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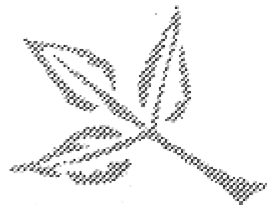
PERSONAL STUDY NOTES

THE GREAT LIVES OF MISSIONARY PIONEERS

Hudson Taylor & Missions to China



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[1] *Christian History Magazine-Issue 52: Hudson Taylor & Missions to China*. 1996. Christianity Today: Carol Stream, IL

Did you Know?

Remarkable or little-known facts about Hudson Taylor and missions to China.

Hudson Taylor popularized—in the face of severe criticism at first—the now commonplace idea that missionaries should live and dress like the people they seek to evangelize.

When Taylor arrived in China in 1854, many Protestant missionaries were content to minister in the coastal cities. Taylor's example of pushing into the vast interior was one reason other missionaries began doing so as well.

Taylor—contrary to the mission conventions of his day—believed that single women were fully capable of managing distant mission outposts without the help of male missionaries.

Taylor's China Inland Mission was founded in 1865 on the premise that it would never solicit funds from donors but simply trust God to supply its needs. Today, 131 years later, though the organization has changed its name (to Overseas Missionary Fellowship [International]), it has not changed this policy.

Taylor battled severe depression all his life, both from the way he drove himself and because of the immensity of the task. Even after thousands of conversions, there were still some 400 million Chinese to reach. At one point late in life, he sank towards black despair, and "the awful temptation," as an unpublished note in the Taylor papers runs, "even to end his own life."

A heretic by the name of Olepen was the first missionary to China in 635. Olepen was a follower of Nestorian Christianity (See "Trickle-Down Evangelism," in this issue).

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Travel to China took immense patience and courage for European and Middle Eastern missionaries. A trip from Rome to London was considered long in its day: about 1,000 miles. From Persia, the base of the Nestorians, to Chang-An, the Tang dynasty capital (now Xi'an), the trip covered 5,000 miles. Taylor's first trip to China, by sea, took half a year.

Franciscan missionary John of Monte Corvino gained many converts by buying young boys from their non-Christian parents, baptizing them, and then training them for ministry. Starting in 1294, he worked for 11 years in China and baptized more than 6,000 persons.

In the early 1800s, evangelism and printing Christian literature were capital offenses in China. It was even forbidden for foreigners to learn Chinese. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China (who arrived in 1807), paid exorbitant fees to study Chinese. His two tutors lived in fear of torture by the Chinese officials. They carried poison so that if in danger, they could end their lives in Morrison's home rather than in a Chinese prison.

Whereas many Protestant missionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries worked with the lower classes, early Catholic missions focused on converting the elite. Jesuit Matteo Ricci, for example, who arrived in Peking in 1601, made inroads with the Chinese literati by demonstrating his fluency in classical and spoken Chinese, fixing watches, and making maps.

Because early Protestant missionaries were fluent in Chinese, they played key roles in international diplomacy. William A. P. Martin, a Presbyterian missionary, was responsible for the clause in the Treaty of Tientsin (Tianjin) (1858) that allowed missionaries to enter the interior of China to propagate the Christian religion. This treaty opened the way for Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission.

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In the 1860s, missionaries began opening schools for Chinese girls. This was a radical break with tradition: education for women was unheard of in China.

The largest massacre ever of Protestant missionaries took place in China in 1900. During the Boxer Rebellion, 188 Protestant adults and children were martyred.

China was the largest Protestant mission field in the world between 1830 and 1949. At its height, before the Chinese civil war of 1925–27, the number of missionaries topped 8,000.

In spite of the fact that missionaries were expelled in the early 1950s and Christians endured severe persecution in the mid-1960s, the number of Christians in China grew slowly to around 5 to 7 million by 1980. Many Christians simply went underground and worshipped in family churches.

The official, government-licensed church in China is called the Three-Self Church (which stands for self-government, self-support, and self-propagation); it repudiates foreign, missionary control of the Chinese church. The Three-Self idea, however, was not the invention of the early anti-foreign communist officials but was first employed by Presbyterian missionary John L. Nevius (1829–1893), who used it to evangelize and then plant indigenous churches in China.

Since the lifting of repression in the mid-1980s, the number of house churches has grown to over 200,000 today, and the number of Christians to nearly 50 million (though the Chinese government puts the figure at about 20 million).

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Surprised by China

From the Editor

Pulling together an issue of *Christian History* is a combination of planning and, I trust, Providence. That each issue in the end resembles a unity is always a pleasant surprise.

We had set our sights on an issue that would examine both Hudson Taylor and modern missions to China. I thought we could cover Taylor in a couple of articles and have plenty of room for other topics. Like other well-known missionaries, such as Timothy Richard. Like the harrowing 1950s, when the communist government persecuted the church.

Not quite. The issue quickly got out of control as we discovered more and more fascinating aspects of Taylor's life and mission. For example, read about the extraordinary enthusiasm of his missionaries (see "Missions Dream Team") and the results of Taylor's policy on female missionaries (see " 'Unbecoming' Ladies of the China Inland Mission," page 28).

We couldn't talk about Taylor, of course, without talking some about the missionaries who came before him. See both "Trickle-Down Evangelism," and "The Gallery."

Then there is the infamous Boxer Rebellion: I had heard of it but had no idea of the gripping, and frankly bloody, details (see "Fury Unleashed").

And we couldn't talk about the astounding development of the indigenous Chinese church. See "Trying to Break Loose," and "Miracles after Missions."

Suffice it to say, the place and the times, especially the last 200 years, make for some of the most fascinating

stories in church history. And you're only getting a smattering. We've hardly done justice to Roman Catholic missions, or to the complex politics that made modern missions both a possibility and a problem, or to the millions of Chinese believers who contributed to the Christian cause, tens of thousands of whom were martyred.

Still, I dare say, there's enough to whet the appetite here.

Spelling challenged. For decades, scholars used the older Wade-Giles romanization system, but today, more and more are using *Pinyin*, the system used by the People's Republic of China. In this issue, we use Wade-Giles and put the *Pinyin* equivalent in parentheses for the first use in each article—e.g., Peking (Beijing).

CH WEB PAGE. Finally, I encourage you to check out the new features of our WWW site: ChristianityToday.com/christianhistory/

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LIVING WORD

Pushing Inward

Whether he was battling despair or floating on euphoric faith, Hudson Taylor drove himself—and the gospel—ever deeper into China.

James Taylor was intrigued by all things Chinese. It fascinated him that once-famous empires, like those in Persia, Greece, and Rome, had risen and fallen, but the Chinese Empire remained—the world's greatest monument to ancient times. In the early months of 1832, he knelt beside his 24-year-old wife, Amelia, in the parlor at the back of his busy chemist shop in Barnsley, Yorkshire, England. "Dear God," he prayed, "if you should give us a son, grant that he may work for you in China."

When their child was born on May 21, 1832, James and Amelia called him James Hudson Taylor—Hudson was his mother's maiden name. Immersed in a Methodist family fascinated with China, the young Hudson sometimes blurted out, "When I am a man, I mean to be a missionary and go to China"—though his parents were not to tell him of their prayer for some years.

Yet his faith and life calling were not always clear to him. By age 17, he was in the spiritual doldrums, experiencing, as one biographer put it, "teenage restlessness and rebellion" against his impatient father. He became the anxious prayer concern of his sister and mother, among others, which led to a story that has become a legend in missions circles.

According to Taylor, in June 1849, when he was 17, his mother locked herself in a room 50 miles from home. She was visiting her sister at the time, and she had felt moved not only to pray that Taylor would become a Christian but to stay in the room until she was sure her prayers had been answered. That same afternoon, Taylor later recalled, he

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picked up a gospel tract about the finished work of Christ and accepted "this Savior and this salvation."

Such "coincidences" were to attend the rest of Taylor's life—a single-minded, even strong-headed life completely dedicated to one thing: bringing the gospel to the interior of China.

Chinese dressing

Within a few months of this "new birth," as he called it, Taylor's call to China was confirmed during a night of intense prayer when Taylor lay stretched "before Him with unspeakable awe and unspeakable joy." He spent the next few years in frantic preparation, medical and language studies, and a deeper immersion into the Bible and prayer.

Finally, on Monday, September 19, 1853, the little three-masted clipper *Dumfries*, weighing less than 500 tons, slipped quietly out of Liverpool harbor with Taylor aboard headed for China. Just 21 years old, he said an emotional good-bye to his mother.

For Taylor life had become an adventure of faith, of learning to trust God in impossible circumstances. The first leg of this journey only reinforced the pattern.

Off the Welsh coast, the ship ran into a severe storm that lasted for hours. The captain described the sea as the "wildest he had ever seen." Taylor alternated between dread and trust in God's care. When the captain, a devout Methodist himself, grew convinced that they weren't going to survive a half-hour longer, he turned to Taylor and asked, "What of your call to labor for the Lord in China?"

Taylor said that he wouldn't wish to be in any other position and that he still expected to reach China. But if not, "The Master would say it was well that I was found seeking to obey his command."

In fact they did survive the storm, and in March 1854, the ship arrived in Shanghai, one of the five "treaty ports."

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The 1842 Treaty of Nanking (Nanjing), ending the first Opium War between England and China, had opened these trading links with the West, giving foreigners the right to live only in these cities. Taylor quickly settled in and began his work as an agent of the Chinese Evangelization Society, a fledgling independent missionary organization started under the inspiration of pioneer missionary Karl Gützlaff. A local teacher taught Taylor the Mandarin dialect, variations of which were used all over China.

That same year he made a radical decision for which he received both derision and praise: he decided to dress in Chinese clothes and grow a pigtail.

His decision was rooted in his deep respect for Chinese culture and his view of the missionary's role. When incredulous fellow Protestant missionaries, who all wore western dress, criticized him for this unbecoming behavior, he pointed out that those who knew the Chinese best came to appreciate their customs. Many Chinese objected to Christianity, he argued, because it seemed to be a foreign religion that tended to mold converts in the ways of Western nations. Taylor, like the Roman Catholic missionaries who for decades had adopted Chinese dress, was ahead of his time.

First steps inland

The early years presented surprises to the young Taylor. Many Europeans lived in luxury in Shanghai, and Taylor thought some missionaries were "worldly." Yet they were in great demand with government officials as interpreters. The general atmosphere of hearty sociability came as something of a shock to the child of a strict Methodist.

Furthermore, money quickly became a sore point. Whereas Church Missionary Society single men received the equivalent of $700 a year, not including rent, he was given a salary of only $80 a year, which was also supposed to cover rent.

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Still, Taylor pressed on to get the gospel to the Chinese in the interior who had never heard it. China was composed of 18 provinces, of which only seven had missionaries, and even then, they tended to work in only a few coastal cities. Taylor carped about missionaries who confined themselves to the relative comfort of urban life. He worried about the countless unreached souls of inland China and immediately set about trying to reach them.

In December 1854, within nine months of his arrival, Taylor and Joseph Edkins hoisted sail, and with bags of Chinese Bibles and tracts over their shoulders, visited hamlets along the banks of the Huangpu River. At Songjiang, the extraordinary appearance of two foreigners drew crowds, who at one point made sport of the two men, mocking them and threateningly backing them down a street that ended at the river. Taylor and Edkins barely escaped (hopping onto a passing boat) and continued their 200-mile, round-trip journey. Taylor soon made other trips to the interior, eventually using the city of Ningpo (Ningbo), home to a number of mission organizations, as his base.

The Chinese Evangelization Society proved to be well-intentioned but increasingly incompetent; it failed to pay its missionaries in a timely manner and often sent missionaries unprepared for their work. After much prayer and wrestling, Taylor resigned from its service in 1857. He didn't know exactly how his work would be financed, though he decided he would not ask for donations—nor even let friends and relatives know of his needs. He would simply trust God to supply him.

