Imperial Entanglements: Tracing the Relationship to Empire in the Missionary Religions of Christianity and Buddhism

by

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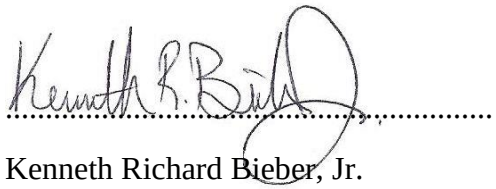
Declaration

I, Kenneth Richard Bieber, Jr., student number 17153141, hereby declare that this dissertation, "*Imperial Entanglements: Tracing the Relationship to Empire in the Missionary Religions of Christianity and Buddhism*," is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.



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Abstract

This dissertation explores the relationship between the missionary activities of Christianity and Buddhism with empire. At pivotal points throughout each religion's history, scholar-missionaries relied, knowingly or unknowingly, on the framework, technology, and military and political strength of empire to help move their respective religions beyond each tradition's ethnic and cultural communities of origin.

This dynamic of reliance upon empire is seen in the work of the apostle Paul in the first century C.E. Although the former Jewish Pharisee who became a Christian church planter would die under the sword of the Roman Empire, his missionary travels throughout the provinces of the empire were made possible by his Roman citizenship, as well as by enjoying the passage offered by imperial roads and shipping routes.

Relatively early in each tradition's history, each religion found an emperor who converted to the respective faith, and then used his political position to promote the movement, including offering the patronage of missionaries. In the case of Buddhism, tradition regards Ashoka of the Mauryan Empire as having convened religious councils, applied the ethics of his adopted religion to his society, and supported missionary activity beyond the borders of his immediate rule. Christianity had as its patron Constantine, who, like his Buddhist parallel, convened the Council of Nicaea in the fourth century C.E., funded sacred architecture, and supported Christian missionary endeavors.

Another parallel is found in the entrances of both Mahayana Buddhism and Protestant Christianity into China. Their movement into China demonstrate this relationship between missionary endeavors and imperial influence, as the work of key missionary translators was connected to the trade of commodities made possible through the strength of empire. Buddhism traveled to China from India along the trade routes of the Silk Road, which originally allowed the export of silk and tea to travel from China to the upper class consumers of the Roman Empire. Fifteen hundred years later, these same commodities would prove desirable to the consumer class of the British Empire, resulting in a trade imbalance with Middle Kingdom. The Opium Wars of the mid-nineteenth century forced open the whole of China's interior to the importation of opium, but also allowed Christian missionaries to travel unencumbered.

Connections between empire and religious mission continued in the twentieth century, as the empire-like actions of the People's Republic of China's invasion of Tibet prompted the departure of the Dalai Lama to India. From there, he has since become a representative of Tibetan Buddhism on the global stage. The first decades the twenty-first century demonstrate that religion and empire continue to be tied together, even though empire is commonly considered an institution located in the past.

Notes on Language Usage

This dissertation uses pinyin for the names of Chinese persons, places, and ideas. However, when using quotes from other authors, I have left their use in their original spelling when the author used another, older transliteration system, such as Wade-Giles or Yale Romanization.

Chapter four compares the two emperors of Ashoka and Constantine. For the Indian emperor, the text here employs the spelling Ashoka. When different quotations throughout the chapter employ the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration's spelling of "Aśoka," or the transliteration of the Brahmi script as "Asoka," I have chosen to leave the spelling choice of the author.

This dissertation is written in English for a doctoral program in South Africa. As I am an American English speaker, I normally rely on the American English spelling of words, except when quotes from other sources employ the British or other spellings. An example of spelling variations between American and British English is found in the different spelling of 'civilization' (US) and 'civilisation' (UK).

Although this dissertation engages in comparative missiology between Christianity and Buddhism, it still is a work in the field of missiology from a Christian background. As such, the second chapter considers the apostle Paul and a biblical theology of empire, contains many Scripture references. Biblical quotes rely on the 2011 copyright text of the *New International Version* (NIV) translation.[1]

[1] *Holy Bible, New International Version*®, *NIV*® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.®

Key Words

Christianity

Buddhism

Empire

Comparative Missiology

Apostle Paul

Ashoka

Constantine

Kumārajīva

Robert Morrison

Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama

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My parents, Ken and Diane, have always encouraged seminary and academic study through the years, even though I have memories of each of them working late into the night as divinity students.

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Three professors, all having passed, were influential in shaping me. Dr. Ernst Breisach embodied and then evoked a love for history while I was an undergraduate at Western Michigan University. Dr. David Ede demonstrated how to study religion both in the past and present, showing how it is on a continuum from the past into the present and future. Both during and after seminary, Dr. Roger Greenway helped me to begin to grasp the breadth of Christian mission, and how good missiology requires both theological engagement and practical sensibility.

During my first stint in seminary, Dr. John Bolt's theology courses and seminars demonstrated a love for truth for its own sake. I am grateful for his introducing me to a critical appreciation of both Jonathan Edwards and the Dutch Neo-Calvinist tradition.

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CHAPTER ONE: EMPIRE AND COMPARATIVE MISSIOLOGY

1.1 IMPETUS: Teaching in China

The impetus for this dissertation began twenty-five years ago when I graduated from college in 1994. Having made the commitment at a student missions conference to go on a short term mission trip following graduation, I went to teach conversational English in China with an evangelical parachurch organization. During the six weeks of orientation in Southern California, our organization made clear to the teachers that the best witness for the gospel would come from our serving as high-quality, professional educators. Such a work ethic would demonstrate a witness of integrity by showing love for our students, all of whom had been raised under Communist atheism in the People's Republic of China. So I took on our organization's ethos and strove to work diligently, even offering extra, unpaid time to my students, all of whom were older than my twenty-two years.

During those weeks of orientation, however, the question of my role as a teacher began to stir in my mind. With our organization, we thought of ourselves—and presented our work to financial supporters—as overseas missionaries going into a closed country that had expelled all Western missionaries in 1950. We would serve as "tentmakers" in what is sometimes called a *creative access country*.[2] But I also realized that we were helping Chinese individuals, and thereby the nation, enter into the global economy by giving them the opportunity to engage with native English speakers. During my time in college, the Soviet Union had collapsed and seemingly everyone wanted in on the growing international open market economy. Our teaching in China would allow Chinese students

[2] The term tentmaking alludes to the apostle Paul's use of his trade as a tentmaker to support himself while helping to plant the church in Corinth (Acts 18:3). For places like China in the 1990s, "Creative-access methods are used in countries in which access by traditional missionaries has been restricted for some reason." See Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 210.

access into that global economy through the skill of conversational English, the dominant language of globalization.

Having majored in world history, the question began to arise for me of whether we, in our role as English teachers, were also serving as agents of Western-driven globalization. I did not want to ignore the possibility that we might be playing a role similar to that of missionaries during the era of European expansion, roughly 1450-1950 C.E. Concerning that time period, Stephen Neill writes the assessment, "It is now widely taken for granted that, whatever may have been the beneficent intentions of the missionaries, they were in fact the tools of governments, and that missions can be classed as one of the instruments of western infiltration and control."[3] My undergraduate courses on Chinese history made me aware that the outcomes of the Opium Wars between the British Empire and Qing dynasty of the mid-nineteenth century had benefitted Christian missions by allowing missionaries access into all of China.[4] I had also studied how the anger against Western imperialism in the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) particularly targeted missionaries, whom many Chinese people viewed as agents of empire.[5]

Over ninety years since the Boxer Rebellion, some of my students might come to faith in Christ through my interactions and conversations with them during that coming year. After all, I had felt called to go overseas when I learned at that conference my freshman

[3] Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), 11-12.

[4] "To the [Chinese] scholar-gentry, missionaries were foreign subversives, whose immoral conduct and teachings were backed by gunboats." In the decades following 1860, "Thousands of incidents occurred and hundreds were reported in diplomatic channels by missionaries demanding redress and official protection of their treaty rights to proselytize." See John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History, Second Enlarged Edition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 222-223.

[5] Chinese converts were also targeted, viewed as collaborators with occupying powers. See John Keay, *China: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 493.

year that Jesus sends his people into all the world to make disciples, commonly known as "the Great Commission" in Matthew 28:16-20. My operating under this conviction showed my involvement with the evangelical movement, as defined by Frances Fitzgerald:

> The word "evangelical" comes from the Greek "evangel," meaning the "good news," or "the Gospel." While the word could be claimed by all Christians, evangelical became the common name for the revivals that swept the English-speaking world in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In America the series of revivals, known as the First and the Second Great Awakenings, with their emphasis on simple Bible preaching and immediate conversion, touched virtually all Protestant denominations. For most of the nineteenth century almost all Protestants would have called themselves evangelicals in the sense that they believed they had been born again in Christ and had a duty to evangelize, or spread the good news of the Gospels in America and abroad.[6]

So I would be going to China under the command of Christ, seeking to bring people to faith so that they would become his disciples. However, all of the sixty-four students I would teach would gain language skills to help them, the state-run company for which they worked, and the country of China as a whole, engage with the global economy. So I wrestled with whether my fellow teachers and I were serving as agents of economy, or even empire, be it an unofficial empire of globalization.

1.2 PROBLEM

My personal example of going to China for a year raises the question of the relationship between missionaries and empires in a short term situation, unknown to the public. However, the entanglement between missionaries and empires can also involve public

[6] Frances Fitzgerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 2. Fitzgerald continues, "As the religious historian George Marsden writes, 'Evangelicalism today includes any Christians traditional enough to affirm the basic beliefs of the old nineteenth century evangelical consensus: the Reformation doctrine of the final authority of the Bible, the real historical character of God's saving work recorded in Scripture, salvation to eternal life based on the redemptive work of Christ, the importance of evangelism and missions, and the importance of a spiritually transformed life,'" 2-3.

figures and their close proximity to power. Such was the case with American evangelist Billy Graham (1928-2018). This present study looks primarily at missionaries who resettle in new countries to promote their respective faith, whereas Graham was an evangelist based in the US who traveled the globe. As a spokesperson on the world stage proclaiming the Christian gospel, however, he functioned as a missionary, seeking the conversion of his hearers.

Graham partnered with the British preacher John Stott (1921-2011) to serve as the best known leaders who convened the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization's first International Congress on World Evangelization, held in Switzerland in 1974. Although Graham and Stott differed as to what degree to incorporate concerns of delegates from the majority world, they both participated in key ways, with Stott authoring the Lausanne Covenant, which came out of the conference.[7] While these two leaders disagreed on the breadth of the social application of the gospel, with Graham focusing primarily on individual conversion, they agreed on the call and need for Christians to evangelize the globe.

In Graham's inaugural address to the Lausanne Congress in 1974, he alludes to the temptation to mix the gospel with political power in the presentation of the call to conversion:

> A third error is to identify the gospel with any one particular political program or culture. This has been my own danger. When I go to preach the gospel, I go as an ambassador for the Kingdom of God—not America. To tie the gospel to any political system, secular program, or society is dangerous and will only serve to divert the gospel. The gospel transcends the goals and methods of any political system or any

[7] See Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Billy Graham and John Stott* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013), 155-179

> society, however good it may be. Jesus touched on this in his conversation with Pilate. In answering Pilate he said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'[8]

One month after this evangelization congress, Graham's friend Richard Nixon would resign from the American presidency on August 9. Graham's confession to concede to political temptation most likely alludes to his friendship with Nixon and other presidents as, following Nixon's downfall, Graham would distance himself from political endorsements, even while maintaining relationships with the succeeding presidents to follow.[9]

Five years prior to the Lausanne Congress, Graham had acted on this impulse to connect the mission of the Christian gospel with political and military power during the Vietnam era. The Vietnam War, which ran from 1955-1975, can be viewed as a proxy war between two empires. Following the Second World War, the Soviet Union undertook the spread of communism throughout the globe. Its former ally from the Second World War, the United States, was now its greatest nemesis, as the US attempted to keep the Soviet Union at bay while itself spreading free trade and liberal democracy. Had the two superpowers faced each other directly in war, the result very well could have been nuclear annihilation. Instead, these two empires pressed their own influence while mitigating the other's through proxy wars, such as the Vietnam conflict. In the end, the United States pulled out from Saigon, and the communists from North Vietnam overran the southern half of the country. In the height of the war, however, Graham used his relationship with the American president to attempt advancing both the concern of missionaries in the region and American military victory:

[8] Billy Graham, "Why Lausanne?," *Lausanne Movement*, http://www.lausanne.org/docs/lau1docs/0022.pdf (accessed March 5, 2018).

