E. Farhadian**, Boston University, USA: "A Social History of Central Dani in New Order Indonesia: An Examination of Western Missions and Modern Dani Identity in a Plural World"
- **Brian M. Howell**, Washington University, USA: "Reaching Out: Philippine Protestants in a Global Context"
- **Eric H. Lindland**, Emory University, USA: "Baptist Institutions in the Congo: Personal Meanings of Church, School and Hospital"
- **Sung Deuk Oak**, Boston University School of Theology, USA: "Toward Indigenous Korean Christianity: Moderate Evangelical Mission Theology of the American Missionaries in Korea, 1884–1914"

**Scholarly Consultations on World Christianity**

- **Stephen W. Kidd**, University of St. Andrews, UK: "Indigenous Peoples of the Chaco, Christian Missions and the Nation-State"
- **Sze-kar Wan**, Andover Newton Theological School, USA: "Chinese Christian Biblical Commentarial Traditions: An International Collaborative Investigation of Resources, Methods, and Interpretation"

**Projects for Locating, Preserving, Cataloging, and Making Accessible Collections of Non-Western Research Materials**

- **Lancelot Prabhu**, S.J., St. Xavier's College, India: "A Rev. N. V. Tilak Archives Project"

**Announcing**

The annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be held June 19–21, 1998, at Techny (near Chicago), Illinois. The theme is "Tools of the Trade: Missiological Reference for Church, Academy, and Missionary." Andrew F. Walls will give the keynote address. **Jonathan J. Bonk** of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut,
Russian Orthodox Church. "Evangelicals, ... see a privileged whose activities are law-abiding. (Of course, such toleration does not preclude defense of freedoms when they are violated.)¹⁸

Mark Elliott and Kent Hill, president of Eastern Nazarene College, encourage evangelicals to appreciate and support the Russian Orthodox Church. "Evangelicals, . . . see a privileged status for Orthodoxy as a tsarist throwback that a clear majority of Russians have said they do not want. Nevertheless, a charitable evangelical response would be to assist in strengthening the voice and witness of Orthodoxy in any way possible—even as evangelicals maintain the position that no single Christian confession alone can reach all of Russia for Christ."¹⁹

Proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. Humanitarian aid that is part of Christian missions needs to be given without coercion to

is the ASM president. The Association of Professors of Mission will meet June 18–19 at the same place. The theme of their meeting is “Methods of Practical Education for Holistic Mission.” Roger Schroeder, S.V.D., of the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, is president of the APM. For further information and registration for both meetings, contact Darrell L. Guiter, Columbia Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 520, Decatur, Georgia 30031-0520 (Fax: 404-377-9696).

A core group of Catholic missiologists, made up of the missiological faculties of the Gregorian and Urbanian Universities, Rome, and representatives from Catholic missiological faculties in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, and South America, has met several times during the last two years to explore the possibility of establishing an International Association of Catholic Missiologists (IACM). The scope of IACM will be to promote the study and research of missiological issues in preparation for the third millennium. The general perspective will be Catholic, but ecumenical and interreligious perspectives will also receive attention. Membership is open to all individual Catholics who are specialists in missiology and related subjects. There will also be institutional members. For further information, contact: Secretary, IACM Core-group, Pontificia Università Urbanaiana; Via Urbano VIII, 16; 00165 Rome, Italy (Fax: 39-6-69-88-18-71).

Personalia

We send special greetings to Johannes Verkuyl in the Netherlands, who was 90 on January 16, 1998. Professor Verkuyl is well known as a Dutch missionary statesman: for his twenty-four years of missionary service in Indonesia, his period from 1963 to 1968 as general secretary of the Netherlands Missionary Council, and his tenure as professor of missiology at the Free University of Amsterdam until he retired in 1978. The 66 books and some 400 articles he has written in the areas of social ethics, apologetics, interreligious dialogue, evangelism, and missiology are a major contribution to studies of world Christianity.

Congratulations and best wishes go also to Karl Müller, S.V.D., who celebrated his eightieth birthday in Sankt Augustin (near Bonn), Germany, on January 25, 1998. Father Müller is a distinguished Catholic missiologist who was mission secretary and vice-superior general of the SVD in Rome, and also served as director of the SVD Missiological Institute and director of the Anthropos Institute, both in Sankt Augustin. Most recently he coedited the Dictionary of Mission (Orbis Books, 1997).

Died. David J. Michell, 64, director of OMF in Ontario, Canada, in an automobile accident near Toronto, on December 24, 1997. Born in China to Australian missionaries serving with China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellow-
ship), Michell was interned during World War II in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in China along with Eric Liddell, the Olympic athlete whose story is told in the film Chariots of Fire. After ministering in Japan and New Zealand, Michell became director of OMF Canada in 1975 until he retired from that post in 1993 to become OMF director for Ontario. In 1992 he published a biography, The Spirit of Eric Liddell, and he chaired the Eric Liddell Foundation. In 1995 he was permitted by China to place a wreath on Liddell’s grave.

Died. Edward J. Malatesta, S.J., 65, internationally known biblical scholar and historian of the church and Jesuits in China, in Hong Kong, on January 27, 1998. An American Jesuit, Father Malatesta first gained renown as a biblical scholar when he was a professor at the Gregorian University in Rome from 1966 to 1977, specializing in the Letters of St. John. In the late 1970s he shifted his interests to research on the Jesuits and the church in China, and in 1984 he cofounded the Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at the University of San Francisco, which was later named for Matteo Ricci, pioneer Italian Jesuit missionary to China. A friend commented, “I find an almost poetic justice in the fact that Fr. Malatesta died on Chinese soil. He would have wanted nothing more than to die as he had lived, building one last bridge between China and the West in the spirit of Matteo Ricci, the Jesuit giant who inspired his life work.”


Died. Anton G. Honig, Jr., 82, Dutch missiologist, in Kampen, on January 4, 1998. He was a missionary in Indonesia of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands from 1954 to 1967, mainly teaching at theological schools in Yogakarta, Java, and Makassar, Sulawesi. After returning to the Netherlands, he was professor of missiology at Kampen from 1967 to 1984. From 1972 to 1976 he was a member of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches. His book Hoe ver reikt het heil in Christus? was published a few days after he died.
convert to any religious confession. John Bernbaum, president of the Russian-American Christian University, observes, "Most Russians think Protestants are just worried about finding adherents to their strange theological beliefs; we have to demonstrate that our goals are more significant and beneficial than that."22

Serve the national church. In its guidelines for Christian workers, the Europe group of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance exhorts a servant attitude. "Go as a servant to those you will meet. Be willing to accept and respect the Christians you meet as brothers and sisters in the Lord and to serve their needs with compassion and love."21 Alexei Melinchuk, administrative director of Donetsk Bible College in Ukraine, suggests what type of Western missionaries can best serve the national church. "We need Western missionaries in our country. However, we need a very small number who are experienced and well-educated and who can help us prepare our own missionaries."22

Above all, follow Jesus’ Golden Rule. Since the modern missions crusade to Russia began, foreign missionaries have evidenced considerable concern and care to establish guidelines for their ministries. Numerous evangelical organizations and institutions, including CoMission, Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Overseas Ministries Study Center, and World Evangelical Fellowship, have held conferences, consultations, and symposia in the West to consider how missionaries can best conduct themselves in Russia and the former Soviet Union. The Institute of East-West Christian Studies in the United States publishes a quarterly journal, East-West Church and Ministry Report, devoted primarily to this subject.

Foreign missionaries living in Russia have also attempted to establish guidelines through a variety of forums, including the Gathering, a quarterly meeting of foreign missionaries held in Moscow. An electronic conference entitled “Gathering” was set up in November 1996 to promote communication among expatriate missions working in Russia and to provide a medium to discuss ministry issues.

Even when missionaries carefully examine their attitudes and activities, specific guidelines are difficult to determine. Many issues are complex and debatable. For example, is it possible for foreigners to be of Christian service in Russia if they do not know the language and culture? Is long-term missions service by foreigners always preferable to short-term? How can nationals and foreigners best work in partnership in missions in Russia? Should foreigners always be subservient to nationals? Should foreign Christians provide financial assistance to national Christians, and if so, under what circumstances of accountability? Is the denominational diversification engendered by foreign missions desirable, or does it inevitably promote competition? How should missionaries relate to divisions within national denominations—such as the registered versus unregistered schism in the Evangelical Christian-Baptist movement? With the existence of national evangelists, church planters, and musicians, how much of a role exists for Westerners to fulfill these ministries in Russia? How can foreigners learn from the Russians as well as teach and assist them? To what extent should evangelicals work with confessions and denominations other than their own? When does evangelism become proselytism?

Even the most conscientious missionaries will not find it easy to resolve such complex matters. Both missionaries who care deeply and those who appear indifferent to the consequences of their mission will make mistakes. Nevertheless, the accomplishments of missionaries in Russia in only five years are remarkable. Thousands have left comfort and security to go to remote regions of Russia, sometimes with the intention of staying indefinitely. They have attempted to bring spiritual help and healing to a society scarred by seventy years of Marxist atheism and now suffering political, economic, and social turmoil. During the past six years, they have worked with national Christians to expand existing churches and to establish perhaps as many as 4,000 to 6,000 new fellowships and churches. They have also helped to organize an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 indigenous parochurch organizations across the former Soviet Union, ministering to even the most neglected sectors of society.22

At a February 1995 consultation of Russian and Western Christian workers, when asked what guidelines they would recommend for Westerners wishing to help promote church growth in Russia, the nationals urged missionaries to "acclimatize, understand, love, accept...and be one body with Russian believers, making changes as the Holy Spirit directs."24 Russian immigrant evangelist Johannes Reimer has urged Western missionaries to be "incarnational rather than organizational" if they wish their mission to succeed. "Become one of us and we will listen to you."25

Such recommendations sound remarkably like the Golden Rule. Although not a detailed description of how missions in Russia should be conducted, Christ’s admonition in Matthew 7:12 gives the most dependable overall direction in an enterprise characterized by much uncertainty and controversy: “In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” In every situation, foreign missionaries will be most effective if imagining themselves in the place of the people of Russia, trying to anticipate their own feelings if the situation were reversed and Russian Christians were coming en masse to evangelize America or Great Britain or Korea.

Notes
2. The East European Missions Directory (Wheaton, Ill.: Institute for the Study of Christianity and Marxism, 1989), edited by Mark Elliott, includes 267 groups, 402 if branches are included, and excludes 44 low-profile organizations. The East-West Christian Organizations Directory (Evanston, Ill.: Berry Publishing 1993), edited by Sharon Linzey and others, includes 691 groups. Paul Hansen, European secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, estimated that there were 80 groups in 1979 (Religious News Service, February 27, 1979). Since 1993, the Institute for East-West Christian Studies has identified some 296 Western agencies not included among the 691 groups listed in the Linzey Directory, thus giving a total of 978 for 1997. The figure of 561 ministries from abroad working in the former Soviet
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Building the Protestant Church in Shandong, China

Norman H. Cliff

The Chinese have a saying, “He who holds Shandong grips China by the throat.” The story of the growth of a virile Protestant church in this province includes periods of political struggle between Chinese, Germans, and Japanese for control of Shandong’s economic resources, and ultimately between Kuomintang and Communist forces. More important, in the religious sphere there were fervent evangelistic efforts by Catholics, mainline Protestants, and sect-type revivalist movements striving to recover the pristine simplicity of the early church.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Jesuit missionaries moved south from Peking to evangelize Shandong. Half a century later they handed over the work in the province to Franciscans. In the 1880s an order from Germany—the Society of the Divine Word (SVD)—took over an area in southeast Shandong. When the early Protestant pioneers arrived in 1860, there were some 20,000 Catholic Christians.

Protestant work in China had been carried on for two decades when the first missionaries came to Chefoo (Yantai), taking advantage of the concessions wrung from the Chinese in the Treaties of Tientsin and Peking in 1858 and 1860. Some of these Protestant missionaries had already worked in Shanghai and, after experiencing ill health, had been advised to go to the invigorating climate on the coast of Shandong. Within a few years some died in a widespread cholera epidemic.

The missionaries came into Shandong via three routes (see map). In the early 1860s three missions, which later had the largest work in the province, came via the treaty port of Chefoo—the Southern Baptists (1860), the American Presbyterians (1861), and the British Baptists (1862). In the late 1860s and early 1870s three missions came via the northwest border from Tientsin and Peking in response to invitations by Chinese peasants to bring the Gospel to their villages—the British Methodists (1866), the (American) Methodist Episcopal Church (1874), and the Christian (Plymouth) Brethren (1888). Lastly, in the 1890s, three Continental societies entered via Qingdao and Jiaozhou Bay, where the German influence was strong—the Swedish Baptists (1892), the Berlin Mission (1898), and the Weimar Mission (1898). Other groups came later, so that by 1920 there were eighteen societies at work in the province, as well as some indigenous independent groups. All these represented the whole spectrum of Western denominations and sects.

Shandong was the “sacred province” in which Confucius...
and Mencius had left a strong influence, and the pioneers had to take account of this in their evangelistic efforts. While they opposed footbinding, concubinage, and the selling of daughters and were critical of many aspects of Chinese culture, these early arrivals learned to have a deep respect for the teachings of the great Sage. John Nevius of the Presbyterian mission said of Confucius, "The system of ethics and morality which he taught is the purest which has ever originated in the history of the world, independent of the divine revelation in the Bible, and he has exerted a greater influence for good upon our race than any other uninspired sage of antiquity." The strategy of John Nevius and Hunter Corbett, both of the Presbyterian mission, and British Baptist Timothy Richard was to quote from Confucius as a springboard from which to lead the hearers on to the deeper teachings of Christ and the dynamics of his power.

Early Opposition

The gentry and populace, however, opposed the teachings of the new religion. Open-air services and the distribution of tracts, methods used in young mission fields throughout the world, brought little response here. Thus, in order to gain a basic hearing for the Gospel, many missionaries turned to the running of primary schools and small hospitals and clinics, much to the dismay of the home boards, who charged that donations for evangelism were being misused.

This change of approach brought a little more response. Then in 1877/78 a devastating famine over an extensive area of the province involved the missionaries in large-scale relief work. Timothy Richard of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) obtained from the foreign communities in Chefoo and Shanghai large sums of money for the thousands of peasants dying of hunger. He and John Nevius, and later other Protestant missionaries, carefully distributed the funds to those in need. This proved to be a small breakthrough, for the authorities recognized that the foreign missionaries could be trusted to handle and distribute large sums of money equitably.

Many children orphaned by the famine were rescued by the American Presbyterians and British Baptists and brought up in mission orphanages in a Christian environment, later to become workers and preachers in the churches. But still the number of adult converts were few, and the Chinese community in general remained disinterested in the Christian message. Thus Shandong became a laboratory of missiological experimentation as to what method of evangelism could achieve a breakthrough.

