

THE PROBLEM OF EVALUATING AMERICAN MISSIONARY WORK IN CHINA

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Professor John K. Fairbank's remark that "the missionary in foreign parts seems to be the invisible man of American history" suggests the importance of the missionary in American history.¹ While many have accepted this recognition of the importance of the missionary in American history, they have nonetheless arrived at different conclusions in their evaluation of the meaning and/or effects of American missionary enterprise abroad, especially of that enterprise in China. This paper is a modest attempt to first survey the different conclusions reached and then explain why such differences have developed. In presenting this paper, the author also entertains the hope that it may in some small way help us gain a proper understanding of the religious or spiritual relationship between China and America in the past and prepare us for a more fruitful relationship in the future.

I

The most direct clash in the evaluation of the meaning and effects of the American missionary enterprise in China was that which developed between the leaders of the Chinese Communist regime and the U.S. Government. For instance, on the eve of establishing the Communist regime in China, Mao Tse-tung singled out America's "spiritual aggression" for attack: "For a very long period, U.S. imperialism laid greater stress than other imperialist countries on activities in the sphere of spiritual aggression, extending from religious to 'philanthropic'

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¹ John K. Fairbank, "Assignment for the 70's," *American Historical Review*, 74, no. 3 (February 1969): 877.

and cultural undertakings.”²

The reaction of the U.S. Government to this denunciation can be seen from the statement issued by its ambassador to the United Nations, Warren R. Austin. In 1950, Ambassador Austin pointed out that 250,000 Chinese students had graduated from primary and middle schools maintained in China with American funds; that one-eighth of all the Chinese college graduates had received their education at the 13 colleges founded by the American Protestant missions in China; and that 10,000 Chinese students had been educated in American colleges and universities. Ambassador Austin further pointed out that the American Catholic Church had maintained 320 orphanages in China. In view of these facts, he challenged the Chinese accusation of American cultural imperialism and called it “evil propaganda.”³

If the governments could not see eye to eye regarding American missionary and cultural work in China, the missionaries themselves by the 1950's also developed some doubts about the value of their work. While in 1900 Dr. D.Z. Sheffield could assert that the missionaries “are laying rock-foundations upon which the shapely structure of a new civilization is to be built in future years,”⁴ in the 1950's some missionaries wondered whether they might have indeed unconsciously served as a part of Western imperialism in China. In an article written for the *International Review of Missions* in 1951, one missionary asked: “Can we not detect some justice in the charge of imperialism against our policies for institutions ... which fitted them [the students] for the *comprador* class which was the agent of the western penetration of China?”

The same author continued, “Ours is a religion of in-

² Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, 4 vols. (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965-67), 4: 448.

³ Warren R. Austin, “U.S. Appeal to Chinese Communists to stop Aggression in Korea,” *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950) no. 23: 933.

⁴ D. Z. Sheffield, “The Influence of the Western World on China,” *The Century Magazine* (May-October 1900): 789.

carnation; that the Gospel can only take shape in social and economic and political form—that the ‘pure Gospel’ and the ‘pure Church’ not only do not but cannot in history exist; and that not all that is now for present purposes castigated as imperialism was wrong.” Furthermore, he challenged the previous notion of Westernizing China and believed that the efforts of trying to make the Chinese culturally Anglo-Saxon had been mistaken.⁵

The Chinese Christians also had mixed feelings about missionary work in China. Some Chinese Christians praised and defended it. For instance, in 1949, a group of Chinese Christians claimed that Western missionary work in China had been “to serve the needs of the Chinese people,” and that the missionaries had entertained “no other purpose than to preach the Christian gospel of love” to the Chinese.⁶ But others criticized it for its failure to serve Chinese needs other than those spiritual. A Christian layman leader pointed out in the late 1940’s that except for its preaching personal salvation, the Christian work had produced no new citizens for the construction of a new China; therefore, “Christianity has so far failed.”⁷

II

Since in passing judgment on American missionary work the government leaders might have been motivated by political considerations, and the missionaries and Chinese converts might have been influenced by religious or emotional biases, we shall next turn to the scholars who have studied the subject and examine their supposedly more objective opinions.

