

## **“Go Ye Therefore....” Diverse Methods of Spreading the Missionary Message**

*Exhibit at the Yale Divinity Library, February – August 2019, curated by Martha Lund Smalley*

Christian missionaries have employed diverse methods to carry out the Great Commission in the millennia since Jesus instructed his disciples to “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...” This exhibit draws on the holdings of the Divinity Library’s Day Missions Collection to illustrate methods of spreading the Christian message through evangelization, educational work, medical work, public health activities, relief work, translation, literature distribution, and so forth. Images and documents show how boats, tents, gyroscopes, parades, puppets, dental clinics, model villages, printing presses, artwork, tracts, etc. all played a role in spreading the “good news.”



The Day Missions Collection at the Yale Divinity Library is known as the preeminent North American collection for documentation of the history of the missionary enterprise and the development of Christianity throughout the world. The establishment of Christian missionary societies engaged in overseas evangelism, education, and medical work was an important social movement that emerged in the 19th century. By midcentury most Protestant denominations and many Catholic orders had created mission agencies and were actively recruiting missionaries to work in foreign lands.

### **Evangelistic meetings**

Mass evangelism in large venues was one method of spreading the missionary message. The attraction of such events was their novelty and evangelists would use music, visual effects, and even scientific demonstrations to draw a crowd.

At right, the audience for a meeting in China led by John R. Mott and G. Sherwood Eddy lines up for entry into the venue.





G. Sherwood Eddy



John R. Mott

In the early 1910s, John R. Mott and Sherwood Eddy, American YMCA leaders and world crusaders, made several highly publicized evangelistic tours through major cities in China. Accompanying them was C. H. Robertson, a science lecturer from Purdue University who held his audience spellbound with demonstrations of electricity, gyroscopes, radio, and wireless telegraph. Eddy played into the patriotism of Chinese youths and their admiration for Western science and civilization, and presented "Christ as the only hope of China," the guide for effective nation-building and the cure-all for the country's political and social ills.

From Lian Xi "Cultural Christians and the Search for Civil Society in Contemporary China," in *The Chinese Historical Review*, 20:1, 70-87 (2013)

The audience at a 1912 Sherwood Eddy meeting in China where C. H. Robertson was demonstrating scientific equipment to gain the attention of the group, with an evangelistic message to follow:





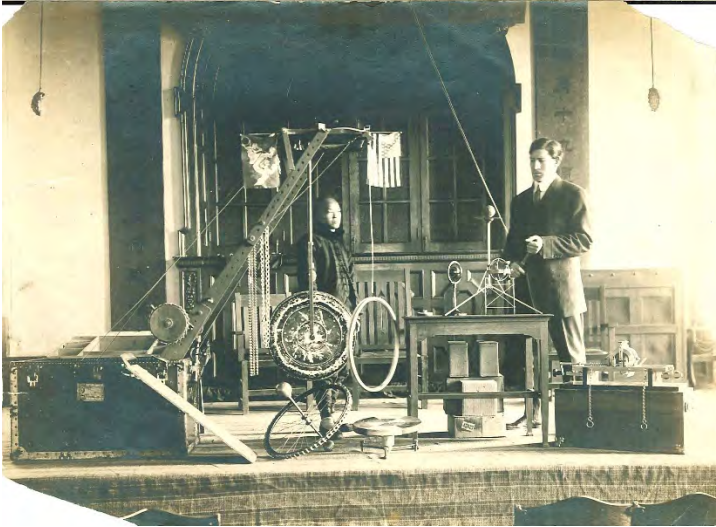
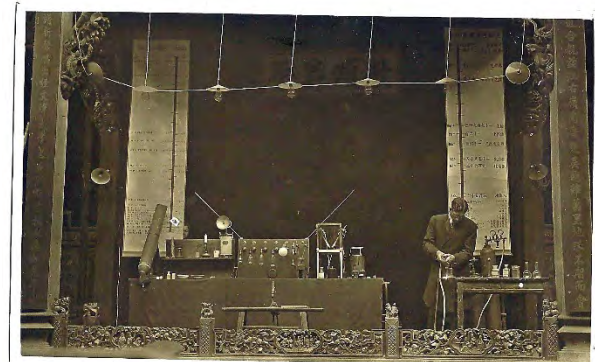


Photo from the YMCA archives at the University of Minnesota shows C. H. Robertson demonstrating scientific equipment at a mass meeting in China.

Photo from G. Sherwood Eddy papers, Yale Divinity Library Record Group 32:



Excerpt from a February 1917 article in *The North American Student* describes the work of C. H. Robertson:

The Chinese are in desperate need of many things, and they know it. Two of their most pressing needs are modern science and the religion of Jesus Christ. The first is needed to insure the stability of that part of their life which deals with the material, and the second to put their spiritual and moral life on a sound basis. The lecture department of the National Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association of China aims to assist in supplying these two great needs in a large way.

The method of work has been to convey this new information through the medium of public lectures demonstrated with suitable apparatus. After seven years of preliminary investigation by Professor C. H. Robertson, a laboratory was opened in Shanghai. There a staff of mechanics prepared apparatus and the new department introduced itself to the public with its lecture on the gyroscope. The apparatus is made large so that it can be seen from all points of an audience of from 1,000 to 2,000. As the equipment is the best

## Itinerating evangelism

While evangelists such as John R. Mott and Sherwood Eddy garnered much publicity in their mass meetings, for many missionaries the necessary method of evangelization was to travel throughout the countryside using primitive transportation, striving to find people who would take the time to listen in small towns and villages.