Taylor also had for some time been seeking a wife. He had been rejected by two women in England, one before and one after he left for China, leaving him deeply lonely. But in 1857, he met and immediately fell in love with 20-year-old Maria Dyer, the much-sought-after daughter of prestigious (though deceased) missionary parents. Despite snobbish and fierce opposition from some in the Ningpo missionary establishment (Taylor's Chinese dress and lack

of sophistication put them off), the young couple married in January 1858. It was an uncommonly happy marriage partly because they shared a deep passion to evangelize China even at great personal sacrifice.

Taylor continued to pour himself into his work, both treating the sick and preaching, and by March 1860, Taylor's church on Bridge Street, Ningpo, had grown to 21 members. But by the summer of 1861, he had contracted some disease (probably hepatitis) that completely sapped his strength. After seven years of ministry in China, he was forced to return to England for an extended period of recovery.

Seeking the impossible

Though he was supposed to rest in England, he continued his furious work pace, translating the Bible, recruiting missionaries, and obtaining a qualification in midwifery.

Taylor was troubled in England by the lack of interest in China. In 1865, as he paced the floor, he dictated to Maria *China: Its Spiritual Need and Claims.*

"Can all the Christians of England," he wrote, "sit still with folded arms while these multitudes [in China] are perishing—perishing for lack of knowledge—for lack of that knowledge which England possesses so richly, which has made England what England is and made us what we are? What does the Master teach us? Is it not that if one sheep out of a hundred be lost, we are to leave the ninety and nine and seek that one? But here the proportions are almost reversed, and we stay at home with the one sheep, and take no heed to the ninety and nine perishing ones!"

Taylor became convinced that a special organization was needed for the evangelization of inland China—to go beyond the five treaty ports to which nearly all missionary work had been confined. He was determined not to cut the

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financial ground from under the feet of the older missionary societies, but what form should such an organization take?

He began making plans for recruiting 24 missionaries: two for each of eleven inland provinces of China that were without a missionary, and two for Mongolia. It was a visionary plan that would have left experienced missionaries breathless: at the time, a host of seasoned missionary organizations had, all told, only some 90 Protestant missionaries in China. Taylor single-handedly wanted to increase that by over 25 percent.

This would be an enormous financial commitment, so Taylor opened a bank account under the name of the China Inland Mission (CIM). Soon he had money and five missionary volunteers to send to China—even before he had formally committed himself to head a new missions society.

He hesitated to take that step because he found himself wracked with doubt. For months in 1865, a myriad of concerns raced through his mind; he rarely slept for two hours at a time, sometimes not at all. On the one hand, he agonized over the millions of Chinese who were dying without the hope of the gospel; on the other hand, he wrestled with what he called his "unbelief": he feared taking responsibility for sending young men and women into the China interior, where they would be subject to rejection, illness, and persecution—all of which he knew about first hand.

Taylor thought he might be on the verge of a nervous breakdown: he wrote in his diary later, "For two or three months, intense conflict.... Thought I should lose my mind." A friend, seeing that Taylor desperately needed a break, invited him to Brighton on the south coast of England for the weekend of June 24–26.

On Sunday morning, he slipped out after worship: "Unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security while

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millions were perishing for lack of knowledge," he later recalled, "I wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony."

Some time during that walk, he found relief. "There the Lord conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to God for this service. I told him that all responsibility as to the issues and consequences must rest with him; that as his servant it was mine to obey and to follow him—his to direct, to care for, and to guide me and those who might labor with me...."

With that, he felt his halting steps had been confirmed. Immediately he wrote in the margin of his Bible, "Prayed for 24 willing, skillful laborers, Brighton, June 25/65."

Taylor was determined that the CIM would have six distinctive features. First, its missionaries would be drawn from any denomination-provided they could sign a simple doctrinal declaration.

Second, they would have no guaranteed salary but trust in the Lord to supply their needs. Income would be shared. No debts would be incurred.

Third, no appeals for funds would be made.

Fourth, the work abroad would be directed not by home committees but by himself and eventually other leaders on the spot in China.

Fifth, the organization would press to the interior of China ("where Christ had not been named").

Sixth, the missionaries would wear Chinese clothes and worship in Chinese-styled buildings.

Challenges to the vision

Within a year, a two-year-old clipper, the *Lammermuir*, sailed out of the East India dock in London bound for China. Aboard, with Hudson and Maria Taylor and their four

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children, were 16 young missionaries, six men and ten women, who looked forward to joining the four men and one woman already working under Taylor's direction as cim missionaries in China.

In the inland towns of Hangchow (Hangzhou) and Hsiaoshan (Xiao-shan), the CIM began its work, a combination of medical care and evangelistic preaching amidst the hustle and bustle of Chinese life. CIM missionary John McCarthy, from Dublin, described the scene that greeted him when he arrived in Hangzhou in 1867. It was the Chinese New Year holiday, and a crowd hovered outside the CIM clinic. Sedan chairs lined up dropping off patients and waiting to be hired for the return journey. Food and drink vendors had moved in and were doing a good trade. In the midst of the seeming confusion, Taylor stood on a table preaching to the people. As McCarthy and his family were shown into the CIM house, Taylor waved his hand and acknowledged them with a brief word of welcome and then carried on preaching.

Taylor was seeing more than 200 patients daily. His operations to remove cataracts seemed like miracles to the Chinese. One convert, Mr. Tsiu, who had been converted under Taylor's preaching in Ningpo, also preached to those who waited for medical treatment.

The visionary and indefatigable Taylor made enormous demands on himself, and as one would expect, equally high demands on CIM missionaries, and some of them balked.

One of his missionaries, Lewis Nicol, visited Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries and grumbled about things he thought were wrong at New Lane (CIM headquarters). He soon abandoned his Chinese dress, claiming that English clothes gave him more protection and respect. "I will not be bound neck and heel to any man," he told Taylor. After nearly two years of unpleasantness, Taylor dismissed Nicol from the mission, mainly for spreading lies about the CIM. Three CIM missionaries resigned in sympathy with Nicol.

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Around the same time, two cms missionaries complained that it was dangerous for so many unmarried men and women to live together at New Lane and that Taylor was too familiar with the young ladies (he and Maria kissed some of them on the forehead before they went off to bed). The ladies themselves denied any inappropriate behavior on Taylor's part, but still the complaint reached London and for a while led to a fall in support for the mission. For appearance' sake, Taylor ended the kissing, but he refused to stop directly supervising single women.

Then Timothy Richard, an able young Welsh Baptist who arrived in China in 1870, began to win over some members of the CIM, particularly those who lived in the Shansi (Shanxi) area. Richard emphasized establishing the Kingdom of God on earth and protecting the poor and needy from tyranny. He also argued that God worked through other religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism; if their similarities to Christianity could be pointed out, he believed, then followers could be won over to Christ, and thus, the whole life of China would eventually undergo a thorough Christian transformation. A handful of CIM missionaries were influenced by Richard's more liberal views, and they left the mission.

In spite of controversy, the number of CIM missionaries grew. By 1876, 18 new missionaries set sail for China, bringing the total to 52, making CIM a fifth of the total missionary force in China. CIM missionaries moved increasingly into the interior provinces: to Honan (Henan), Shensi (Shaanxi), Kansu (Gansu), Hunan, Kweichow (Guizhou), and at least one brave soul reached Tibet.

Taylor made another bold move, for which other mission societies criticized him: he began sending unmarried women into the interior, a testimony to the courage of these women.

Taylor's boldness seemed to know no bounds. In 1881 he had the temerity to ask for another 70 missionaries by the close of 1884-and he got 76. Late in 1886, Taylor was

praying for another hundred missionaries by 1887. A veteran missionary told Taylor, "I am delighted to hear that you are praying for large reinforcements. You will not get a hundred, of course, within the year, but you will get many more than if you did not ask for them."

"Thank you for your interest," Taylor replied. "We have the joy of knowing our prayers answered now. And I feel sure that, if spared, you will share the joy of welcoming the last of the hundred to China!" By early November 1887, Taylor announced that 102 candidates had been accepted for service and that enough money had been given to pay for their passages to China!

Many of the early missionaries of the CIM had little formal education, but a number were university graduates. Some arrived idealistic and enthusiastic but mentally and spiritually unprepared for the rigor of interior mission work. Some were arrogant and insensitive to Chinese culture. Some found that once on the scene, they didn't care for Taylor's leadership or CIM's high ideals. Some wilted under the pressure of sustaining a living and assimilating a new culture while trying to spread the gospel. Indeed, the toll on human health was great, but the mission remained true to its purpose and eventually became the largest missionary organization in China, and even more important to Taylor, with a Christian presence in all 18 provinces of China.

Setbacks and heartaches

Whether in China or back in England, Taylor faced a relentless round of speaking engagements, personal visits, correspondence, and administrative tasks. Still he greeted each sunrise with prayer, and he often worked late into the night, catching sleep day or night when his body demanded it.

Unforeseen events of local history often slowed the work. Members of the mission, including Taylor's family, were injured in an anti-foreigner riot that attacked the CIM house in Yangchow (Yangzhou) in 1868. When the news

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reached London, the House of Lords began debating whether allowing missionaries into the China interior was good for British trade.

Rivalry between the London and China councils of the CIM, which Taylor had established to run the mission, caused him enormous strain for a time and led to the resignation of nearly 30 missionaries. The issue was this: Taylor wanted the China Council, as closest to the work, to have executive powers; the London Council disagreed.

William Sharp of the London Council thought Taylor was dictatorial and ought to have his powers severely clipped. He told Taylor, "When it doesn't accord with your views, you try to force your council to fall in with your views. I could wish you were led to let the mission get on by itself while you concentrated on expounding the Scriptures and stirring up the churches."

Taylor could be demanding and seemingly autocratic, but in Taylor's mind, he was merely anxious to protect the integrity of his mission. Writing to London about new recruits, he said, "I only desire the help of such persons as are fully prepared to work in the interior [of China], in the native costume, and living, as far as possible, in the native style. I do not contemplate assisting, in the future, any who may cease to labor in this way. China is open to all, but my time and strength are too short, and the work too great to allow of my attempting to work with any who do not agree with me in the main on my plans of action."

As a man who had literally given all to Christ in China, he found it difficult to expect any less commitment from others: "China is not to be won for Christ by quiet, ease-loving men and women.... The stamp of men and women we need is such as will put Jesus, China, souls, first and foremost in everything and at every time-even life itself must be secondary."

In spite of his self-confessed periods of irritation and impatience, he could show forbearance and flexibility. It

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was only after two years of defiance that he reluctantly dismissed Lewis Nicol, and at times he even waived some of the mission's rules (like the prohibition against single female missionaries marrying) to respond to local circumstances.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of his work was that he managed to continue it in spite of constant poor health and regular bouts with depression. On a speaking tour of the United States in 1900, Taylor nearly had a complete physical and mental breakdown. As his wife, Maria, had noted decades earlier, "I am more intimately acquainted than anyone else can be with his trials, his temptations, his conflicts, his failures and failings, and his *conquests.*"

The personal cost was often high indeed: Maria died at age 33, and four of Maria's eight children died before they reached the age of 10. (Taylor eventually married Jennie Faulding, another CIM missionary.) Even more devastating to the mission: while Taylor was convalescing in Switzerland in the summer of 1900, the Boxer Rebellion spread through China, murdering 58 CIM missionaries and 21 of their children.

The world catches on

By the late 1880s, Taylor's vision had begun to ignite imaginations all across the world. In 1888 Taylor visited Canada, and wherever he preached, young people offered themselves as missionaries to China. Taylor had been opposed to the idea of establishing a branch of the CIM in North America but grew convinced that it was God's will. By the time his visit was finished, over 40 men and women applied to join the CIM.

By the end of his life, the very mission organizations that had scoffed at his methods had begun adopting many of them.

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Just after Taylor died, a young Chinese evangelist looked upon his body and summed up Taylor's most important legacy: "Dear and venerable pastor, we too are your little children. You opened for us the road to heaven. We do not want to bring you back, but we will follow you."