1. The Pro-Missionary Arguments

In 1929, the most renowned missionary historian, Profes-

⁵ A China Missionary, “First Thought on the Debacle of Christian Missions in China,” *International Review of Missions* (October 1951); reprinted in *African Affairs* 51, no. 22 (January 1952): 38-41.

⁶ Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958): 307.

⁷ *Ibid.*

sor Kenneth Scott Latourette, listed many Christian contributions to modern China. Mission work provided China with good leadership during the revolutionary decades of the twentieth century. Chinese Christians like Dr. Sun Yat-sen, Foreign Minister Wang Cheng-t'ing, Premier Yen Hui-ch'ing, and Chang Po-ling, President of Nankai University, were all illustrious examples. It also greatly promoted modern Chinese education by compiling textbooks and turning out competent teachers for Chinese schools. It facilitated the importation of Western learning. It stimulated China's own religions and philosophies, such as Buddhism and Confucianism, for their internal reform. Finally, it also served as an agency for interpreting China to the Occident. As against all the above contributions, the only ill effects of the missionary work in Latourette's mind were the Taiping Rebellion and the missionary intrusion into Chinese politics and law that accelerated the breakdown of the Chinese state. On balance, Latourette concluded that the missionary work had brought China "into contact with the best in the Occident" and had promoted "the greater welfare of the Chinese people."⁸

Three and a half decades later, Professor Liu Kwang-ching continued Latourette's praise for the Christian missionaries in China, saying that they were "often the best source of Western learning in Chin" in the nineteenth century. He also commended them for their deep understanding of the problems and aspirations of the Chinese people; for their pioneering projects in rural reconstruction in the 1920's and 30's; and for their essential emphasis on the sacredness of the individual. In short, Liu believed that the missionary had indeed made a meaningful contribution to China:

The idea that every soul is worth saving, that every individual should be given the chance to develop his capacities—this, in combination with the scientific and technical knowledge of the West, could and did make a contribution to China and the Chinese.⁹

⁸ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967 reprint): 843.

⁹ Liu Kwang-ching, ed., *American Missionaries in China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966): 1.

2. The Anti-Missionary Assessments

Criticism of American missionary work in China by American scholars and intellectuals can be traced at least as far back as the 1920's. For instance, John Dewey in the 1920's found himself in disagreement with the general Western assumptions, including missionary ones, that China was a peril to the world, and that the way to deal with her was either by Westernizing or Christianizing her. Dewey criticized such assumptions as untrue to the reality of China and unfair to the Chinese:

Persons who are irritated in themselves are always irritated about others. The principle applies in social psychology. Nations are "projecting" their own troubles and uncertainty upon China.... For it is not true that the Chinese difficulties have suddenly become a menace to the world's peace and prosperity. It is only true that western nations are in danger of condensing their own troubles and unloading them upon China.¹⁰

Dewey was also critical of the conversion-oriented nature of mission education. He believed that education and evangelism were two separate things and that mission schools should not try to achieve both in their work. Therefore, in 1920 he advised the Christian workers in China that those who were evangelical-minded should stay away from educational enterprises and let those truly interested in education "throw themselves fully into their school work" and "build up a worth-while school system."¹¹ Besides Dewey, Professor Charles T. Holman of the University of Chicago in his article "I Don't Want to Christianize the World," published in 1935, attacked the missionaries for their doctrinal exclusiveness; their blindness to political and social injustices; and their parochial and vindictive attitude toward other religions and civilizations.¹²

But the criticism of American mission work made by the intellectuals and scholars in the early decades was a sporadic and casual affair. In the decades of the 1960's and 1970's this

¹⁰ John Dewey, "As the Chinese Think," *Asia* 22, no. 1 (January 1922): 79.

¹¹ John Dewey, "Address at Annual Meeting of the Chihli-Shansi Christian Educational Association, Peking," *Educational Review* (1920): 105.

