

The Maryknoll China History Project

Jean-Paul Wiest

Introduction

Since the late 1960s, interest in China mission studies has been gaining momentum among missionary societies and churches in the West as well as in the third world. Proof of worldwide support came in 1980 when international associations such as the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) and the Servizio di Documentazione e Studi (SEDOS) representing the Association of Superiors of Catholic Societies and Congregations advocated the creation and preservation of mission archives and the writing of historical mission studies.

In the United States, Protestant churches paved the way with projects such as the China Records Project launched in 1969. Sponsored by the China Program of the National Council of Churches, it resulted in the storage at Yale University of archival records dealing with Protestant missionaries who served in China. Other projects, several presented in this issue of the *International Bulletin*, followed suit; although most were Protestant, a few Catholic projects have recently begun, such as the Maryknoll China History Project (MCHP).

Now in its fifth year and final stage, the MCHP is the first in-depth study that attempts to combine a comprehensive oral history component with an analysis of archival documents and the writing of a critical history of an American missionary group in China.

Purpose and Organization

The Maryknoll China History Project is a joint venture of two religious societies, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and the Maryknoll Sisters. Approved in April 1980, its mandate is

to gather and to study all primary source materials, both oral and written, and to produce a published critical history of the work of the Maryknoll Fathers, Sisters, and Brothers in China from the year 1918 to 1952. The primary intent of the project is to seek to understand the past history of the mission work of the two societies in China through objective and critical scholarly research, as a guide for the future service of the two societies.

Four researchers (Donald MacInnis, Joanna Chan, Susan Perry, and Jean-Paul Wiest), carefully selected for their scholarship and practical experience, have designed and are running the project. As a team they combine academic training in church history, mission studies, theology, Chinese history, and Chinese religions with in-the-field experience in mission service, an inside knowledge of Maryknoll, and native familiarity with the Chinese language, as well as expertise in conducting oral history, gathering missionary records, organizing research projects, and operating a word-processing system. They are aided by part-time associates and consultants.

As progress is made, they report to an Advisory Board of eight persons, four each appointed respectively by the General Council of the Fathers and Brothers and by the Central Governing Board of the Sisters. The Advisory Board's interest in the MCHP is both scholarly and practical. The board sees the urgent need to record the personal histories of the surviving men and women who served in China from 1918 to 1952, and to incorporate those oral histories into a thoroughly researched objective history. At the same time, the board is aware of the importance for the two societies to adjust to changing conditions in the world today. For this reason it is vital to evaluate the original vision, goals, and methods used in the China years in view of both the political situation of that period and the significant changes that have taken place since Maryknoll's departure in 1952. Since an essential ingredient of missiological planning is historical hindsight and insight, researchers are also examining the relations between American missionaries and their Chinese colleagues, parishioners, and non-Christian neighbors in the years before 1952, seeking to discover lessons learned and paving the way for a deeper reflection on future mission practices.

Significance

Since the pioneer work of Kenneth Scott Latourette in 1929, numerous books have been published on twentieth-century North American mission history in China. These studies fall into two categories. First are those written by scholars who draw on the rich history of American missions in China in their overall study of China's modern history. Their main interest in using missionary records is to broaden the base of their research materials rather than to present a record of mission history or to evaluate missionary work. Very few studies are devoted to the Chinese response to Christian missions. The most prolific scholarly writings have been done at Harvard University under the inspiration of Professor John K. Fairbank. All the monographs and symposia produced and published at Harvard have drawn on Protestant mission archives; there is no Catholic title in the entire Harvard output. In recent years only one author has published a history of North American Catholic missions in China; however, his highly selective use of sources limits its reliability and usefulness as a scholarly and objective history.¹

The second category of books on mission history in China includes the so-called house histories, which are often the work of devoted members of a society or institution, written to preserve the early records and to commemorate the work of the early generations. These writings take generally the form of a chronological or a biographical account and rarely give a critical interpretation or comprehensive coverage of the sources.

This study will be of interest, therefore, not only to Maryknollers and members of other missionary institutions but also to scholars in various fields such as Chinese history, church history, missiology, and sociology. It will reveal Maryknollers not only as faithful narrators of Chinese daily rural life, but also as active participants or concerned bystanders in the many events that shaped

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the future of China and the church during the first half of the twentieth century. This history may prompt other scholars to make use of the Maryknoll records in order to broaden the base of their research materials. It should also appeal to a more general audience whose interest in the encounter of two cultures will be sustained by true stories—*les histoires vécues*—of missionaries and Chinese converts.

