

2023-02-04

The 1843 conference of protestant missionaries in Hongkong China

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/49691>

"Downloaded from OpenBU. Boston University's institutional repository."

The 1843 Conference of Protestant Missionaries in Hongkong China

Introduction

I want to thank Professors Eugenio Menegon and Daryl Ireland at Boston University for their inspiration to do this. Dr. Menegon introduced me to the China Historical Christian Database (WWW.CHCDatabase.com) in his inspiring course on 'Merchants, Missionaries, and Pirates'. Dr. Ireland has helped me through the digitization of history and especially the use of spatial digitization to develop a picture of what may be useful to investigate.

I also want to thank Dr. G. Wright Doyle for his encouragement and assistance in exploring overlooked missionaries such as Mary Aldersley and insufficiently researched events. His digitization develops a brief biography of influential missionaries in the Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christians (WWW.BDCCOnline.net).

I also want to thank Joanne Ichimura, Special Collections Archivist at Special Collections, SOAS Library SOAS University of London (www.soas.ac.uk/research/library/special-collections) and William McCarthy Archivist at the Congregational Library in Boston (<https://congregationallibrary.softlinkliberty.net/liberty/libraryHome.do>), as well as other archivists at Yale, Mt. Holyoke College and Virginia Theological Seminary amongst others. Without digitization, it is very difficult and expensive to search through primary records which can illuminate corners in the history room.

Thesis

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, evangelical revivals swept England, America, and Europe. This evangelical revival (and German pietism) generated a plethora of voluntary societies dedicated to a bewildering variety of causes, but with a surprisingly common bond, the evangelical faith of their members. People who embraced evangelicalism formed strong relationships across traditional hierarchical and religious lines which overrode and strained institutional ties. If one looks at the founding officers and reports of these voluntary societies and their funding sources (usually donations), the same names appear time and time again. If William Wilberforce attended all the meetings of the organizations he belonged to, he would never have slept.

One of the hallmarks of the evangelical movement was to energize missions at home and abroad.¹ For this purpose, most Protestant denominations created denominational missionary agencies. However, at the same time, the movement created inter or even non-denominational agencies to carry out this mission. As noted above these voluntary societies were critical to the anti-slavery movement in England or to Bible societies,

¹ For an excellent overview of intellectual, theological, and ecclesiastical movements in the Nineteenth Century see Michael Gladwin, 'Mission and Colonialism', in Joel D.S. Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, and Johannes Zachhuber (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought. 2019; online edition, Oxford Academic, 10 Aug. 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198718406.013.4>, accessed 8 Nov. 2022.

such as the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society.² Whether it was recruiting fellow evangelicals known to each other or whether it was frustration about the pace at which their denomination was moving, evangelicals banded together to accomplish the ‘greater mission’. Prime early examples of this ‘banding’ in foreign missions were the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in America (ABCFM) and the London Missionary Society (LMS) in Great Britain. The initial leadership of these two missionary organizations came from Congregationalists, but very quickly evangelicals of all denominations seeking to become missionaries in foreign lands did not hesitate to present to or develop their credentials with these interdenominational agencies.³

Evangelicals applying to the foreign mission field used every stratagem to achieve their goal. They changed denominations if necessary, or even used their own resources to undercut the ‘power of the purse’ of the mission agencies. A good example was Mary Aldersley. A member of a wealthy evangelical Anglican family, she was recruited by Robert Morrison for the China mission. To further her cause to be commissioned by the London Missionary Society as a missionary, she paid the way for the first woman to be sent overseas by the LMS (1827). Then 10 years later she offered to pay her own way, thus securing the LMS appointment to China.⁴

The mindset of evangelicals can be portrayed in the words of Robert Morrison, the first major Protestant missionary to China:

*“We are of no party. We recognize but two divisions of our fellow-creatures—the righteous and the wicked—those who fear God, and those who do not”.*⁵

This evangelical ecumenism carried over into the missionary enterprise in foreign lands⁶. This did not mean that denominational loyalties and interests were ignored, especially as the major financial support needed for missions came from the missionary agencies, which in turn raised financial support and recruited missionary candidates from local Churches.⁷ The early pioneers in Protestant missions in China ranged from those who applied to and were accepted by agencies with whom they had only a minimal or even no connection, to those

2The great pioneer of interdenominational home missions was a Scott, David Naismith, who, in his short life, founded at least fifty such missions, including his enduring legacy, the London City Mission. Women in the Church. Lights In Dark Places: Women Evangelists In Early Victorian Britain, 1838-1851. Donald M. Lewis. P.416

3See Ecumenism is a Child of Evangelicalism. Sovan K Mallick https://www.academia.edu/39220045/Ecumenism_is_a_child_of_Evangelicalism accessed December 15, 2022. Also The Missionary Origins of Modern Ecumenism: Milestones Leading up to 1920. Peter Heers 2005.

4 She also provided funds for mission endeavors in Djakarta and Ningbo.

5See A Critical Analysis of Robert Morrison’s Mission Strategy in China and Malacca. Mee Onn Lee 2011 p.56

6 An alternative thesis is that ecumenism has its origin in missionary endeavors. Sovan K. Mallick op.cit.

7For an entertaining and scholarly examination of the power of women's voluntary societies on a missionary agency (the ABCFM) see Doomed Romance. Broken Hearts, Lost Souls, and Sexual Tumult in Nineteenth-Century America. Christine Leigh Heyrman 2021.

who were lifelong dedicated members of a denominational agency.⁸ There was a fluidity of missionary sponsorship, partially because most of the early missionaries were inspired by their evangelical beliefs and believed the mission was greater than the institution. Even in the cases where the traditional institutional ties of new missionaries were very strong, after they arrived in China (or in nearby locations such as Malacca, Singapore, and Djakarta) they were housed, taught, and socialized with other missionaries. These interactions couldn't help but develop strong bonds. Moreover, communications with the missionary agencies were slow (3-6 months or more just to report and get a response), which led to a great deal of autonomy by a missionary and a reliance on relationships with other missionaries. As missionaries became more fluent in the Chinese language and more cognizant of Chinese history and culture, their 'authority' grew. For example, when Robert Morrison left England in 1807 he was an unknown from humble origins. When he returned to England on a sabbatical leave in 1824, he was almost a celebrity, meeting with the King and giving lectures on China (about which he was now considered to be the authority). In speeches and writing, he taught its language, politics, history, culture, economy, and society. He urged his audiences to rise beyond denominationalism, language, gender, and even country. Another example was the American medical missionary Peter Parker. He married into the Webster family and through his connections and fame he was invited to address a joint session of Congress, providing information about China and proposals for American China policy.

This was not an isolated case. Many (but definitely not all) of the missionaries in China shared similar sentiments. The Rev. Walter Medhurst had been conducting (in effect) an interdenominational operation in Djakarta and had urged a common translation of the Bible for all missionaries to use. He also influenced the Constitution of a newly established Church in Djakarta to be inclusive of all Protestant traditions.⁹ While the dominant influences were the Englishman Morrison (until his death in 1834) and the American missionary doctor, Peter Parker, the new major influences for the next 15-20 years were to be Walter Medhurst (LMS), James Legge (LMS), and Elijah Bridgman (ABCFM).