¹² Varg, *Missionaries*, : 174.

criticism became a constant and heavy theme in most of the works dealing with the subject. For example, Professor Jonathan Spence in his *To Change China: Western Advisers in China, 1620-1960* criticized the motives of the missionaries. He believed that their coming to China might have been due to their "feared or experienced frustrations at home"; their desire in China had been "not so much to help China as to help themselves"; and their work had been an effort "to prove their own significance."¹³ After having surveyed the life histories of sixteen Western advisers in China, of whom six were missionaries, he concluded that their work in China had been a failure, for China had not been converted and neither Western democracy nor Russian-brand Communism accepted.¹⁴

Another scholar, Professor James C. Thomson, Jr. of Harvard, in his *While China Faced West* discussed both the Rockefeller Foundation's rural reconstruction work in China in the 1930's and the missionary involvement in reform projects such as the New Life Movement. From these discussions he drew two major conclusions. First, he considered these foreign efforts to be instances of liberal reformism and believed them to be total failures, for China "rejected their offering, threw them out, and embraced a Western heresy with which to resist the West."¹⁵ Second, he questioned the values and validity of gradualism or reformism in the less developed countries.¹⁶

Probably the most virulent and penetrating attack on the whole missionary enterprise was that made by Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. While disagreeing with the old accusation that the missionary is a part of the capitalist economy or the instrument of the State or Government, he nevertheless called him a cultural/psychological imperialist. Schlesinger agreed with French writer-philosopher Jean-François Revel that the most

¹³ Jonathan Spence, *To Change China* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969): 292.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 289.

¹⁵ James C. Thomson, Jr., *While China Faced West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969): xii.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: xiii.

humiliating kind of defeat is a cultural defeat, for "it entails not only acknowledgement of one's own weakness, but also the humiliation of having to save oneself by taking lessons from the conqueror."¹⁷

Schlesinger built up his case by further relying upon some psychological studies on colonialism. In 1950, French ethnographer O. Mannoni published his *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, a study based on the French experience in Madagascar. In this work, the colonizer emerging from the competitive Western society and having suffered defeat of one kind or another, is described as having an inferiority complex requiring assuagement by the experience of domination; and the colonized, having lived in a static and traditional society, is described as having a "dependence complex." Mannoni suggests that these two complexes are symmetrically opposed to each other and that "these two different psychological climates serve to characterize two different types of personality, two different mentalities, two different civilizations." As a result of these conflicts, assimilation meant that "the personality of the native is first destroyed through uprooting, enslavement and the collapse of the social structure."¹⁸

Besides Mannoni's work, the works of Franz Fanon, an African revolutionist who received training in psychiatry in France, were also cited by Schlesinger. Fanon, accepting the fact that the conflict between the colonizers and the colonized were insoluble, insists on violence as the only means for the native to reclaim his identity:

At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.

Fanon further states that once self-respect was restored, the

¹⁷ Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism," in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974): 365-66.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 369.

native could “assimilate the most modern forms of technology at an extraordinary rate.”¹⁹

Basing his argument on the above works and on his own reading of history, Schlesinger drew some conclusions. First, China and Japan, though not strict colonies of the West, were victims of Western cultural aggression, which “not only threatened the self-image of the violated nation but fed the self-righteousness of the intruders.” Since the missionaries wanted to change souls and societies, where traders only wanted to make money or politicians to make treaties, the evangelical spirit of the missionaries “helped to infuse the American role in the world with the impulses of a crusade.” Because of these impulses, Schlesinger asserted, the United States tried to reconstruct Japan after the Second World War, and also entered Vietnam to achieve a missionary goal. Schlesinger concluded his criticism of the missionary by saying that in his cultural interpretation of imperialism “the missionary will find his most fitting place.”²⁰

3. The Tension in the Historiography of U.S.-East Asian Relations

The missionary, as Professor Fairbank said, is indeed “the invisible man of American history.” His effort is a part, an important part, of the totality of American efforts abroad. Before we can form any meaningful opinion of the missionary’s work, we have to understand the nature and the meaning of the larger U.S.-East Asian relationship. But regarding this larger picture, our vision is blurred by the conflicting historical perspectives offered by the leading scholars in the field. I have sensed a tension between what might be termed historicism versus moralism in the historiography of U.S.-East Asian relations. Two recent cases should be sufficient to illustrate this tension.

In 1972, Professor Akira Iriye published his *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansion, 1897-1911*, a pioneer

¹⁹ Ibid.: 370.