Among the itinerating missionaries was medical doctor Lorenzo Morgan. In the excerpts below we see the worries of his wife (who was also a medical doctor) while he was away and, in a letter from Lorenzo, a brief glimpse of the adventures missionaries experienced while out traveling the countryside.



Lorenzo and Ruth Morgan

Tsing-Kiang pu, China.  
May 14, 1906,

Dear Home people,

I am having my first experience of having my husband go away itinerating and not hearing from him for two weeks. At least it is nearly that now and it seems like two centuries! They had planned to get back on Saturday but they were delayed one day in starting by rain and it has rained here several days since they went so that probably they were delayed again someplace on the road. We should have had a letter but so often the mails do not arrive when due that I have not worried over the lack of a letter. No news is good news so I hope it means they are very busy seeing diseases and preaching. But I am anxious that they should come

Ruth Morgan letter

Dear Ruth,

*I wish you could be with us. You would enjoy the sights and sounds and smells and so on. There has been little chance to do much but travel since we left T.K.P. Would you care to hear a little about it?*

*After we left we soon had passed Wang In Tai where we were joined, or joined, a company of showmen, about twenty in number (men) with a bear and three monkeys. These created considerable interest and fun on the way. Just beyond Wang In Tai we crossed the Salt Canal by ferry.... After leaving the Salt Canal we walked along the road in peace for a time. But in a little village we went through the dogs became excited (as did the children, old and young) and made war on the monkeys.... One monkey finally sprang at a big white dog's throat. When the dust had cleared away the dog had fled and the monkey pulled a great bunch of white hair out of his mouth and threw it contemptuously on the ground – then with a business like and perfectly serious air went on his way....*

Letter from Lorenzo Morgan





Missionaries in China often traveled by boat while itinerating because of the poor quality roads.

Boat used by Waddy Hudson, Presbyterian missionary in Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province

Letter from Waddy Hudson describing his visits to 12 outstations and surrounding towns:

Kashing, China      May 13th, 1923

My Dear Home Folks,

The past week has been full, visited in succession twelve outstations and three city centres of work. Inspection for repairs and examination of inquirers, cases of discipline and numerous other incidental matters over the field. Repairs on the Girls School property are in progress, hope to have space for thirty or forty boarders and one hundred day pupils. A campaign is on for Popular Education by means of the Lantern and Slides in Night Classes. I have had to deepen canals, sink piles build stone facings to embankments, construct a bridge, pave streets lay out new roads, level up low spots, dig down high places, plan new chapels, preachers homes, cancel old contracts, make new ones for Chinese tenants on mission property, buy land, move houses, preach on Sundays, lecture at hospital, school and public meetings, attend almost endless committees, board and community conferences, etc, etc. Part of the city wall is coming down to open a new boulevard from the railroad station to the heart of the city. The American School boys came up from Shanghai and held a track meet with Kashing High school Boys, carried back most of the prizes. Our section of China is quiet enough but is now experiencing the

## Tent evangelism

Waddy Hudson's son George was born in China in 1894 and returned to the mission field following his education in the U.S. Forced from China by the Communist takeover, Hudson worked in Taiwan, primarily in tent evangelism and church extension. He conducted 129 evangelism campaigns in frontier villages and helped to organize and build more than 50 churches and chapels following the tent campaigns.



George Hudson and a Chinese colleague in front of one of the tents used in his evangelism ministry





## Boat ministries



James F. Laughton and his wife on board the missionary ship *Fukuin Maru* in Japan.



From 1920 to 1926, James F. Laughton served under the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society to direct the work of their mission ship *Fukuin Maru* sailing among the islands of the Inland Sea and coast of Japan. An article in the 1908 *Japan Christian Year Book*, places the *Fukuin Maru* in a long line of missionary ships such as the “John Williams” and “Dayspring” and describes its work:



While the direct presentation of Christian truth through sermons, addresses, stereopticon lectures and private talks is the mainstay of this work, auxiliary agencies have no unimportant share in its prosecution. There are seven regularly organized

Sunday Schools with an enrolment of 400 pupils. Added to these are many children's meetings on Sunday Schools lines held on any day of the week. Of these a word later on. A kindergarten with fifty pupils enrolled and a night school with forty are doing a quiet helpful work. The ship's newspaper, a purely evangelistic sheet, is written with the thought ever in mind that the island people and those who sail in the ship are, as is actually true in many cases, bound by personal friendship. This goes out by mail to hundreds of homes, emphasizing that which has been taught in the meetings. The ship's Scripture calendar, specially designed and edited, accompanied by a letter signed by all the workers, is much appreciated and is in evidence all the year through in some 500 homes. Small loan libraries, placed in responsive villages to a limited number, also help to turn the minds of some to higher things.

From the Japan Christian Yearbook, describing the work of the Fukuin Maru



A group of children arriving at the *Fukuin Maru* for a class



The class on board the *Fukuin Maru*

## Native catechists and Bible women

A crucial method for spreading the Christian message was the engagement of indigenous Christians such as catechists and Bible women. Because of their place in society and facility with the language, these native workers were often much more effective in reaching people than the Western missionaries could ever hope to be.