[9] Stanley, 65. See also Grant Wacker, *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2014), 22.

> His support for the war in Vietnam was so enthusiastic that on April 15,1969, after meeting with missionaries from Vietnam, Graham sent a memo to the White House urging that, if the peace talks in Paris failed, Nixon should bomb the dikes that held back floodwaters in the North. This, said Graham, "could overnight destroy the economy of North Vietnam." It would also have destroyed countless villages, sending as many as a million civilians to their deaths.[10]

As the account above demonstrates, the man who is identified as having preached to the most people in human history offers strategy on how to wage war to the American President, who serves as the Commander in Chief of the most powerful military force in human history. Five years later, Graham moves from advising the American President on waging war to working with John Stott and others to focus the global evangelical movement on evangelism. In his memoir, Graham recounts that he received his call to be an evangelist at nineteen years old. "From that night in 1938 on, my purpose and objectives in life were set. I knew I would be a preacher of the Gospel. I did not yet know how or when, however."[11] At the time of receiving this call to ministry, the Bible college student from a North Carolina farming background likely could not have imagined that he would not only be calling people across the world to place their faith in Jesus, but also advising the American President on where to bomb targets which would kill numerous civilians in a battle between empires.

Returning to my own early adult years and situation of the matter of missions, globalization, and empire in my trip to China, my concern led me to have a conversation

[10] Jeff Greenfield, "When Richard Nixon Used Billy Graham: For 'America's Pastor,' Access to the Highest Rungs of American Power Came at a Price—One He Would Later Regret," *Politico.com*, February 18, 2018, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/02/21/billy-graham-death-richard-nixon-217039 (accessed March 5, 2018). See also Cecil Bothwell, *The Prince of War* (Asheville: Brave Ulysses Books, 2010), 93-94. Grant Wacker questions whether millions would have been killed by Graham's strategy, but concedes, "Correct or not, there could be little doubt that many civilians would have suffered and died." While "waging war on the civilian population made sense as a strategic assumption," hacker concludes, "the plan made little sense morally, for it surely violated Christian principles of just war as well as the Geneva Convention." Wacker, 236.

[11] Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), 53.

with the founder of my teaching organization that summer. I posed to him the question of whether we might be acting as agents of empire through our English teaching. His response ran along the pragmatic lines suggesting that, if Christians did not go to a newly-opened China, then others would. So we should take advantage of the opportunity. Although he was not born in the US, his answer comports with the responses I have since had with other colleagues in ministry and friends. Both Americans in general and evangelicals in particular are known for pragmatism, and so, if there is an opportunity for American evangelicals to take advantage of, we often do so without overthinking the matter.[12]

In addition to the pragmatic character of American evangelicals, there are two more significant reasons why our own national and religious history obfuscates our ability to identify the possible reality and activity of empire, including its possible collusion with Christian propagation. The first factor to consider is the association of anti-imperial sentiment with the revivalist character of American Christianity throughout its history. This dynamic relationship grew out of the events of British colonists coming to the North American continent for religious freedom. Because of this pursuit of religious liberty, according to Steven Waldman, "Religion helped cause and sustain the American Revolution. The efforts to break from the Crown became inextricably tied to the drive to undermine the Church of England, and vice versa."[13] Over the next century and a half,

[12] On the origins of evangelical pragmatism in its British roots, see David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 64-66. In the American context, Robert Webber describes what is often called the Baby Boom Generation as the "Pragmatic Evangelicals." See Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 16-19, 36.

[13] Steven Waldman, *Founding Faith: Providence, Politics, and the Birth of a Religious Freedom in America* (New York: Random House, 2008), xii.

American colonial religious expression laid the groundwork for our political structure and ethos:

> It was not just religious excess that stimulated the move toward freedom. Religious revivalism—the passion of true believers who felt vivified by faith—fueled the drive for liberty, too. To a degree rarely acknowledged, the American Revolution and the new approach to church and state that resulted were powerfully shaped by the Great Awakening, a period of evangelical resurgence in the mid-seventeenth century led by a crosseyed preacher named George Whitefield. Whitefield and his Great Awakening brethren encouraged colonists to challenge authority. Though their first target was the Miter, the Scepter was not far behind.[14]

American religion, therefore, contains a history of anti-imperial sentiment built into its history and character.

The second significant reason why American Christians have difficulty in discerning and acknowledging empire is because the governance of our country focuses on the separation between church and state, instead of church and empire. The impulse prompting this conversation resides in the DNA of American society due to the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments added to the Constitution. The First Amendment declares, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," which has been parlayed in recent decades into a separation of church and state, and is constantly adjudicated in the courts.[15]

[14] Walman, xii.

[15] "The Constitution of the United States," Amendment 1. President Donald Trump's signing of an executive order that "removes the financial threat faced by tax-exempt churches from the Internal Revenue Service when pastors speak out on behalf of political candidates" serves as a recent example of how the battle of the First Amendment plays out in American society. See John Wagner and Sarah Pulliam Bailey, "Trump Signs Order Aimed at Allowing Churches to Engage in More Political Activity," *The Washington Post*, May 4, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-signs-order-aimed-at-allowing-churches-to-engage-in-more-political-activity/2017/05/04, (accessed May 31, 2017).

Due to the above underlying historical factors, growing up as an American, I was taught that we "do not 'do' empire."[16] This presumption, as described by Niall Ferguson, displays itself in the attitude of Americans regarding British holdings during and after World War II:

> Behind visceral and anti-imperialism lay that schoolroom version of the American war of Independence in which liberty-loving colonists rose up against the arrogant and despotic George III and his brutal redcoat. It was no accident that British apologists for the empire were often branded as 'Tories', the term of abuse which had been applied to loyalists in 1776. At a more sophisticated political level, there was a strong feeling that the protectionist empire and the sterling block were major barriers to the creation of open free markets throughout the world, to which the United States government was committed.[17]

While such antipathy toward, and denial of, empire was taught to me growing up, learning about "Manifest Destiny," the nineteenth century belief that the United States was foreordained to fill in the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, did seem empire-like, albeit one of land and not sea. In the same way, Richard Falk suggests that overseas intervention of the past few decades belies the American denial of empire:

> This empire is distinctive to the degree that it is a self-consciously informal empire and nominally an "anti-empire." It doesn't seek to displace the formal sovereignty of other states and even claims to respect and promote the right of self-determination of all peoples—while at the same time reserving the option for itself to intervene if necessary to promote "regime change."[18]

For both American society and the church, this challenge of recognizing empire has become a difficult question to ask in these first decades of the twenty first century, as official empires were dismantled throughout the latter half of the preceding century.

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[16] Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), ix.

[17] Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1994), 512.

[18] Richard Falk, "Slouching toward a Fascist World Order," David Ray Griffin, John B. Cobb Jr., Richard Falk, and Catherine Keller, *The American Empire and the Commonwealth of God: A Political, Economic, Religious Statement* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 47.

For Americans, as we have seen, identifying, much less admitting to, being purveyors of empire is a challenging task. We know the church-and-state conflict well, whether one pushes for Christianity in the public square, or vies for a more secular or pluralistic space. In this new century, the George W. Bush years (2001-2009) raised the question of the imperial presidency with the 2003 invasion of Iraq.[19] Concerning the mood of the opening decade of the twenty first century, Richard Falk charges, "This American leadership resents any suggestion of its imperial intent or identity, continuing to invoke America's historical roots as a constitutional republic as if nothing had changed."[20] Against this backdrop, my conversations with fellow evangelicals have made me think that they are even less willing than other Americans to consider the question of empire, and whether short term and long term mission trips act as proponents for the global economy, a primary objective of empire.[21]

While American evangelicals have the challenges of pragmatism and the origins of our separation of church and state coming out of the American experience of throwing off the control of the British Empire, this question of empire and church is not just an American issue. Rather, it has traveled with Christianity through the ages in whichever context it has taken root throughout the world. Part of the confusion of Christianity's relationship to

[19] Niall Ferguson argues that America is an empire and ought to embrace its role. Ferguson, ix. Timothy Parsons suggests that, "Although the era of empires is conclusively over, policy debates, particularly after the terrorist attacks of 2001, frequently revolved around imperial themes." See Timothy H. Parsons, *The Rule of Empires: Those Who Built Them, Those Who Endured Them, and Why They Always Fail* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15.

[20] Falk, 47.

[21] Baylor University reported in 2011, "The number of United States Christians taking part in trips lasting a year or less has grown from 540 in 1965 to an estimated more than 1.5 million annually, with an estimated $2 billion per year spent on the effort." See "Short-Term Mission Trips: Are They Worth the Investment?" *Baylor University*, May 2, 2011, http://www.baylor.edu/mediacommunications/news.php?action=story&story=93238 (accessed May 2, 2017).

power comes from how, according to Jaroslav Pelikan, "much of the 'divine right of kings' and of the theory of 'holy war' rested on the presupposition that Jesus Christ was King, and so did much of the eventual rejection both of all war and of the divine right of kings."[22] Is Jesus king over kings now in the actual political sphere? If so, would that make an emperor like Constantine the ultimate goal: to have a Christian on the throne who interacts with the church (such as Constantine's convening of the Council of Nicea, 325 C.E.) and supports its mission (which we will consider in chapter three)? Whether or not having political rulers who profess the name of Christ as part of the mix, Jesus does command his followers to cross political and geographic boundaries, taking the same outward direction as an empire. This outward trajectory results in overlap and encounters between a church in its mission and an empire in its pursuits. I want to show, however, that the resultant entanglements between missionary work and political empire are not just limited to the Christian faith. This present study, then, considers the broader history of religious mission and its relationship to and entanglements with power.

1.3 THESIS STATED

This dissertation demonstrates how the missionary religions of Christianity and Buddhism, in pursuing the goal of making followers from across the globe, have historically relied upon the strength of empires, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to pursue their goals of making followers from beyond the ethnic community of the founder, or from which a missionary was sent. Throughout the histories of these two traditions, missionary activity has been influenced, promoted, propelled, or antagonized by the powers of empire. These powers include not just military strength, but technology,

[22] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 46.

trade, political partnerships, and cultural influence. Oftentimes, this imperial influence, even when presented as an opposing force, moved the mission of the religion forward, as will be demonstrated with the example of the early Christians and the apostle Paul in chapter two. For a Buddhist example, chapter five will show how China's imperial action of invading Tibet caused the Tibetan diaspora and enabled the public notoriety of the Dalai Lama throughout the world. As suggested above, some amount of this interaction between empire and religion may flow from the inherent similarity of both power and religion operating under the impulse to move outward and cross borders, even if for different pursuits.