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Fashion Statement

Missionaries who dressed like the Chinese suffered a few snags.

In the gossipy colonial enclaves of Shanghai and Hong Kong, "going native" caused outrage and hilarity. When China Inland Mission workers first adopted Chinese dress, it seemed to other expatriates as if they were putting on the clothes of the enemy, "aping Chinese dress and manners." Western suits, the diplomats said, offered protection and prestige, the power of the flag.

It seems so simple to adopt "the costume of the country" as a courtesy to one's hosts. But this "simple" policy of Hudson Taylor had some surprising ramifications.

"Full Chinese dress" was one of Taylor's hardest and fastest rules, a symbol of his intention to create an indigenous Chinese church shorn of foreign trappings. "The foreign dress and carriage of missionaries, … the foreign appearance of chapels, and indeed the foreign air imparted to everything connected with their work has seriously hindered the rapid dissemination of the truth among the Chinese."

In a hierarchical society like China, however, where every button, every feather, every ripple of silk, denoted one's status, putting on Chinese clothes was no simple matter. How to choose the right costume? The missionaries did not want to be confused with Buddhist priests in saffron robes, nor with upper-class Confucian scholars.

The CIM chose to dress like poor school teachers, a humble costume that befitted their goal of converting China from the bottom up. Such dress, they claimed, offered a sort of spiritual passport into the hearts and minds of the people.

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Indeed, this costume allowed cim pioneers to make some of the most prodigious, and dangerous, explorations of inland China. In 1875, for example, two men and a Chinese evangelist walked across China in safety a few months after a British official named Margary—dressed in uniform whites, with a guard of soldiers—had been murdered.

Divisive issue

Nonetheless Chinese dress was a deeply divisive issue. The male missionaries hated the queue, the pigtail that Chinese men wore. This custom had been imposed by the "barbarian" Qing (or Manchu) dynasty, who had conquered China in the 1600s, as a sign of Chinese subservience. Cutting off one's queue was a sign of sedition, punishable by death.

Growing a queue involved shaving the front of one's head every day, and until their hair grew in, the missionaries wore skullcaps with a false queue hanging down the back.

For the missionary women, Chinese dress was a real hardship. Although the first Mrs. Hudson Taylor (Maria Dyer) grew up in China, she refused to wear Chinese clothes until she became matron of the CIM and had to set an example for younger women. "The nearer we come to the Chinese in outward appearance," she told them, "the more severely will any breach of propriety according to their standards be criticized. Henceforth I must never be guilty, for example, of taking my husband's arm out of doors!"

The single women encountered particular prejudice. Depending on what they wore, they risked being confused with courtesans or sing-song girls or, worse, with sorceresses and the disreputable "singing people" who sang at weddings and funerals.

By 1907, China was changing fast, as the Qing government tottered toward revolution. It was the day of the dollar watch and the bicycle; Western things were all the

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rage. Even Confucian scholars were wearing bowler hats. The missionaries in the large cities found that "a foreigner in native dress is becoming an object of ridicule … and a hindrance to the work." The problem was the queue.

The CIM debated the problem for a whole year, canvassing the members throughout China. If they cut off their pigtails, it would be a "radical departure from a distinctive feature" of the mission. It would also, "in the eyes of the official class, tend to identify them with the anti-dynastic movement." Finally, D. E. Hoste, the head of the CIM, decided to make Chinese dress optional depending on local circumstances.

In 1911, when the new Republic of China outlawed the queue, we can imagine the relief of the men of the old cim as they joined hundreds of millions of ordinary Chinese in cutting off the hated sign of slavery. The streets, we are told, were filled with piles of braided pigtails hacked off at the base.

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LIVING WORD

Missions Dream Team

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The story of seven extraordinary missionaries and their brief encounter with an extraordinary Chinese pastor.

Seven young aristocrats—two of them famous athletes, and another two, military officers—forsaking the comforts of England to work with a relatively unknown missionary society in the back country of China—this was a story the press could not pass up, and these young men immediately became religious celebrities.

Known as the Cambridge Seven, they were one of the grand gestures of nineteenth-century missions. Their story, published as *The Evangelization of the World*, was distributed free to every YMCA and YWCA throughout the British Empire and United States.

Though their time together was brief, they helped catapult the CIM from obscurity to "almost embarrassing prominence," and inspired hundreds of recruits for the CIM and other mission societies. In 1885, when the Seven arrived in China, the CIM had 163 missionaries; they doubled by 1890 and reached 800 by 1900, one-third of the entire Protestant missionary force.

Their story—especially their brief encounter with the infamous Pastor Hsi of Shansi (Shanxi)—has another dimension: it gives a glimpse into the unbounded enthusiasm of early Protestant missions and late-1800s Chinese Christianity.

The Seven

Though they are remembered together, each of the Seven made commitments of faith and to the CIM separately, and each had unique ministries in China.

Stanley Peregrine Smith was the orator, scintillating, introspective, bookish, a real "percussion cap!" (as D. E. Hoste called him, for "the gun was already loaded" and Smith was the charge that set off the explosion). Son of a London surgeon, he was captain of the Cambridge rowing team and thus one of the most famous men in England. He was born again in one of D. L. Moody's revivals and helped found the Cambridge Christian Union, forerunner of many student Christian organizations. Smith had a soapbox in Hyde Park where he preached "not the milk and water of religion but the cream of the gospel."

The second was Charlie Studd—"a Roman candle." He was even more famous as captain of the Cambridge cricket team. Inarticulate but charismatic, Studd could impress hostile audiences. Many students came to heckle, expecting one, as a professor put it, "wanting in manliness, unfit for the river or the cricket field, and only good for psalm-singing and pulling a long face. But the big, muscular hands and long arms of the ex-captain of the Cambridge Eight cricket team, stretched out in entreaty, while he eloquently told the old story of Redeeming Love, capsized their theory."

Shortly after he arrived in China, Studd came into an inheritance of £25,000 (several million dollars today), which he invested in "the Bank of Heaven." He gave £5,000 to D. L. Moody to build Moody Bible Institute, and £5,000 to General William Booth to send 50 Salvation Army missionaries to India.

William Wharton Cassels, "Will the Silent," was an ordained Anglican clergyman, curate of a poor parish in south London. He was, according to his biographer, inordinately reserved with "something more than introspection" and was "a fervent lover of order.... To him obedience to marching orders was fundamental. And so were unity, order, and authority."

Dixon E. Hoste also loved order. His father, Major-General Hoste, was an "uncompromising Christian" who ran his family with "military precision." Young Dick joined

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the Royal Artillery, where he was converted during the Moody revival and gave himself to Christ "as completely as he had given himself to soldiering," according to Hoste's biographer.

The Polhill-Turners came next. Cecil was a lieutenant in the Royal Dragoons in Ireland, and brother Arthur was studying to become a priest.

The final member was Montague Beauchamp, a "rich young man" from an old evangelical family who became a generous benefactor of the CIM.

No gift of Pentecost

After a tour of the British Isles, the "sporting hearties" (as the newspapers dubbed them) sailed with much fanfare. Each spoke at a highly publicized evangelistic rally the day before their departure, in February 1885. They arrived in Shanghai six weeks later. Shanghai was a brawling, racially divided city, a cancer on the coast of China. The Seven stayed long enough to be outfitted in Chinese clothes before they were sent "inland" to Shansi province, far off in the northwest.

In Shanghai the Seven divided. Hudson Taylor took the Polhill-Turners, Beauchamp, and Studd to go on a round-about tour up the Yangtze (Yangzi) River, and then overland into Shansi from the south. They were to speak before English-speaking consuls, merchants, and customs officials. On the river, it was as if they were "on a continuous picnic." They refused to study and prayed to receive the Chinese language supernaturally. They had been so divinely blessed in England that they expected to receive the gift of language miraculously as a mark of God's approval. Taylor warned them that this was one of the "devices of Satan to keep the Chinese ignorant of the gospel," and when Chinese didn't divinely descend upon them, they "knuckled down to study."

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The other three, Smith, Cassels and Hoste, went up the coast and held "spiritual life" meetings in Chefoo (now Yantai) and Peking (Beijing). Smith rhapsodized about the road ahead: "Oh, when He steps on the scene, how the hills melt before Him!"

Escorted by a "genial" agent of the American Bible Society, they left Peking to walk to Shansi, 30 days inland. Eventually they reached Pingyang [now Linfen], where they joined the other four. By July Cassels was able to write, "We are a very happy party, enjoying our work, enjoying our walks on the city walls."

In Pingyang the Seven's story entered another story, remarkable in its own right.

Remarkable "native" work

Pingyang was the most ancient city in China, the cradle of Chinese civilization, where humans learned agriculture at the dawn of time. It was a cosmopolitan city, sitting on the Big Road from Peking to Sian (Xi'an). For years rumors had been circulating of a remarkable "work of God" there entirely under "native leadership."

A few years earlier, veteran English Methodist David Hill had held a contest with cash prizes for "first-class literary essays upon Christian themes," such as "The Source of True Doctrine" and "Regulation of the Heart." The author of the winning essay was reluctant to claim his prize. No wonder. He was a broken-down scholar, a "native doctor," a "fixer" at the magistrate's *yamen* (court), an opium sot given to hallucinations, far from the "first-class" scholar Hill had hoped for.

Hsi Liao-chih (Xi Liaochi) had started smoking opium for some illness. Opium is the best pain-killer known to humankind, but like many of his day, Hsi was quickly addicted. He lay on his bed for a year and a half hallucinating that he had descended into hell.

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After the contest, Hsi started working with Hill translating tracts. As a result, he was converted and, through prayer and "the usual medicines," was cured of his drug addiction. He had more visions, of ascending into heaven, where the Holy Spirit sent him back to earth to save suffering humanity. On his baptism, Hsi took a new name: Hsi Sheng-mo, "the Overcomer of Demons."

When Hill left the Shansi district, Hsi took charge of the few Christians. He returned to his village, where, according to his biographer, he learned "all he could from occasional intercourse with the missionaries, and [was] taught of God, often in quaint surprising ways."

These included Hsi's reliance on visions and dreams, and his gifts of healing and exorcism. For the missionaries, exorcism, the casting out of devils, was something to be spoken of in whispers. To Chinese Christians, though, the story of Jesus' curing "the demoniac among the tombs" (Mark 5:1–20) seemed very contemporary.

Hsi did not have to look far for his first evil spirit. His wife was a sullen and suspicious peasant woman, and when he was cured of opium, she thought he had been "bewitched" by the foreign medicine. Whenever he prayed, she would fall into "paroxysms of ungovernable rage." Hsi called for the entire household to fast, laid his hands on her head, and commanded the spirit to depart "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth." She was permanently cured and joined her husband's ministry as his full partner, responsible for the growing household of Christians and evangelizing the women.

Opium ministry

About two years after his conversion, Hsi found a new ministry: curing opium addicts. After the recent famine, many peasants turned to opium as a new cash crop, and soon the dusty fields were red and white with poppies. Shansi was one of the largest producers of domestic opium in China, and by the 1880s, it was reported in some villages

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that "eleven out of every ten people smoked opium!" First you consume opium, the saying went, and then opium consumes you. In the last stages of addiction, many sots sold everything to satisfy their craving: their wives and children, furniture, roof tiles, agricultural tools.

The first opium refuges experimented with a combination of Chinese folk medicine and "stimulants and tonics" to alleviate the "cold-turkey" symptoms of withdrawal. The stimulants included quinine, belladonna, sulfate of strychnine-and coffee. By 1880 morphine had been introduced and was nothing short of a miracle drug: it could be administered in decreasing doses (gradual reduction, not cold turkey). But morphine pills slipped out of the missionaries' hands into the black market as a cheap substitute for opium. In late-1800s China, morphine was known as "Jesus opium."