The 'fluidity' of institutional commitment by evangelicals (discussed above), is illustrated in the Conference of Missionaries held in Hongkong in 1843. The migration of missionaries to Hongkong during and after the 'Opium War' of 1840-1842 is partially documented. The organization of that Conference of Protestant Missionaries from different denominations and different countries is known but not fully documented. It provides an example of the power of evangelical fervor in overriding denominational and institutional ties but also shows the enduring strength of the denominational and institutional anchors of mission agencies. Mission stations established in China before the Conference were primarily inter-denominational. Faced with the challenge of presenting a united front to the Chinese people, the missionaries strove to create a common bible and a common message and continued to sponsor interdenominational missionary conferences. At the same time, the news of the opening of China (as a result of the Opium war) had a powerful impact on both the interdenominational and denominational missionary agencies. Their imaginations were fired up and another burst of enthusiasm for foreign missions spread through seminaries and universities. Within a short time after

⁸ One example was David Abeel who was with the Dutch Reformed Church but found a position with the Seamen's Friend Society in New York which was working closely with the ABCFM. Another was Mary Aldersey mentioned above. See The Chinese Empire: A General and Missionary Survey Volumes. Marshall Broomhall 1907 Pp. 678-679

⁹ Mission to China. How an Englishman Brought the West to the Orient. John Holliday 2016. P130. Medhurst had become the leading missionary in China in terms of operations along with James Legge in terms of language and writing. Holliday is the great-great-grandchild of Walter Medhurst and has written this readable biography.

the 1843 Conference, denominational missions 'stations' were established and the nexus between these stations and the denominational institutions in the home countries was strengthened.

No surprise that for the next 50 years, there were continual tensions between denominational interests and cooperative missionary actions inside China.

What follows is a closer examination of that first Conference in 1843 and how it illustrates that tension.

Prelude to The Missionary Conference

In 1812 Robert Morrison discussed a mission beyond the Ganges [India] and began with Reverend William Milne in 1814 to develop a robust set of programs in Djakarta, Penang, and Malacca, including translation, printing, preaching, and training. This area of South East Asia was chosen due to the ongoing restrictions, tensions, and even persecution of missionary activity in China and especially in Macao and Canton. The term coined for this extension to East Asia was 'The Ultra Ganges Mission' which became the London Missionary Society's official name for its mission in East Asia in 1817 when regulations governing its operations were adopted. It is also how it is referred to in the reports and correspondence in its archives., its offices were located in Malacca (Melaka). In Singapore, Penang, Djakarta, and Malacca there were large populations of Chinese who had emigrated from mainland China for a variety of reasons, not the least of which were the large trading ports which needed Chinese workers and translators. William Milne had moved the printing operations of the LMS to Malacca and Penang and language schools and educational schools (including seminaries) were opened in Djakarta, Malacca, and Penang. Most of the British missionaries, until the Treaty of Nanjing, were sent to one of these trading ports to learn the language and culture of China and work in preaching, teaching, and translation. When the East India Company monopoly was ended in 1833, opportunities were seen to move some of the operations in South East Asia to Canton, because up until that date, the EIC [East India Company] had been an antagonist to missionary activity.

One example of how quickly things changed, is to look at the London Missionary Society and how it reorganized its mission to East Asia. As early as 1824, when the Rev. Robert Morrison toured England on sabbatical, he (like subsequent missionaries) told the story of how China and its millions were facing tragedy if they had not heard the message of salvation. It was a potent appeal to listeners and a sharp incentive to support the China mission.

Many missionaries who had been recruited to bring 'salvation to the heathen' in China, had been entrenched in the Chinese diaspora in places like Macao, Djakarta, Malacca, and Singapore. There they learned the Chinese language and its dialects, learned about Chinese culture, and worked to Christianize the local Chinese population as well as other local natives.¹⁰ But their focus in letters and reports was on China. For example, the Rev. Jehu Lewis Shuck of the American Baptist Mission wrote from Hong Kong in September 1842:

10 For a detailed account of how missionaries pursued the China mission in the diaspora see Memoir of the Rev. Samuel Dyer: Sixteen Years Missionary to the Chinese. Evan Davies 1846. See Pp.155ff especially.

"Let us look beyond the causes of the present dreadful and war-like position of affairs and regard the results and the consequences as they bear upon the advancement of the Kingdom and the will of Heaven".¹¹

The Rev. Karl Gutzlaff put it succinctly *"Blot it out from your missionary publications that China is shut"*.¹²

In 1835, Eliza Thornton in Djakarta, in a report to her missionary society in London, wrote that *"by the time this reaches England I trust my tongue will be loosened in the Malay language; and then I shall lose no time in attempting Chinese, for China is the object of my ambition"*.¹³

As noted above, the Chinese diaspora was located predominantly in Djakarta, Malacca, and Singapore. When it was difficult to work in Canton (which was most of the time, especially if learning to speak and write Chinese), missionaries focused their efforts on these other locales, developing schools, printing establishments, and Churches and interacting closely with the Chinese diaspora. It was clearly understood that this was a critical strategy for becoming literate in the Chinese language and culture, and that this was all in preparation for work in mainland China when conditions improved for missionary activity.

The leadership of the LMS in London had been struggling throughout the decade (1827-1837) with how to proceed with the China mission. It perceived that the Chinese people in general equated foreign activity (which was essentially trading), with any Christian activity. The touchstone was opium trading. In general, the missionaries in China were vociferous in their opposition to the opium trade and argued strongly about the need for and wisdom of traveling on ships carrying opium.¹⁴ The missionaries wanted to develop native (i.e., Chinese) missionaries to facilitate the China mission and needed transportation on ships that were essentially under the control of merchants, most of whom carried opium.¹⁵ Merchants and British governmental officials needed translators, which were for the most part missionaries. It was an uneasy relationship, which would echo down the years even after the Treaty of Nanjing.¹⁶

11 British Baptists in China 1845-1952. H.R. Williamson 1957 Pp.17-18

12 Protestant America and The Pagan World: The First Half-Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions 1810-1860. Clifton Jackson Phillips 1969 p.184

13 History of the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East. B.W. Noel 1847 p.15

14 China, its State and Prospects. Walter Henry Medhurst 1838 P. 298ff

Jean Paquette op. cit. P. 117ff. Also, see Elijah Bridgman's correspondence with the ABCFM home office from 1834 through 1843 in ABCFM op. cit.

15 Missionaries in China at this time were heavily influenced by the mission theorist Henry Venn and his 'Three Selves' promotion and by Rufus Anderson. See "Dialectics of the Three Selves". The ideal of a "self-governing" native church - from a missionary concept to an emancipatory slogan of Asian and African Christians in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In 'Internationalising Higher Education From South Africa to England via New Zealand essays in honour of Professor Gerald Pillay'. Klaus Koschorke 2018 Pp.128-129

16 In fact, Robert Morrison and his son John Robert Morrison along with other missionaries had served as official British Government representatives in negotiations with Chinese Government officials from 1813 through 1839.

The 1843 Conference of Missionaries

Missionaries in China at that time were aware of the progress of the war and quite familiar with the Treaty of Nanjing (formerly known as Nanking) which was signed (and later ratified) and included provisions affecting missionaries.¹⁷ Not only were several missionaries closely connected with the British government (Gutzlaff, J.R. Morrison, Walter Medhurst, and his son) but also were closely involved in translating, interpreting, and drafting agreements between the British and the Chinese.¹⁸ As early as 1836 the Rev. Walter Medhurst, while visiting England, briefed the LMS on the problems of moving all UltraGanges operations from Southeast Asia to China, focusing on the legal situation.¹⁹ Some missionaries were more adventurous and had commenced missionary operations outside of Guangdong before and during the war.

Not surprisingly a conference of missionaries was suggested to figure out the consequences or opportunities and to resolve some growing arguments about language. There was not a single driving force for the Conference. Some records of missionaries imply that it was generated by the missionaries themselves (e.g., Dyer, Medhurst, Stronach, and others). The records of the LMS suggest that the London Directors were the driving force.²⁰ The focus of the LMS head office was on strategy and initially it wanted the conference to anchor the LMS mission in Canton and focus on it, as well as on Shanghai and Amoy. Later it settled on Hongkong as the base of the China Mission.²¹ However other missionary agencies had already moved some operations out of the Guangdong area into what became permitted ports.