"Bible women" on the mission field frequently accompanied Western female missionaries but they also served alone or in teams. They would visit women in their homes, read the Bible in villages, teach children, call on the sick, and itinerate around to distribute Bibles and tracts.

Photo caption:

*Miss Abbie G. Sanderson, teacher in the Kak Chich Girls School in Swatow [now Shantou], China, and "Aunt Golden Peace," one of the oldest Bible women in the world, who has traveled from village to village telling people the good news of the Gospel, and now that she can no longer walk these long distances spends her time with patients in the hospital.*

The library's Missionary Postcard Collection contains numerous illustrations of native catechists.





In an era when state governments were ill-equipped or disinclined to provide services for the lower classes, missionaries found opportunity to reach audiences and express their faith in practical ways through schools, orphanages, model villages, and institutions like museums, which sought to convey Western ideas and values.

## Schools



"Mrs. Smith and her class of girls on the home piazza. Five have joined the church."

*Photo from the Smith Family papers, Yale Divinity Library Record Group 5*

The Smiths were a family of Congregational missionaries who served in China from 1901-1950. Edward Huntington Smith devoted nearly 50 years of his life to running an orphanage, raising funds, and promoting Christian education in Fujian province while his wife, Grace W. Thomas Smith served as a teacher. Like many women missionaries, she had a particular interest in teaching girls, who were denied educational opportunities in pre-modern China.

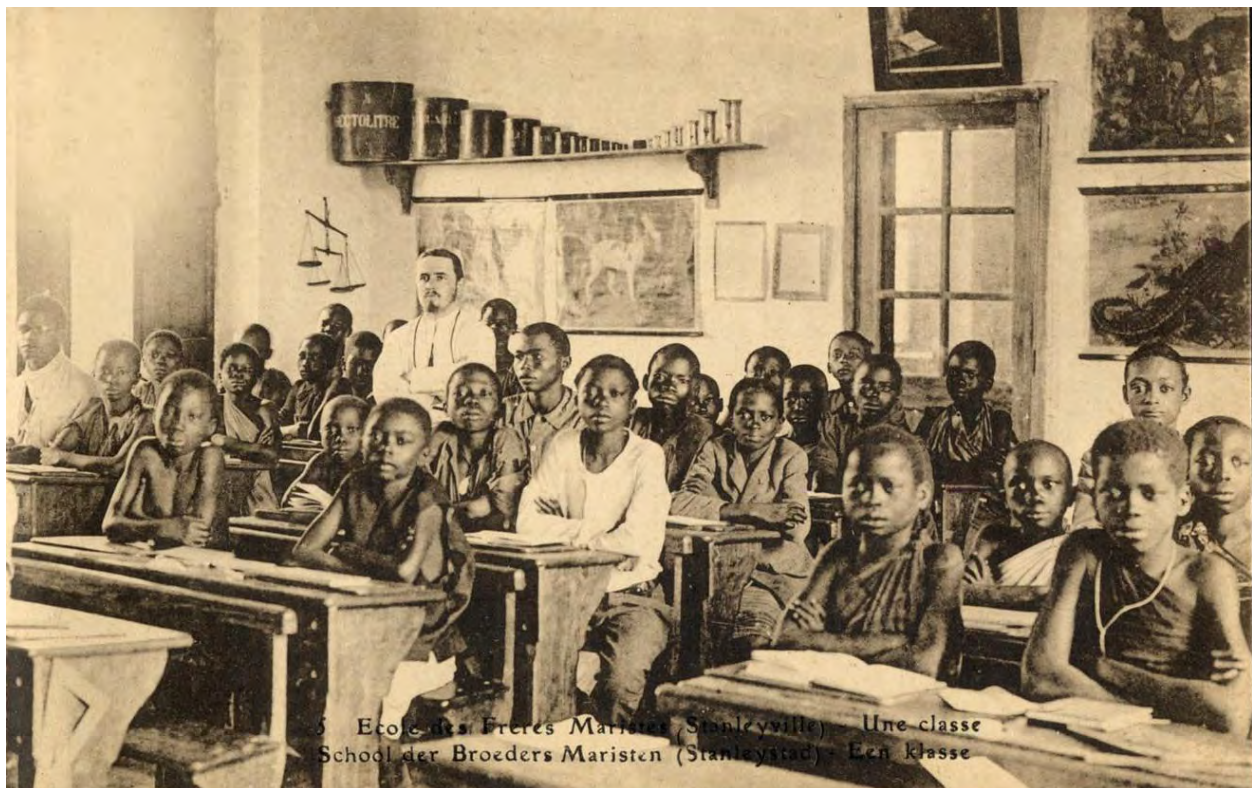
The following excerpt from the theme statement of the 2011 Yale-Edinburgh Group conference on "Missions and Education" speaks to the conflict that some missionaries felt about whether it

was best to focus on proselytizing and evangelism or if educational work was a worthy calling for missionaries:

*"The point is not whether the Gospel shall be made known in one way or another.... But whether it is right to teach other things than the Gospel with a view to the introduction Christianity into a country"*

Thus Thomas of Smith, of the Free Church of Scotland Mission in India, posed the issue of missions and education to the Liverpool Conference on Missions in 1860. All could agree that teaching was simply another way of preaching, and in this sense much, perhaps most, missionary activity was educational. The issue that caused controversy was whether the missionary had a responsibility to go beyond the teaching of the Christian faith to impart a wider discourse of learning. The matter was complicated by the fact that literacy for access to the Scriptures was often seen as a necessary accompaniment of Christian teaching. Christian communities became literate communities; the early nineteenth century successes in the Pacific and in Sierra Leone produced higher rates of literacy than many European nations had at the time. Evangelists were teachers, and teachers evangelists...