The relationship between imperial power and mission activity shows itself particularly in the lives and work of scholar-missionaries, who will draw the focus of this study.[23] As the sending religions of Christianity and Buddhism contain teachings to be conveyed to converts and future adherents, the process of transmission requires study, translation, transport, and dissemination, requiring the academic skills employed by philosophers, theologians, translators, and teachers. Such individuals find their model in the apostle Paul, who planted new churches throughout the first century Mediterranean. In one sense, he 'hitched a ride' on the boats of the Roman Empire in being aided in his mission by the framework and infrastructure of that empire. Throughout his career, however, he never offered the imperial powers his ultimate allegiance. Paul's interaction with the Roman Empire demonstrates how a constellation of the economic, technological, and political

[23] Another area one could explore in the relationship between empire and missions is the newly developing field of *diaspora missiology*, pioneered largely by Enoch Wan. Empires' actions intentionally or unintentionally cause the displacement and movements of people groups, resulting in the spread of the faith in or through diaspora communities. See Enoch Wan, ed., *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice, Second Edition* (Portland: Institute of Diaspora Studies, 2014), Michael Pocock and Enoch Wan, eds. *Diaspora Missiology: Reflections on Reaching the Scattered Peoples of the World* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2015), and Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong, *Global Diasporas in Mission* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

features of empire intersect with the missionary's work, either assisting directly or indirectly the missionary's undertaking.

This relationship between a religious proselytizer and imperial powers is not limited to early Christianity. Looking beyond the New Testament, we see this pattern of scholar-missionaries interacting with the political, military, technological, and economic powers of empire in the historical cases of the entrance of Buddhism and Protestant Christianity into China. This civilization serves as an appropriate test case for our thesis because of how both Buddhism and Christianity came from the outside to undergo indigenization, despite historical periods of suppression. For Christian missions, more than any other country, China captured the imagination of Westerners as the ultimate field mission as, according to Scott Sunquist, "India may have been the 'jewel in the crown' for the British Empire, but China was certainly the jewel for Western missionaries."[24] Also making it suited for examining the relationship between empire and missions is China's historic view of itself as a kingdom that considered itself the center of the world, but then came to be ruled by other empires. The current question of China's status as a burgeoning superpower or empire proves to be one of the key questions of global discussion in the twenty-first century.

1.4 METHOD

The field of missiology draws from the many disciplines of theology, biblical studies, history, sociology, linguistics, and other domains. This present work of missiology combines the areas of biblical theology, historical theology, and the study of history in its

[24] Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 95.

aim to examine the relationship between missionaries and empire. After first laying a biblical and theological foundation for understanding empire within a Christian and Reformed framework, the bulk of the research functions primarily as a historical inquiry into the spread of two religions. Pursuing this path, then, the content here works with mostly secondary as well as some primary sources.

This study undertakes qualitative research by endeavoring to demonstrate the theory that missionaries of both Christianity and Buddhism, particularly scholars seeking to translate the respective faith into a new culture, have historically, whether intentionally or unintentionally, relied upon the framework, mechanisms, and power of empire to achieve their aims of making converts from beyond their community of origin. This qualitative theory of a historical pattern of reliance will be exhibited through a series of case studies, or what Creswell and Poth term a "collective case study."[25] This collective case study is one which the researcher identifies "one issue or concern," such as my theory of missionary reliance upon imperial power, and then "the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue."[26] These multiple case studies are taken from the respective centuries of (1) the apostle Paul as presented in the New Testament in the first century C.E., (2) the life of the convert emperor Ashoka in the third century B.C.E. and (3) Constantine in the fourth century C.E., (4) the entrance of Buddhism into China in the fourth through seventh centuries C.E., (5) the entrance of Protestant Christianity into China in the nineteenth century, and (6) the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries for the Dalai Lama's engagement with the West, along with (7) some consideration of

[25] John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches, Fourth Edition* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2018), 99.

[26] Cresswell and Poth, 99.

current trends underway in the twenty first century. The examination of the collective historical cases will not only be descriptive, but will evaluate these entanglements or cooperation between religious mission and empire while keeping in mind the values laid out by each faith's founder for the new, alternative community of church or sangha made up of adherents from outside country of origin.

The final two chapters consider the closing decades of the twentieth and the first decades of the twenty first centuries, and thus include some living public figures. As many works either by or about these figures have been produced and are available to the public, and because of their public prominence, no attempts are made at securing interviews with those individuals.

1.5 TERMS

1.5.1 Empire

Chapter two offers a theological definition of *empire*. Apart from the biblical survey behind and theological construction of the term, a functioning definition for this present study understands empire to be constituted by the crossing of political and cultural boundaries for influence or direct rule for the benefit of a ruler or political entity. Historian Charles Maier explains the etymology of the term empire:

> The word *empire* comes from *imperium*, which was the Roman power to command (including control of the armies and the power to put to death), entrusted under the Republic to twin consuls for yearly terms. From the consuls it was delegated to the emperors and eventually ascribed to the collectivity: *imperium Romanum* or *imerium populi Romani*. This implied that the power to command meant control over non-Romans. Empire thus came to mean rule over others.[27]

[27] Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 36.

In the case of the Roman Empire, such rule over others was explicit, as was the same for the Babylonian and Persian Empires who ruled directly over Israel in the Old Testament. Rather than relying on a formal imperial declaration, Maier suggests that empires "are contests for the control of human resources that are fought out on the micro and macro levels simultaneously."[28] A nuanced understanding of empire, then, recognizes that one kingdom or nation can exert power over other peoples can happen without the explicit declaration of rule.

This opening chapter has already suggested that the United States might function along the lines of an empire, even though American history officially began with the throwing off imperial British rule. So is the USA an empire? Niall Ferguson reports that, regarding the US, "by far the most popular term among writers on international relations remains *hegemon*," which is a nation's position of global leadership to enforce particular economic and political values through military superiority and financial persuasion.[29] This leadership through strength and economic coercion can result in the surprising reality that a "hegemon can be more powerful than an empire," which has been the case in the American situation.[30]

Surveying American history demonstrates the United States did not just pursue the aforementioned Manifest Destiny, but also holds island territories such as Puerto Rico and Guam, and annexed the former Kingdom of Hawaii in 1898, which became the

[28] Maier, 59.

[29] Ferguson, 8.

[30] Ibid., 12. Ferguson argues that the US ought to abandon the designation of hegemon and pursue empire outright.

fiftieth state in 1959. But even in cases when it has not annexed territory, the United States has deployed military to ensure the flow of commodities to its market, as recounted by James Hancock:

> Throughout the 1920s, labor unrest spread to all the Republics of Central America. The founding of the Soviet Union in 1927 had inspired worker movements all across the world and the US government became obsessed with limiting the spread of communism in their hemisphere. US Marines were repeatedly sent to Central America to quell banana strikes and restrict any strikes or political changes deemed unfavorable to US interests. In 1920, Guatemalan farm workers tried to unionize, but their revolt failed when US Marines were sent by President Franklin Roosevelt to "protect" US interests. Workers in Panama went on strike in 1925, only to have US troops intervene again. In reality, nothing could be done in Central America without US consent; US soldiers occupied Nicaragua continuously from 1912 to 1933, the Dominican Republic from 1916 to 1924, and Honduras from 1911 to 1925.[31]

This military deployment for the sake of ensuring the flow of goods and commodities fits the simple definition given for empire as the crossing of political boundaries at the beginning of this section. Hancock describes how even the threat of American military power resulted in the use of force by the Colombian military in 1929:

> The wave of insurrection among banana workers reached a crescendo in late 1928 and early 1929 when 32,000 workers went on strike in the Magdalena region of Colombia. Vigilante groups were organized by United Fruit and trained by the US military to try and quell the walkout. Martial law was declared. Sadly, it ended when multitudes of strikers and their families gathered in the town square of Ciénega after Mass, waiting for the speech by a regional governor. The general in charge, Cortés Vargas, gave the crowd five minutes to disperse and when they didn't, he had machine gunners on rooftops fire on the crowd, killing a thousand people. The jittery general's explanation was that he had had the choice of quelling the riot himself or the United States would intervene again. This action spiraled into the decades of guerilla warfare and bloody battles that still plague Colombia.[32]

These historical realities of the annexation of territories and military intervention for economic protection demonstrate that the United States has functioned, like the British

[31] James F. Hancock, *Plantation Crops, Plunder and Power: Evolution and Exploitation* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 42.

[32] Ibid.

before it, as an empire, and for the purpose of this study, will be identified as such. Employing this term is not pejorative, but rather, serves descriptively by regarding the nation's use of power against and persuasion over other countries. The term 'empire' differs from 'kingdom' in that the latter refers to one country or land of rule. In contrast, an empire has more than one realm of rule, and may include kingdoms and princedoms subject to its authority.

1.5.2 Religion

When dealing with the topic of religion and empire, it is important to recognize how the academic discipline of comparative religion itself arose within the context of imperial empowerment. In *Empire and Religion*, David Chidester traces the development of comparative religion from the mid-nineteenth century, which, "was a crucial index for imperial thinking about empire."[33] He argues that, "More than any other imperial science," this discipline compounded the hierarchical values of empire as it "dealt with the essential identities and differences entailed in the imperial encounter with the exotic East and savage Africa."[34] As this present study examines the relationship between religion and empire in what are considered two of the oldest faith traditions, it is wise to note Chidester's contention on the weighted designation of what constitutes a world religion:

> In imperial comparative religion, we can see a predilection for religions of empires. While ancient were the religions of Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires, the major religions of the world were associated with imperial rule—Solomon's palace and temple, Constantine's *in hoc signo*, Muhammad's conquests, the Hindu world-ruler, the Buddhist emperor Ashoka, and the Confucian court of the emperor of China. Reclassified from an indigenous animism to a religion, Shinto

[33] David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 4.

[34] Ibid., 5.

> gained admittance to the world of world religions in the wake of the expansion of the Japanese empire. In a kind of circular gesture of self-recognition, imperial comparative religion found that world religions were imperial religions.[35]

Throughout the history of the discipline, agents of empire relayed back to their home countries religious texts and field reports concerning religious practices and imagery throughout the world. Chidester explains, "By weaving this data together, imperial theorists had the opportunity to produce a universal theory of religion."[36] Two of these theorists' work will now be considered regarding their definition of religion.

For the first definition, Chidester includes Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) as one of these theorists who attempted to offer a universal understanding of religion. Durkheim is known for the sacred-secular division regarding religion.[37] While Durkheim recognizes both corporate aspects of belief and the more individualistic emphasis on magic, he identifies the overarching function of religion as offering meaning to the relationship between the individual and larger society:

> The main purpose of religion is not to provide a representation of the natural world, for if that were its basic task its persistence would be incomprehensible. In this respect it is scarcely more than a tissue of lies. But religion is above all a system of notions by which individuals imagine the society to which they belong and their obscure yet intimate relations with that society. This is its primordial role; and although this representation is metaphorical and symbolic, it is not inaccurate. Quite the contrary, it fully expresses the most essential aspect of the relations between the individual and society. For it is an eternal truth that something exists outside us that is greater than we are, and with which we commune.[38]

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[35] Chidester, 309.

[36] Ibid., 5.

[37] For a summary of the criticisms of the sacred-secular division posited by Durkheim and others, see Irving Hexham, *Understanding World Religions: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 56-59.

[38] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 170-171.

Chidester relates how one of Durkheim's successors, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926-2006), did not want to see himself as falling in the academic lineage of Durkheim and other earlier social scientists.[39] Although Geertz recognizes the social congruence afforded by religion, his definition focuses on religious symbolism:

> Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.[40]

At least two authors have found that, "Of all the important academic definitions of religion, Geertz's at least initially appears to be the most careful and thorough—and probably the least open to charges of special pleading," praising the comprehensiveness and pliability of Geertz's definition.[41]

The third chapter of this study will compare the emperor Constantine with his Buddhist counterpart Ashoka, but the example of Constantine's conversion to Christianity and employment of Christian imagery illustrate not only elements of both Durkheim and Geertz's definitions of religion, but also show the new resultant culture of a missionary religion. Constantine (272-337 C.E.) was not formally baptized until on his deathbed, but as a young commander he and his troops reportedly saw a vision of the Christian cross with the Greek letters *chi-rho* (χ-ρ) across its front in the sky.[42] Although he continued to allow pagan worship forms after his victory, Constantine had a *labarum*, or imperial

[39] Chidester, 307-308.