The conclusion of the 'opium war' (September 4th, 1839 until August 29th, 1842) changed the operating environment for Christian missions in China. Hongkong was ceded to the British and provisions were negotiated to permit Westerners four additional Treaty ports or places where they could establish residency and various operations such as trading and publishing. The profession of the Christian religion was no longer to be a capital offense and teaching Christianity was no longer illegal in these ports. However, the extent to which Missions could operate would only be known as time passed, especially with the powerful influence and even control of missionary activity for the next 25 years and the residual suspicion and sometimes hostility of segments of Chinese society.

17 Chinese Commercial Guide, Consisting of a Collection of Details and Regulations Respecting Foreign Trade with China. By the late Hon. J. R. Morrison. Third Edition Chinese Repository 1848. Pp.122ff and 294ff

18 For an account of the relationship between Missionaries and the British Government and its Military see London Missionary Society's Activities in Hong Kong and Shanghai During the 19th Century (1843— 1860). YU Qiang 2006.

[Written In Chinese Traditional - 十九世紀倫敦傳教士在滬港兩地活動之研究 (1843— 1860)

19 Holliday op.cit. p.182.

20 Dyer, the Secretary of the Conference, stated that the Conference was in direct response to the request on December 31st, 1842 of the LMS to hold such a Conference. See Dyer's Letter to the LMS dated August 25, 1843, in

<https://digital.soas.ac.uk/CW00004274/00001/1x?search=dyer>

21 An uncompromising land; the London Missionary Society in China, 1807-1860. Jean Paquette 1987 P.152

The Rev. Samuel Dyer became the Secretary of the LMS Missionary Meeting in August 1843 and provided most of the accounts of the actual proceedings.²² The following was his list of legally permitted places for operations of non-Chinese organizations and corporations negotiated at the end of the war (recorded in his journals and correspondence).²³

1. SHANGHAI and its vicinity, with a population of about 500,000.
2. NINGBO (then known as Ningpo) and its vicinity, with a population of about 300,000.
3. FUZHOU (then known as Foo-Chow-Foo or Fuchou) and its vicinity, with a population of about 100,000.
4. AMOY and its vicinity, with a population of about 130,000.
5. GUANGZHOU (sic) (then known as Canton) and its vicinity, with a population of about 1,000,000.
6. HONGKONG and its vicinity, with a population of about 50,000.

This analysis by him also reflects the common understanding of the composition of the population of the Treaty ports and became essential information for the campaigns in England and America to send missionaries to China.

For example, the Rev. William Boone of the US Episcopal Church under date of October 13, 1841, Wrote from Macao:

*"We must not let the China Mission go down, when everything in and around China seems to call upon us to increase it. I think there is every reason for a rational hope that in less than two years we may reside quietly at Amoy, and with prudence prosecute our labors within the heart of that great emporium of commerce."*²⁴

Dr. Boone sailed from Macao on February 1st, 1842, and arrived at Amoy on February 24th. There were also other eager missionaries anticipating the outcome of the war, who moved to Hongkong, Macao, or one of the future Treaty ports. The Baptists including the Rev. Isaacher Roberts [February 1842] and the Reverend Jehu Lewis Shuck [March 1842] and Henrietta Schuck moved to Hongkong, while the Reverend William Dean moved

²² Robert Morrison while a student had become acquainted with the Dyer family. Later during Morrison's sabbatical in England 1824-1826, Samuel Dyer took classes in Chinese language and culture from Dr. Morrison along with other men and women (the latter being taught separately). In 1827 he arrived in Penang and stayed there until 1835 when he moved to Malacca and took up work with the Anglo-Chinese College which had been established by Morrison (along with Rev. William Milne) in 1818.

²³ Memoir of Rev. Samuel Dyer. Evan Davies. 1846 Pp 248-249

²⁴ The Bishops of the American Church Mission in China 1906, William Boone, Artificial Collection, VTS Records, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Digital File. P.3. William Boone returned to the US in early 1843 and missed the Conference in Hongkong. He was consecrated Bishop in 1844.

to Macao in May 1842.²⁵ By May 1842 Theodore Joset (*Propaganda Fide*) arrived in Hongkong on May 1842 to establish a new Catholic mission.²⁶

The Rev. Elijah Bridgman of the American Board (ABCFM) was urging the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM to focus on the expansion of the Chinese mission and especially to recruit missionaries and provide resources. In one urgent letter, he stated

*“Protestant merchants and catholic missionaries are confidently looking for and exploiting and preparing to occupy more extended spheres of operating and there is no reason to question the wisdom of their views and conduct in so doing”.*²⁷

While most British missionaries avoided ‘jumping the gun’ the Religious Tract Society (based in London) did not. It had been distributing religious tracts in places like Ningbo and had been trying to create a united interdenominational approach to the writing, publication, and distribution of religious tracts. It requested that the Missionary Conference in Hongkong take up their request for a common version of the Bible.²⁸

Dyer’s Memoir captures the excitement best:

“In these circumstances, the body of missionaries to which Mr. Dyer belonged and the Society with which they stood connected, felt that it was of the utmost importance that all the labourers then in the field should meet in conference at Hong-Kong. Mr. Dyer repaired thither, but to return no more! He left Singapore in company with his beloved colleague, Mr. J. Stronach, on the 18th of July, 1843, and reached his destination on the 7th of the following month.

CHINA OPENED! This not only begins a new epoch in the history .of that empire, and in the social relations and mutual intercourse of the world, but it marks a new era in the operations and history of the Protestant mission to that people. It is impossible yet to say what the ultimate results of this altered state of things will be; but changes of a decided character in the opinions, habits, and in the civil and social condition of that remarkable race, will undoubtedly be among the consequences of that OPENING. This therefore was a critical juncture. To act wisely then, was a point of vital moment! Many

²⁵ British Baptists in China 1845-1952 H.R. Williamson. 1957 P.18. Lam Chi-fung's Transformative Role in Shaping Hong Kong Baptist Life between 1950 and 1970. A.K.To. 2018 Pp.32-33. Also see a series of letters from missionaries in China to the ABCFM including one in October 1842 which listed all those arriving in Hongkong and other cities Papers of The American Board of Commissioners For Foreign Missions ABC 16-: Missions To Asia 1827-1919 ABCFM 2000 Unit 3 Reel 257 16.3.8: South China Mission. Vol. 1a Pp. 78-80

²⁶See The Beliefs, Aspirations, and Methods of the First Missionaries in British Hong Kong 1841-1845 Kate Lowe. 2000. P. 53-54. We should also note that the *The Congregation of the Mission* (The Lazarists) had begun to move their mission to Hongkong and later the Sisters of Charity arrived in Hongkong and then moved to Ningbo in 1845.

²⁷ Papers of The American Board of Commissioners For Foreign Missions Bridgman to Anderson March 26 1842 p3 Reel 257 P. 91

²⁸ See Doctrinal Dispute within Interdenominational Missions: The Shanghai Tract Committee in the 1840s. John T. P. Lai. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, July 2010, Third Series, Vol. 20, No. 3 (July 2010), pp. 308-309, Appendix pp. 316--317

most important topics were to be brought before the missionaries, when they met, for discussion, arrangement, and final settlement.