Methodology

The project has been divided into four phases, which partly overlap. The first one was devoted to defining the project, setting guidelines, and working out a methodology. The second phase concentrated on oral interviews, their transcription and their indexing into a computerized retrieval system. The third stage dealt with archival materials and their computerized indexing. The fourth stage, just underway, is the actual writing of the history of Maryknoll in China.

The MCHP researchers developed a specific methodology based on a carefully researched "List of Major Categories and Topics." The list of categories was modified into a standard questionnaire, which served as a guide for interviewers and included one list of questions in English for American missionaries, and one in Chinese for Chinese-language interviews.

As the project progressed, the "List of Major Categories and Topics" was refined by analyzing interviews and archival materials. An outline will give an idea of the entire range of questions covered by the Maryknoll project.

1. The American home base
The American Catholic church of that period
The American sociopolitical context of that period
2. The making of a missionary
Family and religious background
Vocation
Training for mission
Personal mission vision
Changes in images of China and attitudes
3. Theology and missiology: Maryknoll's mission vision
The original vision
How the vision changed (from society/congregation chapter to chapter)
Impact of the China experience on Maryknoll vision today
Changes in theology and missiology
4. Stages in growth, stasis, and retreat: Chronology of Maryknoll missions in China
5. Categories of mission work (by Maryknoll Fathers, Sisters, and Brothers)
Evangelization and church planting
Christian nurture
Social and charitable works (including parish work and outreach, catechumenates, clergy and leader training, orphanages, clinics and hospitals, schools, seminaries, refugee and relief work)
6. Maryknollers' daily work and living
Daily schedules
Sense of vocation
Spiritual formation and growth
Cultural adjustment: successes and failures
7. Roles of Maryknoll Fathers and Maryknoll Sisters
Distinctions in mission tasks
Relationships and changing roles
Sisters' role in work with women and families
Sisters as inspiration to Chinese women
8. The Chinese church

Church planting and growth
 Theory and practice of an indigenous church
 Chinese leadership: religious and laity
 Survival of the church today

9. Chinese Catholics: Clergy, religious, catechists, laity
 Who were they?
 How did they become Christians?



Sr. Barbara Marie (Dorothy) Rubner, M.M., teaching medical skills. Kongmoon Novitiate, 1947.

Their training in the faith, and their concept of Christianity
 Their relations with Maryknoll missionaries
 Their views and recollections today

10. Reverse mission: American images of China
 How Maryknoll influenced American images of China: *The Field Afar* magazine, letters home, home-leave speaking, books and other published writings
11. The larger history: China and America of that period
 The sociopolitical context in America, which inspired and supported the China missions
 The sociopolitical context in China, which affected Maryknoll
12. Biography
 This is a human as well as an institutional history; biographical and anecdotal vignettes, both of Americans and Chinese, are considered essential to document and authenticate this history
13. Evaluation
 The researchers seek to discover lessons learned in the Chinese experience, based on goals, issues, successes and failures, struggles, tensions, and conflicting views based on contemporary reports of the time, as well as on reflections or hindsight for today—by both Maryknollers and non-Maryknollers

Sources: Archives, *The Field Afar*, and Interviews

The mention of mission history immediately brings to mind the richness and the multitude of documents often jealously preserved in the archives of some mission institutions. The Maryknoll archives, both at the Sisters' Center and the Fathers and Brothers' Center, are well preserved and organized, and contain about 90,000 pages of documents related to China. A unique feature of Maryknoll was to require that each mission parish and each Sisters' house maintain a diary of events and activities. Although their quality and content vary greatly according to the diarist, these writings are an invaluable source of information on all aspects of life in China. Altogether diaries comprise 38,000 pages, or about two-fifths of the total archival documents on China held at Maryknoll.

Of all these documents, only selected and edited pages of the missionaries' correspondence and diaries have been published in book form as *Maryknoll Mission Letters* and in *The Field Afar* magazine. *The Field Afar*—later renamed *Maryknoll*—is the official magazine published in common by both Maryknoll societies. It is an important tool, in particular, for looking at the images of China and themselves that Maryknollers were passing on to their American readers and benefactors. An added advantage is the detailed index of the magazine kept in the library of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers since its first issue in January 1907.