Theories of Mission in Shandong

John Nevius took long journeys by cart or horseback across central Shandong, establishing small groups of believers, to whom he gave more and more advanced instruction with each successive visit. A chain of small churches was established. Hunter Corbett took similar journeys to the eastern region of Shandong. Nevius, basing his conclusions on a careful study of the missionary journeys in the Book of Acts, came to advocate direct evangelism, free from the "institutional baggage" of schools and hospitals. The "Nevius Method" became widely known and followed in other fields, especially Korea, as a result of a visit there by Nevius in 1890.

British Baptist Timothy Richard aimed at reaching the literati through intellectual discussions and the publishing of academic writings, believing that the common people would follow if their leaders, whom they held in high respect, accepted the Christian religion. This approach, while creating goodwill between the missionaries and community leaders, brought little tangible results. The strategy of Arthur Smith of the American Board was the opposite. He argued that Christ always started with the disadvantaged and the poor and worked upward.

Calvin Mateer, with a genius for making gadgets and conducting laboratory experiments, gave scientific demonstrations to groups of interested students, regarding his method as preparatio evangelica. His major strategy can be seen in the way that he and his wife, Julia, ran the Tengchow College. Having no children of their own, they gave loving, close, and intensive training to their students. Some of the early converts of the Presbyterian mission had been struck off the membership rolls for moral lapses and dishonesty. Mateer maintained, following the Christian nurture theology of Horace Bushnell, that by close and careful supervision, as well as by personal example, young converts could be molded into becoming stable and reliable Christians. The Tengchow College gave the early Shandong church some of its most successful and influential Christian leaders.

One such was Jia Yuming, who, after graduating from Tengchow, pastored a church in Linyi and then helped in the Tengxian Seminary, becoming its vice president. In 1930 Jia became president of the Jining Women's Theological Seminary in Nanjing, later to found an independent Spiritual Light College. He was one of China's best Bible expositors. Some of his hymns are in the present Chinese hymnbook. Another was Ding Limei, who, after leaving Tengchow, pastored a church in Laizhou, and in the Boxer Rising suffered beatings, imprisonment, and torture. There was a revival when Ding addressed students at the various Presbyterian colleges. When preaching, he was quiet and unemotional. When counseling after his meetings, he appealed
to students to enter the Christian ministry. He worked as traveling secretary for the Chinese Student Volunteer Movement, from which he was released for a few years to do missionary work in Yunnan Province.

Timothy Richard was discouraged because his open-air preaching and giving out of tracts had borne little fruit. In reading a sermon given by Edward Irving half a century earlier at a London Missionary Society annual meeting, Richard felt he had found the answer. Irving pointed out that when Christ sent out the Twelve in Matthew 10, he instructed them to seek out the worthy, those who were searching for God, as converts to the faith. When Richard moved inland from Chefoo to Qingzhou, he found that there were thousands of members of secret societies who were seekers after truth. Several hundred of them came into the churches.

Richard found thousands of members of secret societies who were seekers after truth. Several hundred came into the churches.

The various strategies advocated by Nevius, Mateer, and Richard succeeded moderately well, tending to reflect their advocate’s personality and background. On the eve of the Boxer Rising, after forty years of work, there were 13,500 church members in the churches of nine mission societies, including 5,500 in the American Presbyterian congregations and 4,000 in those of the BMS.

In 1900 the Yi He Chuan (“righteous harmony fists”—teenage boys wearing red sashes and believing they were invulnerable to bullets and shells) killed 250 Chinese Christians and one missionary in Shandong and burned down the homes of several thousand Christians and many chapels. The young, struggling Protestant church in the province received a serious setback. Missionaries and their families fled to Japan, Qingdao, Weihai, and Chefoo for safety.

An Important Development

Among those who evacuated to Chefoo were American Presbyterians and British Baptists, who met informally to discuss how to turn this tragedy into good by planning for a better future pattern of work. Though of different church traditions and cultures, the two societies made a far-reaching decision that was to alter the structure of missions in Shandong. They agreed to pool their resources in personnel, buildings, and funds to set up high-quality training to produce pastors, doctors, and teachers.

Initially they used their existing plant and buildings, but by 1915 Cheeloo University had been established in Tsinan, the capital. The Baptists received generous financial help from the Arthington Trust, as did the Presbyterians from the Rockefeller Foundation. By 1924 a dozen missions, the main groups working in Shandong, were supporting the project.

In an indirect way the Cheeloo scheme achieved Richard’s vision of winning the gentry and upper classes to the church. In fact, few of this group ever joined, but the forming of a Christian university had the effect of building an alternative social hierarchy. Sociologists recognize that religious minorities tend to be upwardly mobile and successful. Some of the children and grandchildren of the orphans of the late nineteenth-century famines rescued by Nevius and Richard, as well as those of the “seeker” converts won from the secret societies (both groups originally outcasts of traditional Chinese society), went through the village primary school on to the regional high school, and in many cases on to Cheeloo University to become graduates in medicine, theology, and education. They took either important posts in the various missionary institutions or executive appointments in provincial and national government.

But Cheeloo was not a complete success story. A group of Presbyterians led by Dr. Watson Hayes doubted the wisdom of the project. They (1) asserted that the university would produce pastors unsuited to village work (most pastors fell into this category), for the graduates would be reluctant to accept the hardships of rural life, and they would preach over the heads of the peasantry; (2) they worried that Chinese Christians would not have sufficient say in the running of the theological college, and this at a time when they were demanding an increasing role in the decisions of church life; and (3), most important of all, they feared that a union seminary in Jinan would move away from the evangelical faith, as had many such seminaries in the United States.

A group of Presbyterian theological students followed Watson Hayes out of Cheeloo. They formed the Tengxian Seminary, which grew and attracted students from other provinces and became the largest and strongest evangelical theological seminary in China.

As the twentieth century proceeded, the focal point in missionary strategy moved from the question of how to win converts to the Christian faith—that was now a core of second- and third-generation Christians—to how to implement the three-self formula, or the widely accepted goal of establishing self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting churches. Theories formulated in the home offices of the (British) Church Missionary Society and the American Board by Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, while neat and useful, were not entirely practicable in faraway Shandong, with its ever-recurring floods, famines, warlordism, and civil unrest.

It was difficult, perhaps impossible, to build stable churches amid such turmoil and to produce leaders of suitable caliber where most of the populace were illiterate and lacking regular employment. This problem applied particularly in northwest Shandong, where the American Board and British Methodists operated. Both missions had to reduce their stations and cut their budgets to keep the work viable.

New Challenges

Missionary policy on other matters had to be flexible with changing times. In the first two decades of the century, there were many applications for church membership, some of which were based on the idea that a Western education required a Christian profession of faith. It was difficult for the missionaries to know who had become genuine Christians, and thus many were brought into membership who later fell away in the pressures of the anti-Christian movement.

Richard, Mateer, and others had combined with their Christian teaching an emphasis on the achievements of Western governments, which they saw as the fruits of Christianity. This strategy backfired when the Chinese Labor Corps returned to Shandong after service in France in World War I. There they had been shocked by the destruction and cruelty of Western wars and
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the behavior of Allied troops. The laborers' experience of trench warfare must have cast doubts as to whether the European religion of Christianity was really a faith of "peace and love," as the missionaries had proclaimed. Many of the labor force turned to socialism and Communism. From now on, the missionaries had to dissociate themselves from the activities of their home governments.

Furthermore, the missionaries were confronted with the rise of nationalism and antiforeignism. The Chinese youth charged that missionary teachers were making the students into captive congregations to propagate Christianity. The authorities responded by requiring schools and colleges to be registered with the government and Christian teaching to be voluntary and outside school hours. The stance of the Southern Baptists was that their educational work was carried on solely as a means of evangelism. To exclude Christian teaching was to remove the real purpose of their schools and break faith with their supporters at home. They therefore closed down their educational work. The American Presbyterians, in contrast, maintained that Christian teachers could still witness to Christ by their lives and personal contact with the students. They had the largest number of schools and continued to run them. The Southern Baptists, British Baptists, and others who closed their schools later regretted it, for applications for the ministry dropped as a result.

Chinese Christians were crying out for an end to denominational labels and doctrinal differences. They hoped that the formation of the National Council of Churches in 1923 and of the Church of Christ in China in 1927 would bring these divisions to an end. In Shandong the American Board, British Methodists, and (American) Methodist Episcopal Church planned to achieve unity in their own denominational groupings before joining a larger union. Other missions such as the Mennonites, Southern Baptists, and Christian Brethren remained outside the union on theological grounds. The only ones to join were the four associa-

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Readers' Response

To the Editor:

The article by Willi Henkel, "German Centers of Mission Research" (July 1997), has familiar tones (I am German myself) and is a good treatment of the subject. I would like to add, though, that the author seems to take "Protestant" and "Catholic" as covering the whole field and thus overlooks the evangelical contribution in Germany to the teaching of missiology and to missiological research. This contribution is not large, but it is growing; it is not opposed to Protestant missiology but does have an (undemarcated) identity of its own. I think it deserves a few lines.

In the 1970s evangelical German-speaking missions began to formulate a missiology of their own, with the Freie Hochschule für Mission in Konstanz near Stuttgart (founded in 1978 as Seminar für missionarische Fortbildung, Monbachtal, with George W. Peters the first director) as its first point of crystallization. This school, with its missiological research institute, now trains both missionaries on furlough and mission candidates, offering an M.A. in missiology through Columbia International University in Columbia, South Carolina. To further evangelical missiology, the Arbeitskreis für evangelikale Missiologie (Association of German-speaking evangelical missiology) was founded in 1984, with Evangelikale Missiologie as its quarterly journal (since 1985) and edition am as its publishing arm (fifteen books since 1993).

Over the same period the teaching of missiology in evangelical schools of theology has gained in importance, for example at the Free Theological Academy in Giessen. In the Seventh-day Adventist Kirchliche Hochschule at Friedensau there is now a chair of missiology. I think it is worth mentioning these new developments to make the picture complete.

Klaus Fiedler

The writer is Associate Professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Malawi, where he has been seconded since 1992 by Evangelisches Missionswerk in Hamburg, Germany.

To the Editor:

Paul Marshall's article "Persecution of Christians in the Contemporary World" (January 1998) makes astonishing claims that call for closer examination regarding both their factuality and their motivation. Persecution of believers is hardly new and has been recurrent since biblical times. In the New Testament, suffering for Christ is depicted as a blessing (Matt. 5:10-11), a cause of rejoicing (1 Pet. 4:13), and a historical fact (Rev. 7). The Church Fathers exalted martyrdom, while church historians pointed to the innocent suffering of believers in pre-Constantinian times as a key factor in the spread of Christianity. International Christian organizations have regularly called attention to religious persecution. Marshall is careful to qualify his statements about types of persecution and the identity of persecutors, which, sadly, include Christian groups. Even so, the figure of 200 million contemporary Christians suffering persecution and an additional 400 million living in situations of discrimination and repression (nearly one-fifth of the worldwide Christian population) seems so inflated as to call for independent verification. More disturbing, however, are a questionable motive underlying these and similar claims and the uses to which Marshall's statistics are being put.

Marshall's statistics are cited by persons who support the Wolf-Specter congressional bill to pass the Freedom from Religious Persecution Act (see "Washington Discovers Religious Persecution," New York Times Magazine, December 21, 1997), which would establish a U.S. government office to monitor religious persecution and impose sanctions on countries that allow or condone it. Though Marshall stops short of endorsing this bill, his own recommendations include appointment of consular religious attachés, intervention by the attorney general and INS officers, and termination of nonhumanitarian assistance to offending countries. These steps would go far toward politicizing religious persecution and making it a governmental concern at the highest level. What makes recommendations like these particularly dubious is the fact that the world's largest mission-sending nation would then become the leading international enforcer of reli-
tions of the (British) Baptist Union and three of the nine presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church. Together they formed the Shandong Synod with seven districts. There were far more Christians outside the union than in it.

The Shandong Revival

Another challenge to missionary leaders was the impact of the Shandong Revival from 1927 to 1937. There were two distinct and separate movements. The first was led by a Lutheran missionary, Marie Monsen, who addressed the missionaries who had evacuated from the interior to Chefoo on account of the antiforeign uprising. When the missionaries returned to their stations, Monsen visited them there and ministered to both workers and Chinese Christians. The second revival movement was an indigenous one that began in 1928 in Feixian and spread northward when a Chinese preacher from Nanjing, Mr. Ma, preached. These meetings produced a revival that brought renewal to the churches as well as deep division on account of excessive emotionalism and extravagant behavior. The response of the missionaries was to give systematic teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit as a corrective to this branch of the revival and to invite some of China’s best Bible teachers to hold conventions in the main centers. Thus John Sung, Watchman Nee, and Wang Mingdao addressed large congregations, seeking to consolidate the fruits of the revival and warning against emotional forms of worship. In spite of these addresses, an unstructured Spiritual Gifts Movement outside the mission churches developed, the influence of which can still be felt in Shandong today after fifty years of Communist rule.

A sense of urgency gripped the missions as the war with Japan threatened to spread to Shandong. Great strides were made in self-government. Chinese Christians held the leading positions in most missions and were involved in decision making.

Author’s Reply

For “independent” confirmation (“independent” of what?), see the 1997 State Department Report on Religious Persecution and the 1997 Country Reports.

The New Testament does not depict suffering as a blessing; it says God blesses us when we suffer. Professor Scherer seems contradictory about this, since he also presses for religious human rights. Will he tell a Sudanese mother that neither she nor we should try to redeem her child from slavery?

Yes, churches can grow under persecution, and do. But they and their members can also die. This has happened in Japan, China, Turkey, central Asia, and North Africa.

Concerning missionary protectorates and crusades, I agree, and I’ve said as much. Incidentally, missionaries are irrelevant here; indigenous Christians outnumber them 20,000:1.

“Politicize” it? It’s been political a long time.

I take “intervention by the attorney general and INS” to refer to granting asylum to people fleeing persecution. Is Professor Scherer opposed to this?

The “Wolf-Specter bill” does not impose “sanctions on countries,” only on persecuting agencies. It simply requires that U.S. taxpayers’ money not be given to complicit regimes. Does Professor Scherer want us to give them money?

His allusions to “motives” and the “religious right” seem to reveal his real worry. In Their Blood Cries Out I called on the “religious right” (and left) to be aware and act on this issue. They have—slowly following Catholics and Jews. Since they have, will their critics quit the field? Professor Scherer seems less worried about people dying than with being allied to people he apparently resents. Americans would do well to put aside their prejudices in common solidarity with those who are suffering.