*THE SACRED SCRIPTURES AND PUBLICATIONS;
THE ANGLO-CHINESE COLLEGE AND EDUCATION;
PRINTING PRESSES;
FUTURE MISSIONARY STATIONS;
THE ALLOCATION OF THEMSELVES AND NATIVE AGENTS;*

and many kindred and associated matters were among the topics that required much deliberation and wise adjustment. The brethren when assembled in conference, appointed Mr. Dyer as their secretary. In this they displayed much wisdom; for his knowledge on every topic to be discussed was extensive and accurate, and in case of a diversity of opinion, he was a man of peace, and he was moreover a man of incessant application, so that nothing would be left unrecorded nor imperfectly done. This however entailed on him most onerous duties. Not only was it necessary that he should be present at every session of the conference, but it necessarily imposed upon him many duties in transcribing resolutions and minutes, and in condensing discussions, and deliberations for the purpose of transmitting them home to the Society, from which the other members of the conference would be free.”²⁹

The General Conference of Missionaries can be split into two main events.

The first order of business was to discuss the details and import of the Treaty of Nanjing for the London Missionary Society’s mission strategy.

The second order of business was to address linguistic disputes which some considered to be critical to the missionary enterprise.

There were other issues needing attention as well, such as presenting a united front on the content and distribution of tracts. It should be noted here, that these two areas of discussion occurred on different dates, and not all the missionaries attended both sessions. Missionary strategy was discussed from August 10 - 21 1843 while the translation of the Bible was discussed from August 22 – 28 1843.³⁰ The first meeting was on August 10th, 1843 at the home of Dr. Benjamin Hobson a medical missionary. Only LMS missionaries attended these first sessions: namely, Walter Medhurst, Samuel Dyer, Alexander Stronach, John Stronach, James Legge, and Benjamin Hobson. Meetings were to be held every day at 9.00 am. It was noted that Mr. J.R. Morrison, who was not a missionary but the son of the preeminent missionary of the era (the Reverend Robert Morrison), should be invited and that the Reverend William C. Milne should have the right to review and assent or dissent from resolutions passed, after he arrived (which was on August 14th). It was also noted that Dr. William Lockhart was missing but would come later. As noted, most of the meetings from August 10th

²⁹ The minutes of the Conference are contained in a Letter by Dyer to the LMS dated August 25, 1843, and supplemented by summary accounts by other persons attending the conference and a few extracts in some publications such as The Chinese Recorder. Dyer Letter op. cit. p.1.

³⁰ These dates are based on various dates found in articles and memoirs and correspondence between missionaries and their home agencies. Also, the sessions were held in missionary houses and the attendees seem to vary.

through August 19th were likely only attended by LMS missionaries.³¹ We do know that on August 22nd, there was a larger and broader gathering of missionaries which included not only LMS-affiliated missionaries but also missionaries from other denominations as well as people from missionary-sponsored educational and medical institutions.³²

The following chart shows the persons ‘officially’ attending the Conference in terms of the official report to the LMS. Use of the term 'officially' is used to refer to those who were listed as attendees by the ‘Report of the Proceedings’ to the LMS by Samuel Dyer. According to other missionary reports, several other attendees at the Conference were not mentioned in the Dyer report to the LMS, but they did attend the meeting held on August 22nd, 1843, and subsequent meetings through September 4th, 1843.³³ They are listed here. The ‘Location before the Conference’ term treats those who were in Macao or Guangdong (Canton) as being commuters to the Conference. The term ‘Location after the Conference’ refers to where attendees went by the end of 1843. Some went on to other Treaty Ports in 1844.

Table 1: Recorded Attendees at the Hongkong Meetings August 10-August 21 1843

Persons in Attendance Officially³⁴	Organization	Location before Conference	Location after Conference
Rev. Walter H. Medhurst (Chairman)	London Missionary Society	Djakarta (Batavia)	Shanghai
Rev. Samuel Dyer (Secretary)	London Missionary Society	Singapore	Macao
Dr. Benjamin Hobson	London Missionary Society	Hongkong	Hongkong
Rev. James Legge	London Missionary Society	Malacca	Hongkong
Rev. Alexander Stronach	London Missionary Society	Penang	Penang
Rev. John Stronach	London Missionary Society	Singapore	Singapore
Rev. William Charles Milne	London Missionary Society	Ningbo	Canton

31 We don't know for sure but the records accessed seem to provide no evidence that others attended although it seems quite likely that there were conversations between those in the room and those staying in the houses of the missionaries.

32 <https://digital.soas.ac.uk/AA00001359/00007/allvolumes> 50th Annual Report LMS 1844 p.40

33 Chinese Recorder & Missionary Journal Issue Vol XII January 1843 - December 1843 Pp. 551-553

34 While J.R. Morrison was expected to attend, there is no record of his attendance.

Table 2: Recorded Attendees at the Hongkong Meetings August 2 – September 4, 1843³⁵

Persons in Attendance on August 22, 1843³⁶	Organization	Location before Conference	Location after Conference
Rev. Walter H. Medhurst (Chairman)	London Missionary Society	Djakarta (Batavia)	Shanghai
Rev. Samuel Dyer (Secretary)	London Missionary Society	Singapore	Macao
Dr. Benjamin Hobson	London Missionary Society	Hongkong	Hongkong
Rev. James Legge	London Missionary Society	Malacca	Hongkong
Rev. Alexander Stronach	London Missionary Society	Penang	Penang
Rev. John Stronach	London Missionary Society	Singapore	Singapore
Rev. William Charles Milne	London Missionary Society	Ningbo	
Rev. Elijah Coleman Bridgman	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions	Guangdong	Guangdong (Canton)
Rev. Dyer Ball	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions	Macao	Guangdong
Rev. William Dean	American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions	Hongkong	Hongkong
Dr. Daniel Jerome MacGowan	American Board of Baptist Missions	Hongkong	Chusan
Rev. Issacher Jacox Roberts	American Board of Baptist Missions	Hongkong	Xiamen (Amoy)
Rev. Jehu Lewis Shuck	American Board of Baptist Missions	Hongkong	Hongkong
Rev. Walter Macy Lowrie	Presbyterian North (American Presbyterian Board)	Macao	Hongkong

³⁵ Yu Qiang *op.cit.* Pp 55, 68-69, Chinese Recorder *op.cit.* Pp., 551-553

³⁶ Not all attendees were at every session. For example, MacGowan and Schuck were not at the first session on August 22nd. Brown only attended the first session on August 22nd. Lowrie only attended the session on August 28th.

Persons in Attendance on August 22, 1843³⁶	Organization	Location before Conference	Location after Conference
S. R. Brown	Morrison Education Society	Hongkong	Hongkong

There were other missionaries in Hongkong at the time and in some cases, it is clear that they either attended some of the sessions, especially the general meeting on August 22nd or had close connections with those who have been recorded as being at the different Conference sessions. At this time the number of Protestant and Catholic personnel in Hongkong was quite small (as was the population of Hongkong) and were living closely together, if not staying in the homes of missionaries recorded at the conferences.

The following chart shows the persons who might have attended the Conference, especially the Meeting on August 22nd, 1843.