Because, however, the number of surviving missionaries who served in China before 1952 was steadily decreasing, the researchers opted to develop first the oral history component of the project and to reserve for a later time an in-depth analysis of the archives. During the second phase, archives were used mainly to prepare profiles of persons to be interviewed as well as to provide background materials on missionaries' assignments and types of work. This approach allowed researchers to adapt the standard questionnaire to the special situations of each interviewee.

At the start of the project in 1980, Maryknoll was fortunate to have nearly half of the Maryknoll men and women who served in China still alive. Two hundred missionaries, mostly Maryknollers, were interviewed. To complete the story of the development of the Chinese church and the role played in it by Maryknoll, researchers also interviewed fifty-six Chinese priests, Sisters, and laypersons who worked with, were trained by, or were associated with Maryknollers in China before 1952. Interviews have been taped, carefully transcribed and translated into English when needed, according to accepted oral history guidelines. The average transcript is forty pages long. Releases were secured to allow use of the content for writing the history of Maryknoll.

The oral history component of the project supplements and enriches the written records preserved in the archives. It gives a broader base of inquiry by allowing missionaries and Chinese who were not necessarily skilled or inclined to writing to recount events and experiences, some of them not previously recorded. It also includes the reflections of old China hands and Chinese on their lives as missionaries, converts, or religious leaders. When conscientiously gathered, carefully processed, and critically examined, oral history contributes to both the quantity and the quality of what is known about the recent past.

The Retrieval System

Use of the "List of Major Categories and Topics" and the standard questionnaire ensure that the researchers' inquiries—both in conducting interviews and in reading archival materials—be as thorough and organized as possible. However, the sequence of facts, experiences, or reflections described in the diaries and the inter-

views do not necessarily follow the patterns of the questionnaire or "List of Topics." A major task, therefore, was to devise a system that permitted easy retrieval of data scattered over 10,000 pages of interviews and throughout 38,000 pages of diaries.

For this purpose, MCHP researchers compiled a list of entries by subjects, names of individuals or groups, and locations. Each interview and each archival document was indexed according to this list and entered into a computerized data-retrieval system designed by the staff. This unique system allows researchers to detect emerging themes; effective data retrieval speeds up the final writing, and facilitates access to documents by other researchers.

The Maryknoll China History Project is using modern methodology and technology as tools to underscore the relevance of mission history and to explore its meaning for missiology today. The usefulness of these tools is shown in the discussion below of some preliminary findings in the area of indigenization in the Church of China.

The findings selected here deal with the mission methods of the Maryknoll Fathers. The final publication will, of course, describe the mission methods of the Maryknoll Sisters as well.

Sample Findings: Indigenization

When old China missionaries are asked about the purpose and goal of Maryknoll in China from 1918 to 1952, they all respond in a similar fashion: "Maryknoll had a general purpose, which was to spread the Gospel among the pagan Chinese. A more precise purpose was the formation of a native clergy with the idea of moving out when the clergy was ready."

This answer reflects very closely the words found in the opening paragraphs of the first set of rules of the Foreign Mission Society of America as approved by Rome in July 1915. In fact there is nothing original in these goals, which Maryknoll borrowed words and all from the constitutions of the Paris Foreign Mission Society (PFMS) already 250 years old. What is significant, however, is the mainly positive role that the young missionary society played in promoting the establishment of a full-fledged native Chinese church.

Indigenization at Maryknoll Headquarters

The idea of Maryknoll working for the formation of an indigenous clergy first appeared in *The Field Afar* magazine in February 1920. Maryknoll took the opportunity of the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* ("Spreading the Faith Throughout the World") of November 30, 1919 to promote the indigenous-priest idea among the Catholics of the United States. In the same year three other issues of the magazine emphasized the missiological importance of the apostolic letter of Pope Benedict XV. Such strong support can be contrasted with the rather cool reception the letter met in European missionary circles and publications. From the January 1922 issue on, Maryknoll—now ten years old and in charge of a large mission territory in Guangdong and Guangxi provinces—chose to present itself routinely as a society whose ultimate goal was the formation of indigenous clergies.

Two years later Maryknoll took another bold step by enlisting into its ranks Father Anthony Cotta, a former Vincentian priest, whose role and stand on the side of the Chinese against the disparaging and seemingly anti-Chinese behavior of some foreign missionaries had led in 1919 to his expulsion from China by his fellow missionaries. Together with Father Vincent Lebbe, he is known to have furnished Rome with the arguments in favor of an indigenous clergy incorporated in *Maximum Illud*.