Hsi, however, had a dream in which the Holy Spirit revealed the recipe for "life-establishing pills." This was not just hocus-pocus, for Hsi came from a long line of Chinese doctors who handed down secret recipes. The pills he concocted were cheap and could be made from native drugs. Within a few years, Hsi opened 14 opium refuges where addicts would come for three-to six-week stays. As he travelled tirelessly through the countryside, he rode a cart emblazoned with a scarlet banner that read "the Holy Religion of Jesus."

As the missionaries encroached on his "turf," they became divided about his ministry. Some announced that the Kingdom of God was about to be established in south Shansi. Others felt that although Hsi was "full of life and fire," he brought in "superstition and fanaticism."

The first foreigners to enter Hsi's hermetic Christian sect were the Cambridge Seven, who came by Taylor's orders to learn Chinese and work with Hsi. It was, according to A.J. Broomhall's massive history of Hudson Taylor, "an admirable combination: Hsi, *plus* young, devoted, foreign workers."

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Reacting to Hsi

What did these naive, young aristocrats know about the subtle snares of the narcotic mind? Nothing, except compassion and what Pastor Hsi taught them. Since Hsi was established and they were illiterate, they made an extraordinary decision—virtually unprecedented in missionary history—to work under Hsi as his "helpers." They would not assert "the divine right of missionaries" (as Smith called it) to "correct" Hsi. Their excessive zeal worried Hudson Taylor, who felt that they might drag the mission down with them.

Each of the Seven reacted differently to working with Hsi, revealing something about each. William Cassels, the ordained clergyman who loved order, was "hopelessly at sea." Appalled by the lack of church rules, he stayed a year before he took Arthur Polhill-Turner and Montague Beauchamp to Szechwan (Sichuan), where they established a proper Church of England diocese. Cassels was eventually consecrated Bishop of East Szechwan in Westminster Abbey, with a gothic cathedral at Baoning (now Langzhang).

Stanley Smith and Charlie Studd were soon casting out devils themselves. But they offended Hsi by supporting one of his rivals and had to be sent away within a few months. They both married and took their brides to an isolated mountain town called Luan for "a honeymoon with Jesus."

Abandoning the unobtrusive style of CIM evangelism, they started parading through the villages with banners and gongs like a Salvation Army band. "We thought the Lord would bless our efforts," Smith wrote. "I am not aware that the Lord did bless them particularly, but the Lord blessed us in our souls very much."

It was easy for Smith to get lost out there in the ancient mountains, always walking (except on the Sabbath), with his Greek New Testament. He eventually came to a quasi-Buddhist idea he called the "larger hope," that all humanity will be saved, "some in this life, and the others, as a result

of adequate punishment and suffering, in the life to come." He went too far, and in 1904, after 20 years in the CIM, Smith was forced to resign. He remained in the Luan area as an independent until his death in 1926.

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The Studds remained in Luan until 1894 and did not return after furlough. After a term in South India in a nondenominational church, at the age of 50, he founded the Heart of Africa Mission and went to the Belgian Congo, where he died in 1931.

Cecil Polhill-Turner was also a wanderer who stayed in Shansi with Hsi for a year. His goal was to be the first missionary in Tibet. He spent a few years in Sinkiang (Xinjiang), then in northern India, and in 1909 founded the Tibetan Border Mission, under the English Pentecostals.

Only Dixon Hoste maintained a long-term relationship with Hsi. In a rowing image, he said that Hsi was the "stroke," the pace-setter in rowing, while he was the coxswain. "It was a cox that was wanted, because Pastor Hsi was perfectly well able to stroke the boat.... What you wanted was a little man to sort of steer." Hoste proved to be a wise and patient advisor, Hsi's best friend who "sort of steered" until Hsi's death in 1896. "We just grew together," he remembered, with no distinction of Chinese and foreign.

Typical exceptions

The pilgrimage of the Cambridge Seven was exceptional only because it was larger than life. Their swings from enthusiasm to despair, from visions and supernatural gifts to "delusions and snares," was typical of missionaries of their generation. As John W. Stevenson, the Deputy China Director said, "we all had visions at that time."

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Trickle-Down Evangelism

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The earliest China missionaries started with the elite.

In A.D. 635, the church in Western Europe was just settling into the feudal Middle Ages, and in Eastern Europe, Christianity was flourishing in the midst of the great Byzantine era. Further east, the Nestorian Church, based in Syria and Persia, was looking to China. That year it sent missionaries to walk via the silk trade route to China's northwest to spread the faith. The first missionaries to China, then, were considered heretical.

Since the 400s, Nestorians had been theological castoffs because they believed Jesus' nature consisted of two persons (rather than one person with two natures). After being condemned at the Council of Chalcedon (451), Nestorians moved east. They retained their missionary zeal and sent representatives to evangelize Arabia and India.

In China, the Nestorian bishop, Alopen, was welcomed to Chang-An (now Xi'an) by the reigning emperor, T'ang T'ai Tsung. In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the Chinese capital, the emperor granted the newcomers space in the imperial library to translate. He himself studied the faith and gave orders for its propagation. Within a few decades, the Nestorian faith gained thousands of converts in several major cities, though its greatest growth may have been among foreigners trading in China.

Two centuries later, though, Emperor Wu Tsung began a severe persecution, and soon the Nestorian church lost its foothold in China proper (though not on the northern frontier).

Khubilai Khan's curiosity

In the late 1200s, Khubilai Khan, Mongol ruler of China, met representatives of Roman Catholicism: Marco Polo and

his uncles. Khubilai Khan was so intrigued, he sent the uncles back to Rome with an invitation for the pope to send 100 "teachers of science and religion" who would try to prove "that the faith professed by Christians is superior to and founded on more evident truth than any other." Twenty years passed before John of Monte Corvino, a Franciscan, was sent. He was warmly received by Khubilai Khan's successor, and within a short time, he baptized 6,000 Chinese, established churches in several cities, and translated the New Testament and Psalms into the language of the court.

Unfortunately, high-ranking Nestorians, who had meanwhile re-established their church in China, hindered the work of John by accusing him of false beliefs and several crimes. Only by dint of perseverance was he able to carry on. By the time the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty was replaced by the Ming dynasty in 1368, there may have been as many as 100,000 Roman Catholic Christians.

But with the coming of the Ming dynasty, all Christians in China were subject to a fresh wave of political repression that lasted over a century. Again the church was decimated, so that by the late 1500s, there were, as far as we know, no Christian churches left.

Scholarly evangelism

The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), with Matteo Ricci as its chief representative, entered China in 1583 from its base in the Portuguese colony of Macao. The strategy of Ricci and his colleagues was to identify with the Chinese elite, who would in turn, they felt, influence the rest of China.

The Jesuits dressed like Confucian scholars—the top of the social hierarchy. They avoided any criticism of Confucius, the patron saint of the scholars, and observed all appropriate amenities when visiting the literati.

They prepared maps, practiced astronomy, constructed and repaired clocks they gave to the emperor, and they

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wrote treatises that explained Christianity in terms of a Confucian world view. The missionaries needed to be deliberately ostentatious about their learning to convince the Chinese of their expertise in European learning, so they would emboss their European books with gold covers.

The Jesuits viewed much of their work as pre-evangelistic, and they were not forthright, at least in their initial contacts, in presenting the full truth of the gospel. Nonetheless, by the beginning of the 18th century, the Christian church in China numbered 200,000 members, including scholars, urban dwellers, and rural peasants.

Soon after the Jesuits entered China, though, members of the Franciscan and Dominican orders followed, and they had some sharp criticisms of the Jesuit approach.

Most Jesuits, for example, viewed the homage Chinese paid to their ancestors as civil deference, not religious worship. Jesuits were willing to describe Confucius in semi-sacred terms, such as "holy," and they used ancient terms for God that could be vague. For example one word for God was also the word for heaven.

Franciscans and Dominicans, and even some Jesuits, thought all this amounted to a compromise of the faith. The conservatives insisted on less ambiguous, more exalted names for God ("Lord of Heaven")—even though they would sound unusual to the Chinese. Most controversial of all, they rejected Chinese ancestor rites as idolatry.

The differences among the missionaries, between them and the Vatican, and between the emperors and the Vatican over these issues resulted in the "rites controversy." This lasted from the early 1600s until 1724, when the emperor, alarmed at the invective and activity of the anti-Jesuit factions, proscribed the Christian faith in China.

The pope sided with the conservatives and demanded obedience from the Jesuits. Their repeated attempts to

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sidestep his ruling became one reason the Jesuit order worldwide was disbanded in 1773.

For the rest of the 1700s and early 1800s, Catholics in China went through alternating periods of persecution and toleration. Catholic missionaries courageously flaunted the law forbidding evangelism, and many were imprisoned, expelled, or martyred.

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Hudson Taylor & Missions to China

The Christian History Timeline

Hudson Taylor

1807 Englishman Robert Morrison, first Protestant missionary to China at Canton

1830 Elijah Coleman Bridgman, first American missionary to China, arrives at Canton

1832 May 21: Hudson Taylor born

1840's Karl Gützlaff works in China

1843–1860 American and British Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Episcopalians send missionaries to China treaty ports

1850 Taylor declares China hopes

1853 September: Taylor departs for China

1854 March: Taylor lands at Shanghai; December: first inland journey

1857 Taylor proposes to Maria Dyer; resigns from Chinese Evangelization Society; Ningpo mission started

1858 Taylor and Maria marry

1861 An exhausted Taylor and his family depart for rest in England

1862 Taylor qualifies as midwife

1865 Taylor resolves to lead China Inland Mission (cim); writes China: Its Spiritual Need and Claims

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1866 Lammermuir sails with Taylor, his family, and 16 cim missionaries

1868 Lewis Nicol dismissed from CIM; anti-foreign riot in Yangchow injures several missionaries

1869 House of Lords debates value of missions to China

1870 Maria Taylor dies

1871 Taylor marries Jennie Faulding

1875 Taylor appeals for 18 pioneers to go to nine interior provinces; April: recovers from paralysis; July: China's Millions Vol. 1, No. 1, published

1876–1880 18 CIM missionaries penetrate nine interior provinces

1885 "Cambridge Seven" depart for China

1886 Taylor appeals for 100 new missionaries

1887 CIM committees in London and China clash over control of the mission; 100 new missionaries accepted

1900 Boxer Rebellion—58 CIM missionaries and 21 children among those murdered; Taylor in Switzerland recuperating from illness

1903 D. E. Hoste appointed general director of cim upon Taylor's retirement

1904 Jennie Faulding dies

1905 Hudson Taylor dies; abolition of old examination system opens way for mission schools

1910 World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh

1926–27 Nearly all 8,000 Protestant missionaries flee during chaos of Northern Expedition

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1934 CIM missionaries John and Betty Stam executed

1941–1946 Most missionaries interred or evacuated but return to China after WWII

1951–52 Wholesale evacuation of missionaries; last of CIM leaves July 20, 1953

Other China Events

1839–42 First Opium War ends with Treaty of Nanking: five treaty ports open to foreigners; Hong Kong ceded to British

1851–1864 Taiping Rebellion

1858–1860 Tientsin and Peking treaties end Opium Wars: more rights granted to foreigners, including right to travel anywhere inland

1877–78 Worst of the great Shantung-Shansi famine

1883–85 War with France over Annam (Vietnam)

1894–95 Sino-Japanese War: China loses Taiwan to Japan and Korea to independence

1897–98 Various provinces ceded to Britain, France, Germany, and Russia

1898 Failure of radical reform

1900 Boxer Rebellion

1911–1912 Revolution; Republic of China established; Kuomintang Party (KMT) inaugurated

1919 May 4th Student Movement

1921 Chinese Communist Party (CCP) founded

1926–1927 Chiang Kai-shek launches Northern Expedition to unite China under KMT, and purges CCP from its ranks

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1934 Long March: CCP forces under Mao Tse-tung retreat from KMT

1937 Open war with Japan begins; KMT and CCP fight Japan together

1946 KMT and CCP resume civil war

1949 October: People's Democratic Republic of China declared

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"Unbecoming" Ladies

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Women played a controversial but decisive new role in China missions.