Paul Marshall

The writer is a Senior Fellow of Freedom House, Washington, D.C., and General Editor of its Survey on Religious Freedom.
and the control of funds. Great progress was also made in self-propagation. The American Presbyterians, Southern Baptists, and Anglicans (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) had their own home missionary societies through which Chinese Christians went to work in unevangelized areas in other provinces, notably Hebei, Shanxi, and Manchuria. But the achieving of self-support continued to prove elusive.

The British Baptists were the most successful in this sphere. From the days of Timothy Richard and A. G. Jones, every preaching station was developed along the lines of self-support. The Chinese churches were responsible for pastors’ salaries, church buildings, and village schools, leaving the BMS to support the training of pastors, teachers, and doctors. The American Presbyterians aimed at achieving self-support, but they allowed humanitarian considerations to modify this principle, insisting that pastors should receive a living salary. Where Nevius had advocated churches being self-supporting from the start, Southern Baptists tried to phase out their financial support for teachers and pastors over a twenty-year period.

The final adjustment in missionary strategy came after World War II, and was a political one. Following the Pearl Harbor raid, missionaries had either been interned in China or repatriated to their home countries. When they returned to Shandong, they expected to resume their work in the province and to continue for many years. But they soon faced the unwelcome fact that life in the Kuomintang-controlled areas was badly affected by soaring inflation and heavy taxation, that there were inescapable signs of incompetence and corruption in high places, and, most serious of all, that the Nationalist government had done little to protect the peasants from exploitation by landlords and usurers. Reports from Communist-controlled areas spoke of the excellent discipline of the Communist soldiers and their exemplary behavior.

Back in the mid-1920s there had been a measure of collaboration between the Communists and the Chinese Nationalists, but in 1927 Chiang Kai-shek had broken with the Communists. For a decade China enjoyed a period of relative stability. Chiang’s marriage to Sung Meiling, a Methodist Christian, and his baptism in 1930 into the Christian church encouraged the missionary community and brought him the support of both Protestant and Catholic missionaries. But now, after the war, the missionaries had to bow to the inevitable. The Communists were offering an attractive alternative to the muddled policy of the Kuomintang.

The Shandong Churches under Communism

On October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the People’s Republic of China. Most societies working in Shandong at this point had a few missionaries remaining in the province to protect their interests. The Shandong Synod contained twelve districts, as the remaining presbyteries had joined. This synod now requested all missionaries in its bounds to leave. At the time of their departure there were some 80,000 Christians in the province. They left amid accusation meetings that charged them with crimes and activities of which they were largely innocent.

Once again the church had to review and adapt its strategy. Evangelism was now impossible, and Sunday worship was forbidden in most centers. Many pastors and evangelists were arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. The church was told that if it was to continue, it must be of service to the community. The Shandong Synod responded to this new situation by organizing the teaching of useful trades to its church members, such as the spinning of woollen yarn and beekeeping.

As in other parts of China, the Shandong church experienced remarkable growth during the dark days of the Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976. In 1986 Bishop Stephen Wang (Wang Shenying) reported that there were 250,000 Protestant Christians in Shandong. This number excludes thousands of independent Pentecostal believers who have stayed outside the three-self patriotic movement and whose origins go back to the spiritual gifts movement of the 1930s. It also excludes the Jesus Family, which is at present suffering cruel persecution at the hands of the Chinese government. The writer has visited Shandong four times in the past sixteen years and can testify to the large congregations and virile witness of the churches in this province. Jesus Christ has many followers here. “He who holds Shandong grips China by the throat.”

Notes

7. Edward Irving, Missionaries After the Apostolic School (Tientsin, 1887), pp. 36, 37.
8. Dr. Watson Hayes to Presbyterian Home Board, July 4, 1921.
My Pilgrimage in Mission

Jacob A. Loewen

I was born in Russia in 1922 in a Mennonite family. My parents were of Germanic peasant stock and I spoke Low German and High German as my first languages. My family immigrated to Canada in 1930 and I had my first years of elementary schooling in Manitoba. In 1934 the family moved to British Columbia, where I completed elementary school in 1936. Unable to attend highschool due to the financial straits of my family, I nevertheless managed to attend a local Mennonite Brethren-sponsored Bible school where I was exposed to a highly legalistic Christian lifestyle rather than to the pacifist Anabaptism one would expect in a Mennonite milieu. Under that instruction I became a fervent soul-winner. The literal reading of the Bible and aggressive soul-winning became the supreme values in my religious outlook.

As World War II erupted, I was able to spend a year in highschool. Then, in 1942-43, I attended the Missionary Medical Institute in Toronto, Ontario, to learn about missionary medicine. At the same time I served as a conscientious objector in the Toronto Western Hospital. During the summer of 1943 I had my first taste of linguistics with the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Toronto, Ontario, to learn about missionary medicine. I began my mission endeavors as a home missionary with a children’s mission in British Columbia. With hundreds of memorized Bible verses as my weapons, I conscientiously attacked sinners, large and small, wherever and whenever I found them.

When I volunteered to serve as a foreign missionary, I learned that I would need to get a college education, and as a prerequisite I earned a highschool equivalency certificate. In 1945 Anne Enns and I were married, and we began married life at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kansas. Two professors in college captured my imagination—a biologist and a psychologist. The former grounded me in natural science and almost persuaded me to go into medicine; the latter began to puncture my legalistic armor by his friendly and penetrating questions. Ultimately I went into languages with the express aim of becoming a Bible translator in some tribal situation. In 1947 I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in humanities, and in December of that year Anne and I were sent to Colombia, South America, as Mennonite Brethren missionaries.

First Lessons in Colombia

We served in Colombia until 1957, with a furlough during the years 1953–55. Our initial assignment was to reduce the Waunan Indian language to writing. My first term on the field was an education in itself. I wanted to concentrate on reaching the tribal people in the region—the Waunan—with the Gospel, but the demands in the Spanish work (the chief interest of the mission) time and again kept us from our main purpose. We were involved in supervising the endless construction of schools, a dispensary, a church, teachers and nurses residences, and housing for longer-term sick people.

The work of the mission necessitated the training of workers in many kinds of endeavors. In keeping with my fundamentalist values, I decreed that no adulterer or drunk could be involved in any capacity in “God’s work.” My stand about adultery proved to be nonfunctional when I was besieged by local people on Monday morning telling me which of my workers had slept with whom over the weekend and could they now get that adulterer’s job. My legalism about drinking went down the drain when a dead-drunk Indian stumbled into our guest room in the middle of the night. As I dragged the offender from the house and deposited him unceremoniously on the path to the village, he began to cry bitterly: “When I am sober and know what I am doing, Jake assures me he’s my good friend; but when I am drunk and don’t know what I am doing, and need a good friend to take care of me, Jake drags me off his yard. Ai! Ai! What will become of me?” I then and there vowed to be a friend of sinners as Jesus had been.

The tribespeople persuaded their entire river community “to give God their hand and walk on God’s road.”

At the four-year point in our first term, the Waunan began calling us liars—we were so busy with other things, we weren’t really mastering their language, as we had promised. We pled desperately with the mission authorities, and they finally gave us permission to concentrate on learning the tribal language. But November of that year brought terrible flooding to the region, and the Waunan began to fear that God was sending another deluge to destroy the world. To prevent such a catastrophe, they revived their long-abandoned beseeching ceremony to plead with God about their sinfulness and to beg for mercy. When my partner Dave Wirsche and I were invited to a distant river to participate in such a ceremony, the pathos of their monthlong fasting and beseeching almost drove us to despair. In desperation we decided that we had to give these people a message of hope from God’s Word. All fundamentalist preconceptions about a pure gospel message had to be scrapped. We just did not know how to express the Gospel in the tribal language. With the help of our tribal teacher, we began to explore their tribal mythology and belief system. This gave us some local anchor ideas to which we added a few biblical concepts in an attempt to deliver a meaningful message in their language. We had to leave shortly afterward, but to our surprise that first tentative and faltering message had so deeply moved this group of thirty tribespeople that they went from house to house and persuaded their entire river community of four hundred people “to give God their hand and to walk on God’s road.”

Then came the devastating news that the tribe had been signed over to the state church by a government concordat. We were declared nongrata and were expelled from the region. The whole experience shook us to the core. Much of our time had been April 1998
squandered building an array of buildings that now had to be abandoned to feed the termites.

**Immersion in Anthropology**

Furloughed back to the States, and convinced that I needed to be better equipped to understand the tribal culture, mythology, and belief systems, I enrolled in anthropology at the University of Washington. We stretched our furlough to two years and I furiously immersed myself in anthropology. Then we returned to South America to survey the ten Choco dialects of Colombia and Panama (my doctoral dissertation) for Bible translating purposes. During that study I tried to convince the mission to move their tribal work across the border to Panama, since a part of the Waunan language family was native there, but the mission would not consider it.

As I made my survey, I found myself brushing up against all kinds of missionaries—different denominations, all kinds of faith missions, and many independent missionaries—all zealously defending their turf. It dawned upon me that we missionaries were not building the one body of Christ; we were simply trying to transplant our personal cultural version of it.

During the two years of my research, my nongrata status in the region was driven home with increasingly frequent police arrests. Because of the severe religious persecution in Colombia, we were recalled to the States in 1957. I finished my Ph.D. at the University of Washington and was then appointed a professor of anthropology and modern languages at Tabor College.

During the summer of 1959 I began to work with the Empera Indians in Panama, members (along with the Waunan) of the Choco language group. One day my partner and I ran into the person responsible for tribal education in the country. When he heard our dreams for tribal literacy, he completely ridiculed them, and said, “These people are brutos (brute-stupid) and cannot learn to read Spanish. We have tried for decades without any success.” When we contradicted his judgment, he challenged us to show him wrong. As a result, we were invited to conduct a literacy campaign among the Empera. Over the next year we prepared a set of primers in the tribal language, embedding in the primers almost the entire Spanish syllabary. We then asked the Empera, who knew a passable amount of Spanish, whether they would be able to learn to read their own language. Almost offended, they assured us, “Why, of course, we just need to learn a few letters and then we can read. We were born in our language!” In three short weeks our first batch of nine students learned a large section of this tribe in Panama. Poof! went my instantiation, once-and-for-all conversion.

Meanwhile in Colombia, the state church tried to win over its new concordat charges, but it was flatly rebuffed! As a result the state church gave up the older generation as hopelessly lost and took away all the Waunan children and put them in orphanages to make Christians out of them. The tribal parents were now very angry and utterly frustrated with the situation. In desperation they stole back their own children from the orphanage and fled with them into the jungle. From time to time they sneaked back to their gardens for food, but they did not let themselves be seen or found. After two years of this jungle nomadism, rumors began to circulate that Tiger and Fox (the names the Waunan used for me and my partner Dave) had been working in Panama. In groups, these Waunan now ventured across the unmarked country border to investigate these rumors. They learned that Tiger and Fox had indeed been there and would return soon.

**Mission by Professors on Summer Break**

The converted Empera took in the Waunan refugees and pointed out unused land for settlement. The Waunan were then baptized by the Empera and settled into Christian villages. Out of these events came a whole series of lessons in mission. Most obvious was the fact that here we had a mission effort by two people with no formal missionary assignment and no mission field (Dave and I were only guests of another mission). In effect, a church was being established by two college professors on summer break! Working with local legal authorities, the new church received its own legal charter under a non-denominational name—United Evangelical Church. This charter authorized the new church to strike up relationships with national and international entities in the areas of morals and religion, social concerns and services, health and medical services, and secular and religious education. It also gave the group the right to expedite birth certificates, to marry, and to bury. Before long this young church was making ample use of its legal rights and privileges.

In the development of this church we discovered what it means when a church works under the guidance of the Spirit of God. We became deeply aware of how handicapped we Western missionaries were when it came to spirit phenomena and faith healing. Because of the way this young church nurtured the conversion of alcoholics, I had to revise my theology of instantaneous, once-and-for-all conversion.
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When the church decided to translate the Scriptures on its own, we realized why God had kept us from doing it. He wanted to keep us missionaries from becoming enamored with our own work as Bible translators. He wanted mother-tongue speakers to do it. Furthermore, we had to learn that when the whole church is involved in the Scripture translating process and experiences its own answers to the prayer “God how would you have said this, if you had said it in our language in the first place?” then the Word achieves an authority that all too often it does not enjoy in the Western church.

We also learned that transplanting the structures and rules of the home church back in North America, like many missions seemed to be doing, did not work under the terms we short-termers had to follow. When our denominational mission insisted that we introduce the home church’s behavior rules, the tribal leaders made the mission executives aware that their people did not have the whole Bible yet and that church rules could not be transmitted cross-culturally in abstract without doing damage in the receiving culture. They insisted that the believing community under the guidance of God’s Spirit was the only one that could make or change all the necessary rules of behavior. Church polity, we learned, could not be transplanted; rather, it must be indigenously developed.

Meanwhile at Tabor College, I was receiving all kinds of additional lessons on being a missionary: how to improve my “third-ear” hearing and how to feel with people when they are unable to verbalize their concerns and problems. I learned about the many competing inner voices derived from schedules and routines that interfere with our hearing of God’s Spirit. Then came the lessons about keys. I learned that God gives each one of us the keys for lives for which we are responsible. As a result, I outgrew my earlier indiscriminate witnessing method of clobbering sinners with memorized Scripture verses. Furthermore, I had to lose my prudishness about human sexuality as I learned to help college students find solutions to their spiritual and social development problems.

## Twenty Years with the Bible Societies

For five years we waited in the expectation that the mission was looking for a new assignment for us. When year after year the answer was still “no assignment,” we decided to wait no longer. In 1964, when the American Bible Society offered us a possibility to train translators, solve translation problems, and supervise Bible translation quality, we jumped at the opportunity. For the next several years I was responsible for all of South America. In this new role I began to see deficits in many earlier, missionary-made translations. Luckily my boss, Eugene A. Nida, was willing to let me experiment with the training of mother-tongue speakers as translators. When I reported on the lessons I had learned in seven languages at a workshop in Spain in 1969, the Third World representatives who were present were so enthused that they insisted that mother-tongue translation be made a worldwide Bible Society policy.

In the summer of 1970 I taught at the Muslim University of Mashad, Iran. In September of that year the United Bible Societies (the worldwide fellowship of national Bible societies) decided that the most mature situation ready for mother-tongue translators was in Africa, and I was therefore made responsible for East Central Africa: Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Rhodesia-Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. I also had some advisory responsibility in South Africa. In Africa I quickly realized that my earlier enthusiasm for a Bible without genealogies was totally wrong. Africans grooved on genealogies! They saw them as exceedingly important faith documents. It was in Africa that I learned the value of the Old Testament for people whose culture is so much more like earlier biblical cultures than our own or even the cultures of North and South American tribal societies. Time and again African Christians complained, “Why don’t missionaries allow us to follow our Bible—the Old Testament? Why are they forcing us walk in Western culture’s ways, which are alien to our own?”