²⁰ Ibid.: 372-73.

work on the subject. Most of Professor Iriye's earlier works can be described as trying to explain with objectivity the multi-dimensional relationship between the U.S., China, and Japan.²¹ He almost never judges, denounces, or praises the behavior of these three countries in dealing with each other, though occasionally he may express his hope for a more peaceful relationship among them. This new work of his is consistent with his earlier scrupulous historical writing.

But this kind of detached, historical objectivity is seen as undesirable by Professor Marilyn B. Young. In her review of Iriye's new work, while she praised the work in general she also expressed her dissatisfaction with it:

I am somewhat puzzled by his insistence that economic expansionism (usually coupled with the word "peaceful") is nonimperialistic.... Moreover, reading his discussion of Japanese and American behavior in China, one is apt to forget that, whatever the policy pursued, it was in the imperialist context of the unequal treaty system, established by force and involving a degree of territorial control. Thus "peaceful economic expansion" in China seems to me to be a somewhat anomalous notion.²²

And,

Professor Iriye's conclusion is, however, fairly sanguine. Expansion, he once again declares, is the way of the world. Even peaceful expansion can cause friction and suspicion. "Nevertheless, awareness of these difficulties is a positive factor that can in time build a bridge of common humanity across the Pacific." ... Perhaps. But one might also want to question the notion that expansion is a necessary part of human nature. Or if it is, what possibilities of social mutation can we begin to imagine?²³

In these words, Professor Young clearly expressed her moral sympathy for China and her annoyance over Professor Iriye's non-critical attitude toward foreign aggression in China. What Professor Young obviously wished to see in Iriye's work was

²¹ Such as his *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965); and *Across the Pacific* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967).

²² Marilyn B. Young, review of *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansionism, 1897-1911*, by Akira Iriye, in *Journal of Asian Studies* 33, no. 1 (November 1973): 123.

²³ *Ibid.*: 124.

some kind of moral denunciation of American and Japanese imperialism in China. Though we do not know Professor Iriye's personal views on imperialism, judging from his reluctance to make moral judgment in his works, he most likely thinks that moral judgment is neither a necessary nor a legitimate part of historical writing.

Another case of historicism versus moralism is an argument between Professors Jerome B. Grieder and Donald W. Treadgold. The second volume of the latter's *The West in Russia and China: Religious and Secular Thought in Modern Times* deals with the history of Western religious and secular influence in China. Professor Treadgold in this book praised the efforts made by the Jesuits from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century and the more liberally minded Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century in forging a cultural syncretism between Christian culture and Chinese tradition. While lamenting the eventual failure of these efforts, he also imparted his obvious negative attitude toward the rise of the "brutal" totalitarianism or Communism in China and also his doubt that the Chinese tradition and the potentialities of syncretism can be confidently pronounced dead even under the present harsh Communist rule.²⁴ Professor Grieder considered these ideas and sentiments of Treadgold's to be value-ridden and culture-bound and believed that historians should not invest their studies with their own religious or cultural preferences. In other words, historical writing must divorce itself from moralizing. Grieder made the following comments on Treadgold's work:

He [Treadgold] writes an intellectual history in which ideas are presented not as emotionally charged sources of belief and action enmeshed in the imperatives of a particular time, but rather as entities to be manipulated in pursuit of calculated historical ends.

And,

... Treadgold's conclusion is culture-bound in the most obvious and

²⁴ Donald W. Treadgold, *The West in Russia and China: Vol. 2: China* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973): 17.

painful sense. It assumes not only the morally lethargic traditions of China and the morally delinquent regime of the present time, but more-over takes as terms of fixed content of the most suggestive and troublesome language of the Western tradition itself.... He is more concerned, in the final analysis, with the dissolution of Western values than with the effect of these values on China.²⁵

In his rebuttal to Grieder's very hostile comments on his own work, Treadgold did not retract his preference for cultural syncretism or apologize for his affirmation of what he termed as "the categories of truth" in the Western tradition which, according to him, have after all occupied Westerners ever since ancient Greece. But Treadgold did deny that he ever criticized the Confucian tradition as "morally lethargic" or the present Chinese regime as "morally delinquent," though he admitted that that regime was "very hard indeed on moral delinquency of many kinds, in a puritanical manner quite comparable with the ethos of Stalin's USSR." Treadgold also denied that his central position was culture-bound, for his whole book was "filled with sympathetic concern for those who sought to preserve the values of the Chinese tradition against those who regarded them as outmoded or obstructive of the kinds of change they desired."²⁶

From the above two cases we may conclude that while Iriye and Grieder seem to be more concerned with how history developed rather than with how history should have developed, Young and Treadgold prefer to see history moving toward a desired end, an end either morally sound or spiritually uplifting.