Cotta stayed on the faculty of the major seminary at Maryknoll headquarters until his death in 1957. He had no special of-

ficial responsibilities but his role was like leavening in dough. He mingled constantly with the seminarians, sharing informally his love for the Chinese and his hope for a Chinese indigenous church—the driving force of his life. His spiritual counseling, too, was sought after. He became the spiritual director and confessor of the founders, Bishop James Anthony Walsh and Mother Mary Joseph, as well as of many seminarians and Sisters, novices and professed. As such his influence was profound. Perhaps there is no better description of Father Cotta's impact on Maryknoll's drive to further indigenization than this statement of an eighty-four-year-old veteran of China mission: "He gave us all a view of 'This is the kind of missionary I must be. I mean doing everything for the Chinese and trying to do as much as you can to make a Church over there.'"²

Indigenization in the Field

In view of the relatively short time that Maryknoll spent in China, its record on the promotion of indigenization in the mission field by its missionaries shows a strong commitment but also several blemishes.

When put in charge of a mission territory, Maryknoll immediately set up probatoriums, minor seminaries, and novitiates. For instance, as soon as Father Ford arrived in Jiaying in the fall of 1925 as head of the new mission, he opened a seminary in rented, cramped quarters. Although he wanted to establish the church in Jiaying as an influential spiritual community and not as a visible presence of stone buildings, he made an exception two years later and started to construct a seminary. That seminary remained the only church building he erected in Jiaying until 1947 when he launched upon plans for his center home and cathedral. On the anniversary of his arrival in Jiaying twenty-five years later, the diocese could boast nineteen Chinese priests and fifty-one seminarians.

The Training of Indigenous Vocations

In each territory the Maryknoll head of mission asked missionaries to be constantly on the outlook for possible vocations. The training given by Maryknollers to indigenous seminarians followed very closely the training given at the time in any Western minor seminary—including the learning of Latin—but often lagged behind the best governmental schools in Chinese studies. The daily schedule was Spartan and the discipline strict. Anyone caught outside the seminary wall without permission was promptly dismissed. Maryknoll Sisters were called upon to direct the formation of indigenous Sisters and ran the novitiates on the model of their novitiate at the Maryknoll Motherhouse.

This training of the indigenous clergy and sisterhood—already a lengthy process of several years—was often disrupted by the almost continually warlike situation that characterized China between 1920 and 1950: fights among warlords of the '20s and '30s, Sino-Japanese War of the '30s and '40s, civil war of the late '40s. The Fushun seminary, for instance, was closed in December 1942 after the Maryknoll missionaries were put into detention camps; soon after, the same thing happened to the Jiangmen seminary when the Japanese occupied most of Guangdong Province. As for the Wuzhou seminary, it was constantly on the move, staying ahead of the Japanese as they made forays into Guangxi Province.

In spite of these conditions, by 1949 Maryknoll had trained forty-two Chinese priests and created five indigenous orders of Sisters with a total of ninety-eight professed and novices in the five territories acquired between 1918 and 1933. The two dioceses of Jiaying and Fushun, which had older and better-established

Christian communities, supplied twenty-seven of the forty-two priests and forty-three of the ninety-eight Sisters—a fact that points to the importance of solid Christian surroundings in fostering and nurturing religious vocations.

Relationships with Chinese Priests

Maryknoll Fathers always took pride that their relationships with the Chinese clergy were governed by a deep sense of equality and fraternity. In fact, they often pointed out that this liberal attitude distinguished them most from the French MEP, who kept a certain distance from the Chinese priests and never accepted them on a completely equal footing. When asked, however, how well they knew the French missionaries, most Maryknollers recognized that they had practically no contact with them except occasional visits, during which the MEP displayed a great sense of hospitality and courtesy. Maryknollers' opinion of MEP attitudes toward the Chinese clergy was therefore based on hearsay or reading. The reality is that isolated MEP missionaries, as well as Maryknollers, had turned into staunch individualists with whom it would have been hard to live anyway, without regard to race or nationality.

As the number of Chinese priests increased, newly ordained priests were usually assigned for a period of six months to one year as curates to a Maryknoll pastor; the reverse situation seems never to have occurred. Although they agreed in principle that it would not have mattered, most Maryknollers recognized that it would have been personally difficult for them to accept being the curate of a Chinese pastor. Only one recalls proudly how he volunteered in 1926 to go to work under one of the six newly consecrated Chinese bishops but was not granted permission.