In Africa I had occasion to become acquainted with many African Independent Churches and the prophets that guide them. I noticed how often their rapid growth coincided with the arrival of the Old Testament in a major language. These churches, I saw, catered to the felt needs of their African members and did not necessarily follow a Western church’s polity. From them I learned that to expedite justice in Africa it was not nearly as important to judicially establish the details of guilt and innocence in a case as it was to spread the guilt evenly over all parties concerned so that genuine peace could be established. Finally, from 1979 through 1984, I served as translation consultant in West Africa, responsible for Ghana, Benin-Dahomey, Niger, Upper Volta-Burkina Faso, and Togo.

By the time I retired in 1984, I had probably worked with several hundred different languages. In the course of this experience, I learned that there is truly only one God in this entire world but that this one God is known by hundreds—yes, thousands—of different names in different languages. I became convinced that this God was at work in the various cultures of the world long before the first missionary came and would still be working after the last missionary left. I further learned that these many languages and cultures had something to teach me about God and his Word.

Since my retirement in 1984 I have served in a number of short-term overseas assignments, such as facilitating reconciliation of a church-split in India, helping Mennonite workers with the Kekchi Indians in Guatemala, and doing a survey of the Hopi mission situation in Arizona. In spite of a stroke in 1993, I am able to write with my left hand, and I employ a part-time secretary to help me continue my research.

As a missionary, I had to learn to leave my home church agenda at home. I was only truly helpful when I functioned as a catalyst. If I put my ear to the ground in the local situation and discovered where the Spirit of God was presently working and then fitted myself into that agenda, then I could be of help to set in motion indigenous efforts that truly met local felt needs and built God’s kingdom there. All in all, I found that in four decades of mission I had more to learn than I had to teach! So thank you, all my Third World teachers!

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I realized that my enthusiasm for a Bible without genealogies was wrong: Africans grooved on genealogies!
The Legacy of Robert Morrison

J. Barton Starr

When asked in 1807 by an American merchant if he really expected to “make an impression on the idolatry of the Great Chinese Empire,” Robert Morrison replied, “No, sir, I expect God will.” This well-known exchange, related by Isabella Graham, epitomizes Morrison’s approach to his mission to China. As the pioneer Protestant missionary to a country closed to mission work (both by the Chinese government and by the British East India Company), Morrison knew that his work would be that of a forerunner. He knew that he would have little opportunity to preach the Gospel or to shepherd converts into the sheepfold of God’s kingdom. But he also clearly believed that God had called him to prepare the way for others who would follow in his footsteps. Every study of Christian missions in China and almost every survey history of Christian missions written about him, and yet surprisingly little substantial scholarly work has been written about him.

Robert Morrison was born on January 5, 1782, in Morpeth, England. At about age three, he moved with his family to Newcastle. His father, James, was a last and boot-tree maker and an elder in the High Bridge Presbyterian Church, the church young Robert later attended. He received his early education first from his uncle James Nicholson (a local schoolmaster) and later from Rev. Adam Laidlaw. During his teenage years, Morrison apparently studied the Bible diligently and was moved by reading articles in missionary magazines. When he was fifteen years old, he “formed the design of engaging as a missionary.” However, for the next few years he continued to work with his father and was briefly and unsuccessfully apprenticed as a patten-ring maker, followed by a stint traveling throughout England with a company of strolling players. At the age of twenty, however, he felt God calling him into a life of mission service in Africa, and in 1803 he went to London to study at Hoxton Academy. The following year, the London Missionary Society appointed him as a missionary. For the next two and a half years, Morrison studied at the Missionary Academy at Gosport, as well as studying medicine at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital in London and astronomy at Greenwich. Contrary to Morrison’s expectations to go to Africa, however, the LMS asked him to go to China, there to begin translation of the Bible and to do other work to pave the way for future missionaries. With little hesitation, Morrison accepted the change in assignment and began preparing to go to China.

Beginning a Lifelong Study

Part of that preparation included beginning to study the Chinese language. Many years earlier a copy of a partial translation of the Bible into Chinese had been given to the British Library. There, with the assistance of Yong Sam-tak, a Chinese man who was in London, Morrison began copying the partial translation and started what would be a lifelong occupation of learning and translating Chinese.

Morrison sailed for China on January 31, 1807, going via the United States because of the East India Company’s prohibition on missionaries in China. On April 18 he arrived in the United States, where the famous incident cited in the opening of this article took place. Morrison enjoyed his time in the United States and made acquaintances in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston who would become lifelong correspondents and supporters of his work. On May 12 he sailed from New York on board the Trident, arriving in Canton on September 6, 1807.

As it was illegal for him to be in Canton as a missionary, he first lived in the American Factory where he undertook the task of learning the Chinese language. Because it was a crime punishable by death for a Chinese person to teach a foreigner the Chinese language, through a series of surreptitious means he employed local Chinese as helpers and teachers. One observer noted that Morrison’s teachers always brought shoes with them so that if somebody stopped by unexpectedly, they could claim they were there to repair shoes for Morrison.

It is difficult to classify Morrison’s work because he did so many different types of work. Because of the restrictions placed upon him by the Chinese government, by the East India Company, and by the Macao government, Morrison clearly was not an evangelist in the mode of later missionary evangelists. Apparently, in his entire missionary career, fewer than a dozen Chinese became Christians as a direct result of his ministry. This lack of opportunity to function as an evangelist was sometimes frustrating to Morrison, but he early realized that this would be the case and that God had called him to prepare the way for others.

Employment with East India Company

Two significant events occurred in Morrison’s life in 1809. First, the East India Company recognized his ability with the Chinese language and employed him as their translator in China. The salary and other benefits from this employment enabled him to work in China with little need for money from the LMS. It also enabled him to be a generous benefactor for a number of projects. Finally, it gave him legitimacy in that he now had a legal right to remain in Macao and Canton as an employee of the East India Company.

Second, in that year he met, fell in love with, and married Mary Morton, whose father was a surgeon with the Royal Irish Regiment and was briefly in Macao with his family. In an apparently happy marriage, Robert and Mary had two children that lived to adulthood—Mary Rebecca and John Robert, the latter quite significant in the later history of British relations with China and then as part of the government of the new colony of Hong Kong. Mary’s brother William also remained in Macao.

In the British Library, Morrison began a lifelong occupation of learning and translating Chinese.

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with the Morrisons and was under the tutelage of Morrison for a number of years. Later, William became a minister and worked in India. Never very strong, Mary lost her health, and in January 1815 she returned to England with the two children, which initiated a bleak time in Morrison's life. Later, her health somewhat improved, and in 1820 she and the children returned to Macao, but she died there in 1821.9 Out of respect for Mary and Robert, the East India Company purchased a plot of land in Macao and established a Protestant cemetery so that Mary could be buried with dignity within the city walls. The children then returned to England and Morrison was again alone. Loneliness was one of the themes that persisted throughout Morrison's correspondence over the years as he struggled in his work in Canton and Macao without co-workers until very late in his career.

Only once in his career did Morrison return to England. Leaving China in December 1823, he arrived in England in March 1824 and was reunited with his children. On the voyage to England, he wrote a delightful journal entitled "The Domestic Memoir of Mrs. Morrison" to give his children something to help them remember their mother. In it, he summarized his and Mary's life together and quoted extensively from their correspondence.10 While in Britain, Morrison was in constant demand as a speaker, helped to establish a language institution for missionaries to begin studying languages in Britain before going overseas, had an audience with King George IV and presented him with a copy of his Chinese translation of the Bible, and in November 1825 married Elizabeth Armstrong.11 Morrison and his family returned to Macao and China in 1826. He and Eliza had five children, some of whom returned to live and work in China, as did both Mary Rebecca and John Robert.12

Living in Canton and Macao for twenty-five years, Morrison focused mainly on translation. In addition to his work with the East India Company, he was called upon to serve as the official interpreter for two British missions to China—the Amherst Mission in 1816 and the Napier Mission in 1834. It is for Morrison's work as translator (and often negotiator) for the Amherst Mission as well as for such incidents as the Topaz affair and the Lintin affair that Morrison has been criticized most severely by historians as an agent of colonial interests. Morrison saw his work in these cases primarily as a functionary doing a job. He also saw these assignments as distractions from his missionary work, and he particularly resented the part he was forced to play in translating and negotiating local disputes. He was aware that his role as an intermediary would also be that of cultural interpreter to both parties and that he would probably be criticized by both sides. When this in fact occurred, he was saddened but not surprised. That later historians would also take similar views probably would not astonish him.

Morrison's first publications were Chinese-language tracts, but within ten years of his arrival in Canton, he had published a translated collection of Chinese literature and a grammar book of the Chinese language to assist other Westerners who wanted to learn Chinese (his primary concern was for missionaries). At the same time, he continued to work on translation of the Bible as well as a dictionary. The East India Company set up a press and published his six-volume Dictionary of the Chinese Language between 1815 and 1822.

His translation work on the Bible began immediately upon his arrival in China, and the first portion (the Book of Acts, based upon the Chinese manuscript in the British Library) was published in 1810. With the assistance of William Milne, a colleague in Malacca, he completed the entire Bible in Chinese in 1819 and published it in 1823 (by the latter date Milne was dead). Although Joshua Marshman published a Chinese Bible in Serampore, India, in 1822, Morrison and Milne's Bible came to be the one used by missionaries throughout most of Chinese-speaking Asia. Morrison, however, was well aware of shortcomings in the translation. In 1819 he wrote to the London Missionary Society: "If Morrison & Milne's Bible shall, in China, at some subsequent period hold such a place in reference to a better translation, as Wickliff or Tyndall's now hold in reference to our present English version—many will forever bless God for the attempt . . . . Granting that many had the Talent to do better than we have done, but few appear to have had the will."13 In many places the translation was awkward, infelicitous, or even incorrect. Morrison began very early to make revisions as he understood the language better, and during the late 1820s and early 1830s he encouraged his son John Robert and others (including Karl Gützlaff, Walter Medhurst, Edwin Stevens, and Elijah Coleman Bridgman) to undertake an entirely new revised edition of the Bible that would be more useful.14 Despite the flaws in Morrison's first translation, Yung Wing, a Yale University graduate (the first Chinese to graduate from any American university), later wrote about Morrison: "The importance and bearing of his dictionary and the translation of the Bible into Chinese, on subsequent missionary work in China, were fundamental and paramount."15

Call for Co-workers

Almost from the day of his arrival in Canton, Morrison sent out frequent pleas for co-workers for the immense task of evangelizing China. The first positive response to his entreaties came in 1813, when the LMS sent William Milne and his wife to join Morrison. However, because he had no official connection with the East India Company, Milne was not allowed to remain in Canton or Macao. After some initial investigations elsewhere, he settled in Malacca. Milne and Morrison established a very close personal relationship, and Morrison grieved over Milne's death in 1822 almost as deeply as he did over the death of his wife, Mary.

In their nine years of collaboration, Morrison and Milne worked on a number of projects in addition to translation of the Bible. They produced two periodicals: Indo-Chinese Gleaner (in English) and Chinese Monthly Magazine (in Chinese). One of their most high-profile collaborations for the future of mission work in Asia, however, was the establishment of the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca in 1818. The college had the dual purpose of providing Chinese-language training for future missionaries and of educating local boys, a number of whom played significant roles in later Chinese history. While the college was not everything he had hoped it would be, it was sufficiently successful that Sir Stamford Raffles and Morrison agreed to move it to the new British colony of Singapore. Although Raffles's departure from Singapore thwarted these plans, ten years after Morrison's death James Legge moved the Anglo-Chinese College to newly established Hong Kong.
As Morrison continued to live and work in Canton and Macao, he published approximately forty other works in English and Chinese. In addition, he published for a short time a periodical entitled *Evangelist and Miscellanea Sinica* and served as “assistant editor” (actually, more of a contributor or consultant) for the *Canton Register*, the first English-language newspaper in China. He contributed numerous articles to that and other periodicals. As a result of his publication work, Morrison became known worldwide as a noted sinologue and was granted an honorary doctorate by the University of Glasgow in 1817. Consequently, he carried on an extensive correspondence with scholars as well as with those who supported his work as a missionary.

As the lone Protestant missionary in China, Morrison’s frequent calls for co-workers began to bear fruit. First, Milne was sent out, and by the late 1820s others were beginning to turn their attention toward the Middle Kingdom. Morrison’s appeals led to the American Seamen’s Union sending Rev. David Abeel to Canton in 1830. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions responded to his call for workers by sending Elijah Coleman Bridgman to China in 1830, where he worked under the tutelage of Morrison in learning the language and then as a co-worker until Morrison’s death. Soon others were coming in larger numbers, so that by the time of Morrison’s death in 1834, there was a small but growing missionary presence on the coast of China.

**Pioneer in Missiological Issues**

As the first Protestant missionary in China, Morrison also faced, dealt with, and foreshadowed many of the missiological issues that arose in later years. For example, he briefly tried adopting Chinese dress and manners but soon abandoned the practice as unrealistic and unnecessary for his work. He frequently had to deal with questions as to whether his work, which centered on translation and education, was really “mission work” or not. Did one have to be an evangelist to be a true missionary? Were educational institutions and mission work compatible? Morrison also was an early advocate of sending single women missionaries to China. In 1823 he wrote that “[C]hristian females are essential; but Missionaries’ Wives who are Mothers as soon as they arrive in heathen lands are seldom in sufficient health; nor have sufficient leisure to qualify themselves. Pious young women to acquire the pagan language & teach girls & grown women, would be very useful in the [missionary] Community.”

While Morrison saw few direct results from his ministry in terms of conversions, and apparently some of those who did become Christians later either left the faith completely or became less diligent, one of his converts did have a significant influence on the development of Christianity in China. Liang Fa, one of his earliest co-workers, became known as the first Chinese evangelist and had a long ministry along the southern coast of China. Robert Morrison died in Canton on August 1, 1834, and was buried alongside his first wife, Mary, and infant son, James, at the Protestant cemetery in Macao. The causes of death were apparently a fever (brought on by a cold caught in a squall while aboard ship between Macao and Canton) and exhaustion. The Protestant Christian world mourned the passing of a giant in mission history.

**One of Morrison’s greatest contributions was to bring China to the attention of evangelicals in Europe and America.**

What is the legacy of Robert Morrison? He is often praised in articles and books on mission history—and occasionally is vilified in works dealing with imperialism in China because of his work with the East India Company and the two British embassies to China. The truth, as usual, lies somewhere in between. Clearly, he shared some of the prejudices of his early nineteenth-century British contemporaries and the desire of evangelicals to share the Gospel with the “heathen” of China. It is equally clear, however, that as Morrison continued to live, learn, and work among the Chinese, he gained a profound respect for Chinese culture, language, and some of the people. While he was not able to move fully beyond himself and the attitudes of his times, neither was he an agent of imperialism in China. He increasingly came to see his role not only as a precursor for other missionaries but also as a bridge between two cultures. That he did not totally succeed in the latter task does not diminish the value of his efforts.