The foregoing distinctions are important to our discussion of the problem of evaluating American missionary work in China, for they demonstrate the fact that in interpreting a historical event or issue, historians are often influenced by

²⁵ Jerome B. Grieder, review of volume 2 of *The West in Russia and China*, by Donald W. Treadgold, in *Journal of Asian Studies* 33, no. 3 (May 1974): 464-66.

²⁶ Donald W. Treadgold, "Cultural Bias and Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 37, no. 1 (November 1977): 190.

their own ideological orientations. If one is burdened with moral sympathy for the fate of modern China and is sensitive to the charge of imperialism, then most likely he will agree with the judgment made by the critics of missionaries, such as Thomson, Spence, and Schlesinger. If one is more concerned with cultural exchange or religious syncretism and has faith in such developments, then he will be in agreement with the interpretations of Latourette, Liu, and Treadgold. But if one is interested more in the analysis of U.S.-East Asian relations than in holding a rigid preference for the direction of those relations, he will then follow the framework as that adopted by Iriye and Grieder. Historians, after all, are human beings, and as such, are conditioned by their own moral sense, life experience, and intellectual philosophy; and this is why they quite often find themselves disagreeing with each other on the interpretation of many historical events and issues.

III

While most of the scholars included in the above examination are largely secular scholars who have had little direct involvement or experience with church work, the following is a survey of opinions of those who have had such involvement or experience, be it scholarly, theological, or ecclesiastical, and who have expressed their opinions at several international conferences held in recent years under the auspices of churches and convened specifically for ecumenical or evangelical purposes. Since the opinions expressed in these conferences have direct bearing on our evaluation of American or Western missionary work in China and since these opinions can be largely considered as representing the present thinking of the Christian Church and its workers, they deserve our close attention.

Between 1974 and 1977, three international conferences were held dealing with the historical and contemporary relationship between Christianity and China: one at Bastad, Sweden; one at Louvain, Belgium;²⁷ and one at the University

²⁷ The proceedings of these two conferences appear in *Christianity and the New*

of Notre Dame, U.S.A.²⁸ In these conferences, we have witnessed the interesting phenomenon of intellectual disagreements among the participants on at least three issues: the meaning of the Church and its relationship with history and the world; the reality of the Chinese Communist revolution; and the effects of the Christian work in pre-1949 China.

On all these issues the debate was joined between those who could probably be classified as neo-orthodox or conservative Christians (whom we shall hereafter refer to as "conservatives") and those whose expressed opinions could find easy agreement with the Modernism of the 1920's and the Liberation Theology of the 1970's (whom we shall refer to as "liberals"). On the issue of the meaning of the Church and its relationship with history and the world, the conservatives affirmed that "the Church is not to be conformed to the world," but the other way around; that it was Christ who "confronts the world and transforms it," not human beings; and that Christians should try to "endure the tension of judgment and grace" rather than to "find the meaning of history in a human movement."²⁹ The liberals considered these conservative affirmations as misplaced, and, as such, needing replacement by a theology of history. The Church in the West needs self-emptying and repentance for all of its past wrongs and should emphasize the social and political dimensions of its gospel even at the risk of condoning, or resorting to, revolution.³⁰

China (South Pasadena, California: Ecclesia Publications, 1976), 2 vols. A critique of the papers presented in these two conferences appears in Michael Chu, ed., *The New China: A Catholic Response* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977). See also Jean Charbonnier, "From Challenge to Exchange: A Report on Theological Approaches to the China Question During the Period 1974-1977" (Paris, August 1977), 16 pp. (unpublished).