Chinese priests were given parishes with the largest Christian community to administer, and Maryknoll priests were assigned to areas when missionary work was still plentiful. Certainly Maryknollers recognized this as part of their vocation and did not complain. At times, however, they would have liked more encouragement and support from their bishop in recognition of their difficult work. Some missionaries in the Jiaying mission, for instance, remarked almost with a touch of jealousy that their bishop had become so totally pro-Chinese that he was oblivious of the feelings of his fellow missionaries.

Chinese Priests' Views of Maryknollers

When interviewed, Chinese priests who were trained by and worked with Maryknoll gave a very touching appreciation of the work of Maryknoll. Their relationships were those of seminarians and young priests toward generally older missionaries. Even when they mentioned flaws and mistakes, these flaws, they said, did not make Maryknoll less effective, but prevented Maryknoll from being even more effective. They thought that Maryknoll was actively building an indigenous church. The Chinese priests of Jiaying were certainly the most positive in their statements, probably because progress in that direction was more striking in their mission than in any other.

Strained relationships between Maryknollers and Chinese priests developed mainly after 1952, particularly in Hong Kong. Although such situations occurred after 1952, the MCHP takes them into consideration in order to find out what triggered them and whether or not they have roots in Maryknoll's work in mainland China. Hard feelings are especially strong among Chinese priests from former Maryknoll missions who were ordained in Hong Kong in the early 1950s and could not or would not reenter China. The causes of their grievances fall into two categories.

First, Chinese priests complained of unjust treatment by old China hands who, after 1952, were put in charge of parishes in

Hong Kong. They accused these Maryknollers of keeping unnecessarily tight control over the Chinese curates, of making blunders in not listening to them, and of being unwilling to pass parish responsibilities on to the Chinese priests. One wonders how many of these strained relationships stem from Maryknollers' individualism acquired in order to survive in China. How many stem from the Hong Kong situation, with a limited number of parishes and no other place to go for both Maryknollers and the Chinese priests in exile? How many stem from excessive dependence on Maryknoll of young, homesick Chinese priests who chose to stay under the control of Maryknoll rather than take the bold step of joining a new diocese?

The second cause of hard feelings was the question of finances. Grievances stemmed from an economic chasm separating the missionaries and the Chinese. The personal allowance received by Maryknoll priests had always been larger than the one received by Chinese priests and certainly gave Maryknollers a standard of living well above that of an average Chinese. This relatively affluent lifestyle (although Spartan by Western standards) was usually justified on the grounds that to live otherwise would endanger the missionaries' health and the efficiency of their work, and that "face" required them to adopt that lifestyle. Like the rest of the Chinese Christians in rural areas, Chinese priests at first accepted this rationalization given by the missionaries. They knew that the missionaries' health was indeed at stake. Moreover, they also benefited; Maryknoll supplied them with education and an allowance to maintain a respectable standard of living.

By contrast, Chinese priests soon realized that missionaries' health was less at stake in Hong Kong and differences in allowances should have been reduced if not eliminated. By not receiving the same money, the Chinese priests felt discriminated against, reduced to some kind of "second-class priests," victims of injustice within the church. The same missionaries who had given them "face" had taken it away.

Early Responses to the Idea of a Chinese Bishop

Twice Maryknoll was presented with an opportunity to have some of its priests work under a Chinese ecclesiastical superior but did not show much eagerness in seeing these proposals turn into reality. The first instance happened in 1925 when Jiaying became a separate mission territory. Two proposals were circulated: one giving the whole territory to Maryknoll; the other creating two smaller ecclesiastical territories, one run by Maryknoll and the other by a Chinese superior with Maryknoll and MEP priests under him.

Although praising the second proposal as a "noble idea," Bishop James E. Walsh, in charge of studying the possibilities from the Maryknoll side, expressed his true opinion on the matter when writing to another Maryknoller that he would rather see Father Ford in charge of the whole Jiaying territory. When the second proposal was finally rejected, no one at Maryknoll showed regret.

Maryknoll had a second opportunity in 1938 when the Wuzhou prefecture was elevated to the rank of vicariate. A terna (a consultative ballot) sent by Maryknoll headquarters to all the priests in Wuzhou showed that Monsignor Meyer, the incumbent prefect, had not received a strong enough majority to be recommended as vicar apostolic. Subsequently Rome asked Bishop James E. Walsh, then superior general of Maryknoll, to go to China and make an extensive search for a Chinese priest who would qualify as the first bishop of Wuzhou.