"Hudson Taylor makes extraordinarily ample use of the services of unmarried ladies," wrote a German missionary in 1898, adding that he thought the idea "unbecoming and repellent."

He was not alone—many missionary societies severely criticized the idea of sending single females to the mission field. But by 1898, the tidal wave of evangelical missions was sweeping away strict gender roles. The Women's Missionary Movement, begun in America in the early 1860s, had already given birth to 40 "female agencies"—mission societies that sponsored only single women. Barred from ordained ministry in their homeland, hundreds of women eagerly volunteered to serve abroad.

A large measure of this change can be attributed to the policy of Hudson Taylor. Women were vital to the China Inland Mission from its inception. In 1878, he took a much criticized step in permitting single female missionaries to work in teams in the interior of China. By 1882, less than 20 years after its founding, the CIM already listed 56 wives and 95 single women engaged in ministry.

Women labored sacrificially and with distinction in virtually every capacity of Taylor's mission. The following stories represent the thousands of women who volunteered for missionary service in China.

Lone wolf

Most of the single women missionaries in the CIM worked with a female partner or on teams that included married couples. But some struck out independently.

Annie Royle Taylor (no relation to Hudson), who arrived in China in 1884, was described as "the lone wolf" and an "individualist, so bad at harmonious relationships with colleagues that she would have to be returned to Britain or stretched to her own limits." She chose the latter option and set her sights on bringing the gospel to the forbidden city of Lhasa in the heart of Tibet.

She faced many obstacles and setbacks, and Taylor wrote in 1890 of "dear Annie Taylor [having] a very hard time of it." But she did not give up easily. By 1892 she was ready to make the thousand-mile journey into Tibet with her Tibetan convert, Pontso, a Chinese man and his Tibetan wife, and two other men to help with her 16 saddle and pack horses. She adopted native Tibetan dress and shaved her head in the fashion of a Tibetan nun.

Taylor's party faced one obstacle after another. Bandits stole their tent and clothing and killed most of their animals. One of the workmen died, another turned back. The Chinese man demanded money, and when that was refused, he brought accusations against her to Tibetan authorities that led to her arrest. Yet, according to A. J. Broomhall, "she kept a daily dairy, never complained in it, and gamely made a Christmas pudding with the currants and black sugar, flour and suet she had brought with her."

Taylor met face to face with the government officials who arrested her, but the confrontation ended with an escort, horses, and provisions for her to continue her journey. After more setbacks, Taylor finally established her own agency, the Tibetan Pioneer Mission, and soon 14 candidates from London arrived to help her in 1894.

In less than a year, however, the infant mission was in shambles. The new missionaries repudiated her leadership and called on the CIM for assistance. Taylor would not be deterred. She wrote back to London asking for female recruits because, "the Tibetans respect women and do not even in time of war attack them."

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Taylor continued for more than 20 years, working mostly alone—except for her faithful convert Pontso.

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Desert ministry

"The Trio," as they became known, began their work in China around the turn of the century. After more than 20 years of doing routine missionary work in China, Mildred Cable and Eva and Francesca French were convinced God was calling them to China's great Northwest—to the Gobi Desert and beyond. Many of their colleagues were shocked. In the words of Cable, "Some wrote, saying in more or less parliamentary language, that there were no fools like old fools."

The Trio would not be deterred. They traveled for months by ox cart before arriving at the City of the Prodigals—the last city inside the Great Wall, named for its reputation for attracting criminals. Here they set up a base where they spent winters. The remaining eight months of the year they evangelized, traveling the vast trade routes of the Gobi Desert. They stopped at every settlement, timing their visits with festivals and fairs, where they preached the gospel and passed out tracts.

More than once, they were assailed by bandits and caught up in local wars, but their most persistent enemy was the weather. Once they were on the Gobi Desert during Easter week when the warm spring breezes suddenly turned into a blinding blizzard. They struggled to set up their tent and start a dung fire amidst the blowing snow and sand. That accomplished, they boiled water for the hot-water bottle, but as it was handed to Eva, it burst open, scalding her shivering body. The other two tended her burns, but the incident was ever a reminder of the cost of frontier evangelism.

Broken hearts

Using single women in ministry, however, was not without its complications. Early on Hudson Taylor was

publicly criticized for his close relationship with two single missionaries, Jennie Faulding and Emily Blatchley, after which he kept his distance—to Blatchley's regret:

"I am so lonely, so utterly alone," she wrote in her journal. "But why should I cling so? Oh, Christ, take hold of my hands.... I find such joy in being with the Taylors, but I must not let it intoxicate me."

Not long after she penned these lines, Blatchley volunteered to accompany the Taylor children who were returning to England for schooling. Soon after they left, Maria, Taylor's first wife, died in child birth. The next year, Taylor set sail for England to visit his children—and, Blatchley hoped, to marry her. But it was not to be. Jennie accompanied Taylor on the voyage, and when they arrived in England, they were engaged.

Blatchley was devastated. "I feel sure from what I know of my own nature that I should, if I had had the chance, have been Mrs.," she painfully wrote in her journal. "And so it is in love and mercy my God cut off my flowing stream at which He perhaps saw I should drink too deeply. Such a sweet, sweet stream, such a painful weaning! Therefore such a great blessing must await me for Jesus to bear to see me have so much pain." She died of tuberculosis not long after the wedding.

Marital clashes

Hudson Taylor did not make a distinction between married and single women. He expected married women to focus primarily on ministry, even as their single sisters did. To a male recruit he wrote, "Unless you intend your wife to be a true missionary, not merely a wife, homemaker, and friend, do not join us."

Maria set the pace for other married women in the mission. Despite caring for five children, she was active in the ministry—reaching out to Chinese women and serving as first lady of the China Inland Mission. Souls were dying

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without the gospel, and no one in the mission was exempt from active duty.

Jennie was also active, balancing ministry with the care of Taylor's growing children (from his marriage with Maria) and more children of their own. Once when Taylor was ill while they were in England, she returned to China alone to carry out needed refugee work, leaving the children behind in his care.

Yet besides his own wives' examples, there were others, like that of Isobel Kuhn. Kuhn's appointment as a missionary had initially been delayed because she was described by one person as "proud, disobedient, and likely to be a troublemaker." But after two years on probationary status, she sailed for China in 1928 as a single woman. As soon as her language study was completed, she married fellow missionary John Kuhn whom she had known as a student at Moody Bible Institute.

They were both strong willed and endured many difficulties and personality clashes early in their marriage. More than once, Isobel stormed out of their house in anger. One of Kuhn's many contributions to missionary literature was her openness about the marital struggles she and her husband John faced when living alone in a remote area.

For 20 years, Isobel and John worked among the Lisu, a minority people in the far western province of Yunnan. When they were forced to leave the area due to violent guerrilla warfare in 1950, they relocated in Thailand. After barely two years of ministry in Thailand, Isobel was diagnosed with breast cancer. She wrote three more books before she died in 1957, leaving behind a husband, a daughter and a son—and eight books and many articles that depicted missionary work and life in an honest and refreshing light.

No more quivering lips

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Mrs. Arthur Smith, another China missionary, censured any work of single women that involved them in "lawless prancing all over the mission lot." Her target was Lottie Moon, whose work in China would become legendary (see *The Gallery*, page 34). The proper role of a female missionary, Smith argued, was to attend "with a quivering lip" her own children.

Not so, said Taylor and the "unbecoming" women of the China Inland Mission, both single and married. And missions in China never looked the same after they said it.

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Fury Unleashed

The Boxer Rebellion revealed the courage of missionaries—and the resentment they sparked.

On the last day of 1899, Chinese reactionaries abducted Sidney Brooks, a 24-year-old missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. They tortured him for hours and then murdered him. British authorities acted swiftly; two culprits were executed and an indemnity was demanded. But if the British thought this would quell the rising Chinese resentment, they were wrong.

Within six months, thousands of angry Chinese came screaming out of the villages of North China, twirling swords and chanting, "Burn, burn, burn! Kill, kill, kill!" They tore down chapels, cathedrals, orphanages, hospitals, and schools, and murdered missionaries and Chinese Christians. The uprising is called the Boxer Rebellion, and it dealt the modern Protestant missionary movement its most severe blow ever.

Shanghai mentality

The causes of the uprising were many and complex, but the arrogance of foreigners is as good a summation as any.

Since the 1840s, foreigners had forced China's hand in treaty after treaty, gaining control of large parts of the country. The English, Americans, French, Dutch, Spanish, German, and, the largest group, Japanese, had divided up the country as if they were playing the board game *Risk*. Foreigners sometimes owned whole cities.

Worse, they swaggered through China knowing they could not be arrested for any crime. If a drunken sailor killed a prostitute or his captain set fire to a trading junk, they were

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protected by the extraterritoriality that is granted high-ranking diplomats.

Too many missionaries (though hardly Hudson Taylor) adopted a "Shanghai mentality," which regarded the world beyond their enclave as a "heathen colossus." In some places, missionaries were more intimate with British authorities, more interested in playing soccer at the consulate with sailors.

Many foreigners despised the Chinese. One Canadian reported that a "gentle-spirited Norwegian" told him "that after being out here for a few years, he got into such a dulled spiritual condition that he would, on occasions, knock down or beat a Chinese."

Missionary pride and Chinese anger shot up in 1899 when the Chinese government conferred official status on missionaries, making a bishop or superintendent the equal of a provincial governor, and ordinary foreigners the equivalent of district magistrates. Wrote one missionary, "What other government has bestowed such privileges upon ministers of the gospel?"

Many missionaries who did venture forth into the "heathen colossus" did so insensitively. Many publicly ridiculed sacred Chinese beliefs—ancestor worship and Confucian precepts. Some charged into temples while Chinese were worshiping and denounced them for bowing to idols.

One American writer spoke for most foreigners and too many missionaries when he wrote in early 1900, "The day is not distant when China will be delivered from its effete civilization and will come under the power of those motives which have their source in the vital truths of the Christian revelation."

Harmonious fists

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By the late 1890s, more and more Chinese decided they had had enough. The Society of Harmonious Fists, or Boxers, led the way.

Their origin is unknown, but by the late 1890s, they had a mystical aura about them. They wore red ribbons around their wrists, yellow sashes, and yellow talismans. They believed they were invulnerable to foreign weapons. Their shamans conducted demonstrations in which a musket (loaded with a blank cartridge) was fired at a follower, “proving” the point. They murmured incantations that induced a trance-like state, and they had secret signals and passwords.

Boxer propagandists stirred up hatred of foreigners. Foreigners were “first-class devils,” Chinese converts to Christianity, “second-class devils,” and those who worked for or collaborated with foreigners, “third-class devils.” They claimed that Chinese children were mutilated in Christian orphanages and that Chinese women were lured into Christian churches to be raped.

They circulated thousands of handbills and proclamations. One, referring to the current drought that was causing great suffering, said, “[Because] the Catholic and Protestant religions are insolent to the gods, extinguishing sanctity, rendering no obedience to Buddha, and enraging Heaven and Earth, the rain clouds no longer visit us. But 8 million Spirit Soldiers will descend from Heaven and sweep the Empire clean of all foreigners!”

Sweeping violence

In January 1900, events accelerated. At Peking (Beijing), reactionary forces were gaining influence with the emperor and, the power behind the throne, the empress dowager, Tz’u Hsi (Ci Xi). Authorities issued an edict that encouraged the Boxers. Throughout late winter and spring, the Boxers increased their attacks. Villages were looted, and the first reports of Chinese Christian killings were heard.

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The fury broke loose in June. Buildings of the Presbyterian mission in Shantung (Shandong) were destroyed by a mob. Two English missionaries were killed a few miles northeast of Paotingfu. The plant of the American Board Mission just outside of Peking was burned and many Christians killed.

In mid-June, violence swept into Peking, and international troops were summoned from the coast to protect foreigners. The troops were rebuffed on their way but managed to capture some Chinese forts. The empress dowager regarded the capture as a declaration of war. On June 24, an imperial decree ordered the killing of foreigners throughout China.