Table 3: People Associated with Attendees at the Hongkong Meetings

Other Persons possibly in attendance or in close communication with the recorded attendees	Organization	Location before Conference	Date of Arrival in Hongkong	Location after Conference	Person/s Communicating closely with
Mary Ann Aldersey	London Missionary Society	Djakarta	July 8, 1843	Ningbo	Rev. John Stronach Mr. J.R. Morrison
Mary Isabella Legge (Nee Morison)	London Missionary Society	Malacca	July 10, 1843	Hongkong	Rev. James Legge
Mrs. Jane Hobson (Nee Abbey)	London Missionary Society	Macao	June 1, 1843	Hongkong	Dr. Benjamin Hobson
Rev. Thomas MacBryde	Presbyterian North (American Presbyterian Board)	Amoy	September 18, 1841	USA	Rev. William Lowrie
Mrs. Mary Williamson McBryde (Nee McClesky)	Presbyterian North (American Presbyterian Board)	Amoy	September 18, 1841	USA	Rev. William Lowrie

Other Persons possibly in attendance or in close communication with the recorded attendees	Organization	Location before Conference	Date of Arrival in Hongkong	Location after Conference	Person/s Communicating closely with
Mrs. Henrietta Schuck	American Board of Baptist Missions	Hongkong	March 19, 1842	Hongkong	Rev. Jehu Lewis Shuck

Strategic Planning Results

We have noted above how some missionary activity had been occurring before the official Treaty of Nanjing. Following the Conference, there were major moves to open missions in the new Treaty Ports. After the Conference ended in early September, missionaries began relocating to the Treaty Ports.

Once the 'Opium War' was underway, the efforts to move missionary operations to Canton, Macao, and Hongkong picked up steam.³⁷ The LMS London leadership was under enormous pressure to distance itself and its mission from the opium trade and began to develop a hostility to British support of the opium traders while at the same time, it cultivated the support needed for the transport of the missionaries and the protection of the British navy.

"In some of these ventures, two men identified with missionary activities were involved - Charles Gutzlaff and John Robert Morrison. They were official translators and as such accompanied H. M. S. Blond and Melville to the port of Amoy in August, 1842. Later, Gutzlaff became a magistrate at Tinghai and formed a police force and a band of informers. John Robert Morrison, though he acted only as an official translator, was thought by the Chinese to be "a military commander". This may have been for good reason. At one point Morrison did take a more active role in the British military campaign in China."³⁸

This had been a critical factor in the shaping of the LMS request for a General Missionary Conference in 1843.³⁹ While there were dissenting voices in London about the impending move of all operations in South East Asia to Hongkong, the LMS agreed that the opportunity to finally expand operations into China was an opportunity not to be missed. It was thought that the British control of Hongkong and trade in the five Treaty Ports would enable missionary activity to proceed quickly. However, the LMS had not reckoned on the appointment of Henry Pottinger in 1841 as its Consul in China by Palmerston (Foreign Secretary of Great Britain). Pottinger had worked closely with the East India Company in India and seemingly inherited the suspicion if not antipathy of the EIC to missionary activity. He was the chief negotiator of the Treaty of

³⁷ Jean Paquette *op.cit.* P. 135

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Pp. 132-133

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Pp. 128-130

Nanjing. While the Treaty permitted religious activity in the Treaty Ports it was to be under the supervision or control of the British Consul.⁴⁰ Pottinger tried to limit missionary activity in the Treaty Ports but he still needed the missionaries for translation and interpretation and even negotiations.⁴¹ The occupation of Hongkong by the British officially commenced in January 1841.⁴² In December 1842, the LMS instructed the LMS missionaries to move all operations to Hongkong and to gather together to discuss how the re-branded Ultra Ganges mission – namely, the China Mission - should be expanded and implemented.⁴³

The second order of business on August 10, 1843, was to discuss the move of LMS missionary operations to Hongkong. The closure of all missionary, educational, and printing operations in Djakarta, Malacca, and Penang was approved along with the monetary proceeds to be sent to Hongkong.⁴⁴ The Ultra-Ganges mission was dissolved and in April 1843, the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca was moved by Rev. James Legge to Hongkong.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the LMS began to abandon some of its missions in South East Asia (Djakarta 1843, Penang 1844, Singapore 1847).⁴⁶ Its new focus was on Guangdong (Canton), Hongkong, Shanghai, Ningbo, and Amoy.

The third order of business was to deal with the allocation of missionaries (LMS missionaries) in southeast Asia. Legge was assigned to Hongkong along with the operations of the Anglo-Chinese College. Hobson was assigned to Hongkong along with the operations of the Medical Missionary Society. Alexander Stronach and William Young were assigned to Amoy. Samuel Dyer and John Stronach were assigned to Fuzhou (or Foochow) (known then as Fuk Chow Fou). Medhurst, Milne, and Lockhart were assigned to Shanghai and/or Ningbo (known then as Ningpo).⁴⁷

The fourth item was to establish the Anglo-Chinese College in Hongkong. This had several interesting sub-resolutions including that the language taught and used at the College should be Mandarin. There were 34 sub-resolutions on this topic.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Ibid., P.153

⁴¹ Ibid., P.149. Reverend Walter Medhurst for example was the intermediary between Pottinger and Chinese officials in Canton in post-Treaty issues.

⁴² The British Foreign Office wanted an island controlled by the British following the model of Macao and the Portuguese. They were offered Kowloon or Hongkong by the Imperial Commissioner Qishan. Hongkong was chosen by Charles Elliot and the Treaty of Chuenpi was signed in January 1841. Its ratification was later rejected by both the British and Chinese governments, but its provisions formed the core of the Treaty of Nanjing.

⁴³ Jean Paquette op.cit. P. 153, LMS op.cit. p.38

⁴⁴ Dyer's Letter op.cit Pp. 1-2 The first order was to organize the meetings and procedural matters.

⁴⁵ See Waiting for China: The Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca, 1818-1843, and Early Nineteenth-century Missions. Brian Harrison 1979

⁴⁶ The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895. Richard Lovett 1899 Pp 438,439

⁴⁷ Ibid., P2

⁴⁸ Ibid., Pp 3-4

The fifth item was the Missionary Printing operations. The printing operations at Penang were to be transferred to Hongkong; those at Malacca to Fuzhou; and those at Djakarta to Shanghai or Ningbo.⁴⁹

Item six was to set up an organization of all the LMS missionaries in China to be known as The General Committee of the Chinese Mission of the London Missionary Society with Alexander Stronach as its Secretary. Interestingly each Mission station was to have one representative and one vote. In addition, it mandated that there be a local committee at each station comprising all missionaries in the mission area with voting power after one year of service.⁵⁰

Meanwhile, other Missionary societies also began re-planning their mission strategy.

We noted above that the ABCFM had begun to refocus its efforts on the seacoast towns north of Canton⁵¹. The British General Baptists resolved at a meeting of their Missionary Committee in Leicester England on 22nd March 1843, "to extend the sphere of the Mission to China". This they had done, partly at least, at the instigation of the Rev. Lewis Shuck of the American Baptist Mission who had moved to and wrote from Hong Kong in September 1842 a year before the 1843 Conference.⁵²

"Let us look beyond the causes of the present dreadful and war-like position of affairs [the Sino-British war of that time] and regard the results and the consequences as they bear upon the advancement of the Kingdom and the will of Heaven"

Its first missionaries recruited for the China Mission went to Ningbo.⁵³ The Church Missionary Society, which heretofore had deferred to the LMS, decided to start a mission in China. In June 1844 Reverend Thomas McClatchie (part of the trio who founded the YMCA in that year) sailed for Shanghai.⁵⁴ The American Methodists were also discussing mission work in China.⁵⁵

While the original instructions from the LMS for the Conference in Hongkong were to its own missionaries, the missionaries on the ground made other societies welcome and the Conference became more representative of the missionaries in the area. Moreover, as is discussed below, the British and Foreign Bible Society requested the people attending, to address certain linguistic issues especially the need for a more readable Bible. The Agencies represented at the Second Session of the Conference were as below:

⁴⁹ ibid., p5

⁵⁰ ibid., Pp. 6-7

⁵¹ Major efforts were in Amoy and Chusan

⁵² H.R. Williamson. op.cit P.18.