An examples of a mission school classroom in the Congo, ca. 1930, from the Library's Missionary Postcard Collection:





## Orphanages

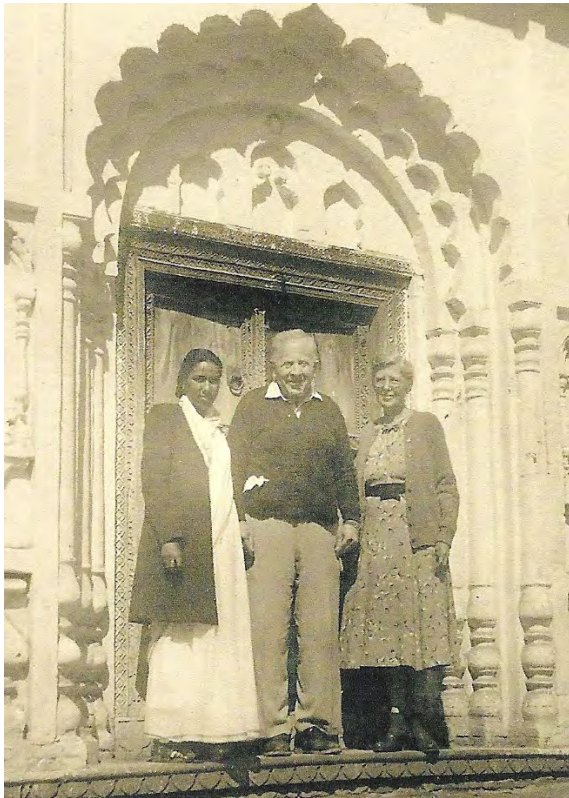


According to the *China Christian Yearbook* there were 27 Protestant orphanages in China in 1936. Some were supported by mission agencies and others by special sponsors, such as the *Christian Herald* magazine. Emily Susan Hartwell, shown above with boy orphans, was the founder of the Christian Herald Fukien Industrial Homes at Ado. This institution focused on teaching crafts and trades to orphans so that they could support themselves in the future. The *China Christian Yearbook* for 1936-1937 notes the following in its article about orphanages:

**Purpose and Objectives**      Eleven reports stated directly that their big aim was to make Christians, —to give them salvation, to teach them the way of the Lord, etc. Of the others, seven declared that their object was to rescue the destitute from sin and/or starvation. Two made no comments at all. Seven put it that they were attempting to train their charges, mentally and spiritually, for usefulness in the world. But all, without exception, distinctly implied that Christ was the incentive behind their work.

## Model villages

The impulse to improve the daily lives of the people they were trying to reach came early to missionaries in the field. William Carey, sometimes called the father of modern Protestant missions, wrote home from India in 1792, "Send me yearly the best garden and fruit seeds. Send also implements of husbandry, sickles and plough wheels. Those we teach are hungry and many starve." Rural development and model village projects sprung up around the globe.



Charlotte and William Wiser were American Presbyterian missionaries in India who focused on development work as a means to spread the Christian message. From 1945 to 1960 the Wisers were instrumental in the formation and direction of India Village Service, a demonstration project for the improvement of village life in north India.



The proposal for the India Village Service began, "Challenged by the importunate pleas of friends of India's villages; inspired by the love and teachings of Christ; persuaded of the Christian's duty to serve the people of India through helping them to find greater fullness of life, economically, socially, physically, and spiritually; and being assured of the use of resources and the cooperation of personnel that may make such a program possible, INDIA VILLAGE SERVICE has been projected...."



## Museums

The creation of museums by missionaries was another method of engaging audiences. For China missionary J. S. Whitewright, the creation of a museum showcasing Western science and technology was an opportunity to engage the Chinese people and open channels of communication. In a paper delivered at the 1908 conference of the Museums Association in Ipswich, England, Whitewright noted that

All who knew China, from the inside, knew only too well that the literati and officials were bitterly hostile to everything 'foreign.' They knew also that this hostility had its root mainly in ignorance and misconception.... To seek to overcome all this; to make friends of enemies; to enlighten, teach, help; to endeavor to open men's minds, especially the minds of the scholar and official classes, to the reception of all truth were the reasons for commencing the work to be described here.