In Peking the foreign community hunkered down in a small section of the city for a protracted siege. For missionaries out in the interior, there was nowhere to go. The uprising was not primarily anti-Christian, but missionaries and their converts were the chief sufferers.

At Paotingfu, on June 30 and July 1, 15 missionaries with a number of Chinese Christians were killed.

On July 12, two men, five women, and five children, all foreigners, with five Chinese Christians, were killed at Tat'ung.

At T'aiku six missionaries and eight Chinese were executed on July 31 and their heads taken to the governor.

In the province of Shansi, the governor, Yu Hsien, stage-managed the bloodiest massacre. On the morning of July 9, in Taiyuan, the capital, all Protestant missionaries and their families, Catholic priests and nuns, and several converts were rounded up. They were handcuffed and marched before the governor, who stood surrounded by an armed bodyguard.

A convert who survived the ordeal described what happened. "The first to be led forth was Mr. Farthing. His

wife clung to him, but he gently put her aside and going in front of the soldiers knelt down without saying a word, and his head was struck off by one blow of the executioner's axe. He was quickly followed by … Doctors Lovitt and Wilson, each of whom was beheaded by one blow of the executioner. Then Yu Hsien grew impatient and told his bodyguard, all of whom carried heavy swords with long handles, to help kill the others.…

"When the men were finished, the women were taken. Mrs. Farthing had hold of the hands of her children who clung to her, but soldiers parted them and with one blow beheaded their mother.… Mrs. Lovitt was wearing her spectacles and holding the hand of her little boy even when she was killed. She spoke to the people saying, 'We all came to China to bring you the good news of the salvation of Jesus Christ, we have done you no harm, only good, why do you treat us so?' A soldier took off her spectacles before beheading her, which needed two blows."

Thirty-three Protestants and 12 Catholics were killed in like manner, together with a number of Chinese Christians. The heads of some were placed in cages on the city gates.

As news of such massacres spread, missionary families and loyal converts gathered their belongings in bundles, and by foot, mule cart, or donkey tried to escape. Many made for remote rural areas where they lived for days or weeks a nerve-racked, threadbare existence of hunted fugitives. Some were spared or evaded discovery; some were caught and hacked to death.

On August 14, international troops relieved Peking. Peking was looted and punitive expeditions were sent into the surrounding country, which led to more atrocities, this time by the victors. According to one British captain, "Casual exploitation by arrogant detachments of foreign soldiers moving about a prostrate countryside" led to "robbery, assassinations, and nameless outrages … numbers of innocent and peaceful non-combatants were slaughtered … whole districts were ruthlessly and needlessly laid waste."

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Some missionaries exploited the situation. Though some prevented looting, others looted freely. One even wrote an article, "The Ethics of Looting." Many mission societies demanded reparations for damages and lives lost. (Hudson Taylor was one missionary who refused indemnities even when offered.)

Rising indignation

Tertullian's comment, "The blood of Christians is seed" proved accurate in China. The courage of the martyrs, both Chinese and missionary, inspired three-fold church growth in the next decade.

Unfortunately, Chinese indignation would continue to build for another fifty years—until the communists successfully expelled all "foreign devils."

Mark Galli is editor of Christian History.

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The Gallery—Gritty Pioneers

Six missionaries whose tenacity changed China

Robert Morrison

(1782–1834)

"Failed" first Protestant missionary

As he sailed into the port of Canton in 1807, 25-year-old Robert Morrison was filled with a driving passion to see the Chinese people come to know Christ. By the time he died in China 27 years later, however, he had baptized only ten Chinese. But if Morrison died discouraged, his pioneering work, which included a six-volume Chinese dictionary and a translation of the Bible, opened the door for other missionaries and thus for the millions of conversions he had only dreamed of.

Morrison was raised in a stern Scotch-Presbyterian home where reading missionary stories in a church magazine whetted his interest in foreign missions. His mother, however, made him promise not to go abroad while she was alive. Only after his mother died, during Morrison's early twenties, did he take up ministerial training in London. After two years of study, he was accepted into the London Missionary Society. While waiting to find a male colleague to go with him to China, he studied language for one year with a Chinese scholar living in England. When no partner was forthcoming, Morrison left for China alone. He was forced to go via the United States, since the East India Company, which owned most of the English ships going to China, refused him passage.

Morrison's lifelong relationship with the East India Company was one of mutual need and mutual distrust. The company guarded its commercial interests in China by strictly refusing to let Westerners such as Morrison

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evangelize. They feared missionaries would offend their Chinese trade partners. But after Morrison's arrival in China, company officials learned of his language skills and hired him as a translator. They gave Morrison a salary but also attempted to restrict his missions activities. In 1815, for example, the company threatened to deport him when it learned that Morrison had completed, in secret, a translation of the New Testament.

In 1809 Morrison married Mary Morton. After six years and two children, a seriously ill Mary returned to England with their children. It was six years before they returned to Canton to see their father and husband. When Mary died, Morrison sent the children back to England, and three years later traveled there himself for his first and only furlough. When he returned to Canton, he brought with him the children and a new wife, Elizabeth, with whom he had four more children and a happy marriage.

In 1834, two months after pioneer missionary William Carey's death in India, Morrison died. When as a young man Morrison had first sailed to China, he was asked, "Do you really expect to make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese empire?" In reply, Morrison spoke more prophetically than he knew: "No, sir, but I expect God will."

Karl F.A. Gützlaff

(1803–1851)

Disgraced idealist

One historian described him as, variously, "a saint, a crank, a visionary, a true pioneer, and a deluded fanatic." Karl Gützlaff provides a poignant example of how Christ is preached even through those with many shortcomings.

In the waning years of Robert Morrison's life, a younger, equally zealous Gützlaff was skirting the coast of China in his boat, delivering Chinese tracts translated by Morrison. The free-lance missionary had recently lost his wife and

daughter after several years of mission work in Indonesia and Thailand.

By the late 1840s, the reports from Gützlaff's work in China were glowing: the 300 Chinese Gützlaff had trained to evangelize China in one generation had distributed thousands of New Testaments and counted no fewer than 2,871 baptized converts. Supporters back home were enthusiastic—until the hoax was discovered in 1850.

Gützlaff was in Europe promoting his mission work at the time, but evidence suggests he already knew he had been deceived by his Chinese workers. They had concocted the conversion numbers and had secretly sold back to the printer New Testaments Gützlaff had paid to have printed in the first place. The printer would sell them again to an unsuspecting Gützlaff.

More serious still: for fear of losing financial support, Gützlaff chose to gloss over the growing discrepancies. When this all came to light, he was disgraced. A disheartened Gützlaff returned to China to try and pick up the pieces. One year later he died.

If history judges Gützlaff as a "deluded fanatic," it must add that he was a fool and a fanatic *for Christ.* In Indonesia and in Thailand (where he and his wife translated the complete Bible into Siamese) and in China, he was foolish enough to dress, eat, and live like those he sought to evangelize—a radical step in his day. He deftly blended evangelism with social concern, as when he helped to negotiate the end to the First Opium War, in 1842.

And though the mission organization he founded, Chinese Union, died with him, out of its soil grew the Chinese Evangelization Society, which sent Hudson Taylor to China in 1853, only two years after Gützlaff's death. Taylor himself remembered and honored Gützlaff by calling him "the grandfather of the China Inland Mission."

Jonathan Goforth

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(1859–1936)

Greatest evangelist to China

Jonathan Goforth lay bleeding after having been hacked in the back, neck, and head with a sword. He thought surely he would be the next of the dozens of China missionaries to be killed during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. But miraculously he survived, and with his wife, Rosalind, fled south to safety—to continue a missionary life that would earn him one historian's accolade as "China's most outstanding evangelist."

His strategy (which Rosalind at first objected to for the sake of their children's health), was to spend one month evangelizing in one region or city, leaving behind a native evangelist to nurture the new believers. Once or twice a year, they returned to these sites to encourage the fledgling congregations.

Jonathan was known for his ceaseless energy. Often he preached eight hours a day, on several occasions to crowds of 25,000 people. The Goforths' itinerant work took them for a time to Manchuria and Korea, but their most lasting impact was in China, where more than 13,000 Chinese became Christians between 1908 and 1913.

In 1918 he led a Pentecostal-type revival attended by a number of Chinese soldiers, including the Christian General Feng Yu-hsiang. After two weeks of preaching, a Communion service was held for nearly 5,000 officers and soldiers.

The Goforths endured their share of controversy and heartache. During the 1920s, when the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy reached a crescendo, Goforth battled younger Presbyterian missionaries whom he said preached a watered-down gospel. They also buried five of their eleven children on Chinese soil.

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The Goforths finally retired to Canada in 1934 after 74-year-old Jonathan had already lost his eyesight. Less than two years later, Jonathan died.

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Lottie Moon

(1840–1912)

Patron saint of Southern Baptist Missions.

The best man among our missionaries." That's how the Southern Baptist Missions' journal hailed Lottie Moon, 72, when she died on Christmas Eve, 1912, after a lifetime of work in China. Moon had bucked the chauvinist limitations placed on missionary women. She also succeeded in rooting the gospel among the Chinese in ways unprecedented in Baptist missions.

Reared in an aristocratic Virginian family during the Civil War, this highly cultured and educated Southern belle made an unlikely missionary candidate: she viewed Christianity with skepticism during her college years. But her family influenced her even more. She had an uncle, James Barclay, who was the first Christian Church missionary to Jerusalem, a devout mother, who prayed for her salvation, and a younger sister, who preceded Moon to China (by several years) and would eventually invite Moon to join her. Moon experienced a crisis conversion during her graduate studies, then taught school for several years while she prepared to follow her sister to China. She refused a marriage proposal from C. H. Toy, a man with missionary plans of his own and a future Harvard professor: though she loved him, she didn't think his acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution made them a good match.

In China she served as a school teacher but soon felt this traditional woman's role limited her evangelistic gifts. "Can we wonder at the mortal weariness and disgust," she wrote in the Baptist missions periodical, "the sense of wasted powers and the conviction that her life is a failure that comes over a woman when, instead of the ever broadening

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activities she had planned, she finds herself tied down to the petty work of teaching a few girls. She added, "What women want who come to China is free opportunity to do the largest possible work.... What women have a right to demand is perfect equality."

Differing philosophically with her male field director in China, Moon, now a seasoned missionary and 44 years old, moved to P'ing-tu, where she attempted to begin a church. Initially the work was difficult and discouraging, but soon Moon reported she had found "something I had never seen before in China. Such eagerness to learn! Such spiritual desires!" And, she added, "Surely there can be no deeper joy than that of saving souls."

One such soul was Li Shou Ting, who became pastor of the church and, in the two decades that followed, baptized more than a thousand converts.

This joy, however, turned to despair during a severe famine in Henchow. She spent her last years pleading for funds and food for the starving thousands. With little help forthcoming from the United States, she emptied her own bank account, but still there was so much need. She lapsed into depression and quit eating. Her health declined, and finally she died.

Nonetheless, her legacy lives on. Eighty five years after her death, the Southern Baptists annually raise millions of mission dollars through the "Lottie Moon Christmas Offering."

John and Betty Stam

(1906/07–1934)

Martyrs who inspired a generation of missionaries.

As John and Betty Stam were led to certain execution by their communist captors, someone asked, "Where are you going?"

After saying he didn't know where the guards were going, John added, "But we're going to heaven."

John and Betty Stam met at Moody Bible Institute, where both felt God calling them to missions in China. A year after Betty returned to China, where her parents were veteran missionaries, John followed but was stationed in a different region. A year later, on October 25, 1933, the two married, and in September 1934, they became the proud parents of Helen Priscilla.

Three months later, when 2,000 communists mounted a surprise attack on Tsingteh (Ching-te), where the Stams lived, John, Betty and the baby were taken into custody. For several days, they were watched closely, but John was allowed to send letters to CIM headquarters. In one letter, he relayed their captors' demand for a $20,000 ransom and then closed with, "The Lord bless you and guide you, and as for us, may God be glorified whether by life or by death."