⁵³ Reverend T.H. Hudson and Reverend and Mrs. William Jarrom

⁵⁴ A narrative of an exploratory visit to each of the consular cities of China, and to the islands of Hong Kong and Chusan in behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the years 1844, 1845, 1846. George Smith 1847 P.iii

⁵⁵ Clifton Jackson Phillips op.cit., p.195 Footnote 97.

Missionary Agency	First Sessions August 10-20	Second Sessions August 22 – September 4
London Missionary Society - LMS	7	7
American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions - ABCFM		3
American Baptist Board of Missions - ABBM		3
American Presbyterian Board – APB (North American)		1
Morrison Educational Society - MES		1

Tellingly, 18 of the 23 persons identified as being at or associated with the 1843 Conference either stayed in Hongkong, Canton, and Macao or moved to one of the other Treaty Ports open to missionaries before the year 1843 was over.

Undoubtedly there was a competitive instinct in competition with the cooperative spirit. Not only between missionaries in the field but also between home agencies. For example, Alexander and John Stronach wrote a letter to the LMS in June 1844, concerning the assignment of William Young to Amoy and Alexander Stronach's plans to move to Amoy also. In this letter, they stated that they didn't agree with the LMS concerns which had been expressed after the Conference ended. The LMS had questioned the propriety of LMS missionaries intruding on an *"area already pre-occupied by American Missionaries"*. The counter-argument by the Stronachs was that not only had the Americans Abeel and Hepburn invited them in by letter and also orally through Pohlman, but the Baptists were already there as well. He then stated Abeel called Amoy *"a world unto itself"* and the dialect was already known to the LMS as well as the American and Baptist missionaries, unlike Fuzhou whose dialect would require a long time to learn. Finally, they said that it made no sense to import issues when the job of the missionaries was *"preventing these collisions ... of differences of sentiments ... subject of new causes"*. He went on to state he would go to Amoy and if conditions turned out to be different from his analysis he would reconsider his strategy.⁵⁶ On July 16th, 1844 Alexander Stronach and Mrs. Stronach, and William Young informed the LMS that they had set sail from Penang to Amoy.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, Dr. D. B. McCartee of the American Presbyterian Mission arrived in Ningbo on June 21st, 1844 and it was noted by the Presbyterian Board that

"In 1838 two missionaries to the Chinese had arrived at Singapore, and the number was increased from time to time, so that when the five ports were thrown- or rather forced-open, it was possible to settle two missionaries at Canton, three at Amoy and five at Ningpo. The larger number was provided for Ningpo because it had been decided "to occupy Ningpo as the chief station, or mission, of our Board in China."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ SOAS *op.cit.*, Letter from Alexander and John Stronach, 14 June 1844, Singapore p.2

⁵⁷ SOAS *op. cit.*, Letter from Alexander Stronach, July 2nd, 1844, Singapore p.2

⁵⁸ *Jubilee Papers of the Central China Presbyterian Mission, 1844-1894*. Chapter 1: Historical Sketch of the Ningpo Station, American Presbyterian Mission 1895, p1.

There are similar sentiments expressed by all the Missionary Boards at that time. On the one hand, there was a strong drive to cooperate and transmit a common message. On the other hand, there was the need to maintain denominational efforts and show success to each agency's supporters. This tension between evangelical cooperation and traditional denominational interests would reverberate for the next 75 years.

The Language Question

As noted above, there was a meeting of all Missionaries and some others commencing on August 22nd, 1843 and after that meeting, from August 23rd through September 4th, 1843, missionaries from the four missionary agencies discussed the translation, printing, and distribution of books and tracts. The focus of these discussions was the proposal to create a new version of the New and Old testaments of the Bible.⁵⁹

The issue of translation of critical Christian terms in English had been going on since Robert Morrison was studying a Chinese-English dictionary in the British Museum before going to China. Morrison while fluent in Cantonese, preferred Mandarin for translation work, especially Confucian Mandarin (Ruist). Phister states that he *“sought to imitate a high official style of Ruist language, but it was wooden and often unclear”*⁶⁰ Morrison so dominated the field of translation of English into Chinese that it wasn't until after he died in 1834 that there emerged a growing public discussion of certain words and a desire for a more vernacular Bible.⁶¹

But there was more to the discussion than simple translation. Morrison was convinced that the Chinese (especially the Confucians) had an understanding of the God of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and that it was therefore critical that missionaries should be literate in Confucian writings, especially the classics, and that this was the nexus between the Christian message and the Confucian message and thus between the missionaries and the Chinese people. However, However, some favored a more critical stance to Confucian teaching and culture and a more authoritative role of the Bible in determining truth.⁶²

Dr. James Legge was the intellectual successor to Morrison in terms of Chinese language and culture⁶³. The discussion on the ' Term Question ' had heated up and into this

“Dr. Legge threw himself with the fervour of a man fighting for what his conscience holds to be the truth. It was, as one had said, ' the longest and the most embittered controversy in which he was ever engaged, a controversy with certain missionaries who did not think of the root ideas of the old Chinese religion as he did. Nominally it related to the question whether they had any word that could be used to

⁵⁹ SOAS op.cit., Letter from Alexander Stronach and John Stronach, September 8th 1843, Hong Kong p.6. After the resolution was voted on by the 12 missionaries a confirmation vote was held at which 14 missionaries were present.

⁶⁰ The Legacy of James Legge. Lauren F. Phister 1998. P.3

⁶¹ There are several sources which should be consulted. One helpful article is The Translation of the Bible into Chinese: The Origin and Unique Authority of the Union Version. Ann Cui'an Peng 2021.

⁶² We should note that this issue dates back at least to Ricci and the subsequent tensions with Papal authorities not just with Protestants.

⁶³ He later became the first Professor of Chinese studies at Oxford University

translate the idea of God: really and substantially it concerned whether they had any idea of God at all. And he maintained they had.”⁶⁴

The 1843 Conference in Hongkong took up the question and when it became clear that there would not be a clear resolution of ‘terms’, especially the word for God, it was decided that a committee would be established to complete a new revision of the Bible. In addition, there was considerable pressure to make such a translation a more vernacular version that would appeal to ordinary Chinese, not just scholars.⁶⁵ It is clear from the minutes of the Conference, that the delegates could not agree on the correct term in Chinese for “God” and essentially they postponed a resolution on this for future meetings.⁶⁶

“The committee appointed to report upon the proper mode of rendering the word (Elohim) stated that they were not prepared to recommend any one term to express it. It appears to this meeting that it will be difficult to find any single term which shall suit the views of Baptists and Paedobaptists on that subject; so it was resolved.

That we proceed harmoniously in the work of revision, employing the talents of missionaries of both these sections of the church to conduct it, and to bring it to as perfect a state as possible: that when this is done, should difficulties still exist on this subject, each section shall be at liberty to recommend for publication separate editions of the same version, agreeing in all other respects, and only differing as to the rendering of this term: and that the revision go forth to the world, not as the work of one party or of the other, but as the result of the combined efforts of the whole.”⁶⁷

That as it is difficult to decide upon the most appropriate word for expressing the name of God in Chinese, each station may for the present use such word as it shall prefer, leaving the ultimate decision to the general committee”.⁶⁸

These last two resolutions illustrate the efforts of missionaries in the field to present a united or at least cooperative front in their work.

The work was allotted to missionaries at the various mission stations in China (established or about to be established). When the whole of the New Testament had been revised, each station was to select one or more of its most experienced men to act as Delegates and be the judges as to the suitability of each version.⁶⁹

The planned meeting to review and approve the versions submitted was held in Shanghai on July 1st, 1847. The Delegates were Bishop Boone, of the American Episcopal Mission; Dr. Walter H. Medhurst and Reverend J.