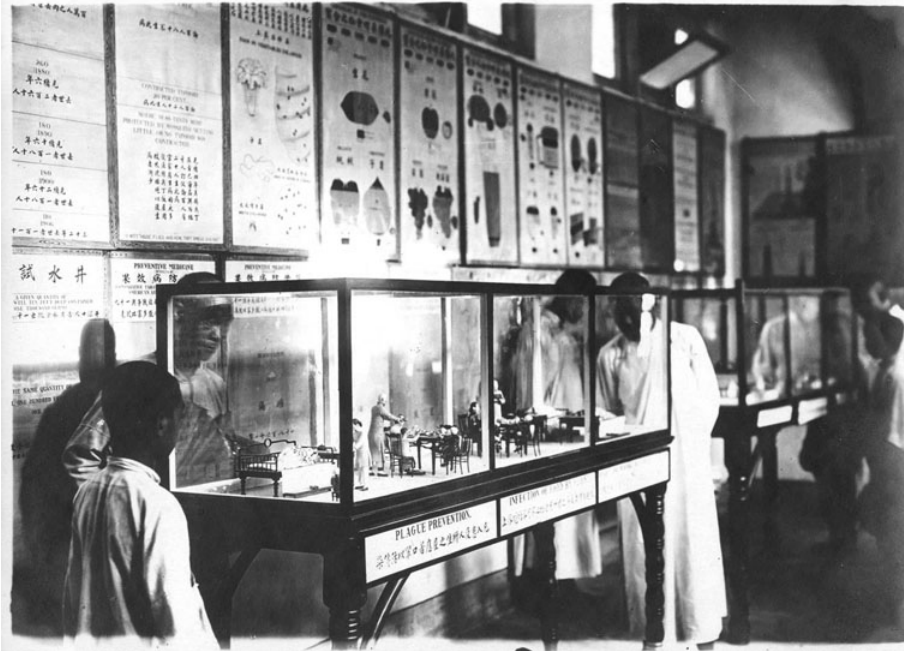


Whitewright first opened his museum in Ching-chon-fu, Shandong Province in 1887. Later, the museum transferred to Jinan and became part of the Whitewright Institute. The Institute consisted of reception rooms, the museum, reading room and library, a lecture hall seating six hundred people, and a separate court with reception rooms for women. Subjects covered by the exhibits included physiology, chemistry, science applied to commerce, hygiene, natural history, geography ethnology, geology, and paleontology.

Describing the Institute in 1913, Thomas Cochrane wrote:

The Public Health section of the Museum is most interesting and useful. There are models and pictures illustrating bubonic plague, how contagion is carried by flies, methods of the spread of tubercular disease, etc. The visitors at times of religious festivals, when picked evangelists are drawn from the regular staff in other parts of the field to give short evangelistic addresses, number thousands. During one fair about sixty thousand people passed through the Lecture Hall and heard an evangelistic address.

It is estimated that more than five million people visited the Institute between 1905 and 1924.



Display on plague prevention in the Whitewright Institute at Shandong Christian University in Jinan, ca. 1920.

On the conservative side of the missionary spectrum, there were many who thought that all efforts should be directed toward direct evangelism with a view to personal conversion, but increasingly among mainline Protestant missions the focus shifted to improvement of the societies where they worked through medical, educational, and development work.

## Medical work



Nurses treating patients at the American Board Mission Hospital in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, ca. 1911

Photo from the Emily Susan Hartwell Papers, Yale Divinity Library Record Group



American Presbyterian missionary Randolph C. Sailer wrote of three phases for medical work in his 1944 article "Medical Missions in China" published in the *International Review of Missions*:

We may divide the function of medical missions into the following three phases: First, it is a means of breaking down prejudice, winning confidence, securing a friendly atmosphere for the preaching of the Gospel. This aspect of the work was greatly emphasized, it was of great value, but it was necessarily temporary. Then comes the evangelistic aspect, without which no medical work can be termed missionary. Medical missions should be regarded as an integral part of the Gospel message, a practical demonstration of God's love, a purpose which can be much more effectively achieved in a hospital ward than in the crowded waiting-room of a dispensary. Hence the need for better manned hospitals. Medical missions, moreover, become a permanent asset of the native church, carrying on its influence to future generations...



Ellen Lavine Graham Hospital,  
Haizhou, Jiangsu, China, ca. 1931

By 1937 there were 254 mission hospitals in China. The staffs of mission hospitals during this era were predominately indigenous, with Western missionaries in supervisory and training positions.

Photo from the Lorenzo and  
Ruth Morgan Papers, Yale  
Divinity Library Record Group  
126

Missionaries had notable impact in the treatment of individuals suffering from leprosy. Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic disease caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium leprae* and *Mycobacterium lepromatosis*. Individuals suffering from leprosy were often ostracized by their societies, so mission agencies stepped in to provide care.



Catholic missionaries working with leprosy patients in Madagascar  
From the Missionary Postcard Collection



Patient at a leprosy hospital in Xianfu, Shaanxi, China, ca. 1885  
From the Dean Goddard Papers, RG 8

## Public health campaigns

Raising consciousness about hygiene and disease prevention was the goal of parades and public presentations throughout China. A float and masked figures from a cholera prevention parade in Fuzhou, documented by YMCA missionary Ralph Gold, are shown below.





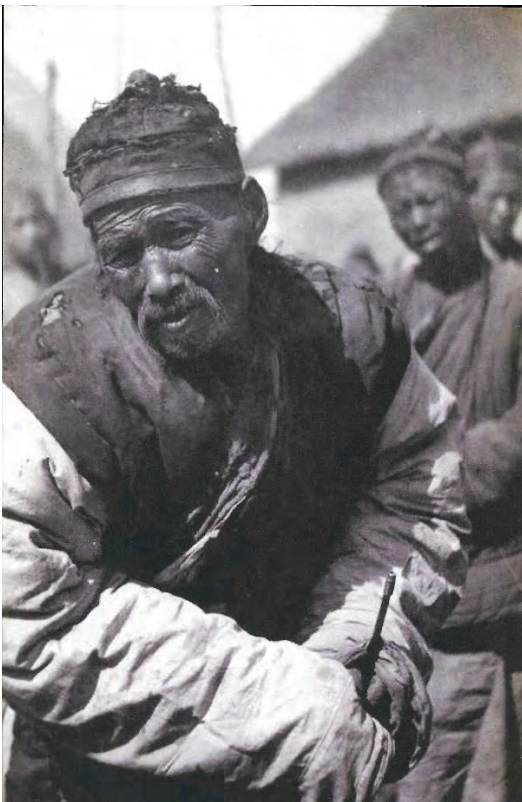
## Relief work

Famines, floods, and other natural disasters were times when missionaries worked to ameliorate conditions for those they sought to reach with their message.