They were aware of the strong anti-Western, anti-Christian sentiments of the Red Army, but they were nevertheless shocked when they overheard the soldiers discussing how to dispose of their baby. On the morning of December 8, as the solders prepared to kill Helen Priscilla, a farmer who had heard about their situation, stepped forward and pleaded for the baby's life. The farmer was told it would be his life for hers, and he agreed. He was killed on the spot.

The next morning, as Betty was bathing Helen, they were suddenly forced to leave the house—without the baby. Stripped to their undergarments, the two were paraded down the street, and a crowd gathered as they were sentenced to death. A Chinese doctor, a Christian, made a last-minute plea for their lives; without hesitation the communists condemned him to death. In turn, John begged for mercy for the doctor, to no avail. Then John and Betty were ordered to their knees, and in quick succession, both were beheaded.

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Christians around the world learned of the young missionaries' deaths as well as of a daring rescue by Chinese Christians of baby Helen—which included a hundred-mile trek with Helen hidden in a rice basket to deliver her to her grand-parents.

Despite serving only three years, John and Betty Stam inspired a generation through their courageous martyrdom. Hundreds volunteered for missionary service following the publication of the Stams' biography.

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Trying to Break Loose

It took some doing for Chinese Protestants to get free of missionary control.

At a large, nationwide missionary conference in Shanghai in 1907, a respected senior missionary, veteran of decades in China, said, "The self-government of the Chinese Church is not something which we [foreign missionaries] shall grudgingly concede under necessity but something we shall eagerly anticipate and promote."

Chinese Christians must have had their doubts. The conference took place 100 years after the arrival of the first Protestant missionary in China, Robert Morrison. Yet of the 1,100 delegates, only six or seven were Chinese.

All during the great missions century, from the 1840s to the 1940s, missionaries claimed their purpose was to help create a Chinese church, run by Chinese Christians. Eventually an indigenous Chinese church emerged, but first it had to overcome political and social obstacles—and foreign missionaries themselves.

"Christian" rebels

There were only a few dozen Protestant missionaries in the 1840s and 1850s, and these were limited to the five port cities. Chinese congregations were small and weak, and self-government was out of the question. But during these years, the first example of indigenous Protestant Christianity, wholly led by Chinese leadership, emerged in south and central China. It is called the Taiping Rebellion, a violent and destructive mass movement that sought to overthrow the Manchu dynasty.

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The Taiping leader was Hung Hsiu-ch'an, who had been exposed to Christian doctrines through Chinese-language tracts. Hung also underwent a startling vision in which he was transported to heaven. He said God the Father spoke to him, declared him to be the younger brother of Jesus, and commissioned him to purify China of false religion—in Hung's words, to "seize the killing power in Heaven and earth."

Accordingly, Hung unleashed a bloodbath. Foreign missionaries declared Hung deluded and his movement a caricature of true Christianity. The Chinese government, which almost perished, and the officials and social elites of central China, where over 20 million died and whole provinces were laid waste from 1850 to 1864, viewed the Taipings as a product of Christianity, pure and simple.

Anonymous Chinese partners

The decades from 1860 to the early 1900s were the heyday of the foreign missionaries. Protestant missionaries increased in number from fewer than 100 in 1860 to several thousand soon after 1900, spread over the entire empire (thanks to new political privileges granted by treaties in 1842 and 1860). This was the age of institution building in China missions: schools, from primary through college; hospitals and clinics; translation and publishing. It was a remarkable achievement by a remarkably capable and self-confident generation of missionaries.

Yet just below the surface of this "missionary" achievement can be seen the real secret of its success—Chinese Christian partners.

Chinese Protestants increased from a paltry few hundred in 1860 to over a quarter million in 1905. Though mission records often omit the names of the Chinese, Chinese Christians played key, though subordinate, roles—in churches, as assistants, preachers, and translators; in rural mission stations, as resident staff where foreign missionaries seldom visited; and in education, medicine,

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and publishing, where they did most of the day-to-day work.

Compared with earlier generations of Chinese Christians, they were better educated (thanks to mission schools) and more prosperous. Many entered business and the professions as well as the pastorate. They had a greater say in their churches. They wanted to hire and pay their own Chinese pastors and to manage their own programs.

In Shantung (Shandong) province, for example, Liu Shoushan (1863–1935) came out of abject poverty as son of an opium addict to become a real estate tycoon in the port city of Tsingtao (Qingdao). He was educated in American Presbyterian mission schools, and as his business prospered, he repaid the mission, with interest, every cent spent on his upbringing and education. In later years, he gave large sums to several churches and also funded Christian hospitals, individual Chinese preachers, and Chinese ymca workers. He was also one of the founding elders of the first Shantung church to declare independence from foreign mission control and take charge of its own affairs, in 1912.

Everything looked positive for the whole Christian enterprise after 1900 as schools, hospitals, relief activities, churches, missionaries, and Chinese Christians were on the rise. Several Chinese Christian leaders began to play visible nationwide roles. Ding Limei, a young pastor from Shantung province, became a powerful evangelist and revival speaker.

Reverend Cheng Jingyi, son of a London Missionary Society Chinese preacher, pastored a church in Peking (Beijing) in the early 1900s. He was, at age 29, one of only three Chinese delegates to the important 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference. He electrified the assembly by pushing for rapid indigenization; he also wanted to eliminate denominational divisions among Protestants: "Speaking frankly … denominationalism has never interested the Chinese mind."

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Later Cheng and other Chinese leaders helped organize the National Christian Conference of 1922, which had a majority of Chinese delegates. In addition, the National Christian Council, an ecumenical standing committee that emerged following the conference, had a majority of Chinese members.

Breaking away

This "Sino-Foreign Protestant Establishment" looked like an equal partnership between foreign missions and Chinese Christians. It wasn't. The missionaries still held the key positions—and the purse strings. Thus some Chinese Christian congregations able to support themselves opted for full independence. This trend accelerated after 1912 because the new national constitution (adopted by the Republic of China after the overthrow of the old Manchu dynasty) contained a religious freedom clause. In and around several major cities, including Peking, Tientsin (Tianjin), and Shanghai, federations of newly independent churches came into being, dropping their previous missionary and denominational labels.

New Chinese Protestant movements also emerged, like the True Jesus Church and the Jesus Family, both with Pentecostal characteristics. The "Little Flock" (also called "the Local Church" or "Assembly Hall") of Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng) contained eclectic Brethren and Holiness features. All three of these movements are still strong forces in Chinese Christianity today. And Pentecostalism has been characteristic of many of the Chinese indigenous Protestant movements since the 1920s, including much of the "house church" movement in China in recent years.

In the whirlwind of war

Beginning with the patriotic May 4th Movement of 1919, everything began to change. Until then Christianity was seen as a positive force in China. After 1919 the entire foreign presence in China, including foreign missions, was seen as a scourge and targeted for dismemberment. Radical non-

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Christian groups denounced missions as "cultural imperialism."

The late 1920s saw political upheaval, the flight of foreigners to the coast and abroad (including over 90 percent of foreign missionaries), the closing of many mission schools and student strikes at others. Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party won power and reimposed order, and he himself was baptized a Methodist in 1930. But the old sense of missionary confidence was never regained. One-fourth of Protestant foreign missionaries never returned to their posts, and home support for missions nosedived with the onset of the Great Depression.

When full-scale war between China and Japan began in 1937, a whirlwind engulfed all Chinese churches and foreign missions. Many missionaries left China between 1937 and 1941. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the remaining Western missionaries were interned, reducing the missions presence to a few hundred who retreated to West China with the Nationalists.

Chinese Christians were thrown into turmoil but also took up more and more responsibility for managing their own affairs. The foreigners who did not return after the 1920s flight had left their responsibilities in the hands of Chinese colleagues. Most of the foreign YMCA secretaries were let go. But under the able and astute leadership of David Yui (Rizhang), longtime general secretary, the "Y" actually increased its membership in the 1930s.

The wholly indigenous Christian movements grew rapidly in the late 1920s and 1930s. Leaders of the True Jesus Church blasted foreign pastors as "big sinners" and "big deceivers." Watchman Nee and other Little Flock spokesmen decried the sins of divisive denominationalism, which they laid at the feet of traditional foreign missions. By the time of the Communist revolution of 1949, these independent groups constituted at least a quarter of Protestant Christians in China.

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In addition, a group of dynamic Chinese evangelists rose to prominence in the 1930s—including Wang Mingdao, John Sung, and Marcus Cheng, among others. The conservative revivalism of these men left its mark upon Chinese Protestantism.

The end of missions

China plunged into civil war in 1946, from which the Communist Party emerged victorious in 1949 to set up a new state, the People's Republic. It put all Christian bodies, indigenous as well as missionary, under controls and restrictions. Then in the anti-American and anti-foreign atmosphere of the Korean War, remaining missionaries were deported beginning in early 1951.

Not all Chinese Christians regretted the departure of the missionaries. Many Christian leaders thought it was high time for the Chinese church to control its own destiny and hoped to do so under the new government. Today they continue to hope and struggle for autonomy under the watchful control of this government. But this chapter of missions is closed for good.

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LIVING WORD

Was It Worth It?

Western Protestants poured money and people into China for a hundred years. Did it make a significant difference?

This graphic gives a visual impression of the accompanying numbers. The numbers are gleaned from various sources and, in many cases, are simply educated guesses by missiologists. Estimates of the number of Christians today vary widely among experts. We've used the figures of Tony Lambert of OMF (international), which seem to occupy a middle ground. —The Editors

Protestant Missionaries
1807: 1
1840: 20
1858: 81
1865: 189
1874: 436
1893: 1,324
1906: 3,833
1918: 6,395
1926: 8,325
1928: 4,375
1930: 6,346
1951: 0

Population of China
1812: 362 million
1851: 380 million
1949: 450 million
1980: 900 million
1990: 1.1 billion
1996: 1.2 billion

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Baptized Protestants
1800: 0
1834: 10
1853: 350
1869: 5,753
1876: 13,035
1898: 80,000
1911: 207,747
1934: 500,000
1980: 2 million
1996: 33 million
(government estimate: 19 million)

Protestants per Chinese
1850: 1 in 1 million
1900: 1 in 2,000
1926: 1 in 1,000
1952: 1 in 1,000
1996: 1 in 36

Roman Catholics
1800: 250,000 (compared to 0 Protestants)
1900: (about) 1 million
1950: 3 million—or five times the number of Protestants
1996: 18 million—or about half the number of Protestants
(government estimate: 6 million)

Total Christians (Protestants & Catholics) in China's population today
4.3 percent or 1 in 23.

Source of Statistics: Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christian Missions in China (1929); Tony Lambert, OMF (INTERNATIONAL); statistics of the People's Republic of China.

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The Miracles after Missions

The missionaries are forgotten, but the prospects for Chinese Christianity have never looked better.

The word miracle *has been so overused (from the "Miracle Mets" to* Miracle Whip) *that it's hard to know how to describe real miracles—like the ones taking place in China today. To help us understand some of the astounding developments in modern China,* Christian History *spoke with Kim-Kwong Chan, co-author with Alan Hunter of* Protestantism in Contemporary China *(Cambridge, 1994).*

One prominent missiologist calls this volume "the best book on the current scene." No wonder: Chan, as a free-lance consultant, has traveled extensively in the interior of China and visited dozens of churches. In his current project, he is seeking to find effective mission models where mission activities are officially prohibited.

How is Hudson Taylor remembered in China today?

He is not well remembered. Average people of China have little knowledge of the history of Christian missions.

When the government speaks about the missions movement, it emphasizes its faults. Many Protestant missionaries felt superior to the Chinese; some were even racist. Some exploited the Chinese. Those memories trigger resentment among the Chinese, even among Chinese Christians.

So even believers don't talk about the early missionaries. I travel to different Christian communities in China, and most of them have virtually no linkage, structurally or historically, with mission societies.