Before Morrison’s arrival and years of work in China, Protestant evangelicals had only the vaguest idea of China as a place where the Gospel needed to be shared. One of Morrison’s greatest contributions was to bring China to the attention of evangelicals of Europe and America. A diligent correspondent and a frequent contributor to periodicals, he constantly kept the needs of China’s masses before the Protestant churches in the rest of the world. It may not be too much to say that without Morrison, Protestant Christianity would have been much later making its way to China. From the time of Morrison’s arrival in Canton in 1807, China became more to Protestant Christians in Europe and America than simply an exotic place in the Far East that produced silk, spices, and other unusual products. He is rightfully known as the father of Protestant missions in China.

**Morrison’s most famous convert, Liang Fa, had a successful ministry as China’s first indigenous evangelist.**

Notes

1. Throughout the rest of her life, Isabella Graham, whom Morrison addressed as “Dear Mother,” remained a correspondent with Morrison and a supporter of his ministry.
2. James Morrison was a farmer before he moved to Newcastle.
5. There is no evidence to indicate why Yong Sam-tak was in London, but one of the earliest extant documents by Morrison discusses his...
first meeting with Yong. See Robert Morrison, Memorandum of Conversation with Sam Tak, 1803, LMS, South China, Incoming Letters, Folder #1, Jacket A; IDC MF H-2138, #1.

6. Morrison wrote in his journal and correspondence that he arrived in Macao on Friday, September 4, and in Canton on Sunday, September 6 (Robert Morrison's Journal, September 4, 1807, LMS, South China, Journals; IDC MF H-2138, #564; Robert Morrison to Thomas Wilson, Canton, October 9, 1807, Dr. Williams's Library, London, Archives of the New College, London, L.52/2/5 iv).

7. The American Factory was a collection of buildings that formed a portion of the restricted enclave in Canton where Chinese officials permitted foreign traders to live and work during the trading season (about five months out of the year).

8. Their first son, James, was born and died on March 5, 1811.

9. Mary apparently died of cholera.

10. “The Domestic Memoir” will be published as part of The Papers of Robert Morrison.

11. I have been unable to locate much information about the wedding itself. Even in her biography of her husband, Eliza does not write about the courtship, engagement or wedding, except to say that the wedding took place.

12. The five children were Robert, Martin Crofton, Hannah, George Staunton, and Charles Marjoribanks.

13. Morrison to the Directors of the LMS, Canton, November 25, 1819, LMS, South China, Incoming Letters, Folder #1, Jacket C; IDC MF H-2138, #31.

14. As early as 1821 Morrison wrote, “It is desirable I should visit Maca & revise the Scripture Translations” (Morrison to W. Alers Hankey, Canton, October 11, 1821, LMS, South China, Incoming Letters, Folder #2, Jacket A; IDC MF H-2138, #35).


16. Abeel and Bridgman were both appointed in 1829 and sailed to China on the same ship in 1830. After approximately two years, Abeel came under the auspices of the ABCFM.

17. Morrison also wrote that a longer-term result of sending single female missionaries abroad was that “by serving in this capacity for a time, [they would] be eminently fitted for Missionaries’ wives” (Morrison to George Burder and William Alers Hankey, Canton, November 10, 1823, LMS, South China, Incoming Letters, Folder #2, Jacket C; IDC MF H-2138, #36–37).

18. Liang Fa’s name in Cantonese (his native dialect) is Leühng Gling Faat. His pamphlet Good Words for Exhorting the Age (in Chinese) strongly influenced Hong Xiuquan and the Taiping Rebellion. For a recent study of this influence, see Jonathan D. Spence, God’s Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), pp. 17–68.

Bibliography

There are many brief works on Robert Morrison, and he is mentioned in virtually every work on missions in China. However, there is no modern scholarly biography. The best available is Marshall Broomhall, Robert Morrison: A Master-Builder (London: Livingstone Press, 1924). Another useful work is his widow’s biography of Morrison. See Elizabeth Armstrong Morrison, Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison, D.D., 2 vols. (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1839). The latter is somewhat difficult to find in print but is available on microfiche from Interdocumentation Corporation in Leiden, Netherlands. The main depository of Robert Morrison materials is the collection of London Missionary Society materials at the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. There is a quantity of other material scattered around the world, which at a later date will be brought together in a collected edition entitled The Papers of Robert Morrison.

Works by Robert Morrison in Chinese

1811[?] A Summary of the Divine Doctrine. Canton[?].

1812[?] The Doctrine of Jesus in Catechism Form. Canton.


1818 Hymns for Nurturing the Spirit. Macao.

1819 Brief Notes on the Journey to the West. N.p.


Works by Robert Morrison, in English


1815 Translations from the Original Chinese, with Notes. Canton: East India Company’s Press.


1816 Dialogues and Detached Sentences in the Chinese Language, with a Free and Verbal Translation in English. Macao: East India Company’s Press.


1819 A Memoir of the Principal Occurrences During an Embassy from the British Government to the Court of China in the Year 1816. London: Reprint, James Nichols, 1820.


1824 The Chinese Miscellany; Consisting of Original Extracts from Chinese Authors; in the Native Character; with Translation and Philosophical Remarks. London: London Missionary Society.


The Legacy of James Legge

Lauren F. Pfister

Born the fourth son of a merchant in the small town of Huntly in northeastern Scotland, James Legge (1815-97) grew up in a Congregational home that maintained a strict but warm evangelical environment. The church the family attended was nicknamed the Missionar Kirk because of its evangelical emphasis. Having become involved before the turn of the nineteenth century in establishing Sabbath schools and supporting local itinerant preaching, this church had also already sent one of the first missionaries to China from its own congregation, William Milne (1785-1822), the collaborator of Robert Morrison. To people in this and other Dissenter forms of evangelical life at the time, missionaries were religious heroes and were held in as high honor as any other religious, military, or political hero.

Both Legge and his eldest brother, George (1802-61), received their university education at King's College, Aberdeen, and later attended Highbury College, the Congregational seminary in the London area. James excelled in classical languages, proving his educational achievements by being the first ever to obtain the highest academic scholarships among all competitors both before and at the end of his university career.

At the time of his graduation in 1835, when his brother George was already becoming established as a Congregational minister in England, James Legge was still unsettled about his personal religious commitments. Determined to resolve "the great problem of religion" in a manner that demonstrated his own mature reflections and personal choice, Legge ended up spending eighteen months teaching in a Congregational secondary school, or "college," in the small town of Blackburn, England. In spite of his self-proclaimed intention to be independent, he was in fact continually influenced by his eldest brother's circle of ministerial and lay Christian friends, to the point that his first teaching job was arranged through one of these contacts. (Later his brother's theological writings continued to form a groundwork for Legge's own spiritual efforts and intellectual writings.)

Much to his benefit, the principal of the school, a Mr. Hoole, was a positive Christian example and open supporter of his new faculty member's quest for religious solutions. Through Legge's own vigorous studies, his reading in religious literature, as well as the dialogues and disciplines promoted by Mr. Hoole, by the beginning of 1836 the young Scotsman had professed his desire to be a Christian, which he publicly proclaimed by joining the local Congregational church. Always vigorous in pursuing what he believed to be his duty, Legge became an active lay preacher and church supporter, caught up in the rising wave of Dissenting evangelicalism in England and Scotland that produced a set of major religious revivals commencing in 1840.

By the time he applied to enter Highbury College in the spring of 1837, Legge was nearly determined to become a foreign missionary. Within a year he applied to the London Missionary Society and was accepted as a candidate. Some questions about his health made India, one of his first interests, an unacceptable option, and so after some further examinations and discussions, the way was opened for him to work in China. Consequently, for the last year in seminary he studied Chinese at the University College in London with a former missionary to the Chinese in Malacca, Samuel Kidd (1799-1843). In the meantime he won the approval of his Congregational pastor in London and lifelong theological mentor, John Morison, to marry Morison's only daughter, Mary Isabella. Graduating from seminary in the spring of 1839, Legge was first married and then one month later in May was ordained for work in China. The couple left in July 1839 for their post in Malacca with plans to help at the Anglo-Chinese College, where Kidd had previously taught.

The Political Context

Legge was a representative of the second generation of missionaries to the Chinese, Robert Morrison having arrived thirty-two years earlier and William Milne twenty-six years earlier. Morrison and Milne had not been able to work in China as professional evangelists; not until Legge's generation was this possible. Morrison himself was forced to work in expatriate mercantile enclaves as a translator in order to gain his first access to the Chinese language and covertly to initiate his missionary strategies. Leaving an immensely influential heritage of preliminary sinological tools for later missionaries, Morrison and other first-generation missionaries generally worked under restricted conditions with Chinese contacts who risked severe penalties for cooperating with "foreign barbarians."3

Following the First Opium War (1839-42), treaty conditions eased these restrictions and made the role of professional missionaries simultaneously possible and problematic. Precisely because missionaries were regularly perceived by Chinese officials as part of the militarily imposed vanguard of Western intrusions, an uneasy tension continued to govern the relationships between foreign missionaries and the Chinese bureaucracy representing the Manchurian imperial authority. Especially after further concessions were granted in treaties following the Second Opium War (1856-1860), cross-cultural contacts made by resident missionaries, whether Catholic or Protestant, were often susceptible to xenophobic reactions. Any aggressive missionary methods produced heated responses from the already threatened Confucian/Ruist civil officials. Some officials indirectly or overtly supported riotous mob action intent on destroying the missionaries, their newly formed and minuscule Chinese Christian communities, and their attached institutions.4

Legge arrived in Malacca in January 1840, amid news of
impending war in China. Within a year he was unexpectedly made the principal of the Anglo-Chinese College (first established by Morrison and Milne in 1818) due to a cholera epidemic which killed his predecessor among many others. As events led to the outbreak of war, Legge prepared himself, his fellow workers, and some students to move toward China sometime in the future. In 1843, after the Nanjing Treaty officially settled the Sino-British War (though without resolving the troublesome problem of the opium trade), Legge moved the college into the new British colony of “Hong Kong.”

There other circumstances brought him to resettle the school as a liberal arts training center, designing it to provide a preparatory education for those who might become worthy of seminary instruction. He also built up a Dissenter style of Protestant mission and church life under British legal protection.

For the next three decades Legge devoted himself to missionary work in Hong Kong and southeastern China as well as to the production of massive translations and commentaries of the classical scholarly traditions of China. During these years he returned three times to England and Scotland for furloughs (1846–48, 1857–58, and 1867–70) and once to Japan (1865), most often because of sickness or fatigue. In October 1852 his wife, Mary Isabella, died in childbirth from complications that probably included tuberculosis, but Legge remained at his station as a widower, sending his three daughters to Scotland for their education during this period. (The youngest died within six months of returning to Scotland.) Later in 1858, once more through arrangements of members of the congregation served by his brother George, Legge married a ministerial widow named Hannah Mary Willetts. Returning to Hong Kong in 1859 with his two eldest daughters, a stepdaughter, and his new wife, Legge persisted in his studious habits and began producing some of the most important sinological work of his whole life. Because his second wife could not endure the hot and humid climate of southeastern China, Legge was left alone in Hong Kong once more from late 1865 till his return to Scotland in early 1867. He traveled back alone to Hong Kong in 1870 to serve for three years as the pastor of the English-speaking congregation at Union Church and to complete the final volumes of his magnum opus, the Chinese Classics.

After declaring his retirement from missionary service in 1873, Legge took a long trip with a few missionary colleagues to visit the Temple of Heaven in Beijing and then the famous sites associated with Master Kong (Confucius) in Shandong Province. While at the major temple grounds in Beijing, Legge and others removed their shoes as an act of piety and ascended the Altar of Heaven, where imperial sacrifices were still offered to Shangdi (the Lord on High) on a yearly basis. Holding hands, they stood in a small circle and sang the Christian Doxology. (Legge had argued twenty years earlier, in Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits, that at the Altar of Heaven the one true God was at least recognized and addressed in China.) This event later became fodder for his opponents, who resisted any kind of cultural accommodation and feared that any amalgamation of Christianity with Ruist traditions would ultimately confuse Chinese seekers and believers. Legge then took a ship from northeastern China to San Francisco, traveled across the full length of the United States, and returned by another ship to London.

Ultimately it was the Chinese Classics that earned Legge international acclaim and later justified the creation of a professorship for him in Oxford. He taught there in association with F. Max Müller at Corpus Christi College from 1876 until his death in 1897, continuing to support missionary causes in China in spite of the detractors who criticized his translations and his accommodationist spirit. From the time that he landed in England in 1874, he never returned to China or elsewhere in Asia.

During the whole of his missionary career, Legge remained situated in the Hong Kong colony and thus experienced China in a way quite different from those who lived among the mandarins and common people of the nearby Qing Empire. The colonial conditions gave him relative freedom and legal protection to work among Chinese people and with Chinese converts, providing a strong institutional basis for working within the southern province of Guangdong. A major part of his missionary legacy, however, was formed out of his accommodation to the classical traditions associated with the Ruist elite. This involved not only linguistic and cultural sensitivities but also a specific religious claim related to the existence of an ancient form of monotheism in these traditions.

Legge's Ideals and Pragmatic Concerns

As principal of the Anglo-Chinese College, Legge aspired to prepare a group of first-generation Chinese Christians who could become pastors, teachers, and scholars. Working with his first wife, Mary, he founded boarding schools in Hong Kong for less-privileged male and female students. The curriculum in the boys' school included both Ruist and Christian scriptures as well as some modern subjects adopted from Scottish education (mathematics, geometry, and some practical science subjects). But the lure of rapid financial gain in other fields for English-speaking Chinese students lured many away, while most of those who became Christians did not fulfill the Legges' high expectations. Although missionary schools continued to be run in the few Chinese port cities open to missionary residence, Legge began to question the feasibility of bilingual missionary education in Hong Kong and China. Consequently, before the beginning of the Second Opium War in 1856, Legge closed down the Anglo-Chinese College and focused his energies elsewhere.

Legge's talent for scholarly endeavors quickly became manifest through his teaching and early writings, especially as it related to studies in the ancient canon of Ruist scriptures. During the first public debates in Hong Kong on the “term question” between 1847 and 1852, dealing with theoretical and practical problems in translating Christian theological terms appropriately into Chinese, Legge's research skills became much more refined. Essays and booklets Legge produced for these debates resulted in some groundbreaking studies in the religious implications of the Ruist scriptures and the reformed rituals performed in the Qing imperial worship at the Altar of Heaven in Beijing. After 1856 he devoted himself to pastoral ministry in English and Chinese congregations in Hong Kong, spending his leisure hours in preparing translations and notes on the Ruist canon.