Baptist missionary Timothy Richard, shown at left with his family, was among the first Protestant missionaries to become actively involved in famine relief work. Between 1876 and 1879, more than 13 million people died in northern China due to famine. The foreign community in Shanghai organized a China Relief Committee to supplement the work of the government and Timothy Richard was its chief agent in the provinces. In a review of the book, *Famine in China and the Missionary: Timothy Richard as Relief Administrator and Advocate of National Reform, 1876-1884* by Paul Richard Bohr, Valentin Rabe wrote that "Richard's efforts to rationalize the distribution of famine relief brought him into daily contact with indescribable suffering and permanently changed his concept of missionary work. From an approach summed up in the phrase: 'I am after the leaders,' he became dedicated to placing western science and technology in the service of humanity in China and later justified a sweeping proposal for the country's economic development and institutional reform with the conclusion that 'the end of all was the relief of the poor from starvation.'"

Lorenzo and Ruth Bennett Morgan were among the many missionaries who devoted their lives to famine relief and fighting disease. The Morgans were medical missionaries in China, serving under the Presbyterian and Methodist mission boards from 1905 to 1946. Documentation in their papers held at the Yale Divinity Library describe their work during the 1907-1908 famine in Jiangsu Province, the 1918 outbreak of plague in Datong and the area northeast of Beijing, as well as their more routine hospital and clinic work.



Photos of the 1907 famine from the Lorenzo and Ruth Morgan papers, Yale Divinity Library Record Group 126.



1907- Famine year. Waiting for flour.  
Drs. Lorenzo + Ruth Morgan, China 9/28





## Presses, publishing, literature distribution

In his article "Christian Literature in Nineteenth-Century China Missions: a Priority? or an Optional Extra?" John Tsz-pang Lai writes:

Protestant missionaries to China repeatedly stressed the importance of Christian literature in their missionary endeavors. Tract production and distribution went hand in hand with oral preaching in the propagation of Christianity. Samuel Wells Williams (1812-1884) remarked that "the voice explains the book and the book recalls the ideas and teachings of the preacher." It was also generally believed that missionaries, "until they have mastered the language, can do nothing without tracts and even when they can preach with fluency and power, they regard tracts as important subsidiaries to impress the truth on the awakened hearer."

*International Bulletin of Mission Research, April 2008*

American Methodist missionary Franklin Ohlinger was a pioneer in the field of publication and translation for the church in China. Below, an excerpt from an essay that he wrote on the distribution of Christian literature in China reveals some of the difficulties that the missionaries encountered, including the use of Bibles as wallpaper and shoe sole padding.



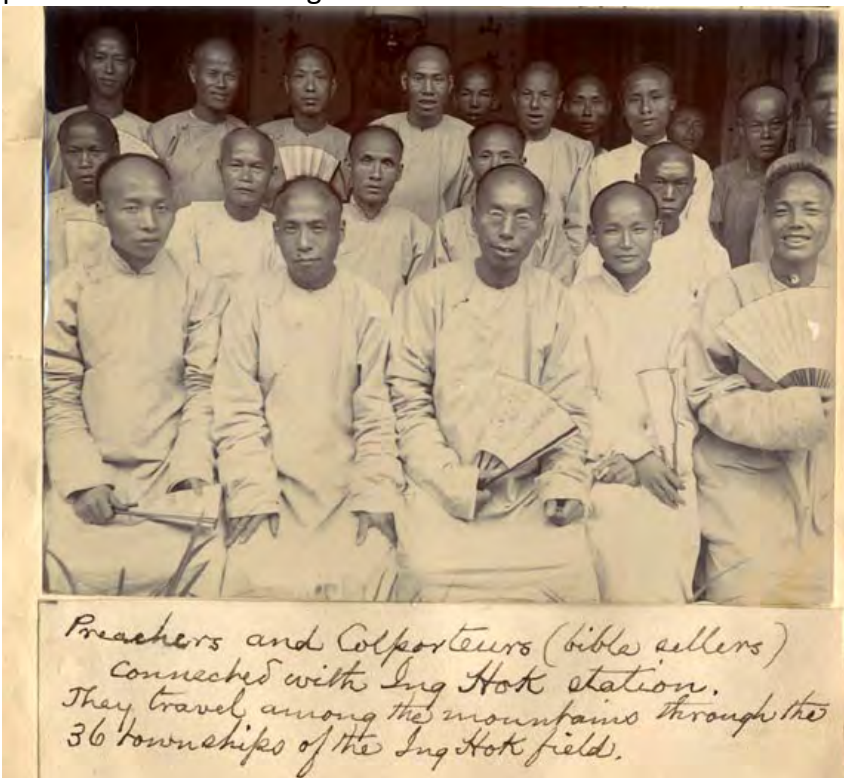
In their eagerness to circulate the Bible and other books among the Chinese the missionaries for a number of years gave away books almost indiscriminately. The paper was made of bamboo pulp and so thin that it could be printed on one side only : the binding consisted of common thread, loosened without trouble and, from the Chinese point of view, - had some value. Many a Chinese house and INN was papered with opened - Bibles (the printed side of the leaf toward the wall) and many shoe-soles were padded with Christian books. The venerable missionaries of all denominations <sup>finally</sup> ~~had~~ discovered this practice to their great chagrin and sorrow and decided that thenceforth no more books should be given away, but that all must be sold, if for but one tenth of their cost-price.