Bishop Walsh soon found that although the Maryknoll priests and Brothers in Wuzhou "without exception professed to cherish and welcome the idea of a native vicar over them in principle,"



Frs. Walsh and Dietz arrive in Wuchow, 1919. With Fr. Héraud, M.E.P., and American river gunboat sailors from the U.S.S. Pampanga, in front of the Old French chapel.

only two out of fourteen saw "no reason why a native vicar could not succeed [in Wuzhou]." The remainder were "doubtful that the [vicar] would work at this time." Sensing that none of the three young Chinese priests working in the Wuzhou mission could assert enough authority over the Maryknollers, Bishop Walsh advised Rome that he could find no Chinese priest available. Moreover, the appointment of a Chinese vicar in Wuzhou at the time seemed "too big a chance" because of the risk of isolation among a solid group of foreigners and the troubled political conditions of the area.³

Bishop Ford's Approach to Indigenization

Among the five mission territories, the vicariate of Jiaying shows the best record on indigenization. A partial explanation is that the area remained rather isolated from the war situation that ravaged China during that period. The key explanation, however, lies in the personal-mission vision of its chief, Bishop Francis X. Ford. He was the Maryknoll bishop who, more than any other, emphasized the establishment of the church rather than the conversion of individual souls: "The object of mission work is not primarily to convert pagans, it is to establish the Catholic Church in pagan lands. The purpose is to preach the Gospel and to build up as complete an organization as possible, which will itself later continue with better success the work of converting the native population."⁴

To carry out this objective, Ford laid out four broad areas of action: (1) training of as many qualified and willing lay helpers as possible to participate personally and directly in the apostolate; (2) immediate preparation of young Chinese men for priesthood and Chinese women for religious life to assume the leadership of the church; (3) involvement of Maryknoll Sisters in missionary work not merely to direct orphanages or other institutions of charity, but to go to women in villages and preach the gospel to them; (4)

emphasis by all his missionaries on direct evangelization, using the written word as well as personal contact with non-Christians.

Ford's idea was revolutionary. He aimed to bring the church to China, but without the methods, the "civilization," and the control of the Western church. As previously mentioned, Bishop Ford refrained for many years from launching any large construction projects. Similarly, he never promoted works of charity by missionaries because he thought they could become a burden to carry for the Chinese church. In his view, it was better to let the Chinese Christians come up with their own ways of helping each other and running their church.

Conclusion

In December 1975 Pope Paul VI released an apostolic exhortation on evangelization in the modern world, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, which many see as the richest document we have on evangelization. Encompassing all the previous encyclicals and ancillary works, it challenges us to keep on searching: "The conditions of the society in which we live oblige all of us to revise methods, to seek by every means to study how we can bring the Christian message to modern [persons]."⁵ Maryknoll has responded to that challenge in many ways by fostering theological reflection, sponsoring cultural and educational exchanges, and helping church-to-church relations. The China History Project is part of Maryknoll's response, seeking to understand the past history of its mission work in China as a guide for future service to the Chinese and other peoples of the world.

Findings, in addition to those briefly described, deal with a wide range of topics such as missionaries' goals and visions, missionaries' impact on the home front, measures of success and failure, cultural clashes and encounters, relationships between national and local politics, and evangelization. Through these

findings the study of mission is truly contextualized. Mission is embedded in a historical and human setting of war and peace, good harvest and cataclysms, life and death, and hope for better days.

Finally, it is also important to keep in mind that contacts with outsiders who lived within third-world countries have often been at the core of the transformation of many of these countries. In China, outsiders included Western missionaries who gained converts to Christianity and performed a variety of functions. The impact of Christian missions on China forms a subject much broader

than even a comprehensive history of Western missionaries in China. By establishing extensive factual records based on both Western and Chinese sources, such a history can provide opportunities for scholars to study other facets of the influence and results of Christian missions and the church in China. This approach to mission history is a point of entry into a common field of dialogue and cooperation with Chinese historians concerning China's modern history and the role of Christianity in it. It is with this frame of mind that researchers should approach the study of any missionary undertaking.