²⁸ For the proceedings of this conference, see James D. Whitehead, Yu-ming Shaw, and N. J. Girardot, ed., *China and Christianity: Historical and Future Encounters* (Notre Dame, In.: Center for Pastoral and Social Ministry, University of Notre Dame, 1979).

²⁹ See Charles C. West, "Theological Reflections on China," *ibid.*: 260; also his "Some Theological Reflections on China," *China Notes* (Fall 1976): 39.

³⁰ See "Responses" to Charles C. West's "Some Theological Reflections on China,"

On the issue of the reality of Chinese Communist revolution, the conservatives criticized its suppression of individual liberty for the elusive goal of promoting the collective interests of the masses and denounced its substitution of a human dictator (Mao) for a Christian God. They were also very much annoyed by the recent euphoria about Communist China on the part of so many China observers. They criticized these observers as engaging in a "guilt-trip" and neglecting the dark reality of the Communist rule in China.³¹ Sharply disagreeing with these negative comments on the Chinese Communist revolution, the liberals viewed it as "part of God's saving action," or the "sign of the times"; therefore, they affirmed its positive significance, for it "overthrew the powers that oppressed the [Chinese] people, achieved national independence and dignity, and unified them for socialist construction." Some of these liberals even claimed that the Long March of the Chinese Communists was the same as the Jewish exodus, with the implication that Mao was a Chinese Moses.³²

On the issue of the effects of Western missionary work in pre-1949 China, the conservatives emphasized its positive contributions to the life of modern China, such as the impact of Jesuit syncretism on the later Chinese philosophical development and the missionary influence on the Chinese reformers and revolutionaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³³ The liberals also had a different perspective on

ibid.: 41-42; also "Workshop Reports from an Ecumenical Colloquium in Louvain, Belgium, September 9-14, 1974," in *Christianity and the New China*, vol. II: "Appendix," 1-28.

³¹ See Julia Ching, "The New China: A Dialectical Response," in Michael Chu, ed., *The New China: A Catholic Response*: 3-24. See also "A Memo to the Conference," and Donald W. Treadgold, "The Problem of Christianity in Non-Western Cultures: The Case of China," in Whitehead, Shaw, and Girardot, ed., *China and Christianity*: xi-xii, 184-99; and "New Man' in China: Myth or Reality," in *Christianity and the New China*, vol. II: 45-52.

³² See "Workshop Reports from an Ecumenical Colloquium in Louvain, Belgium, September 9-14, 1974," op. cit.: 17-19; and Thomas Berry, "Mao Tse-tung: The Long March," in *Christianity and the New China*, vol. I: 55-69.

³³ Donald W. Treadgold, "The Problem of Christianity in Non-Western Cultures: The Case of China," op. cit.: 187-89.

this issue. Burdened with the criticism of Western imperialism in China, they simply concluded that Christian work in China in the past was part of this imperialism and as such, the Western Church should repent.³⁴

The contradictory interpretations and evaluations of American missionary work in China, of U.S.-East Asian relations, and of the general relationship between Christianity and China are, in the final analysis, really not something illogical or even surprising. In the twentieth century our perspectives toward progress, history, and faith have all undergone significant changes. The West's sanguine faith in the inherent moral and spiritual superiority of its civilization began to lose its strength after the First World War. The social and spiritual crises in the West since the 1960's have also disillusioned many Western intellectuals, theologians, and churchmen. Therefore, many of them have not only challenged the validity of mission work, and criticized the encounter between Christianity and China, but have also looked toward Maoist China for guidance in both spiritual and mundane matters—a phenomenon not dissimilar to that of the 1930's, when many of their predecessors turned toward Stalin's Russia.³⁵ This reaction in the 1960's and 1970's was also very similar to that of the Jesuit fathers in China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Frustrated with the ill effects of the Thirty Years' War, they became very much impressed with the Confucian state, whose spirituality seemed to them to be rich and whose politics also very stable.

But while history seems to have repeated itself, we should not fall victim to it. In this author's opinion, the encounter

³⁴ See "Workshop Reports," 11-12.