[40] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 90. See also James C. Livingston, *Anatomy of the Sacred: An Invitation to Religion, Second Edition* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1993), 10, and William Arnal and Russell T. McCutcheon, *The Sacred Is the Profane: The Political Nature of "Religion"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23.

[41] Arnal and McCutcheon, 23.

[42] Regarding questions on the date for when Constantine had this vision, see Paul Stephenson, *Constantine: Roman Emperor, Christian Victor* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2009), 134-140.

standard, with the chi-rho forged for his troops to ensure his victory of becoming sole emperor of Rome's empire:

> ['The *labarum*] indicated that Constantine's signal advantage over his enemies was his ability to recognize a powerful sign of divine favour and translate it to the profane world. Thus within a traditional Roman context he forged a material focus for his *virtus*, the 'military courage' or 'valour' that would be rewarded with success. In a Christian context, Constantine supplied a channel through which grace could operate: the imperial standard, or *labarum*, which Constantine had produced for his guards and replicated for his regular troops to carry alongside their standards.[43]

Within Durkheim's definition, Constantine's labarum given to his troops functioned like a totem for this clan of soldiers.[44] As the channel for the grace of the newly adopted Christian God to protect their commander and give success, the labarum brought the power of the sacred into the secular. At the same time, Constantine was changing the culture by now bringing Christian symbolism into it, a new sacred to give meaning to the secular.

Constantine's use of the labarum would also fit Geertz's definition of religion as well. In employing this symbol for himself, his troops, and the empire, Constantine forged and employed a symbol for the creation of a community, or segments of the larger community, under his imperial rule. It was not just with the labarum and the minting of coins, however, that Constantine utilized Christian symbolism. He undertook a campaign to reclaim sacred sites of the Christian community, building shrines on the holy places of the Scriptures from the Old and New Testaments. "In the struggle over the ownership of

[43] Stephenson, 187.

[44] Ibid., 165.

sacred space, Constantine continued to engage in symbolic warfare on behalf of his Christian empire."[45]

Having acknowledged above Chidester's charge that theories of religion are borne from an imperial disposition, the next natural question concerns the relationship between the society and the religion being studied: how are religion and culture intertwined?[46] Within the purview of this present research, this question between religion and culture concerns whether the religion being sent out with missionaries exports the missionaries' home culture as well. This was the initial question for me from my personal illustration at the chapter's beginning. While it might not have been under the swords and spears of Constantine's troops, would my time in China share the good news of Jesus Christ? Or would it spread the cultures of American society and global capitalism by promoting the language of those cultures, which is English?[47] These questions lead to whether those economic influences themselves would shape the host culture into something new, such as when the entrance of McDonald's restaurants changes the diet the in the cities into which it spreads. I have witnessed in the McDonald's restaurants of Hong Kong and Taiwan many high school students eating, sleeping, and studying in this American fast food restaurant while waiting for their evening college entrance exam courses. Both Western style education and the American fast food diet have put their stamp on the cultures into which they enter. Whatever the intent of the missionary, the agent spreading

[45] David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History* (New York: HarperOne, 2000), 105.

[46] For a consideration of the related issues on this question, see Jaco Beyers, "Religion and Culture: Revisiting a Close Relative," *HTS Theological Studies*, Volume 73, No 1 (2017), https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v66i1.341 (accessed May 31, 2018).

[47] Chapter four of this study will include a survey of the history of the British East India Company. The Company both made use of the social structures of India, while transforming that society with a new structure and cultural influences. See "Company India: Private Empire Building" in Parsons, *The Rule of Empires*, 169-229.

the faith brings a system of belief and symbolism that both reflect and construct communal elements.

1.5.3 Mission and Missionary Religions

As this study deals with missionary religions, one initial task requires defining the term *missionary*. Scott Sunquist writes how, although the "term [missionary] may seem obvious, it has engendered some controversy in the last four decades."[48] This difficulty is described by Michael Stroope in his recent, thorough survey and evaluation of the nomenclature of mission, and its derivatives of 'missional' and *missio Dei*.[49] Stroope explains the background that gave rise to the controversy for the terms used for mission:

> From within attitudes and events that gave rise to the expansion of Spain and Portugal, mission emerged, and from within the colonial expansion of the church, mission developed into a modern tradition. The Crusades provided framework, and the colonial expansion of Western powers offered opportunity for the innovation of modern mission. The assumptions and aims of these political and cultural forces gave rise to the notions of conquest and occupation that exist within mission language.[50]

While acknowledging the difficulties related to the term, for the Christian foundation of this present research, I am employing Sunquist's definition that a "'missionary' is, quite simply, one who is sent. Theologically speaking, the missionary is sent by God (John 20:21), but practically and ecclesiologically, a missionary is sent by a church or an ecclesiastical body."[51] Charles Van Engen agrees with Sunquist in arguing that the "church in the twenty-first century needs to keep the 'sending' element of Christian

[48] Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in the Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 7.

[49] Michael W. Stroope, *Transcending Mission: The Eclipse of a Modern Tradition* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017).

[50] Ibid., 29.

[51] Sunquist, 7.

mission in the foreground."[52] However, Van Engen emphasizes the divine element, which Sunquist acknowledges, in stating that the "authority of the mission enterprise is not the denomination, mission agency, self-proclaimed apostle, large relief agency, or a more advanced culture. The Sender is Jesus Christ, whose authority defines, circumscribes, limits, and propels Christian mission."[53] Christian mission, then, began with Christ himself, and has continued through the ages as the church, albeit in different ways and with different emphases, has sent missionaries across political, linguistic, ethnic, and class boundaries to make more disciples. In this way, Christianity is a missionary or sending religion.

All religions that spread through conversion or cultural influence have a missionary element. However, not all are as explicitly "missionary" or as intentionally a sending religion' as Christianity. For example, over the past millennium-and-a-half, Islam has spread, not so much by the sending of identifiable missionaries, but through the movement of peoples by military campaigns, trade, and migration:

> Islam did not produce a missionary class to spread the faith or unleash a continuous initiative; rather it relied on the unorganized discretionary enthusiasm of Muslims as representatives of the faith. This could sometimes be a conquering army removing empires, sometimes tradesmen, and other times a wandering dervish or just ordinary Muslims interacting freely with their non-Muslim neighbors.[54]

[52] Charles Van Engen, "'Mission' Defined and Described," in David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, eds., *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millenium* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 12.

[53] Van Engen, 12. Van Engen's full definition for mission contends that "God's mission works primarily through Jesus Christ's sending the people of God to intentionally cross barriers from church to nonchurch, faith to nonfaith, to proclaim by word and deed the coming of the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ through the Church's participation in God's mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to one another, and to the world and gathering them into the church, through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, by the work of the Holy Spirit, with a view to the transformation of the world, as a sign of the coming of the kingdom in Jesus Christ." Van Egen, 27. In describing the development of this concept of the *missio Dei*, or mission of God, David Bosch suggests, "In the new image, mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God." Because "God is a missionary God," then mission "is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is an instrument for that mission." David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 390.

[54] Mehmet Ozalp, "Islam," in Aaron J. Ghiloni, ed., *World Religions and Their Missions*, (New York: Peter Lang

Aside from Christian offshoots, such as the conscription of members for two-year mission trips in Mormonism, out of the world's larger religious traditions, Buddhism is the other most intentional in sending out its members to make more converts. In constructing a comparative missiology, I will be applying the term missionary to both Christianity and Buddhism, in that the founder of each of the two religions examined have 'sent' disciples to make his teaching known, to gain more followers, and to grow the religious community across various boundaries. In this way, both Buddhist and Christian traditions exhibit having 'sent ones' and a sending impulse. The case studies in the following chapters offer different examples of missionaries, both Buddhist and Christian, in how they carried out their missionary work. The ones considered throughout this study were all scholars to some degree, either translating Buddhist sutras or the Christian Bible, or having roles as teachers. As we proceed however, it is wise to consider how Glenys Eddy identifies the difficulty in applying the term "missionary" to Buddhism. She explains, "Some recent scholarship suggests that the concepts of Buddhist mission and missionary are Anglo-American constructions, the result of nineteenth century Anglo-American Protestant thought."[55] Acknowledging the anachronistic use of the term missionary, first for Christianity and then even possibly more for Buddhism, I am using the term to convey the meaning of sending religions. Therefore, understanding that a missionary is one who is sent to spread the faith is the functional definition for this present study.

1.5.4 Comparative Missiology

Publishing, 2015), 183.

[55] Glenys Eddy, "Buddhism," in Ghiloni, 91.

The third area needing not only definition, but also rationale, is that of *comparative missiology*. The discipline of missiology is most commonly known as the study of the spread and transmission of the Christian faith.[56] All religions, however, wield influence in the world, and some intentionally go beyond a community of origin to multiply the number of adherents. This movement and transmission of the faith does not just grow the number of disciples, but also influences cultures, sometimes by adapting to it, and other times, by overwhelming the societies it encounters.

An example of a missionary religion's adaption to a new society can be seen in Buddhism's adapting to the social structures and economic values of Chinese society following the fifth century, which Jacques Gernet describes:

> [I]t is tempting to see in the peasant or, more generally, popular forms of Buddhism in China by and large a complex of magical practices practice applied to private, individual, or family ends. On the whole, they represented a degradation of the authentic Buddhism practiced in the great sanctuaries. There was an entire class of itinerant monks, tricksters, wonder-workers, soothsayers, magicians, exorcists, and healers who lived on the performance of magical arts among the people. These religious benefited from the fiscal advantages granted to regular monks and enriched themselves by displaying their magical talents among the laity, at festivals, or in the marketplace. It would seem, then, that the original and development of this class of irregular religious were essentially fostered by economic motives.[57]

In contrast, the effects of a missionary religion can overwhelm its host society to the point of violent disruption. Such was the case with the Taiping Rebellion in nineteenth century China, which occurred from 1851-64.[58] The leader of this rebellion, Hong Xiuquan,

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[56] Stanley Skreslet defines missiology as a field that "encompasses every kind of scholarly inquiry performed on the subject of mission without necessarily subordinating any group of studies to any other." Stanley H. Skreslet, *Comprehending Mission: The Questions, Methods, Themes, Problems, and Prospects of Missiology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 15.

[57] Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Twelfth Centuries*, Trans. Jacques Gernet (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 250. For an overview of the Sinicization of Buddhism in China, see "The Period of Domestication" in Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 42-64.

[58] For a thorough account of the background, historical figures, and events of the rebellion, see Jonathan Spence,

forged his own blend of militant religion out of the Christianity he encountered from Western missions along with Chinese religious elements, as well as his self-appointed designation of divinity.[59] The civil war against the Qing government birthed by the syncretism of the missionary religion of Christianity with Chinese cultural and religious elements and military insurgence came to an end, according to Jonathan Spence, "after twenty million people or more in the regions under their sway had lost their lives in battle or from starvation."[60]

Comparative missiology, then, goes beyond the Christian tradition to identify the similarities and mark the contrasts between the ways that different religious traditions spread. To pursue these aims, comparative missiology blends the framework and interests of the discipline of missiology with those of comparative religion by looking at the spread, both deliberate and unintentional, of various religious traditions. It brings in the work of comparative religion in that the reasons for proselytization come not only from the example or command of the founder, as is the case in both Buddhism and Christianity, but also often come from the content of the religion. A rationale for engaging in comparative missiology is offered below in section 1.6 through a list of several benefits procured by this new field of study.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

God's Chinese Son: Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996).