Notes

1. Thomas A. Breslin, *China, American Catholicism and the Missionary* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980).
2. Transcript of Father John Driscoll, M.M., TF05, p. 8 (Maryknoll Fathers Archives).
3. James E. Walsh, Correspondence: Rome (Maryknoll Fathers Archives).
4. *The Field Afar*, September 1932, p. 236.
5. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 3.

Diary of a Country Missioner—Manchuria, 1940

Selected and Introduced by Donald MacInnis

Thanks to the foresight of Maryknoll's founders, the archives contain an estimated 90,000 pages of diaries and related materials from the China missions, dating from 1918 through 1952. The excerpts printed here were selected from the diaries of Father John A. Fisher who was assigned in 1940 as pastor of the parish of Ch'iao T'ou (Chiaotou), a market town south of Mukden (Shenyang) in Manchuria. Father Fisher was also responsible for the outstation of Pen Hsi Hu (Benxihu), and all Catholic families in neighboring villages. In contrast to the Maryknoll Sisters who always lived and worked in community, he was, like most Maryknoll Fathers, the one missionary in his station, assisted by Chinese catechists. With thirty American priests and twenty-eight Sisters in 1940, Maryknoll served a territory in Manchuria of 40,000 square miles with a population of 2.5 million.

Manchukuo (Manchuria) at that time was a frontier region under Japanese domination, only partially settled. Impoverished peasant families from China were migrating northward in search of livelihood. Father Fisher's diaries record their difficulties, some beggars, some poor farmers, and some who worked in the coal mines.

While Father Fisher helped the poor and needy as he could, his main tasks were pastoral—celebrating Mass, administering the sacraments, visiting the homes of the sick, the elderly, the lapsed members, arranging dispensations for mixed marriages, organizing catechumens for new Christians and reaching out to non-Christians. One entry describes a funeral Mass held in a rural home, the first Chris-

tian service ever held in that village or entire district.

These diaries record both the special problems of his time and place, and the routine events of daily living. This was a time of inflation and rationing, a constant struggle to get flour, coal, and other necessities: Japan was at war with China. The church and rectory are prepared for winter, the stoves installed, coal laid in, storm doors mounted, and windows papered. An ironsmith makes basketball hoops. The pastor substitutes in the primary school when the teacher is sick, works in the vegetable garden, swims in the mountain streams, and plays basketball with the school-boys.

This was a lonely life; he had one American visitor during the period of these diaries. It was a dangerous time and place. Gerard Donovan, a fellow Maryknoller in the same vicariate, had been kidnapped, held for ransom, and finally murdered by strangulation just two years earlier.

As for the larger historical context, Father Fisher scarcely alludes to the heightened tensions that would bring his own country to war with Japan in just one more year, leading to arrest and imprisonment for all Americans in China. A single reference (October 11) reads: "News of the Americans being ordered to evacuate in all the newspapers today. Has the people wondering and a few of the local authorities more vigilant. . . . A load of materials arrived for building the hen-coop."

The Diary of a Country Missioner

June 17, 1940. On June 8th I came here to substitute temporarily for Fr. Haggerty, now acting as procurator at the mission center in Fushun, awaiting the arrival of Fr. Mullen from the hospital in Peking where he is recuperating.

June 22. Letter comes from Acting Vicar, Fr. McCormack, telling me to take up permanent residence in Ch'iao T'ou, as Fr. Mullen's recovery will not be speedy.

Ch'iao T'ou is a small railroad village, 100 miles south of Mukden and 120 miles north of Antung. There are 200 Catholics here. Included in the Ch'iao T'ou territory is another railroad mining town, 15 miles to the north, Pen Hsi Hu. At present it is being developed on a grand scale. At Pen Hsi Hu there are some 250 Cath-

olics. Ch'iao T'ou has a complete mission compound. The Pen Hsi Hu compound is a rented mud house atop of one of the town's many smoky hills.

Measles rampant through the village. Two little children, baptized within the year, die today. A third, the child of a very tepid Catholic family, is in great danger. It was a grand opportunity to exhort them to mend their ways and give them a few notions about the proper care for children with measles.

My first Sundays in both Pen Hsi Hu and Ch'iao T'ou were rather eventful including the tricky surprises that they brought. Hearing Confessions before Mass in Pen Hsi Hu, what should happen but that an old lady should lean too hard on the confessional screen. It came down in a heap on top of me. She went in peace and the screen was in pieces! . . .

Had one of my first nights sleeping on the native brick bed, the kang, at Pen Hsi Hu. Quite a few confessions, more than the

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