Tracts and scripture portions were crucial ammunition in the arsenal of missionaries evangelizing throughout the world. An excerpt from the published report of the Cities Evangelization Centers of the Shantung Mission of the Presbyterian Church describes tract and scripture distribution:

Another effective way of preaching the gospel is by the written word. Four boxes of gospel portions have been sold. There are about 2500 to a box so this is quite a number. Besides these about \$12. worth of tracts have been sold. Formerly Christians used to hang up Chinese pictures on the wall but this year they said they would only have tracts and posters. About \$8. worth of posters were disposed of. Their favorite ones were, Jesus Walking on the Water, Feeding the Five Thousand, and the Parable of the House Built on the Rock.

In this case, tracts and gospel portions were being sold, in part to help pay the salaries of the colporteurs, or distributors, of tracts, who were often Chinese Christians.

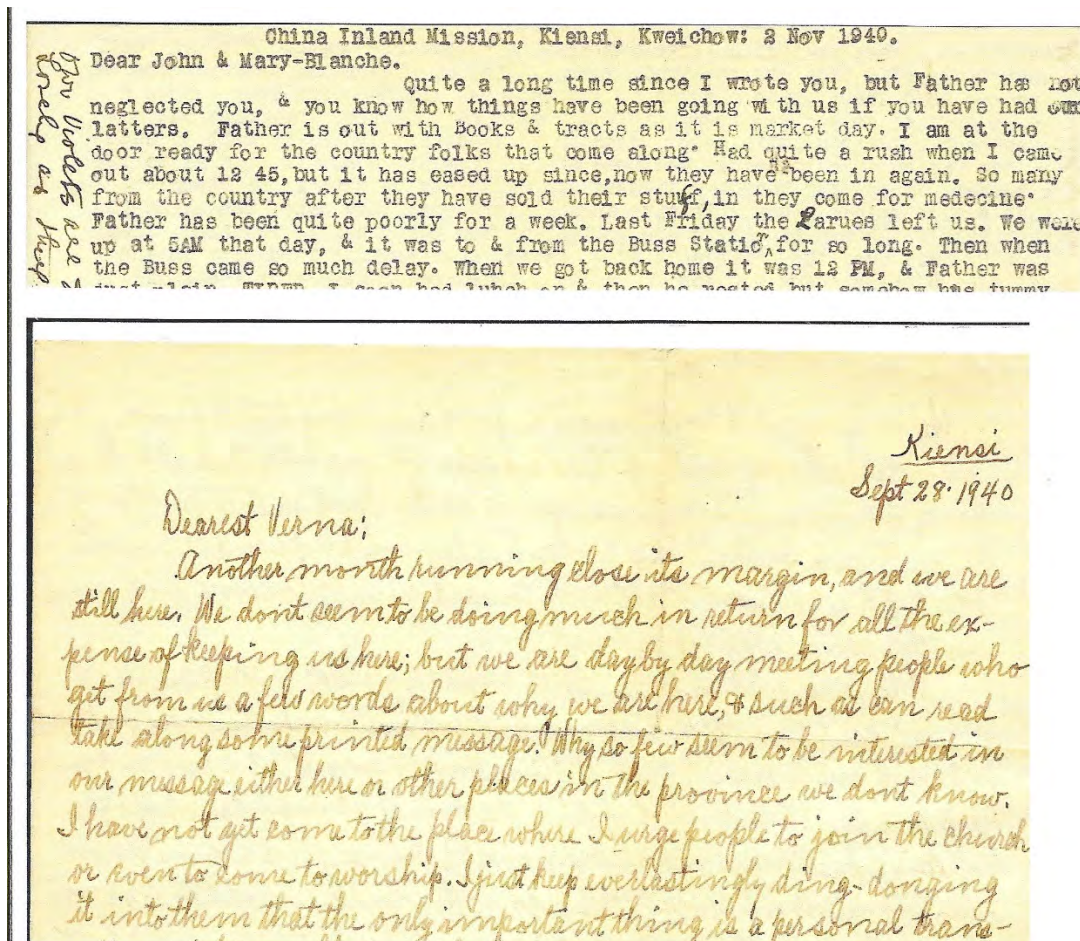
Colporteurs were individuals who brought tracts and scripture portions around to villages and towns for sale.



Tracts were also distributed for free in the marketplace by missionaries. In the excerpts from letters to family members shown below, Mabel Crofts describes the work of her husband Daniel



Webster Crofts, a missionary serving under the China Inland Mission, and Daniel Crofts expresses his discouragement that their message isn't more readily accepted:



Missionaries distributing literature at a Chinese examination center:



Visually interesting publications such as posters were often effective tools for garnering attention and for spreading the missionary message to non-readers. The Yale Divinity Library has a large selection of posters in its Missionary Ephemera Collection, Record Group 221. Recently, 125 Chinese posters from this collection have been made available online as part of Boston University's Chinese Christian Posters database, <http://ccposters.com>



The development of publication operations and printing presses was a crucial aspect of the distribution of Christian literature by missionaries.