[59] Whereas Spence reports on Hong Xiuquan's development of the doctrines of the Taiping movement as part of the historical narrative, both Thomas Reilly and Carl Kilcourse argue that the Taiping community is a form of indigenous Chinese Christianity. See Thomas H. Reilly, *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: Rebellion and the Blasphemy of Empire* (Seattle: The University of Washington Press, 2004), and Carl S. Kilcourse, *Taiping Theology: The Localization of Christianity in China, 1843–64* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[60] Spence, xxi.

1.6.1 Contribution: Survey of the Literature on Missions and Empire

The study of and writing on the history of Christian missions is abundant, forcing this present survey to be focused to major works or series in its scope. The current tradition of the writing about the history of Christian missions does not have an explicit focus on empire, though empire provides the context, along with many elements from, and personalities who populate the account. Kenneth Scott Latourette's vast and seminal seven volume *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* focuses not on church history or historical theology, but rather, the spread of the Christian religion through missionary work.[61] Although Latourette takes care to cover every part of the globe, he writes from the perspective of the first half of the twentieth century by giving a European focus to the history in his survey, particularly in the first several centuries. The first two volumes, entitled *The First Five Centuries* and *The Thousand Years of Uncertainty*, endeavor to cover the first 1,500 years of Christian mission enterprise. The focus is on Christianity's spread from Jerusalem to the rest of the Roman Empire, and its subsequent spread to the rest of Europe.[62] Volumes four through six look at the spread of Christianity from Europe to the different continents, while the seventh volume covers the period from the beginning of World War I through 1945, the end of World War II.

[61] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity, 7 Volumes, 1937-1945* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970). For an assessment of Latourette's series, see Andrew F. Walls, *"A History of the Expansion of Christianity* Reconsidered," in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 3-26.

[62] More recently, Philip Jenkins has tried to correct the general telling of the account of church and missions history by introducing into the mainstream the story of Christianity throughout the Middle East and Central Asia that often gets excluded. See Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died.* New York: HarperOne, 2008).

As a more accessible introduction to mission history than Latourette's voluminous work, Stephen Neill is best remembered for his *A History of Christian Missions*.[63] Neill's account ends with the ecumenical movement that produced the World Council of Churches, which he viewed as the realization of the non-Western church bodies gaining parity with the original sending churches. Neill also published *Colonialism and Christian Missions* in 1966, during the period of deconstruction of European colonialism.[64] Neill argues, however, that he was still too close to the period of Western colonization to offer insightful judgments on the era. At the same time, he does offer a number of insights on how the missionaries and their work during this period might be assessed.[65]

David Bosch's *Transforming Mission*[66] also provides a survey of mission history, but does so by applying Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigms from the field of science to identify seven paradigms throughout the history of Christian missions.[67] After surveying the first six paradigms that correspond to the chronological epochs of church history, Bosch describes the characteristics of a seventh emerging "postmodern paradigm."[68] While he does not explicitly identify it a postcolonial paradigm, or mission after empire, this emerging paradigm follows the paradigm of "Mission in the Wake of the Enlightenment," and thus serves largely as mission after the age of empire.

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[63] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions, Second Edition* (New York, Penguin Books, 1986).

[64] Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966).

[65] Neill, *Colonialism*, 412-425.

[66] David J. Bosch *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

[67] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions—Third Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[68] See chapter three, "Mission in the Wake of the Enlightenment," Bosch, 262-345.

More recently, Dale Irvin and Scott Sunquist have also set out to cover the history of Christian missions, having thus far produced two volumes of their *History of the World Christian Movement* series.[69] The series' title conveys the authors' intent to tell the story of Christianity as a global religion from its inception, rather than a Western export. On his own, Sunquist also offers *The Unexpected Christian Century* to report on how the twentieth century saw the realization of the phenomena of global Christianity.[70] This realization spread during, and largely happened due to, the final century of Western empire and its demise.

Regarding the explicit recognition of the relationship between missions and empire, the *Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* has one title, *Missions and Empire*, edited by Norman Etherington.[71] This volume contains chapters exploring this relationship between Christian missions and the British Empire in the various geographic regions under imperial control, as well as in different areas of study. While not explicitly labeled as a series on missions and empire, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company's *Studies in the History of Christian Missions* functions largely as a series of historical case studies of Protestant missions done within the framework of the Western dominance. Some of the titles such as *Converting Colonialism*, edited by Dana Robert, and *British Missionaries and the End of Empire*, by John Stuart, explicitly recount and examine the

[69] Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), and History of the World Christian Movement, Vol. 2: Modern Christianity from 1454-1800 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012).

[70] Scott W. Sunquist, *The Unexpected Christian Century: The Reversal and Transformation of Global Christianity, 1900-2000* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015).

[71] Norman Etherington, ed. *Missions and Empire (Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series)* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2005).

relationship between missionary work and imperialism.[72] Melanie McAlister describes how recent scholarship has regarded Christian missionaries as working on behalf of empire:

> [I]t was becoming more common for Americans to view missionaries as agents of imperialism—either directly, when they served as the advance guard of imperial power, or indirectly, as cultural imperialists who were certain of their own superiority. Protestant missionaries, particularly those from the mainline denominations, had themselves been raising questions about their own role in undermining local cultures and enabling the expansion of US or European power since the early part of the century. Novelist Pearl S. Buck, the daughter of missionaries to China, critiqued missionaries as ineffectual at best and imperialist at worst in her Pulitzer Prize-winning 1931 book, *The Good Earth*. Historians in recent years have complicated this picture, portraying missionaries, including evangelicals, as both agents and critics of imperialism. In fact, often they were neither, operating at oblique angles to state power, with their own interests and agendas.[73]

All of the titles listed above provide accounts and evaluations of the practices and effects of Christian missionary work carried out during the period of Western imperialism.

While the above titles might describe the historical context provided by imperial power, conveying how mission has been done during, under, or through empire, none offers a biblical theology of empire. Historical surveys of Christian mission, such as Latourette's and Neill's, usually contain a chapter on both mission in the New Testament and the apostle Paul. The field of Pauline studies is a perennial and expansive field, with two recent trends developing. The first is an anti-imperial reading of Paul, led primarily by

[72] Dana L. Robert, ed. *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), and John Stuart, *British Missionaries and the End of Empire: East, Central, and Southern Africa, 1939-1964* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011).

[73] Melanie McAlister, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 21. Two other recent works that critically examine the relationship between American missionaries and US foreign policy are Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), and Matthew Avery Sutton, *Double Crossed: The Missionaries Who Spied for the United States During the Second World War* (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

Richard Horsley.[74] Related to this movement is the New Perspective on Paul (NPP), begun by E. P. Sanders but now with N. T. Wright as its most eloquent and popular spokesperson.[75] The NPP attempts to read and understand Paul in his Jewish rabbinic background of the first century C.E., rather than reading Pauline writings through the lens of church history and, particularly, the doctrines of the Reformation. While both of these schools within Pauline studies assess Paul's relationship to the Roman Empire, they do so considering him more as a theologian and public figure seeking to supplant the existing order of empire with the new kingdom of the church. The focus on Paul in this present study will consider him as a scholar-missionary who plants churches and trains church leaders, along with public proclamation. In so doing, the practical focus of Paul as missionary harkens back to Roland Allen's 1912 work *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*[76] In his own context as an Anglican missionary in China under European domination, Allen saw that the colonial form of mission work contrasted significantly with the ministry of Paul. In contrast to both the anti-imperial reading and the NPP regarding Paul's relationship to empire, Seyoon Kim and Michael Bird offer a portrait of Paul's thought and work in relationship to empire that recognize his work as a missionary

[74] See Richard A. Horsley, ed. *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004), *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), *In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), all edited by Horsley. For critique of premises and textual interpretation of this movement, see Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, eds., *Jesus Is Lord, Caesar Is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), and Christoph Heilig, *Hidden Criticism?: The Methodology and Plausibility of the Search for a Counter-imperial Subtext in Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017).

[75] For the foundational work that launched the New Perspective on Paul, see Ed Parish Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). For a succinct introduction on Wright's consideration of Paul, see Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). For the more extensive treatments of Paul's theology and life, see Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), and *Paul: A Biography* (New York: HarperOne, 2018).

[76] Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962).

church planter, and so comport with Allen's practical examination of Paul's strategy and methods.[77]

Turning to Buddhist missions, less material is available on missionary work and empire. *Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization*,[78] edited by Linda Learman, provides a contemporary account of Buddhist missions in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries. Most often, the story of Buddhist missions is told through the books on the growth of the religion, such as *The Spread of Buddhism*, edited by Ann Heirman and Stephan Peter Bumbacher,[79] or into a particular nation or regions, such as Erik Zürcher's *The Buddhist Conquest of China*,[80] or as a part of the history of the religion, like Ross Reat's *Buddhism: A History*.[81]

Two works of Buddhist scholar Donald Lopez, Jr., consider the relationship between the spread and practice of Buddhism and empires. In *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*,[82] Lopez examines the romantic characterization of Tibetan Buddhism begun under European colonialism but then furthered by the Tibetan diaspora caused by the Chinese takeover of Tibet. Lopez also edited *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*,[83] which has chapters on Buddhism in relation to

[77] See Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), and Michael F. Bird, *An Anomalous Jew: Paul among Jews, Greeks, and Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016).

[78] Linda Learman, ed. *Buddhist Missionaries in the Era of Globalization* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005).

[79] Ann Heirman and Stephan Peter Bumbacher, eds., *The Spread of Buddhism* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[80] Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China, Third Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[81] Noble Ross Reat, *Buddhism: A History* (Fremont: Jain Publishing Company, Inc., 1994).

[82] Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[83] Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: The

both European and Asian empires. The chapter by Robert Sharf, "The Zen of Nationalism," examines the same relationship between Zen Buddhism and the Japanese Empire explored by Brian Daizen Victoria in *Zen at War*.[84] In their respective works, Sharf and Victoria not only consider the relationship between the religion and imperial state, but also focus specifically on D. T. Suzuki (1870-1966), a popularizer of Zen Buddhism to West. In this role, Suzuki acted as a Buddhist missionary who had a cooperative relationship with an imperial state.

As mentioned above, Aaron Ghiloni's *World Religions and Their Missions* serves as a foundational work for the emerging field of comparative missiology.[85] This present work, then, aims to contribute to this new field by demonstrating the theory that in the missionary religions of Christianity and Buddhism, the missionaries relied on the framework and power of empire, even if unintentionally. Within the field of Christian missiology, this work will both offer a theology of empire for Christian missiology, as well as contribute to Pauline studies in demonstrating this thesis that the apostle Paul, relied on the framework of empire for carrying out his mission of church-planting and proclamation.

1.6.2 *Ecclesiology: Discernment in Mission:*

The present study's author serves as an ordained minister of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, part of the broader Dutch Reformed tradition. As one of the Reformed doctrinal standards, the Belgic Confession recognizes the "pure preaching of

University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[84] Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War—Second Edition* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006).

[85] Aaron J. Ghiloni, ed. *World Religions and Their Missions* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2015).

the gospel" as one of the true marks of the church.[86] Engaging in Christian mission requires discernment for when and how denominations, agencies, and individuals act as agents of the state, or an imperial power, rather than as witnesses to Christ. The findings of this dissertation will hopefully be of use to raise and explore this question of discernment for mission activities in divinity schools and for leaders and practitioners.