Unlike J. Hudson Taylor (1832–1905) and others, Legge
chose to live in an English style, never adopting Chinese dress. Yet his awareness of Chinese classical literature and customs, augmented by his preaching in Cantonese with his long-time copastor Ho Tsun-sheen (1817–71), made him sensitive and responsive to numerous Chinese cultural issues. Part of the reason for this choice in self-presentation was motivated by the postmillennial theology he advocated. It claimed that Christian emissaries would become images of “higher” civilization to the postmillennial theology he advocated. It claimed that Christian emissaries would become images of “higher” civilization to the "heathen," and so would be used by God’s Spirit to effect a more complete and massive conversion of all peoples, including the traditional Chinese, to Christian faith and civilization. These attitudes were manifest in some of his early work in Chinese magazines (1855–56), his preparation of bilingual school curriculum, and his determined and consistent assumption of European styles in dress, worship, and architecture.

Still, Legge was known to be a sensitive and talented missionary in other realms. He was competent enough to write Christian pamphlets on biblical themes and stories in Chinese, both in a semi-official style and later in popular Cantonese. In the early 1860s he made two major trips along the East and West Rivers in Guangdong Province, teaching in the village temples (preferring those dedicated to Master Kong and making contacts with religious figures, scholars, and officials at many levels of Cantonese society. One consequence of his 1861 trip up the East River was the establishment of a mission station in the area of Boluo City. The ambivalences of popular feelings, however, led to the key Christian witness there, Che’a Kam-kwong, being murdered by antiforeign vigilante mobs later that same year. Legge’s experiences were recorded and published in Hong Kong and Britain, so that he was associated with the proto-martyr Che’a and took on an aura of a kind of popular hero among British supporters, colonialists, and local Chinese Christians.

Scholarship as a Missiological Strategy

After twenty years of teaching and studying the Ruist canon, Legge initiated the publication of his famous Chinese Classics (1st ed. in Hong Kong, five volumes in eight tomes, 1861–72). For this work Legge would be honored in the Qing Empire and Europe, later being offered the first chair of Chinese language and literature at Corpus Christi College in Oxford (1876–97). His motivations, however, were rooted in a specific missiological strategy that he and many others believed was an imperative for the evangelization of the traditional elitist culture of China. Almost all Chinese leadership in civil society under the Manchurian despot, whether formal or informal, was placed into the hands of scholars who studied these Chinese classical texts and had to pass a series of civil examinations devoted to their exposition. All speeches and writings among literate people were peppered with references to them. Therefore, if any Christian materials were to gain their attention and appreciation, they had to use an informed classical Chinese style. Legge’s work was dedicated in part to serve missionaries by giving them access in English to translations and interpretations of these treasured works of the Chinese gentry.

Though the work was arduous and vast (he refers to more than 300 Chinese commentators in notes to the translations), Legge also set out a wide-ranging assessment of Chinese culture and its intellectual cult focused on the figure of Master Kong. Oriented philosophically by the anti-Humean Scottish realism he studied in the works of Thomas Reid (1710–96) and Dugald Stewart (1753–1828), among others, Legge offered a comprehensive evaluation of the worldview of Chinese Ruist intellectuals from the classical to the contemporary period, taking special effort to evaluate the classical sages, including Master Kong. At first negatively critical and generally unimpressed with the attitudes of the most highly honored Chinese sage, Legge after more than a decade of scholarly publications about these traditions discerned an important difference between the historical man and the myths surrounding him. Believing in his later publications (beginning in the 1870s) that the Ruist traditions were not inherently antagonistic to Christianity (as were Buddhism and Daoism, in his understanding of them), Legge later promoted through his missionary scholarship an accommodating attitude toward Ruist classical traditions. This was most succinctly expressed in 1877 in his controversial pamphlet Confucianism in Relation to Christianity. Prepared originally for the 1877 Shanghai General Conference of Missionaries to the Chinese, it became a source of contention and was deleted from the conference proceedings. Published independently by supporters, Legge’s accommodating arguments fomented extended controversies. Opponents afterward used the pejorative term “Leggism” to describe any accommodating attitude toward Chinese traditions.

In spite of these later anti-accommodationist problems among missionaries and their strategists, the earliest Bible translation of Morrison and Milne, finished and published in 1823, sought to imitate a high official style of Ruist language, but it was wooden and often unclear. Alternative translations were prepared in the 1830s after Morrison’s death, but these were still considered inadequate. So when a group of a dozen missionaries met in Hong Kong in 1843 to discuss a united effort to retranslate the Chinese Bible, almost all agreed with translators in the past that it should be expressed in a relatively stylish way to appeal to the Chinese gentry. The reasoning was simple and direct, following strategies assumed by earlier Jesuit as well as the pioneer Protestant missionaries: if the gentry are convinced and converted, China would quickly become a Christian empire through their influence. As the Delegates’ Committee began meeting to prepare the final edition of the Chinese New Testament in 1847, Legge remained in full agreement with their translation goals. Already in 1844 Legge and Ho, his copastor, had prepared their own translation and commentary to the Sermon on the Mount, following these same principles. But by the time he had produced his most important work in the “term question” debates in 1852, Legge had also become convinced that an important theological bridge existed in the Ruist canonical literature, one all missionaries should recognize and employ.

A Sino-Christian Theological Connection?

In The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits (1852), Legge argued that the “Lord on High” (Shangdi) mentioned in the earliest parts of two Ruist canonical works, the Book of Historical Documents (Shujing) and the Book of Poetry (Shijing), is
Legge presented groundbreaking research in imperial worship rites to demonstrate that the term also appeared there in imperial prayers, always carrying distinctively monotheistic characteristics. Mixing these facts with the missiological strategy to reach the literati of the Qing Empire, Legge advocated using “Shangdi” as the translation for ‘elohim and theos’ in the Bible. Those who opposed this position argued that common people believed the word to refer to a number of Daoist deities and thus claimed it could mislead Chinese readers of the Bible. Believing that missionaries could overcome these problems through proper teaching, Legge continued to argue for this position and its attendant strategy for more than forty years in Hong Kong and Oxford.

The importance of this problem is that it opens questions about God’s sovereignty over unreached peoples. Was it possible for people without any “special revelation” (unlike the cases of direct revelations given Abraham and Moses) to develop a concept of the Supreme Being? Could such a term help unreached people to learn the significance of Christian Trinitarian doctrines, or would it hinder this education effort because of other culture-specific connotations of the term? Legge’s answer was that human beings may conceive of the concept of a supreme being, and do so on the basis of unaided theological reflections. The Chinese classical concept of Shangdi, then, is the result of thoughtful persons, not evidence of some primordial or alternative special revelation.

In Chinese traditional culture, Legge points out, historical records illustrate the presence of this concept of the supreme being about 2,000 years before Christ. Chinese then could be taught that they are returning to the religious concepts of their sage kings, and so be convinced that Christianity is not totally foreign to their cultural heritage. Having agreed with these claims, Chinese people then could be given the special information known only through biblical teachings. This approach, Legge believed, is a natural theological bridge between Chinese and Christian cultures that missionaries ought to use to their full advantage.

**Bonding with Chinese People**

Studies in Legge’s life and work have revealed, beyond his association with the first Chinese Protestant martyr, Che’a, relationships with four other important figures in Chinese history. Accounts of these ties illustrate the strength and problems of Legge’s missionary-scholar role and his missiological strategy.

Soon after arriving in Malacca in 1839, the twenty-four-year-old Legge met the younger Ho Tsun-sheen, one of the best students in the Anglo-Chinese College. Three years later Ho was a relatively articulate English speaker, had learned to read Greek and Hebrew texts, and had published a Chinese novel in English under Legge’s editorship. Ho enhanced Legge’s knowledge of classical and contemporary Chinese, while Legge supported Ho’s scholarly efforts. Together they began working on classical Chinese translations, which helped to convince Legge about the importance of the Shangdi concept. After the Delegates’ version of the Chinese New Testament was made available in 1852, Ho prepared and published the first Chinese commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew and Mark (1854, 1855). These and other writings distinguish Ho as the first modern Chinese Protestant theologian well informed in biblical traditions, one with strong pastoral concerns for his readership. He set the pattern for the pastor-scholar among Protestant Chinese communities, a role still upheld as an ideal for Chinese Christian leadership.

Following Legge’s missionary travels in Guangdong, Ho led the Chinese congregation in Hong Kong to help establish and support new churches in China, the first independent attempt of this kind by Chinese Protestants. In 1870 he and others were attacked in Guangdong while meeting in a newly constructed church building in Buddha Hill City (Foshan). Though Ho survived, his health declined quickly after the traumatic event, and he died the next year. Following Ruist and Christian customs, Legge wrote a memorial to his deceased Chinese colleague.

More complicated and less successful relationships were built between Legge and two other Chinese leaders: Luo Zhongfan (d. circa 1850) and Hong Rengan (1822–64). Luo was a minor Ruist official in southern Guangdong, a man probably in his fifties when he met Legge in 1843. He was refused baptism by Legge, presumably because of his lack of a clear understanding of Christian teachings. Pursuing Christian teaching under other missionaries, Luo later returned to Guangdong to write a monotheistic (Shangdi-ist) commentary to one of the Chinese classics, the Great Learning. Never identified as a Christian, Luo in his work demonstrated that the approach through Shangdi did resonate with the thoughts of some Ruist scholars.

The case of Hong Rengan was special in several ways. Legge was personally drawn to Hong because of the latter’s brilliance and friendship, especially during a period after Legge’s first wife had died. They worked together as teacher and apprentice (along with Ho) from 1854 to 1858, Hong showing much promise as a future evangelist. But his personal ties bound him to the Taiping Rebellion, because his older cousin was the rebels’ king, a visionary who worshiped the “August Lord on High” (huang Shangdi). When Legge left on furlough to England in 1858, Hong received monetary support and encouragement from other missionaries to travel to the Taiping camps in Nanjing and attempt to turn the king and his followers to Christian orthodoxy. Hong’s initial reception by the Taiping king, Hong Xiuquan (1814–64), seemed to promise success in this bold attempt, but in the end it became compromised. Both died during the final wars ending the Taiping movement. Subsequently, Legge could not recall Hong’s memory without remorse.

An unexpected outcome of the Taiping troubles was Legge’s association with the scholarly and controversial Ruist figure Wang Tao (1828–97). He was a baptized Christian who was Walter Medhurst’s (1796–1857) teacher during deliberation of the Delegates’ Committee over Bible translations in Shanghai. Wang earned his degree through civil examinations but was implicated in a plot involving Taiping forces. Fleeing with his family to Hong Kong in late 1862, he worked with Legge for a decade in writing commentaries to the Ruist classics. The relationship between the two men was friendly and close enough that Wang joined Legge for nearly two years in Scotland (1867–69) to continue work on the *Chinese Classics*. Although Legge appreciated many of Wang’s works, he remained an independent judge of all commentaries, including Wang’s, marking his own course through the jungle of classical interpretations. Wang
published a laudatory essay on Legge in 1873, claiming him to be a Ruist scholar in his own right, due specifically to his work on the Book of Historical Documents.¹⁵

Wang later became a strong advocate for cultural reform in the Qing dynasty, influenced greatly by what he saw and learned in his European trip with Legge. A noted author, scholar, and educator in his later years, Wang tended to distance himself from Christian standards of conduct and hide his previous connections with missionaries.¹⁶ Legge nevertheless continued to claim that Wang was a committed Christian throughout his later years.

Since no other non-Chinese has treated so much of the classical canon, Legge’s works are still employed wherever Chinese traditions are studied.

largely because of a sparse correspondence in which Wang continued to show signs of respect for Christian teachings and sustained his friendship with the aging Oxonion professor.

Legge’s Legacy for China

While in Oxford, Legge completed another six-volume set of translations named the Sacred Books of China for Max Müller’s fifty-volume set entitled Sacred Books of the East, including retranslations of some Ruist canonical literature as well as new works in both Ruist and Daoist traditions. No other non-Chinese scholar has translated and interpreted so much of the Ruist canon, and partly for this reason his works in this area are still employed wherever ancient Chinese traditions are studied. After his second wife died in 1881, Legge continued his professorial duties and sinological writings, probing further at the end of the decade into areas related to early forms of Chinese Buddhism and Christianity in China. (Legge and others believed this Christianity to be specifically Nestorian.) A warm relationship with his stepdaughter and her husband, who lived near Oxford, and constant contacts with family, academics, students, and friends kept him from becoming reclusive. In the early 1890s he turned his attention once more to portions of the Chinese Classics he regularly taught at Oxford, revising and publishing them between 1893 and 1895 at the Clarendon Press, this time including within the first prolegomena a somewhat more positive evaluation of the life and significance of “Confucius.” Teaching until just a few days before his death, Legge had maintained throughout his professorial career his associations with Dissenter institutions and their missionary interests, but he could then also more positively identify with the Chinese sage and teacher at the end of his life. By this time there was a melancholy tone to his reflections on his two long missionary-educator and sinological-educator careers. This was due in a large degree to his rejection of more critical approaches to the Chinese canon that were attracting broader academic interest in the 1890s.¹⁷

A courageous advocate of a liberal evangelical tradition in missionary accommodation to traditional Chinese culture, Legge was simultaneously honored with academic credentials and spurned by some missionaries in China as a heretic. His position in favor of the term “Shangdi” as the best translation for “God” in the Bible has remained a hallmark of missionary scholarship and has influenced the use of the term among Chinese Christians with High Church liturgical backgrounds. More important, Legge set standards for missionary scholarship among Chinese missionaries and supported the pastor-scholar role of his collaborator Ho Tsun-sheen. Growing in his appreciation for Master Kong over the years, his continuing productivity in Ruist and Daoist translations while at Oxford convinced him of the greatness of the Chinese sage. Willing to call him Master, Legge balanced this genuine respect with the worship he exclusively reserved for his “Lord and Master, Jesus.”¹⁸ At the end of the twentieth century our efforts to employ culturally sensitive approaches to unreached people groups would applaud Legge’s strategy, but these attitudes were not shared by many in the late nineteenth century, especially those who came to transplant Christian civilization within non-Christian “pagan” societies.

Notes

1. This biographical data is elaborated at greater length in Norman J. Girardot, The Whole Duty of Man (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, forthcoming), and Lauren Pfister, Dutybound (forthcoming). A brief biographical summary has also been written by Andrew Walls in Nigel M. de S. Cameron et al., eds., Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), p. 477.