The Serampore Mission Press, founded by William Carey, William Ward, and other British Baptist missionaries in Serampore, Danish India, produced 212,000 books between 1800 and 1832.







Eli Smith was appointed by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1826 as associate editor of its publishing house in Malta. Smith went to Beirut in 1834 and, as described by the *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, "Equipped with a new press, Smith quickly began to produce materials in Arabic, including schoolbooks, Scripture portions, a hymnbook, catechisms, translations of religious classics, and his own and other missionaries' writings.... Intent on producing works of highest quality, Smith designed a new typeface which became known as American Arabic... Smith devoted his last ten years to the translation of the Bible into Arabic, a project completed after his death by C.V.A. Van Dyke."

A mission printing press in Syria:

Bib

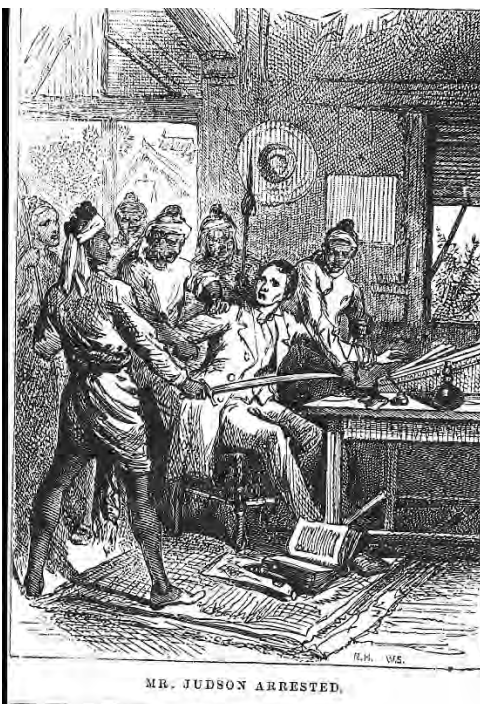


Photo from the Henry Harris Jessup papers, Record Group 117

## Bible translation

In order to make the Scriptures accessible to their audience, missionaries were actively involved in translation work. The late Prof. Lamin Sanneh of Yale Divinity School wrote widely about the impact of Bible translation. In his essay in *Bible Translation on the Threshold of the Twenty-first Century: Authority, Reception, Culture, and Religion*, Sanneh wrote: "Bible translation has marked the history of Christianity from its very origins: the gospels are a translated version of the preaching and message of Jesus, and the epistles a further interpretation and application of that preaching and message. Christianity is unique in being promoted outside the language of the founder of the religion." Sanneh argued that missionaries were the renewers, not the destroyers, of culture through their emphasis on vernacular translation.

The stories of missionary translators such as Eli Smith in the Middle East, Elijah C. Bridgman in China, and Adoniram Judson in Burma demonstrate the essential role played by translation in the missionary enterprise. Journals, correspondence, and printed works provide insight into the way translation has served to foster mutual respect and understanding among cultures and has opened the way for spreading the Christian message. Their stories demonstrate as well the tremendous investment of time and effort needed to produce a worthy translation.



In 1813 Adoniram Judson, one of the first missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the first significant Baptist missionary to Burma, arrived in Rangoon to begin a challenging career. After six years of struggling with the language in order to translate and preach, he had gained only three converts. The government attitude toward his mission, along with other hardships, nearly caused him to abandon his work. Encouraged by his converts, however, he rededicated himself to language study and translation. But before he finished his New Testament translation, Burma and England were at war and Judson, along with other foreigners, was imprisoned. For eleven months he managed to conceal a manuscript of his work in a crude pillow, which was then seized and supposedly destroyed upon his transfer to another prison. Several months later, a free man again, Judson was presented with the pillow stuffing, saved by a Burmese friend as a memento. In it was the tightly rolled manuscript, still intact, and eventually it became part of the first Burmese Bible. In December 1835, some twenty years after work was begun, Judson's greatest accomplishment went to press.



Stymied by Chinese unreceptiveness to the Christian message during his early years of missionary service in Canton, Elijah C. Bridgman seized upon translation of a wide range of documents as the key to mutual respect and eventual understanding. Bridgman was early convinced that there was a need to translate not only the Bible but also secular Western works into Chinese and Chinese classics into English. As Jane Kate Leonard writes of Bridgman's colleague, W.H. Medhurst:

It was clear even to the novice missionary that the Christian religious message had no meaning or significance to the Chinese. A tract that was narrowly religious or devotional in content held no interest because of the vast cultural and historical differences between China and the West....

China was not, in Medhurst's opinion, ready for the Christian religious message; there was a blanket of culture, history, and tradition that had to be penetrated first, and this could not be done by religious tracts. What was needed instead were materials that would show that the West was a highly developed civilization, equal to China, and that its Christian religious tradition was worthy of respect and acceptance.



The exhibit concludes with a selection of Bible and scripture portions from the Yale Divinity Library's Missionary Bible Collection, which is described at <https://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/missionary-bible-collection>. This collection was recently enlarged significantly by volumes received from the Andover Newton Theological School collection.