1.6.3 *Religion in Globalization: Considerations for the Present Global Context*

After the seeming triumph of free market globalization in the late twentieth century, the current season witnesses a pushback with a trend towards populist nationalism. Either of these directions of economic globalism or nationalism embodied in the election of strong individual leaders can tends towards forms of imperial coercion. Understanding the historical frameworks and dynamics of the relationship between empire and two major world religions throughout history provides tools and insight for identifying streams and factors for both empire and mission today.

1.7 BENEFITS OF COMPARATIVE MISSIOLOGY

Comparative religion in the West has formally been in existence since at least the publication of Max Muller's *Introduction to the Science of Religion* in 1873.[87] Throughout the century-and-a-half since, the discipline has shifted at different times to focus on different aspects of history, symbolism, ritual, and ethnography, and more, as Eric Sharpe describes:

> There is of course no one discipline 'distinctive to the study of religion'. Comparative religion has always been multidisciplinary, and as comparative religion has broadened

[86] Article 29: "The Marks of the True Church," *The Belgic Confession*, https://www.crcna.org/welcome/beliefs/confessions/belgic-confession (accessed May 20, 2017).

[87] Eric J. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion: A History, Second Edition* (La Salle: Open Court, 1994), 35.

> out into religious studies, the extent and variety of the available disciplinary options have increased to a bewildering extent.[88]

As a field in constant flux, partly due to its inherent multidisciplinary makeup, "one must be mindful that terms taken for granted just a scholarly generation ago—for example, 'Hinduism' or 'Gnosticism'—are now being questioned; or that it is no longer uncommon to find references to 'Christianities' rather than to just 'Christianity.' Indeed, disciplinary reflexivity … has led to the term 'religion' itself being regarded with suspicion."[89] When the purpose and definition of comparative religion itself is in dispute and continues to evolve, the question arises for why one should pursue helping to found the field of comparative missiology. Several beneficial reasons appear below.

1.7.1 Understand How Religions Spread

As conveyed in its name, comparative missiology examines how religions spread and gain adherents. Studying the various methods, strategies, dynamics, and components in religious expansion across the traditions will help to identify factors that might not be readily apparent in the content or emphasis of an individual religion. Such understanding helps fill out a shared knowledge in religious study.

1.7.2 Distilling the Core Values

Examining the ways that religious traditions and communities self-propagate helps displays the core values and features of the religion by asking, 'What gets passed on?' When religions cross linguistic, ethnic, and geographic boundaries, the key concepts, teachings, and practices that get carried over and translated into the new context embody

[88] Sharpe, 317.

[89] Gustavo Benavides, "North America," in Gregory D. Alles, *Religious Studies: A Global View* (New York: Routlege, 2008), 243.

what is central to the religion, at least to the missionaries and recipients. For example, Protestant missions differed from Roman Catholic mission activity in having less emphasis on sacraments and in rejecting the Latin Mass as the prescribed form of worship for all converts. Comparative missiology takes such a contrast further by looking at what initiation rites and worship forms continue when other religions take root in a new context. In addition to worship, one key value that shows up in Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and other traditions is that of community, demonstrating its position as a shared, central value.

1.7.3 Accent Differences

Aaron Ghiloni suggests that, "In an era of profound religious diversity it is important to appreciate that every mission is more complex than any lone manifestation, no matter how cosmopolitan."[90] The process of focusing on the similarities between the two religions of Buddhism and Christianity, particularly in the way they intentionally send members to proselytize and draw adherents to the new, global community of sangha or church will also help to distill key differences between the two traditions.

1.7.4 Mutual Coexistence

Another benefit of developing a comparative missiology is how, similar to comparative religion, doing so might offer mutual understanding for coexistence. Even with the current postcolonial critique of Christian missions and the experience of multicultural life in a globalized society, "mission appears to be alive and well today."[91] Brian Adams suggests that, "Given this reality, it seems safe to say that any adherents of religious or

[90]Aaron J. Ghiloni, ed. *World Religions and Their Missions*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2015), 6.

[91] Brian J. Adams, "Mission and Interreligious Dialogue: A Deliberative Democratic Framework," Ghiloni, 307.

philosophical tradition are going to encounter the mission efforts of other groups."[92] As individual practitioners and religious organizations will come across one another, understanding not just the content but the means and methods of engagement could help ease misunderstanding of motives.[93]

1.7.5 Mutual Influence

Religions seek to disseminate their teachings, make new adherents, and influence culture. Religious traditions have borrowed from one another, such as when ancient "Buddhism was stimulated by Greek and Greco-Roman culture to produce new forms of architecture and carving."[94] But even more so, studying one another's histories and practices of mission can assist agents and bodies of each tradition to pursue the ideal of the faith to which they adhere and for which they contend. Christian missiology, then, benefits by putting into practice Lesslie Newbigin's admonition for interreligious dialogue as a prophetic corrective:

> But this does not mean that the purpose of dialogue is to persuade the non-Christian partner to accept the Christianity of the Christian partner. Its purpose is not that Christianity would acquire one more recruit. On the contrary, obedient witness to Christ means that whenever we with another person (Christian or not) enter into the presence of the cross, we are prepared to receive judgment and correction, to find that our Christianity hides within its appearance of obedience the reality of disobedience. Each meeting with a non-Christian partner in dialogue therefore puts my own Christianity at risk.[95]

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[92] Adams, 308.

[93] This desire for peaceful coexistence is stated with the recognition that "interreligious dialogue is just as much a European and North American program as is the academic study of religion." See Gregory D. Alles, ed., *Religious Studies: A Global View* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 318.

[94] Hirakawa Akira, *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna* (Honolulu: University of Hawaai Press, 1990), 232.

[95] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eermans Publishing Co., 1995), 182.

An example of Newbigin's admonition can be drawn in chapter three's comparison of the two emperors of Asoka in Buddhism and Constantine in Christianity. This comparison will raise the question of whether one of these converts to his new faith might have exemplified the values of his new religion more authentically than his counterpart. A second question will naturally arise in asking which of the two might have used his imperial position in a way that adhered to and conveyed the ideals and teachings of the respective faith and its founder. Such comparison could offer a prophetic corrective of one missiological practice calling on another back to its ideals.

1.7.6 Considering the Future

The final benefit suggested here for the study of comparative missiology, particularly with this study's historical accounts of the development of mission regarding empire, is the discerning eye offered to both the present and future. Jörg Rüpke contends, "Working historically is not just a methodological option among others. Doing history is based on a pre-scientific conviction. The past is important for the future."[96] The present moment during the writing of this dissertation is witnessing a strong pushback against globalization, and a possible tearing down of the postwar structure that has dominated global politics and economics throughout the past seventy years. The current impulse for nationalist populism and the electing of strong leaders could be a significant shift that reconfigures international relations with a handful of strong individuals who act more like monarchs than democratically elected presidents who govern liberal democracies. In order to gain further power, or expand national borders and economic influence, such leaders may co-opt resident religions. A history-based comparative missiological study of

[96] Jörg Rüpke, "History," Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 286.

the relationship between missionary activity and imperial powers can offer religious leaders and practitioners examples from history and patterns to discern in their own efforts.

1.8 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter two: A biblical theology of empire

Although this dissertation engages in comparative missiology, the second chapter focuses on the Christian tradition to offer a biblical theology for mission and empire. This framework follows in the tradition of Augustine's city of God and city of humanity, Martin Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms, and Dutch Reformed Herman Bavinck's two lines of common grace and saving grace by reframing these respective concepts with the language of divine empire and human empire. Carrying out his missionary work within such a framework, the apostle Paul served as a missionary against the backdrop of the Roman Empire.

Chapter three: Comparison of two convert emperors

The third chapter steps aside from the focus on scholar-missionaries by explaining how both traditions of Buddhism and Christianity contain in their histories an emperor who converted to the faith and then used his office to promote the new religion. Just as the founders Jesus and Siddhartha Gautama exhibit many parallels, so too do these key figures of Ashoka with Buddhism and Constantine with Christianity. Whether or not each of these two emperors underwent an authentic conversion, each one convened religious councils and supported and sent out missionaries. The use of imperial power to both help codify religious teachings and then send out missionaries demonstrates the historical relationship and entanglements of empire with religious mission.

Chapter four: Comparison of the entrance of the missionary religions into China

Like the comparative content of the previous chapter, this fourth chapter presents historical case studies for both religions in their entrances into China. Leading up to the pivotal work of the translator monk Kumārajīva (344-413 C.E.), Buddhism entered China through imperial patronage and the Silk Road. Erik Zürcher's *The Buddhist Conquest of China: the Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*[97] provides an overview of the Buddhism's entrance into China, while Craig Benjamin presents the imperial factors that gave rise to the Silk Road, and it was through that passageway Buddhism made its way to China.[98] Similarly, Protestant Christianity also entered China in the nineteenth century partly through its connections to land-based trade, but even more through the maritime trade of the British Empire, rather than the overland Silk Road. It was the British Empire that provided the framework for the theologian Jonathan Edwards in the preceding eighteenth century to influence the modern missionary movement of the nineteenth century, begun by William Carey and Robert Morrison, the latter of which served as the first Protestant missionary to China. Morrison and his successors, such as James Hudson Taylor, relied on the East India Company and British Royal Navy, particularly through the Opium Wars, to make inroads to China. These historical surveys, then, demonstrate how first Buddhism and, later, Protestant Christianity, relied on the trade and technology afforded by empire in order to enter into China.

Chapter five: Buddhist mission in the secular city

[97] Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972).

[98] Craig Benjamin, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Roads Era, 100 BCE-250 CE* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

This chapter demonstrates how the entrance of Buddhism into the West throughout the twentieth century took place through popular missionary figures whose work was tied to or propelled by empire. After a brief survey connects the relationships between Buddhist and Christian spokespersons on the global stage to both one another and various nations with imperial ambitions, this chapter offers the case study of the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries' Tibetan Buddhist diaspora and, specifically, the biography of Tenzin Gyatso (b. 1935), the fourteenth Dalai Lama. Whether or not China's control over Tibet constitutes empire, the Dalai Lama's escape from China in 1959 forced him to become an unwilling spokesperson for Tibetan Buddhism to enter the global stage. Large attendance at the Peace Conference in Seattle (April 11-15, 2008) to hear the Dalai Lama demonstrated his appeal to a Western audience in a city identified with low religious affiliation. The Dalai Lama has functioned as a public Buddhist missionary to the West, and could not have done so without the imperial dynamic of China's takeover. Such a dynamic demonstrates the thesis that the actions of empires make possible the global reach of the missionary religions.

Chapter six: Developing trends and future areas of research

This final chapter identifies areas for future in-depth studies of a few topics for comparative missiology raised in this present work. The chapter then focuses the question of whether these opening decades of the twenty-first century are witnessing the return of formal empire, along with its relationship to Christianity and Buddhism. Allen Yeh's *Polycentric Missiology: 21st-Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere*[99] suggests that a currently decentralized globalization fosters a multidirectional, diverse practice of

[99] Allen Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology: Twenty-First Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016).

Christian mission. Yeh's missiological outlook resonates with Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's argument that a global economic empire will be controlled by no individual state or person, but by everyone.[100] Such premises are challenged by the hint of the return of formal empire, as the three dominant nations of the United States, China, and Russia have each seen a strong presidential figure come to power. These three Presidents of Donald Trump, Xi Jinping, and Vladimir Putin draw on nationalistic pride, with promises of restored greatness, economic stability, and security, while demonstrating a willingness to exert military power overseas. Each one also shows a willingness to engage or co-opt religions in their country to carry out their agendas.

[100] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004).