⁶⁴ James Legge, *Missionary and Scholar*. Helen Edith Legge 1905 Pp. 68-69

⁶⁵ Phister *op.cit.* P.3 *E.C. Bridgman and the Coming of the Millennium. America's first missionary to China*. Michael C. Lazich 1997 P. 405

⁶⁶ The Chinese Recorder *op.cit.*, pp. 551-553

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Meeting Minutes for September 1, 1843

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Meeting Minutes for September 4, 1843. This was the last session.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, *Reply to Dr. Boone's vindication of comments on the translation of Ephes.* Walter Henry Medhurst 1852 p.iii

Stronach, of the London Missionary Society; Reverend W. M. Lowrie, of the American Presbyterian Mission; and Reverend E. C. Bridgman of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.⁷⁰

As before in 1843, the Committee could not agree on the 'term' question but did support most of the new translations of the books of the New Testament. It agreed to meet again on February 12th, 1851 to review translations of the Old Testament. This controversy over the 'terms' and more importantly over the issue of religious traditions and beliefs in Chinese culture raged on until 1880 when those who wanted to make a clean break with Confucian beliefs and Chinese culture seemed to have won the 'culture' wars.

Conclusion

The 1843 Conference of Missionaries was a major event in the evolution of the mission to spread the Christian religion in China. It energized missionaries in the East to focus their efforts on the most populous country in the world. While driven by the LMS Board of Directors and initially dominated by British missionaries, the scale of China and the ardent desire to spread the Christian message resulted in a broader constituency of nearly all missionaries, including Roman Catholics (especially from France). It thus established an approach whereby all denominations and agencies would work together on common issues even as they operated as independent entities or agencies.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Lazich op.cit., p.416 Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese: Giving a List of Their Publications, and Obituary Notices of the Deceased. Alexander Wylie 1867 p.100

⁷¹ Following the 1843 Conference there were the following Conferences:

1847 (and 1851) Shanghai - Focus was on the development of an agreed-upon translation of the Bible. Small preselected group of delegates appointed in 1843

1869 Beijing – Focus was on the 'nativization' of the clergy and the recruitment of women missionaries. There were 32 in attendance (16 women and 16 men).

1877 Shanghai – Focus was still on language ('terms'), especially on the appropriate translation of 'God' and 'Spirit' into Chinese; the plan to extend the scope and quantity of school books; opium denunciation and the use of periodicals or journals. There were 120 persons in attendance including the place of women in these conferences. ['This caused a flutter', with one person quoting 1 Corinthians about women keeping silent, and the chairman vacating his chair in protest." Biblewomen from London to China: The Transnational Appropriation of a Female Mission Idea Valerie Griffiths 2008 p.530. Also see Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, held at Shanghai, May 10-24, 1877 Yates M. T. Nelson R., Barrett E.R. 1878.

1890 Shanghai – Focus was still on producing an authoritative version of the Bible in Chinese and increasing support for educational initiatives. There were 446 persons in attendance.

1899 Chongqing – West China Conference - Focus was on Chengtu which established a union of all 7 Protestant missions in Szechwan. There were 442 persons in attendance.

1900 Shanghai –Conference of Women Missionaries –Missionaries of all denominations from across the country fled to Shanghai for refuge. Missionaries took advantage of being together in exile and held several Conferences related to their work in China. The focus was on gaining .."a better knowledge of the social life of the women of China and how to best reach out to the Chinese women.

1903 Changsa – Conference of Hunan Missionaries –There were 13 Missionary organizations present.

1907 Shanghai – China Centenary Missionary Conference. There were 1,170 persons in attendance although women were underrepresented. The focus was to unite Protestant efforts into a single coordinated body rather than the diverse and often competitive efforts of many different missionary organizations Creating the Committee of Federation and Comity which established a framework for united action. The Conference also called for an expansion of resources

The Missionary Conference in China established a mechanism for missionaries of different denominations and agencies to work together, which was utilized in the development of major missionary conferences over the next 75 years. It also encouraged missionaries to work together in the localities where they were stationed. This cooperation, fostered in part by their isolation in the villages and cities where they were working and in part by their evangelical beliefs, resulted in various local interdenominational meetings and 'prayer' circles.

The Conference demonstrated that the evangelical revival motivated people from different branches of Christianity and different countries, to relegate many parochial issues to the background in order to take advantage of the changed political situation. It also demonstrated that there were underlying issues which would pursue and preoccupy the mission enterprise for years to come. These included the role of the family (including veneration of ancestors); the role of women (including missionary women); the primacy of Christian theology (the terms for God and Spirit); and the shape of Government (Chinese tradition versus Occidental revolutions).

devoted to education and medical work – to the discomfort of evangelical missionaries who said that “education is not...a substitute for preaching.” The most divisive and controversial issue at the Conference was the privileges and exemptions from Chinese law given Chinese Christians under the ‘unequal treaties’. However, the resolution adopted by the Conference stated that “the time has not come when all the protection to Christian converts provided in the treaties can safely be withdrawn”.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

For the London Missionary Society [LMS] the ongoing digitization of documents related to China has opened up a considerable amount of materials heretofore only available by visiting SOAS in person.

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/research/library/special-collections>

For the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions [ABCFM] the Houghton Library at Harvard University has microfilmed the ABCFM records and several libraries have copies of the reels. In particular, the records for the China mission are in Papers of The American Board of Commissioners For Foreign Missions ABC 16-: Missions To Asia 1827-1919 ABCFM 2000 Unit 3 Reel 257 16.3.8.

https://hollisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/repositories/24/archival_objects/647249

Chinese Recorder & Missionary Journal in Database: American Antiquarian Society (AAS) Historical Periodicals Collection - Series 5 Publications. Available through EBSCO [American Antiquarian Society \(AAS\) historical periodicals collection](#)

Mission Periodicals Online: Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle (British)

The Bishops of the American Church Mission in China 1906, William Boone, Artificial Collection, VTS Records, Virginia Theological Seminary Archives, Digital File.

D.W.C. Olyphant Papers, 1827-1851

https://blogs.cul.columbia.edu/burke/files/2014/02/Burke_MRL6_OlyphantPapers.pdf

Richardson-Sloane Special Collections Center

<https://archives.davenportlibrary.com/repositories/4/resources/1003>

Contemporary Sources (published before 1870 and in chronological order)

China, its State and Prospects. Walter Henry Medhurst 1838

Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison Morrison. Eliza A. Morrison Vol 1 1839

Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison. Eliza A. Morrison & Samuel Kidd Vol. 2 1839

Memoir of Rev. Samuel Dyer. Evan Davies. 1846

A narrative of an exploratory visit to each of the consular cities of China, and to the islands of Hong Kong and Chusan in behalf of the Church Missionary Society, in the years 1844, 1845, 1846. George Smith 1847

Memoir of the Rev. David Abell, D.D., Late Missionary to China. G.R. Williamson 1848

Chinese Commercial Guide, Consisting of a Collection of Details and Regulations Respecting Foreign Trade with China. By the late Hon. J. R. Morrison. Third Edition Chinese Repository 1848

American Missionary Memorial Including Biographical and Historical Sketches. H.W.Pierson 1853

Daughters of China; or, Sketches of Domestic Life in the Celestial Empire. Eliza J. Gillett Bridgman 1853

Memoir of Mrs Lucy T Lord of the Chinese Baptist Mission. Lucy T. Lord 1854

The Medical Missionary in China; A Narrative of Twenty Years Experience. William Lockhart 1861

The Pioneer of American Missions in China: the life and labors of Elijah Coleman Bridgman. Eliza J. Gillett Bridgman, ed. with an introductory note by Asa D. Smith. 1864

Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese: Giving a List of Their Publications, and Obituary Notices of the Deceased. Alexander Wylie 1867

Our Life in China. Helen C. Nevius 1869

Other Sources (in Alphabetical order)

A Chinese Biographical Dictionary. Herbert A. Giles 1898

A Critical Analysis of Robert Morrison's Mission Strategy in China and Malacca. Mee Onn Lee 2011

A History of Christian Missions in China. Kenneth Scott Latourette 1929.