³⁵ Donald W. Treadgold, "The Problem"; and Frank A. Warren, III, *Liberals and Communism: The Red Decade Revisited* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1966). For a discussion of the evolution of Western perception of China and Chinese culture, see this author's "Chinese Culture in the Mind of the West," in *China as a Challenge to the Church* (Concilium: Religion in the Seventies, Vol. 126), eds. Claude Geffre and Joseph Spae (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979): 1-18.

between Christianity and China in general and the American missionary work in China in particular have had both salutary as well as baneful results, though on balance the results are more salutary than baneful. This opinion is based on the following considerations. First, Christian or missionary influence on modern China has not caused the damage described by Schlesinger; in fact, it has enriched the spiritual and cultural life of the Chinese. Second, the missionary work in China should also not be considered a failure, as it was by Thomson, in the sense that it failed to achieve an overall conversion of the Chinese or to establish a Western-type democracy in China. How much success is success? Given their relatively small numbers and modest budgets, the missionaries achieved tremendous success in the areas of education, relief work, and the leavening of the Chinese society in general. Even in terms of conversion, the missionaries and their Chinese co-workers also succeeded in turning several million Chinese to Christ. Any greater expectations for the result of their work are not only unreasonable but also a form of cultural imperialism in itself. Finally, religious encounter is part of cultural contact between civilizations and cannot be avoided. In most cases of cultural contact, good effects will survive and ill ones lose out; therefore, we should not worry too much about the impact of cultural contact. (After all, Chinese civilization is both rich and enduring, and it will not succumb for long to foreign influence that is superficial or unprofitable.) If we accept the above considerations, then our evaluation of Western or American missionary work in China should be a positive one and, as such, should also be affirmed.

美國在華傳教工作之評估問題

邵玉銘

摘 要

對美國傳教工作歷來有很多不同看法，本論文試求經由對這些看法之檢討，來對這項工作，作一評估。表示這些看法的人士包括中國共產黨份子、美國政府代表、美國傳士們、中國信徒、中外學者、神學家及教會領袖等人。

一般言之，這些看法之間之分歧大體一致。中共政權對美國及西方在華傳教工作是敵視的；而美國政府則驕傲地強調美國傳教士對中國所作的貢獻。

對美國傳教士而言，那些在十九世紀及二十世紀初期在華工作的傳教士，對他們的工作的價值都予肯定，但是那些歷經一九四〇年代，中國革命動亂的傳教士們，則對傳教工作之整個功效表示懷疑。中國信徒們對於傳教工作的看法，也和傳教士們一樣地分歧。

對於研究傳教史及文化交流問題的學者們，他們對於傳教工作的看法也一樣地不一致。那些對傳教工作給予正面評價的學者們，他們強調這項工作對中國現代教育、哲學及宗教改革、革命運動、個人神聖屬性之肯定、以及西方對中國及中國文化之認識等事均有貢獻。但是那些採取相反看法的學者們，則責備傳教士對中國所採一付傲慢的施恩態度，以及他們並未能將中國變成一個基督教與西方式民主的國家。尤有進者，這些學者還指控傳教士對中國人民作了一項最嚴重的損害，那就是傳教士曾為西方文化帝國主義的鷹犬，並因而傷害中國人民在種族及文化上的自信。

在檢討以上這些不同看法時，作者也發現在基督教在華活動

的歷史研究中，有一種「歷史主義」與「道德主義」的對立情形；這種對立的情形也籠罩在對美國與東亞關係之研究之中。一言以蔽之，「歷史主義」者多注重所發生的歷史事實，而「道德主義」者，則多表示他們希望歷史所應走而未走的方向。

本論文最後一部份，檢討了近幾年來對美國及西方傳教工作所提出的看法。這些看法，特別見於近幾年來對傳教工作加以檢討的國際會議中。在這些會議中，不同的看法又再度出現。有一些極端的自由派出席人士，甚至稱讚毛澤東是中國的摩西，而他所領導的革命是「上帝拯救世人工作的一部份」。這種偏頗的看法，自然被保守派人士駁斥，認為是一種錯誤的幻想。

作者在結論中提出他自己的看法。他認為西方人士對傳教工作的不同看法，在大多數情形下，只是西方社會內部變動的結果。當西方人士對自己社會不滿時，他們就將自己的理想投向中國，而將中國理想化。作者在最後又提出了一些自己的理由，來肯定西方或美國在華傳教工作的價值。