CHAPTER TWO: THE APOSTLE PAUL AND EMPIRE

2.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter demonstrates the present study's thesis that throughout history, pivotal missionaries, especially scholar-missionaries, have interacted with and relied on the framework and machinery of empire, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to spread their respective religion. The previous chapter defined missionaries as those adherents in both Christianity and Buddhism who have been sent to make the founder's teachings known, to gain more followers, and to grow the religious community across various boundaries. Although the present study attempts to construct a comparative missiology of Christianity and Buddhism regarding their interactions with empire, this current chapter bears a specifically Christian focus with the case study of the apostle Paul from the first century C.E. In considering how Paul is able to work within the framework of the Roman Empire, not just pragmatically but with conviction, this second chapter offers a biblical and theological foundation for understanding empire.

2.2 ESTABLISHING A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EMPIRE

One way to understand the larger narrative of Scripture is to read it through the lens of empire. Doing so is appropriate in that the creation narrative of Genesis 1 opens with an empire, as the story begins with the statement that "God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) Instead of one realm over which the Creator God rules, there are two: heaven and earth, or spirit and matter. This characteristic, the diversity of place or sphere of divine rule, is important for this topic of empire as, from the beginning of creation, one divine ruler exercises rule over two places. These two realms of rule, then, comprise an empire, rather than a singular kingdom. In such an empire, the creator God not only rules over the realms of heaven and earth, but depicts this divine rule as shared,

as God delegates authority to humanity to rule over the earth and its non-human creatures. Genesis 1:26-27 decree the creation of humanity, who will rule as divine image bearers:

> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.[101]

While theologians have offered multiple explanations for humanity's being made in the image of God, known by the Latin term *imago Dei*,[102] I will focus on two facets related to rule. The first is that the Lord God shows the extent of divine rule by placing living statues, icons, or images, throughout the earth. When God creates humanity and blesses them and instructs them to spread across the face of the earth, the presence of humans serve as images, living statues of divine rule. The second characteristic of the *imago Dei* and divine rule is how humans not only bear the image of God as markers which signify divine rule, but also the commissioning as viceroys, who exercise rule on behalf of the divine ruler.[103] In these ways the *imago Dei* of humanity demonstrates the framework of the Divine Empire. Human rebellion, such as the crossing of a divinely-established boundary to extract a resource for consumption in Genesis 3, serves as the establishment of human empire.

At Scripture's opposite end, the book of Revelation concludes the larger narrative with a vision of the future, one in which empire is not removed, but the institution is redeemed as representative of God's rule. This *eschaton* has the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city,

[101] *Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.®.*

[102] See Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 33-65.

[103] J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 147.

coming down to bring full repair between heaven and earth: "I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (21:2). The heavenly city, however, is not a replacement for the old Jerusalem, which itself experienced subjugation by various empires. Instead, this new city is one of final peace, serving as the throne of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (19:16). With this portrayal, the book of Revelation is an affirmation of divine empire as the future, final state of humanity. The New Jerusalem is an imperial city, as the apostle John tells us, "The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it" (21:24). Not only does light go out from the city, but tribute from surrounding states comes in. "The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it" (21:26).

For understanding the application of this biblical narrative to the lives and mission of those who consider themselves Christians, it is helpful to rely on the work of the foundational theologian Augustine of Hippo (354-450 C.E.) when considering imperial entanglements with religious mission, as Augustine lived in a declining Roman Empire, and spent a lot of thought in working through the relationship between church and empire. As mentioned in the first chapter, I serve as a member of the clergy within the Reformed tradition, which considers itself to reside within the greater Augustinian tradition. Although they may have departed from Augustine on their understanding of the sacraments, both of the Reformers Luther and Calvin were descendants of Augustine, particularly in their soteriology.[104]

[104] Martin Luther had been an Augustinian monk prior to launching the Reformation. Concerning John Calvin, Anthony Lane reports, "Calvin held Augustine in the highest regard. He was very reluctant to depart from Augustine in doctrinal matters, or at least to admit to it. He made sweeping claims to the support of Augustine … Calvin clearly believed that, on a wide range of issues, he was simply restoring the teaching of Augustine." See Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin, Student of the Church Fathers* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark,

Augustine set out to answer the question of why God would allow the city of Rome, the grand imperial city, to fall to sacking by the Visigoth King Alaric in 410 C.E. Having "encountered the Roman refugees" coming to Hippo in North Africa, "and heard their tales of pillage, rape, and deprivation," the bishop "realized the error in linking Christian faith and Roman Empire too closely."[105] He saw that the "church, a universal institution, must not remain tied to any particular state. Accordingly, Augustine's *City of God,*[106]" Ernst Breisach contends, "redefined the relationship between the sacred and profane throughout time," and so "stipulated the presence of two great force fields in the cosmos: the City of God and the Earthly City."[107] By establishing this division, Chidester identifies how the theologian "analyzed human history in terms of binary oppositions—God and the devil, angels and demons, Abel and Cain, Jerusalem and Babylon, and so on—that represented the basic conflict between the city of the spirit and the city of the flesh."[108] In such a setting, Chidester explains the key attributes and benefits of the City of God:

> Only the grace of God, Augustine concluded, could bring human beings into the City of God. Mysterious, unfathomable, and ultimately beyond reason, that divine grace, which Augustine saw working through the church, the sacraments, and the Christian faith, was a gift of God that "makes his worshippers into gods." In the end, he concluded, only the mysterious grace of God could undo the enormous, collective damage done to human nature at the beginning. The City of God, therefore, was a divine gift.[109]

1991), 38.

[105] Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 84.

[106] *On the City of God against the Pagans*, early fifth century C.E.

[107] Breisach, 84.

[108] Ibid.

[109] David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History* (New York: HarperOne, 2000), 135-136.

In this way, Augustine sets up the two communities: the earthly and the heavenly. While the former is dependent on the former for its physical sustenance, the heavenly city is the everlasting one, and the two intermingle throughout history. Augustine was figuring out for his own church, and for Christians throughout a decaying Roman Empire, how to live on this earth.

By the time Martin Luther (1483-1546) came to prominence as a foundational leader of the Protestant Reformation a thousand years later, the identification of the church with the political state had long been a given. As part of the reforms he saw necessary to implement, Luther sought, as Alec Ryrie explains, to distinguish between the two institutions:

> This is Luther's theory of the "two kingdoms," the foundation of Protestant political theory. There is an earthly kingdom: the kingdom of secular politics, a place of law, justice, and punishment. Its purpose is to restrain human evil so that some semblance of peace and order is (48/49) possible is in this world. That is a limited aim but not an ignoble one. God has ordained this kingdom, and Christians can serve it, whether as princes, lawyers, or executioners. But existing alongside it, and far more important than it is, is the kingdom of heaven, whose only king is Christ. Here there is no law, and no coercion, because all true Christians are one another's willing servants. And this is where Christians' hearts should be set, not on the lumpen business of human politics.[110]

The danger of failing to make and hold this distinction between church and state was the corruption of the church, which had been the case with Rome in the early sixteenth century. According to Robert Benne, Luther had become "convinced that the Roman Catholic Church had usurped the role of the prince or king by claiming to have coercive power."[111] The Reformer saw the need to both separate and limit the scope of both the state and the church:

[110] Alec Ryrie, *Protestants: The Faith That Made the Modern World* (New York: Viking, 2017), 48.

[111] Robert Benne, "The Lutheran (Paradoxical) View," in Amy E. Black, ed., *Five Views on the Church and*

> Luther believed the church rightfully had only the persuasive power of the Word, not of the sword. The secular authorities were responsible for keeping order and justice in society. God reigned in the world through those authorities enforcing his law. He reigned in the church through the gospel, freely given to and accepted by the believer. These two ways were distinct, not separate spatially, and they interacted in the vocation of the Christian. One of the callings of every Christian is in the realm of citizenship. Luther himself was not bashful in that role. He constantly advised the princes to fulfill their obligation to promote order and justice.[112]

Luther, then, did not seek to eliminated or replace temporal human government, but to award it its proper place. In this way, he followed Augustine in distinguishing between the church and state. For Augustine, it was the Heavenly City and the Earthly City. Luther cast this distinction as the Two Kingdoms. We will now consider a third interpretation of the biblical narrative – that of Herman Bavinck (1854-1921).

As mentioned in the first chapter, my ordination for pastoral ministry resides within the Dutch Reformed tradition. Although I am not ethnically Dutch, I joined the Christian Reformed Church, a Dutch Calvinist denomination in North America, first as a member and was later ordained as a pastor. Our denomination is heavily influenced by the Neo-Calvinism of the Netherlands of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The better-known of the two main figures of this movement is Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920), who served as Prime Minister of the Dutch parliament from 1901-1905. His more academically-focused partner in thought was Herman Bavinck, who taught as a theological professor first at Kampen Theological Seminary, and later at the Free University in Amsterdam, founded by Kuyper. Of the two, Bavinck was the more careful and exact theologian, and follows Augustine in a few ways. First, like Augustine he develops a linear history of God's work in creation and salvation. Brian Mattson explains

Politics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 59.

[112] Ibid., 59-60.

that, "For Bavinck, the true genius of the Reformation, especially as pioneered by Calvin," is a linear history, as "its replacement of Rome's ontological or vertically hierarchical version of the nature/grace relationship (i.e., 'higher' and 'lower' realms of reality) with an *historical* or horizontal version of the nature/grace scheme, starting with the state of integrity (nature) and ending in the state of glory (grace)."[113] Bavinck regarded "the structure provided by the covenant of works" as representing "the most consistent expression of Augustinian anthropology."[114] Anthony Hoekema summarizes Bavinck's understanding of the covenant of works, the original state in which Adam and Eve were to live out their vocation:

> Adam and Christ, he maintains, are both covenant heads. The covenanting parties in the covenant of works were God and Adam. Adam was not only the father of the human race, but also our head and representative. The promise of the covenant of works was eternal life in its fullest sense—an eternal life in which Adam and his descendants would have been raised above the possibility of sinning. The condition of the covenant of works was perfect obedience, not only to the moral law that Adam and Eve knew by nature, but particularly to the so-called probationary or test command: the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty of the covenant of works was death in its fullest sense: physical, spiritual, and eternal.[115]

However, as "Adam and Eve broke this covenant, they were driven out of the garden, and guilt and corruption came upon all humankind."[116] As Hoekema has summarized the thought of his predecessor, Bavinck constructs his own scheme of history, identifying two streams within the human race. Bavinck explains that, after the fall of humanity, divinely-given grace was offered to the human race:

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[113] Brian G. Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny: Eschatology & the Image of God in Herman Bavinck's Reformed Dogmatics* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 5.

[114] Mattson, 111.

[115] Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 118.

[116] Ibid.