3. A sensitive account of these problems among missionaries such as the British missionary Robert Morrison, his Scottish colleague William Milne (1785–1822), the Prussian Karl Gützlaff (1803–51), the British Walter Medhurst (1796–1857), and the American Elijah Bridgman (1801–61) is presented in volume 1 of A. J. Broomhall’s missionary biography Hudson Taylor and China’s Open Century: Barbarians at the Gate (Sevenoaks: Hodder & Stoughton, 1981). Broomhall mentions some of the early Chinese evangelists who also suffered for associating with these men, particularly Liang Fa (also named Gongfa or, more commonly, Afa, 1789–1855).


I use the term “Ruist” here instead of “Confucianist” because of the distorted images the latter term evokes largely as a consequence of a skewed Orientalist interpretation of these early Chinese ritual scholars. “Ruist,” coined from the self-referential Chinese word Ru, was first explained and employed as an English term in Robert Eno’s The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), pp. 6–13.

5. In all official documents of the period, the island was named by the one word “Hongkong,” just as “Shanghai” or “Beijing” continues as a single word, though they are all names consisting of two Chinese characters. Because of later customs, the transliteration of the two Chinese characters was separated and became a two-word phrase by habitual use, in spite of the official name.

6. Originally a nondenominational church for English- and Chinese-speaking congregations, Union Church still exists in Hong Kong, serving primarily English-speaking parishioners. This church petitioned the Hong Kong government to produce a postage stamp in
honor of the church's 150th anniversary. One was published in October 1994 that focused on James Legge as the main commemorative figure.


8. Master Kong is the literal meaning of Kongzi or Kongfuzi. The latter title was Latinized as "Confucius." I prefer the more meaningful rendering "Master Kong."

9. This "pilgrimage" and the following events are carefully described and interpreted in Girardot, The Whole Duty of Man.

10. These were debates about determining and justifying the choices for proper Chinese translations of biblical words such as "God," "Spirit/spirit," and "baptism," but especially the first two terms. It remained a contentious problem throughout the nineteenth century, dividing missionaries and Chinese Christians. The results of these choices are still evident to this day in different Chinese Christian circles, but the argumentative issues have become subsumed through a pragmatic acceptance of the differences.

11. Interpretive work on selected biblical themes had been published earlier by Liang Fa, Morrison's first ordained Chinese evangelist, but Ho's was the first complete commentary on whole books of the Christian Scriptures written by a Chinese theologian.


15. A translation of this essay is found in Lindsey Ride's "Biographical Note," appended to the introductory material of the first volume of the *Chinese Classics*, 1960 edition.

16. An example may be seen in the 1883 republication of Wang's 1873 paean to Legge. Wang replaced a sentence crediting Legge with preparing the *Chinese Classics* in his spare time because his main purpose was to "preach the gospel to bring salvation to the whole world and to lead men to eternal life" with a relatively nondescript phrase about Legge's scholarly dedication. This has been described with further details in Paul A. Cohen, "Littoral and Hinterland in Nineteenth-Century China: The 'Christian' Reformers," in The Missionary Enterprise in China and America, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 223, 408.

17. Left in his papers is a long autobiographical reflection, "Notes of My Life," written for the children of his second marriage, which provides extensive details on his early life. It ends abruptly after a lengthy summary of the work of Morrison and Milne, the starting point Legge had conceived to begin describing his missionary career at Malacca. Illness apparently hindered him from completing it. A summary evaluation of Legge's reconsideration of "Confucius" is worked out with many details in Pfister, "Some New Dimensions," part 2.


Selected Bibliography

Extensive archival materials by Legge and his family are held in both the Bodleian Library and the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. Much of his personal library was purchased by a representative of the New York Public Library. Some of it now is kept in that research library in the United States, but portions of this collection were subsequently sold and have ended up in the Pitts Theology Library at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

Works by James Legge

1852 The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits. Hong Kong: Hongkong Register.


1877 Confucianism in Relation to Christianity. London.


1888 Christianity in China: A Rendering of the Nestorian Tablet at Si-an-fu to Commemorate Christianity. London: Trübner.

Works About James Legge


Pfister, Lauren. Dutybound: James Legge (1815–1897) and the Scottish Encounter with China. Forthcoming.

The biggest problem for editors of reference works on Christian missions has to do with scope. To prepare a biographical dictionary on the church in France or an encyclopedia of religion in Canada is itself an expansive endeavor that demands discretion and selectivity in respect to topics. Even so, the publisher has to hope that there will be a market for such a work, given the nature of specialization among scholars today. Suppose one specializes in the eighteenth century; will references to the nineteenth or the seventeenth century be of use? Magnify that problem by 150 (in reference to nations) or more, and enlarge the time span to twenty centuries, as Anderson’s company must in this book, and one gains a sense of the difficult conceptual problems and some of the market and library risks one takes. Why? Because Christian missioners have appeared in all centuries; they are active across the globe today; they come from myriad religious orders and denominational backgrounds; most of them were too busy to leave papers in archives or have time to write autobiography, so the authors of entries must do considerable foraging and digging.

Anderson recognizes all this in his brief preface. He is awed to report that there have been perhaps ten million formal missioners, while he and his advisers could select and treat a mere 2,400 of these. Whereas only a few years ago such a work as this would have been organized around the work emitted from Euro-American “sending centers” and the lives of some pioneers and superstars who went out from there, today the “sent-to centers” are themselves senders, or they do missionary work among their own. What’s ahead by way of scope becomes clear right off, with the opening sequence: Abdul Masih, Abeel, Abel, Abhishiktananda, Abraham, Abraham Malpan, and so on. Midway, Martin of Tours, Martin Marty O.S.B., and Henry Martyn make up a familiar (to most of us) trio. But how move from “our” Raimundo Panikkar through Pantaenus and Pao’o and Papadius and Papasamaroundoupolos? All that editors can do is assure that the selection is discreet, the articles accurate, the pointings to further reference works helpful.

The contributors make up a Who’s Who of missionary studies; for this review, the International Bulletin of Missionary Research had to go outside the ranks in order to find someone who is not represented among the authors in the book. The entries average three per page. They are even toned, not celebratory; most authors are capable of expressing empathy for the often beleaguered subjects of their articles. The bibliographies that I checked were up-to-the-season in currency. Forty-five pages of appendixes and an index of almost 5,000 items significantly extend the usefulness of this volume.

One does not read dictionaries. But whoever snitches this from the companies of researchers for a couple of hours will find treasures about heroines and saints herein. Cumulatively, they present a far fairer picture than would or do intellectuals who have hitherto misrepresented missionaries of the Western world as having been tools of imperialism, chaplains to the merchant subverters of cultures and missions. So “take and read” may be surprising advice, but not all that beside the point in this sober and efficient, sometimes eloquent, sequence of biographies.

—Martin E. Marty

Martin E. Marty teaches at the University of Chicago and directs the Public Religion Project.


This substantial book has both positive and negative features. It provides much detailed description of the career of Robert Morrison (1782–1834), the first Protestant missionary to China, as well as of the handful of other early Protestant missionaries on the China coast, several of them Americans. It is based on considerable archival work, especially in the papers of the London Missionary Society and those of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The materials on which the several chapters on Morrison are based, which include many of Morrison’s original letters and reports, are actually from the published two-volume memoir edited by his widow in 1839. The Pierpont Papers in New York contribute to the opening chapter’s lively account of the old Canton trade early in the nineteenth century.

The author’s overall contention, that in these decades there came into being an Anglo-American Protestant missionary entity (which included the Pomeranian maverick Karl Gutzlaff) based on the Canton-Macao axis, is basically true, and not a surprise to scholars. It is manifest from the outset in Morrison’s career, when he was warmly received in U.S. evangelical circles while en route from England to Canton in 1807, and later when he became corresponding secretary for the American Board in 1820, a decade before the first American missionaries went to the China coast.

The problem with this volume is that points of interpretation and analysis, some of which the author indeed includes, are buried in an avalanche of information, some of it painstakingly detailed. We are given almost a month-to-month chronicle of everything that went on in the life of Morrison from soon after 1800 to his death in 1834, and selective parts of the others’ lives are also exhaustively recounted. We don’t really need a chapter covering twelve years that is 89 pages long, with 277 notes. Thus while there is much data in this volume, some might find the value not up to the high list price.

—Daniel H. Bays

Daniel H. Bays is Professor of History at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas; his research area is the history of Christianity in modern China.
Where Nets Were Cast: Christianity in Oceania Since World War II.


This volume must be seen in connection with two earlier volumes by the same author, To Live Among the Stars and Footsteps in the Sea. Together the three volumes cover the whole history of Christianity in the Pacific Islands and constitute what will surely endure through future generations as one of the great landmarks in the writing of non-Western church history. This work, like the other two, is painted on a large canvas covering nineteen island countries in its sweep. It is based on years of meticulous research, including travel through the islands and examination of obscure as well as major archives.

The book is an example of what might be called pure history—the stories of actual men and women and what they did. The author has a keen eye and a rich vocabulary for depicting real people. The institutional history of missions and churches is woven in and around the lives of the men and women who formed and operated those institutions. This approach makes for absorbing reading.

Inevitably, when dealing with such a wide field, there will be certain omissions. For example, in the discussion of the tensions between the bishop and the seminary teachers in New Caledonia, there is no mention that the seminary was closed and the training of indigenous priests set back for years. In the report of the struggle over Palau’s nuclear-free constitution, there is no mention of the involvement of the churches in that struggle. Also there is occasional repetitiveness on small points made in different parts of the book.

But these defects are minor in comparison with the values of the work as a whole. One of those values is the way it sets Christian history within the wider context of Pacific Island life. The fact that the author has lived in the Islands for years is of help here. Another value is to be seen in the fact that, for the first time in a broad history, full attention is paid to the Islanders themselves along with the expatriate missionaries. Perhaps the greatest value is that the scholarship of this work is combined with a full understanding of religious life and beliefs—a combination that is often missing in scholarly studies on the one hand and in church publications on the other. This is a work that should appeal to both professional historians and church people. It will be widely welcomed.

—Charles W. Forman

Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century.


The author, who is a research fellow of the Islamic Foundation, Leicester, England, opens briefly with “The Challenge of Modernity” and presents the institutional
findings of sundry Christian bodies—the Vatican and the World Council of Churches—but treats only of Muslim individuals in personal engagement with the themes and the issues of dialogue. The absence of direct representation of minds like Louis Massignon or Montgomery Watt, engaging spiritually and intellectually with Islam from within Christian faith, is regrettable. The book, which is careful and meticulous in its summaries, would have been the stronger with some Christian personalities as significant as the six Muslim figures here to fulfill what the book’s title leads the reader to expect, though Hans Küng is here in the pages on Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

The other Muslims are Isma’il al-Faruqi, Mahmud Ayoub, Hasan Askari, Khurshid Ahmad, and Muhammad Taibi. These, in their diversity of approach and mental hinterland, are admirably representative. Summaries are given of their views concerning shari’ah, Da’wah/mission, dialogue, absolute truth, revelation, the nature of tolerance, and human rights in minority status. Condensing such often prolific, and always formidable, thinkers into some dozen pages each inevitably makes for a certain diffuseness, so that the meaning is not always clear, as for example, in saying, “There is no common truth between Islam and secularism in contrast to Christianity and Islam which are based on a common truth which is God Himself” (p. 155). Is not the khilafah, or autonomy, we enjoy from God in both faiths the very opportunity to be “secular” if taken that way and not conformed to a true, and free, Islam?

Sad, perhaps, that Fazlur Rahman was not included, in view of Nasr’s quarrel with him (p. 161) over Muhammad’s vital role in the transmission of the Qur’an. The extensive bibliography serves the book’s purpose well as a welcome and illuminating review. —Kenneth Cragg

Kenneth Cragg, now retired in Oxford, England, was formerly assistant Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, with residence in Cairo.

Pastoral Theology from a Global Perspective: A Case Study Approach.


This volume is a result of an international consultation held in Switzerland in 1994 in which participants from all over the world shared their pastoral experiences, concerns, and insights. Under the experienced leadership of Robert and Alice Evans, the group of thirty pastors and pastoral theologians discussed and analyzed cases that arose from their own contexts. It soon became evident that the dilemmas each faced were not unique to a given geographic area. Toward the end of
the conference a participant exclaimed, "Look at how many problems and challenges we share!" Reading the cases confirms this assessment. The challenges of doing ministry in today's world are remarkably similar and often interrelated. For this reason, those engaged in pastoral work can benefit greatly from sharing their problems and pooling their common biblical and theological resources. This in essence is what this book does.

The fifteen cases deal with issues across a broad spectrum of pastoral dilemmas: economic development versus ecological concerns; compliance with unjust laws; indigenous traditions—rites of passage, marriage, and burial customs; what constitutes conversion to Christianity; forgiveness and reconciliation; the ordination of women to ministry; social activism; sexual misconduct in the workplace; and ministering to victims of prejudice, economic and social injustice, AIDS, and war. The countries from which these cases come are equally widespread. The issues, however, transcend national, theological, ethnic, and economic boundaries, and they include empowering the economically and socially marginalized and oppressed, as well as questions concerning sustainable development, international debt, the role of women in the church and in society, peacemaking and reconciliation, and how to meet a plethora of other human needs.

The cases are concise and powerfully written, the accompanying teaching notes helpful, and the commentaries insightful and illuminating. Teachers, however, should be aware that providing discussants with the commentaries that follow each case entails a significant risk. Rather than doing their own study, analysis, and reflection, discussants will be tempted to rely on the experts.

—Alan Neely

Alan Neely is Henry Winters Luce Professor of Mission and Ecumenics Emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary.

A Biographical Study of Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen (1834–1918), Pioneer Missionary to the Bataks of Sumatra.


The book under review is the first life of Nommensen since Johannes Warneck's biography of 1934. The author is emeritus professor of church history at the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities in Minnesota. His effort is remarkable in three ways: it offers the first monographic biography of Nommensen in English, it includes a study of the materials in the German Wuppertal-Barmen Mission archives, and the author interviewed personalities in the Batak Church about local memories of Nommensen.

Lehmann unfolds the life and work of Nommensen in the context of the Rhenish Mission's evangelism among the Batak, the largest native Indonesian people in northern Sumatra. He follows in detail Nommensen's path from his birthplace (Nordstrand, in Schleswig) in 1834 to Barmen, the mission's seminary location in 1861. A good account of the British and the American precursors, 1824–34, provides the transition to Nommensen's meeting with the three European colleagues who had started several years before, coordinating with them the evangelism centers and settling in the valley of Silindung in 1864. The author analyzes in detail the rise
of Christian communities and the encounters and controversies with the leading chief and the leaders of the original Batak religion. The relations with the Dutch colonial administration are fairly accounted for. After Nommensen, his fellow missionaries, and the Christian communities had settled (1866–86), the mission moved north to Lake Toba and the Simelungun area (1886–1911). In the final chapter Lehmout outlines briefly the leading elements of Nommensen's theological views. The book is furnished with careful indexes and a number of well-reproduced illustrations. The author is to be congratulated on his achievement.