How do these Christians explain their faith?

They know foreign missionaries brought the gospel to China, but their evaluation of the missionaries is ambiguous at best. Christian missionaries, they believe, were often the agents of Western imperialism. Then again, in spite of their imperialism, they brought the gospel to China.

Are the charges of imperialism and ethnocentrism justified?

Yes, but we must remember that people in any age find it extremely difficult to detach themselves from their history and culture. Even today, in spite of the lessons of history, I see churches and mission societies extend their own denominational values and their own culture as they spread their message. It's hard not to do so.

Many China missions were criticized for "bribing" the Chinese with food (usually rice), education, or hospital care to get them to listen to the gospel. The resulting believers were sometimes called "rice Christians." But recently I've visited Asian mission societies in outer Mongolia; as villagers entered one worship service, they were given two kilograms of rice and a bottle of oil. It's hard to learn from history.

By 1949, less than a million Protestant Christians could be counted (about .2 percent of the population), and this after over a century of intense missionary work. Was this work, then, a failure?

A little less than a million believers is not bad, but the percentage is low. Yet we have to remember that from 1911 to 1949, China was continuously at war—civil war and at war with Japan. Famines and other natural disasters repeatedly swept through the country. China was in constant turmoil and social chaos for almost half a century. That instability prevented normal church growth.

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What happened to Chinese Christians after 1950, after the expulsion of the missionaries?

Until recently, the church remained relatively static. In 1950, if you include Roman Catholics, there were about 4 million Christians (3 million Catholics and 1 million Protestants) in China. In 1982, according to the government, there were 3 million Protestants and about 3 million Catholics. I suspect another million or more could be counted if you add "secret Christians," those who were never baptized but were believers in all other ways. The church grew slightly faster than the growth of the general population, which doubled during that time.

Was this relatively static state due to government persecution?

Yes. From 1949 to 1980, hostility was directed against Christians and other so-called "bad elements" of society, including intellectuals. People lost their jobs, others were thrown into jail, others still were sent to labor camps. Christians were second-class citizens, and that affected not just individuals but their families and relatives, as well.

During persecution, many Christians stopped going to church. Many churches closed. But the church didn't shrink, it just went underground into what have been called "family churches," which originally were gatherings of Christians related by blood. Many Chinese Christians just didn't publicly acknowledge their faith, but they transmitted it to their children and sometimes, at great risk, to friends.

We often read that the church exploded in growth during these persecutions. Is that not true?

The explosive growth came after the mid-1980s, when the Chinese government relaxed its attitude toward Christians. Some of the immediate growth, perhaps 1 to 2 million, came because underground Christians went public with their faith. But since the mid-1980s, the number of Christians has grown to somewhere between 20 to 30

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million (even 50 million as some have claimed, although I have serious reservations). In any case, it has been phenomenal. But it has happened after the period of persecution.

Why is the Chinese church growing so rapidly at this time?

There are three basic reasons.

First, there is an ideological vacuum in China. People no longer claim loyalty to any kind of faith, not even to communism. Because of the more open policy of the Chinese government, there is more contact with the Western world, and people are fascinated by different ways of thinking, including other religions. Religious fervor has been high the past ten years, and Christianity has benefited most. It's something novel to most Chinese, but also something Western, modern, and rational.

Second, Christianity provides people with an intimate social experience: love, caring, concern, and fellowship. They can reveal themselves to others because of the trusting relationships they have with other Christians. After a long, repressive era in which you didn't dare reveal what you really felt and thought, this is an exciting option for many Chinese.

Third, there are the miracles. When I travel to the interior of China, the Christian communities all claim they've seen and experienced miracles.

What type of miracles?

One typical example: An old Christian woman in one village decided, after her eightieth birthday, to start preaching the gospel. She went to the village where her daughter lived and began to preach there. Some villagers who had been afflicted with various incurable diseases, like cancer, came to this woman. When she prayed for them, many were suddenly healed.

Then two more people came to ask for healing, and she prayed, and they were healed. Then three more families. After this woman left, these villagers decided her God was very good. So they abandoned their idols and decided to believe in this Jesus.

But they didn't know how to believe. So they sent one person to nearby towns to look for a place where people worshipped Jesus. When they finally found such a church, they told the pastor, "We have 80 people in our village who want to believe in Jesus. But we don't know how to believe in Jesus."

After that, a new church was started. I hear such stories all the time in my travels.

How do the local government officials react?

That's another interesting set of stories I hear. People tell me that if local officials try to harass Christians, many of them get strange diseases.

In one case, I was told that the local communist party boss couldn't speak any longer because his tongue got stuck out; he couldn't put his tongue back into his mouth again. After he repented and became a Christian, suddenly his tongue moved, and he could speak again. Afterwards, more people became Christians.

I don't know if such instances are psychosomatic; I haven't followed up to confirm each story. But I hear these kind of testimonies in most of the villages I enter.

What is the difference between the family churches and the official Three-Self Church?

Actually there isn't much difference any more. In the early 1980s, some Christians attended official Three-Self congregations (self-government, self-support, self-propagation—meaning, free from foreign missionary control). These churches were given government licenses to operate and were overseen by government officials.

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Other Christians worshipped in family churches, or family gatherings, because they resented government oversight. During these years, you chose to participate in one or the other, and a lot of suspicion between the two groups was in the air.

Today the distinctions are breaking down. A number of Three-Self clergy also pastor family gatherings. A number of family gatherings are informally sanctioned by the government.

This is especially true in rural areas. In some towns, family gatherings have grown beyond extended relatives. Some have large church buildings and command the loyalty of the majority of the town's inhabitants. The local government can't ignore them just because they don't officially exist. Sometimes they are invited to village councils, along with Three-Self representatives, to help plan civic events.

What are the prospects for Christianity in China today?

Comparatively speaking, religious groups have far more freedom today than they did 100 years ago.

Certainly Christians experience some restrictions, but even before the communist era, the Chinese government expected the church and other societies to be subservient to the government. The government has always had a branch that supervises religion. For example, for centuries monks, whether Buddhist or Taoist, were licensed and supervised by the state, not by their monasteries. As long as churches don't speak or act openly against government policy, they are free to spread the message of Christ.

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Fitting Outfits

What do you pack if you're going to China as a British missionary in 1865?

Even though China Inland Mission workers normally wore Chinese dress, for some occasions, they still had to have a Western wardrobe-not to mention a number of other nineteenth-century necessities. Below is a list of items two missionaries from the mid-1860s checked off as they prepared for work in China.

For Miss Jean Notman, 1864

- 1 winter dress, 2 skirts, 1 crinoline [stiff petticoat], 3 print dresses
- 3 petticoats, 6 nightdresses, 3 vests, 12 pair drawers, 9 chemises, silk apron
- 2 doz. handkerchiefs, 9 pair stockings, 1 ps. diaper, 1 pair gauntlets, 4 pairs gloves, hat, hairnet, scarf
- 2 pair boots, 1 pair shoes, galoshes, umbrella
- 2 combs, hairpins, slide, toothbrush, pomatum, sponge bag, nailbrush, scissors, elastic, sewing-machine needles and oil, bodkins, cotton thread trimmings, crochet hook and cotton, darning cotton, darning merino [fine wool], belt ribbon, ribbons, tapes, buttons, pins, hooks, thimble
- 6 1/2 yards black merino, 10 yards muslin, 1 1/2 yards check muslin, 6 3/4 yards longcloth, linen, braid, 1 doz. cambric frilling [cotton ruffles], 9 1/2 yards barege [sheer fabric], 26 3/4 yards flannel, 5 yards red flannel, 6 yards huckaback [toweling], 15 3/4 yards lining, 3 yards ruching [trim]

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- Writing desk, pen holders, pens, nibs, quills, cards, 200 envelopes, elastic bands, 1 doz. pencils, slate, slate pencil, India rubber trunk, tin-lined box, carpet bags.

(Presumably she already had cutlery, crockery, among other things not listed)

For George Crombie, 1865

- Frock coat, doe trousers, waistcoat, tweed trousers, coat, vest, 3 linen coats and vests, 2 pairs drill trousers4 flannel shirts, 4 calico shirts, 6 1/2 doz. collars
- Waterproof coat, felt hat, cloth cap
- 3 pairs boots, 2 pairs braces, 1 doz. pairs socks, pants
- 1 feather pillow, 1 counterpane [bedspread], 1 pair blankets, 3 pairs linen sheets, 4 pillowcases
- 1 rug, mosquito curtains, lining for same, 1 Toralium [trade name for coverlet], 1/2 doz. towels, 1 bag haberdashery
- Iron chair, bedstead and beds (?mattresses), 1 looking glass, walking-stick, camp stool, life-belt, 8-day alarm clock, fishing tackle, string, penknife, strop, medicines, scales
- Writing paper, notebooks, 500 envelopes, 3 doz. pencils, 1 doz. penholders, 1 gross pens, India rubber, 1 qt. ink, writing case
- Coffee mill and pot, teaspoons, dessert spoons and forks, tablespoons and forks, dessert and table knives, all 3 each, groceries, shoe blacking
- Carpet bag, packing case, cooking stove, pipes and utensils, carpenter's tools.

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Recommended Resources—Hudson Taylor & Missions to China

Books on Hudson Taylor and China Inland Mission

There are probably more books on Hudson Taylor, and his China Inland Mission, than on any other missionary since the apostle Paul and perhaps Francis Xavier, the 16th-century Jesuit missionary to Japan. Just in the Princeton Seminary library, which I regularly use, I counted some 54 titles. In the case of books out-of-print or republished many times, only the date of the original edition is given.

Hudson Taylor and the CIM

The single most indispensable and easily available work is A. J. Broomhall's seven-volume paperback *Hudson Taylor & China's Open Century* (Hodder & Stoughton and OMF, 1981–89). For those not quite ready for seven volumes, read the older standard 2-volume work, *Hudson Taylor in Early Years* and *Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission* (in many editions), both by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor. Also see the fine short history of the mission by Leslie T Lyall, *A Passion for the Impossible: the China Inland Mission 1865–1965* (Moody, 1965).

For young people, there are two fine works: Marshall Broomhall's *Hudson Taylor: The Man Who Dared* (1920) and *Hudson Taylor: God's Man for China* by Betty Macindoe (Hodder & Stoughton, 1979).

Hudson Taylor is known for his unwavering faith and his devotional life. On this, see Marshall Broomhall's stirring *Hudson Taylor: The Man Who Believed God* (1929), Virgil Robinson's *Hudson Taylor: Man of Faith* (1966), and *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret* (1932) by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor. His human, Christian compassion is sometimes overlooked but not so in Marshall Broomhall's

By Love Compelled (1936), which traces the motivation of both the man and the mission to the "overwhelming sense of God's love" as much as to God's faithfulness.

Anyone concerned that mission history neglects the major role that women have played should read *Hudson Taylor and Maria* by John Charles Pollack (1962). On the forced transition of the mission from its base in China to "mission to the world," see *The Fire Burns On: A C.I.M. Anthology* (1965), edited by Frank Houghton, and Phyllis Thompson's *China: The Reluctant Exodus* (1979).

Martyred Missionaries of the China Inland Mission, edited by Marshall Broomhall (1901), focuses especially on the Boxer Rebellion. One of the most poignant stories of martyrdom, however, is *Not Worthy to Be Compared: The Story of John and Betty Stam and the Miracle Baby* by E. H. Hamilton (1936).

Reading wider

For the larger picture of China missions, the standard work, though now more than 60 years old, is still Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A History of Christian Missions in China* (1929). For a delightfully readable paperback updating the record, see G. Thompson Brown's *Christianity in the People's Republic of China* (John Knox, 1986).

For those who want the story of Christianity in China stretched back to its beginnings, read my *A History of Christianity in Asia, Vol. 1, Beginnings to 1550* (Harper-Collins, 1992), especially chapters 15, 18, 20, and 21.

Check the author blurbs at the end of this issue's articles for other suggested readings.

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