A Maker of the New Orient: Samuel Robbins Brown, Pioneer Educator in China, America, and Japan: the Story of his Life and Work. William Elliot Griffis 1902

Anglican and Protestant Missionary Societies In Great Britain: Their use of Women as Missionaries from the late 18th to the late 19th Century. Jocelyn Murray 1992

An uncompromising land; the London Missionary Society in China, 1807-1860. Jean Paquette 1987

Asia in the Making of Christianity Conversion, Agency, and Indigeneity,1600s to the Present. Richard Fox Young; & Jonathan A. Seitz 2013.

Biblewomen from London to China: the Transnational Appropriation of a Female Mission Idea. Valerie Griffiths 2008

Biography and the Making of Transnational Imperialism: Karl Gützlaff on the China Coast, 1831–1851. Thoralf Klein 2019

Builders of the Chinese Church: Pioneer Protestant Missionaries and Chinese Church Leaders. G. Wright Doyle, (editor) 2015. Also for biographies of missionaries see <http://bdconline.net/en/stories> ed. G. Wright Doyle

Christian Encounters with Chinese Culture: Essays on Anglican and Episcopal History in China. Philip L. Wickeri 2015

Christian missions, Chinese culture, and colonial administration: A study of the activities of James Legge and Ernest John Eitel in nineteenth century Hong Kong. Man Kong Wong 1997

Colonial Hong Kong and Modern China Interaction and Reintegration. Pui-tak; Lee (Ed.) 2005

Competing Kingdoms. Women, Mission, Nation and the American Protestant Empire 1812-1960. Barbara Reeves-Ellington (Ed) 2010

'Dialectics of the Three Selves". The ideal of a "self-governing" native church -from a missionary concept to an emancipatory slogan of Asian and African Christians in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Klaus Koschorke 2018

Doctrinal Dispute within Interdenominational Missions: The Shanghai Tract Committee in the 1840s. John T. P. Lai. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, July 2010, Third Series, Vol. 20, No. 3 (July 2010)

Doomed Romance. Broken Hearts, Lost Souls, and Sexual Tumult in Nineteenth-Century America. Christine Leigh Heyrman 2021

Earthen Vessels & Transcendent Power: American Presbyterians in China, 1837-1952. George Thompson Brown 1997

E.C. Bridgman and the Coming of the Millennium. America's First Missionary to China. Michael C. Lazich 1997

Ecumenism is a Child of Evangelicalism. Sovan K. Mallick

Edge of Empires. Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong. John M. Carroll 2005

Education in Hong Kong Pre-1841-1941: Fact and Opinion. Materials for a History of Education in Hong Kong. Anthony Sweeting 1990

Fifty years in Amoy, or, A history of the Amoy Mission, China. Philip Wilson Pitcher 1893

From the Society of Jesus to the East India Company: A Case Study in the Social History of Translation. Sean Golden 2000

Gender, Power, and Social Change in the Experience of Western Women Missionaries in Chinese Society from 1807 to 1954. Kerby Goff 2016

Gützlaff and the Chinese Union: A Germ for the Indigenous Chinese Protestant Church? Chou Ma 2019

Imperial Twilight. The Opium War and the End of China's Last Golden Age. Stephen R. Platt 2018

James Legge, Missionary and Scholar. Helen Edith Legge 1905

Jubilee Papers of the Central China Presbyterian Mission, 1844-1894. American Presbyterian Mission 1895

Lam Chi-fung's Transformative Role in Shaping Hong Kong Baptist Life between 1950 and 1970. A.K. To. 2018

London Missionary Society's Activities in Hong Kong and Shanghai during the 19th Century (1843— 1860). YU Qiang 2006. [Written In Chinese Traditional - 十九世紀倫敦傳教士在滬港兩地活動之研究 (1843—1860)]

'Mission and Colonialism', Michael Gladwin in The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century Christian Thought. Oxford Handbooks (2019; online edn, Oxford Academic, 10 Aug. 2017), Joel D.S. Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, and Johannes Zachhuber (eds), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198718406.013.4>

Mission Problems and Mission Methods in South China: Lectures on Evangelistic Theology. John Campbell Gibson 1901

Mission to China. How an Englishman Brought the West to the Orient. John Holliday 2016

Missionaries and Indigenous Culture in Nineteenth Century China. Ian Welch 2015

Obituary: Samuel Wells Williams. James Muhlenberg Bailey 1884

Protestant America and The Pagan World: The First Half-Century of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions 1810-1860. Clifton Jackson Phillips 1969

Protestant Ethics And The Spirit Of Imperialism: British Congregationalists and The London Missionary Society, 1795-1925. Susan Elizabeth Thorne 1990

Records of the General Conference of Protestant Missions in China—Shanghai—1877. A. M. Fielde 1877

Records of the General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China, held at Shanghai, May 10-24,1877. M. T. Yates, R. Nelson, E.R. Barrett 1878.

Rex Christus; an outline study of China. Arthur Henderson Smith, Frances J. Dyer 1903

Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China. Christopher A. Daily 2013

Striving for 'The Whole Duty of Man' - James Legge and the Scottish Protestant Encounter with China. Assessing Confluences in Scottish Nonconformism in Chinese Missionary Scholarship, Victorian Sinology, and Chinese Protestantism. Vol 1 Lauren F. Phister 2004

The Beliefs, Aspirations and Methods of the First Missionaries in British Hong Kong 1841-1845. Kate Lowe. 2000

The Canton Hospital and Medicine in Nineteenth Century China 1835-1900. Sara Waitstill Tucker 1983

The Centenary Volume of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1892. John Brown Myers 1892

Opening China: Karl F.A. Gützlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827-1852. Jessie Gregory Lutz 2008

The Emergence of a Chinese Elite in Hongkong. Carl T. Smith 1971

The Foo-Chow Missionaries 1847-1880. Elsworth C. Carlson 1974

The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784–1844. Jacques M. Downs 2014

The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992. Brian Stanley 1992

The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895. Richard Lovett 1899

The Legacy of James Legge. Lauren F. Phister 1998

The Life and Times of Sir Kai Ho Kai: A Prominent Figure in Nineteenth-Century Hong Kong. G.H. Choa 2000

The Missionary Origins of Modern Ecumenism: Milestones Leading up to 1920. Peter Heers 2005

The Reformed Church in China, 1842-1951. Gerald Francis De_Jong 1992

The Role of the British and Foreign School Society in Elementary Education in India and the East Indies 1813-75. George F. Bartle 1994

The Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, of the United States of America. Presented to the General Assembly, May, 1870

The Translation of the Bible into Chinese: The Origin and Unique Authority of the Union Version. Ann Cui'an Peng 2021.

The St. Andrew's Seven. The Finest Flowering of Missionary Zeal in Scottish History. Stuart Piggin and John Roxborough 1985

Sketches of the missions of the American Board. Samuel Colcord Bartlett 1872

Waiting for China: The Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca, 1818-1843, and Early Nineteenth-century Missions. Brian Harrison 1979

Women in the Church. Lights In Dark Places: Women Evangelists In Early Victorian Britain, 1838-1851. Donald M. Lewis 1990

Working His Purpose Out, The History of the English Presbyterian Mission 1847-1947. Edward Band 1948