—Lothar Schreiner

Lothar Schreiner is Emeritus Professor for Missiology and History of Religions in Wuppertal, Germany.

Fling Out the Banner! The National Church Ideal and the Foreign Mission of the Episcopal Church.


In Fling Out the Banner Ian Douglas provides a fascinating take on the history of the Episcopal Church—one that is presented by means of a narrative of its missionary thought and activity. He begins with the nineteenth century and ends with the period 1960–90. The primary subject of the book is the growth and influence of the Episcopal Church's understanding of itself as a national church destined to occupy a central and strategic place in the configuration of American denominationalism.

Douglas recounts the way in which the national church ideal expressed itself in a particular view of the mission of the Episcopal Church, and in so doing, he shows the ways in which America's churches remain prisoners of the social forces that have shaped America's history. People like William Reed Huntington believed that the Catholic and Reformed traditions of Anglicanism positioned the Episcopal Church to provide a bridge between frontier Protestants and immigrant Roman Catholics. In respect to foreign missions, the national church ideal combined with a catholic ecclesiology gave birth to mission activity that revolved around a bishop who would build a local church by means of schools, hospitals, and well-ordered worship. These churches would in turn provide civilizing influences among the world's more "primitive" peoples.

Fuller Theological Seminary will sponsor a symposium promoting a reconceptualization of the task of global historiography. As the twentieth century draws to a close, significant changes in the Christian movement worldwide can be observed, causing the necessity to relook at the way church history is to be written. Forty-five noted church historians from around the world will gather April 30 to May 2, 1998, in Pasadena, California, to consider this major shift in the Christian church from Europe and North America to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

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William Taylor is currently teaching educational studies at Exeter, but he has also taught in Tanzania, India, and Nigeria. He therefore comes to his subject with something of a feel for the country of which he is writing. His intent is to provide a case study that can “raise wider issues of policy and strategy about the place of church schools in society, especially Nigeria” (p. 5). He then takes us through the stages of the Presbyterian mission’s educational endeavor, from the improvisations of the pioneers in Calabar during the 1840s to the extensive system that covered most of the middle and lower Cross River Valley a century later. His conclusion is quite balanced: missionaries are by definition cultural imperialists, some more so than others. The Presbyterians, however, were consistent in believing that “concerns about equality of opportunity and about the rights of individuals, not least the rights of the child, are fully consistent with the ideals that are at the heart of Christianity” (p. 236). His last word, an appropriate one, is a warning against making “a facile, simplistic assessment” about the work of this and, by implication, any other mission.

Despite its virtues, I found the book unsatisfactory. The text is littered with undocumented generalizations, many of which are at variance with my reading of the evidence. While Taylor’s overall assessment of the mission’s work is sound enough, I found his lack of documentation singularly frustrating. He may be right, but we have no way of finding out.

—Geoffrey Johnston


Colin Reed, principal of St. Andrew’s Hall, Melbourne, a training college for cross-cultural mission, worked in Kenya for twelve years, and this study arises from that experience. It is not quite the pioneer work the preface suggests—there are substantial studies by Robert Strayer and
Fred Morton among others—though it is the first missiological study, the first to deal exclusively with this period, and the first to concentrate on changing racial attitudes among missionaries. Reed expands our knowledge of the Indian background of the “Bombay Africans,” the church leaders of the title, and has a tantalizing postscript on the post-1900 history of the Coast Christians, who were neglected when missionary activity became refocused on up-country Kenya after the introduction of colonial rule.

The missiological issue that most concerns Reed is the racism that marred church development. His discussion is after the introduction of colonial rule. The careful organization of a wealth of confusing data and a balanced interpretation of both controversies and continuities. There are several appendices, including a brief bibliography, but unfortunately no subject index.

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M. Louise Pirouet

M. Louise Pirouet worked with the Church Missionary Society in Kenya 1957–70 and then taught at Makerere University, Uganda, and Nairobi University, Kenya, before returning to Britain to become senior lecturer in religious studies at Homerton College, University of Cambridge in 1978. She is now retired in Cambridge.

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years of Western missionary and imperial expansion, when student YMCAs spread around the world as centers of evangelism, Bible study, and missionary recruitment (the Student Volunteer Movement) as a deliberate effort to enlist for Christ the leaders of the next generation. John R. Mott, the organizing genius and a tireless traveler, maintained that "the points of most strategic importance in any country are the institutions of higher education." By linking Christian student groups both nationally and internationally, the WSCF provided an ecumenical experience, a structure and a forum, to face issues affecting students and their churches before the churches were ready to do so. Thus the WSCF produced not only the pioneer generation of ecumenical leaders (Mott, Soderblom, Brent, Azariah, Visser 't Hooft, and many others) but also led the way in facing many theological questions and engaging in struggles for justice and peace. Since the 1960s these struggles have come to dominate the WSCF agenda. A growing focus on national and regional issues has led to its virtual dissolution as a global body. What has happened to Bible study and personal evangelism? They continue, but it would appear that in many places social action has become the mission, and text has been overwhelmed by context. This history leaves us grateful for the WSCF's past but uncertain of its future.

—Charles Henry Long


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The purpose of this publication is to remind Germans about an illustrious but almost forgotten son of theirs: Dr. Karl Kumm (1874–1938), a missionary statesman of notable achievement. Kumm rode the crest of the wave of his day in his passion about the evangelization of sub-Saharan Africa, then known as the Sudan. He explored the Sudan from west to east in Livingstone style. A determined visionary, he also traveled through many Western countries and their southern outposts in order to recruit missions to join the British-based Sudan United Mission (SUM), which sought to establish a chain of churches across Africa and to halt the march of Islam.

Kumm wrote several books about his African adventures. The passion and force in his speaking and writing ensured his success in establishing many branches of the SUM in many countries. He was the guest of many national leaders and a public hero. Today's vigorous churches from Nigeria's Middle Belt to modern Sudan are a living testimony to Kumm's heritage.

The publishers and Spartalis, an Australian mission historian who heads up the Department of Church History and Missions of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, have done well to revive the memory of this admirable missionary.

—Jan H. Boer

Jan H. Boer, a Canadian, formerly of the Institute of Church and Society, Jos, Nigeria, is now a freelance scholar in Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Doing Filipino Theology.


Leonardo N. Mercado is one of the pioneers of Filipino theology. Since the publication of Elements of Filipino Philosphy in 1973, he has written or edited some eight volumes on Filipino theology, psychology, and spirituality. This edited book, conducted at Maryhill School of Theology in Quezon City in 1995-96, is his latest contribution.

Mercado's method has always been to start with actual Filipino practice, and the first sentence of the book reiterates his conviction that "people are the best inculturators" (preface). This "people" that Mercado and his students investigate here are eleven Filipino shamans who, despite their obvious syncretism and even distortions of Christianity, are considered prime examples of "doing Filipino theology." If these people of strong Filipino identity and deep Christian faith are taken seriously and their thought treated critically yet respectfully, the authors say, themes, attitudes, and methods of expression for a truly inculturated Filipino theology might be discerned and developed.

The book is divided into three parts. In part 1, Mercado contributes two chapters in which he first lays out his own methodological principles for inculturation and then provides an overview of Philippine shamanism. Part 2, the heart of the book, consists of eight case studies of Filipino shamans written by Mercado's students. Mercado then presents a synthesis of part 2 in which he reflects on the implications of the case studies for a truly inculturated Filipino theology.

The case studies are fascinating. They are presented, however, with little critique, and some readers will be uncomfortable with the lack of biblical reflection. But what emerges clearly from case after case is that any Filipino theology needs to deal seriously with the holistic Filipino worldview, with the Filipino need for "sensory encounter with the sacred" (p. 59), and with irrepressible devotions to Mary, the saints, Cristo Nazareno, and Santo Niño. One may not agree that the shamans are Filipino theologians but that they are a vital source there can be no doubt.

—Stephen B. Bevans, S.V.D.

Christianity in Northern Malawi: Donald Fraser's Missionary Methods and Ngoni Culture.


This book provides a scholarly, thoughtful addition to the substantial collection of works dealing with the history of Christianity in Malawi. Based on an Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis researched by the author while he was working as a schoolteacher at Khondowe, the headquarters of the Livingstonia Mission in Malawi, it focuses on the interaction between the Ngoni people of northern Malawi and Scottish missionaries in the period 1878 to 1933. Interesting new
information is provided on the important contribution made by William Koyi, the most successful of the five black South African evangelists brought to Malawi from Lovedale Institution in the Cape Province. But the greatest emphasis is on the role of Donald Fraser, one of the most influential mission strategists of his time, and the central figure in the development of the Ngoni church. As Thompson demonstrates, Fraser was concerned more than most missionaries of his time with the creation of a genuinely African church. Yet, as he clearly shows, this aim was achieved only through the interaction of his ideas with those of his Ngoni parishioners.

Thompson’s strength lies particularly in his analysis of Fraser and his policies. Less successful is his attempt to explore the African context in which the missionary worked—an attempt vitiated by his employment of a disconcertingly static model of Ngoni society strikingly at odds with the image of a fluid, changing community suggested by Leroy Vail and others. There is no hint here that the very concept “the Ngoni church” is open to review.

This is a notably well-researched book, fair-minded in its evaluation of individuals and sensitive to the importance of African agents in the spread of Christianity. If it lacks the intellectual fireworks of some recent studies, it can still be read with profit.

—John McCracken

John McCracken is Head of the History Department at the University of Stirling, Scotland. He previously taught in the universities of Zimbabwe, Dar es Salaam, and Malawi, where he was professor and head of the department from 1980 to 1983. He is the author of Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875–1940 (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977).


Martung Upah: Black and White Australians Seeking Partnership.


Much has been written about the indigenous people of Australia. Only in recent times, however, have works been authored by indigenous people themselves. These two books represent the cutting edge of Aboriginal religious scholarship. Both edited by Dr. Anne Pattel-Gray, founding executive secretary of the Aboriginal and Islander Commission of the National Council of Churches in Australia, they present the reader with a broad spectrum of traditional Aboriginal spirituality; the impact of colonization, missionization, and modernity; and contemporary developments in theology, politics, education, and many other areas.

The first book, Aboriginal Spirituality, is divided into two major sections. Almost all the papers contained in part 1 were first presented in relation to Aboriginal Spirituality: Past, Present, Future—First National Conference on Aboriginal Spirituality and Perceptions of Christianity, which was held in Victor Harbour, South Australia, in August 1990, sponsored by the University of Sydney’s Department of Religious Studies (now the School of Studies in Religion). Its chapters include “Concepts of Land and Spirituality,” by traditional northeast Arnhem Land Landman Galarrwuy Yunupingu; “That Christ Fella,” by renowned activist and author Kevin Gilbert; and “Guidelines for So-Called Western Civilization and Western Fella,” by renowned activist and author Paulson; “Mungulk Dhalatj—a Calm Wisdom,” by husband-and-wife team Djungadjunga and Dhanggal Yunupingu; and “Aboriginal Myths and Customs: Matrix for Gospel Preaching,” by popular Lutheran pastor George Rosendale. Both Gilbert and Harris have now passed on, yet their words live on in these previously unpublished pieces.

The second book, Martung Upah, is a much broader work, encompassing many different fields. It arises out of the Martung Upah Indigenous Conference: A Just and Proper Settlement, a national ecumenical
conference held at the University of Sydney in December 1993 to celebrate the United Nations' International Year for the World's Indigenous People. The gathering brought together indigenous and non-indigenous leaders from the church and from governmental and nongovernmental organizations to dialogue and exchange ideas and to work toward a joint understanding of what the church, as a whole, believes is "a just and proper settlement." It includes chapters on history by Paul Behrendt and Henry Reynolds; on sovereignty by Frank Brennan, S.J.; on land rights by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Michael Dodson and former Australian prime minister Gough Whitlam; on the Australian High Court Native Title ruling by relevant figures Dave Passi (plaintiff) and Gregory M. McIntyre (lawyer); on criminal justice and deaths in custody by Helen Corbett and Chris Cunneen; on racism and economic justice by Sol Bellow and Federal Court Justice Marcus R. Einfeld; on education and theological education by Judy Geary and Andrew Dutney; and on an international, ecumenical perspective by Mac Charles Jones.

Both works are excellent resources for dialogue, direction, and action. They offer the most recent and comprehensive information on Aboriginal religion and theology and related areas. Indeed, both works have been recognized by the World Conference on Religion and Peace, the editor having been presented with the 1996 Philia Award for Literature, for "significant contribution in the course of religious understanding and reconciliation in Australia." These two books are outstanding examples of Australia's indigenous people speaking with their own voice.

—Raul Fernandez-Caliennes

Raul Fernandez-Caliennes is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Sydney.

Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission

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Korean churches, in both positive and negative ways. The beginning of the book contains a list of the forty-three Presbyterian denominations in 1986 and a chart of their affiliations. After working through three major periods of church divisions and attempted union movements (which sometimes spawned still more divisions), the author adds a listing of some twenty-two additional denominational splits among Presbyterians without giving further elaboration. In section 3 Yim gives recommendations for regaining Korean church unity through preaching and the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist.

Along the way, the exhausted reader may ask: Who cares about these seemingly endless splits among Korean Presbyterians? The answer is that it is essential for Christians around the world, as they relate to Korean laity, pastors, and missionaries (who are to be found everywhere!), to know about their background and heritage. It must also not be forgotten that divisiveness among Korean Christians has often led to church growth. Veteran Korea mission scholar Samuel Hugh Moffett has noted that while Western churches sometimes unite and then decline, Korean churches often split and then grow.

As to the book’s format, the McCune-Reischauer system of romanization should have been used systematically for Korean names. Lengthy quotations in German should be given in English translation. The publisher used a small typeface for the text and an even smaller one for the footnotes, making the book hard to read. An index is sorely needed. And the price is too high. Yet this book may be recommended as an excellent source of background information about Korea’s Presbyterians.

—James M. Phillips

James M. Phillips, a contributing editor, served as a Presbyterian missionary in Korea (1949–52) and in Japan (1959–75) and as associate director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center (1983–97).

Dissertation Notices

Balisky, E. Paul.

Brandl, Bernd.
"Die Geschichte der Neukirchener Mission als erste deutsche Glaubensmission."

Chang, Sang Deak.
Ph.D. Pasadena, California: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996.

Farias, Kranti K.
"The Christian Impact in South Kanara: A Socio-economic Study."

Langmead, Ross Oliver.
"The Word Made Flesh: Towards an Incarnational Missiology."

Roembke, Lianne.
"Multicultural Mission Teams: The Adaptation of Their Members to One Another and to Their Host Culture."
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