> Revelation continues, but it changes in character and receives a different content. Now revelation comes to guilty man, who merits death, as a revelation of *grace.* Now when God—in spite of the transgression— calls man, searches him out, and sets enmity in place of the defunct friendship, a totally new element appears in his revelation—namely, his compassion and mercy. Life, work, food, clothing come to him no longer on the basis of an agreement or right granted in the covenant of works but through grace alone. Grace has become the source and fountainhead of all life and every blessing for mankind. It is the overflowing spring of all good (Gen. 3:8-24).[117]

However, this grace from the creator is not a general grace, and "does not remain single and undivided."[118] He explains how that grace forms into two lines of humanity:

> It differentiates itself into common and special grace. Cain is driven from God's presence because of fratricide (Gen. 4:14,16). Yet he continues to live; grace is thus given to him in place of strict justice. Cain indeed becomes the father of a tribe which sets its mind to the task of subduing the earth and begins the development of human culture (Gen. 4:15-24). In contrast, the descendants of Seth preserve the knowledge and service of God (Gen. 4:25-5:32).[119]

According to Bavinck, these two lines of humanity co-exist in the world. The line of Cain bears the image of God by living out the cultural mandate of filling the earth through migration and procreation, establishing societies, and developing cultures and technologies. The gift of life, especially after the violent taking of life by Cain, and the upholding of that life by the Creator shows common grace. But the problems caused by the establishment of human empire in Genesis 3 are not solved by the contribution of the line of Cain. The original human couple's other surviving son Seth fathers the line of those whose primary aim is a relationship with and service to the Creator God. These two lines of common grace and saving grace coexist and intertwine throughout the subsequent biblical narrative:

> When the two groups intermingle and fill the earth with evil, the flood comes as a terrible but necessary judgment. From Noah a new mankind is born, milder in nature,

[117] Herman Bavinck, "Common Grace," trans. and intro. by Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, in Calvin Theological Journal, 24 (April 1989), 40.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

> less in might, and of shorter life. The new mankind also exists and lives only by the grace of God, which now takes the form of a covenant. In opposition to the unrighteousness that had evoked his wrath, God now, as it were, firmly grounds the being and life of the creation in a covenant with all of nature and with every living being. This life and being are no longer "natural." Rather, they are the fruit of a supernatural grace to which man no longer has a self-evident claim (Gen. 8:21, 22; 9:1-17).[120]

We see, then, that Augustine, Luther, and Bavinck identify two linear streams of humanity. One is with God as the source and focus of its community, which are Augustine's City of God, Luther's kingdom of the church, and Bavinck's line of special grace. The other stream of humanity is the earthly city, the political kingdom, or the line of common grace in which God continues the existence of humanity and prompts the development of society and culture. I am following this pattern of Augustine's two cities, Luther's two kingdoms, and Bavinck's dual lines of grace to lay out here a similar framework of two empires, which are Divine Empire and human empire. Such an understanding fits with the beginning of Scripture, as summarized at the beginning of this section. It is within this framework of the biblical narrative, of the interplay and competition of Divine Empire versus human empire that the apostle Paul carries out his work as a missionary. Enlisting new citizens for the Divine Empire, Paul establishes churches throughout the Mediterranean world of the Roman Empire in the mid-first century C.E., and he and his missionary work will serve as the focus for the rest of the chapter.

2.3 BACKGROUND: Paul the Christian Missionary

The apostle Paul serves as an historical case study, even an archetype, of the missionary who interacts with and relies on the framework and machinery of empire to carry out the

[120] Bavinck, 40.

work of making more adherents and spreading the religion, even when the force of empire is experienced negatively. Second only to Jesus Christ, Paul occupies a dominant place in the Christian New Testament,[121] and his personality comes through his writings.[122] He is the main actor in more than half of the book of Acts, the story that recounts the first decades of the early church. Acts portrays its author, Luke, as a disciple and traveling companion of Paul, which allows the inference that Paul wields some amount of influence on the Gospel of Luke as well.[123] Some of the churches in the province of Asia Minor which Paul helps to begin, or plant, in Acts are ones for which we also have the Epistles, or letters written by Paul, regarding particular issues within the congregation. So both the story of Paul as recorded in Acts and his writings in the Epistles comprise a large amount of the New Testament, of which he authors the most books.

The different sources of Acts and the Pauline Epistles enable the piecing together of Paul's story. He was born into a Jewish household in the latter half of the first decade of the first century C.E.[124] Born to a family with full Roman citizenship, Paul would utilize the benefits of citizenship later in his work as a missionary. His family was located in the city of Tarsus, and adhered to the Jewish religious movement known as Pharisees. This group was one of the four main schools of Jewish expression in the first century:

> Our information about the religious currents in Palestine around the latest years BCE and the earliest years CE comes above all from Flavius Josephus. In his *Antiquities of the Jews* (*Ant.*) and his *History of the Jewish War* (*Bell.*) he speaks of three 'religious

[121] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 13-17.

[122] F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 15-17.

[123] See Christopher Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, 2006), 28-29.

[124] Dates for Paul's life and ministry rely on N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018), 433-434.

> parties' (haireseis) which, comparable to the Greek schools of philosophy, stand alongside one another in Judaism: *Pharisees, Sadducees,* and *Essenes*. As a further group he names the so-called 'fourth-philosophy', the *Zealots*, who decisively determined the development up until the Jewish War. According to Josephus they concurred with the Pharisees in all essential points apart from their relentless struggle for (political) freedom. In the light of the catastrophe, Josephus, himself a onetime guerrilla who then deserted to the Romans, distanced himself from the Zealots, while he portrays the Essenes as an ideal community of philosophers and the Pharisees as a politically active party. Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes are described in Greek terms and characterized according to their position on fate and their belief in the immortality of the soul.[125]

Since the Sadducees' fortunes were tied to the temple system in Jerusalem, "After 70 [C.E.]" when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem, "the Pharisees did take the lead in giving the Jewish people a new center of religious life apart from the temple."[126] The subsequent tradition of Judaism would be based primarily on the rabbinic tradition of the Pharisees. Paul's family apparently was committed enough to the Pharisaical expression to allow their son to move, at the age of twelve, to Jerusalem to study with the well-known and highly regarded Pharisee Gamaliel. Luke recounts these details of Paul's upbringing in Paul's speech to the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem in Acts 22:

> "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense." When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today."[127]

As an extraordinary student, Paul rose the ranks in early adulthood within the Pharisee community.

Both the narration and Paul's personal testimony recorded in Acts, as well as his story

[125] Oda Wischmeyer, *Paul: Life, Setting, Work, Letters* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2012), 68-69.

[126] Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity, Third Edition* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 482.

[127] Acts 22:1-3.

shared in the Epistles, describe his conversion experience, which occurred around 33 C.E.[128] As a young Pharisee leader, he stood against the new movement of Jewish people who identified Jesus as the Messiah. Paul enters the narrative of Acts in witnessing the execution of a church leader named Steven in Acts 7. Emboldened by this death, Paul leads the charge to find and imprison the Jews who have become part of the Christian community. Paul's testimony describes these events:

> "I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished."[129]

En route from Jerusalem to the city of Damascus with official sanction to imprison Christians, Paul undergoes a profound experience in which he meets the resurrected Jesus:

> "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' "'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. "'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. "'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me."[130]

After three days of blindness, his sight returns and he, during the years of 33-36 C.E., is brought into the Christian community as a disciple. Making his way to Jerusalem in 36 C.E., he finds himself not fully trusted at first due to his earlier hostility against the faith. The community eventually recognizes him as an apostle, one who is called and sent out by Jesus.[131] The rest of his life is spent in evangelizing and planting churches with various

[128] Wright, *Paul: A Biography*, 66.

[129] Acts 22:1-5.

[130] Acts 22:6-11.

[131] Paul claims apostleship in 1 Corinthians 9:1-5, and in the introductions of most of his Epistles, such as

ministry and travel companions throughout the eastern half of the Mediterranean region, until his death in Rome around 64 C.E.

The first of these traveling companions was the highly regarded leader Barnabas, who originally introduced Paul to the apostles in Jerusalem.[132] Paul sets out from Antioch with Barnabas to begin planting, or founding, churches. As they go along, the emphasis shifts from focusing solely on the Jewish community to a strategy of first approaching the Jewish community within a city or province, and then engaging the Gentile, or non-Jewish, community. Although Paul is most often thought of as the apostle to the Gentiles, Michael Bird reminds us that he continued to engage with the Jewish community throughout his ministry:

> We do not have a "Gentile mission" and a "Jewish mission" in the early churches; rather, we are confronted with a number of interlocking missions that included persons who worked evangelistically among Judean and Diasporan Jews, God-worshipers, and Greeks with competing views of the degree of adherence of Torah for Gentiles and the mode of social relations between believing Jews and believing Jews and believing non-Jews. The division of labor between Paul and Cephas in Gal 2:9 about the "circumcised" and "uncircumcised" was not absolute and implied emphases rather than strict boundaries, since it would have been impossible to definitively separate these two groups. Thus, the Pauline mission, even in its mature form in the 50s, cannot be isolated from missionary activity among Jewish communities.[133]

Even though at one point Paul pledges to wash his hands of the Jews, because he has received so much persecution from them,[134] he continues this strategy of engaging both

Romans 1:1.

[132] Acts 9:26-28.

[133] Michael Bird, *An Anomalous Jew: Paul among Jews, Greeks, and Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 102.

[134] Acts 18:5-6 reports, "When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.'"

Jews and Gentiles even at the end of Acts during his house imprisonment in Rome.[135]

To carry out this mission through the decades in which he travels across the north side of the Mediterranean planting churches, Paul supports himself through his family's trade of tentmaking.[136] Although disagreement exists as to whether this phrase means that he actually produced tents, or leather goods in general,[137] Paul showed himself to be a scholar with a strong academic pedigree who was also a tradesperson with a particular craft of manual labor. He was willing to support himself with manual labor for the larger goal of his ministry.

James Thompson identifies the aim of Paul's work of starting and encouraging Christian congregations across the Mediterranean as nothing less than the "mission of God," which, "according to Paul, is a transformed humanity."[138] Thompson describes Paul's theological vision for his ministry:

> The fact that Paul gave his churches extensive instruction through oral catechesis, visits, and letters leaves no doubt that he had a clear vision for the mission of his churches. Paul's ultimate goal for his churches was that they be transformed into the image of the crucified Lord. The shape of his letters, with their strong emphasis on behavior, indicates Paul's focus on the moral formation of his churches. He expects his churches to be God's colony (Phil. 3:20), living a life that is "worthy of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27). He envisions a community in which members place the interests of others ahead of their own and build an edifice that lasts until the end (1 Cor. 3:10-17). This new humanity will abandon ancient hostilities and be the place where there is no longer "Jew or Greek." A community that is sanctified at the end is the goal for Paul's churches. While Paul expected their love for one another to spill over into the larger community, his primary focus was on the love of members for one another. Inasmuch as Paul assumed that communities would grow, he envisioned that new

[135] Acts 28:17-30. Also, in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he shares how his heart continues to be burdened for his ethnic Jewish community of origin. See Romans 9-11.

[136] Acts 18.

[137] For a thorough consideration of the meaning and possibilities of Paul's work in tentmaking, see Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary, Volume 3* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 2722-2736.

[138] James W. Thompson, *The Church according to Paul: Rediscovering the Community Conformed to Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 173.

members would enter because of the attractiveness of the Christian communities.[139] In pursuing this goal of a planting and shaping churches that embody the new humanity in Christ, Paul operates as a scholar-missionary who plants churches across a wide swath of the Roman world. While he starts in Damascus and Jerusalem, it is believed that Paul eventually made his way westward to Spain, but was eventually martyred, according to tradition, just outside of room under the persecution of the emperor Nero, possibly in the year 64 C.E.[140]

2.4 PROPOSITIONS REGARDING PAUL AND EMPIRE

Surveying Paul's life and work recognizes that he was an ethnically Jewish citizen of the Roman Empire in the first century C.E. His vocation changed from that of Jewish Pharisee concerned with the purity of the Jewish community to Christian missionary who founded or supported churches of Christians of both Jewish and Gentile background throughout the northern Mediterranean rim of the empire. The following four propositions will demonstrate that Paul found success in helping Christianity move beyond its original Jewish ethnic community to become an empire-wide, and eventually global, religion through his interaction with empire:

1) *Paul relied on the framework, political structure, technology, and trade of the Roman Empire to carry out this mission.*

2) *Paul relied on the Jewish Diasporas (both previous and contemporary), which were caused by empire, to carry out this missionary work.*

3) *Paul contextualized a universal message and global aim as he crossed cultural and social boundaries present in and enforced by empire.*

4) *Paul's Epistles and missionary work do not convey a harsh anti-imperial intent, but instead, demonstrate that he recognizes two empires, with ultimate allegiance*

[139] Thompson, 173.

[140] See Edwin D. Freed, *The Apostle Paul and His Letters* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 23. For a discussion on dating Paul's death, see Wright*, Paul: A Biography*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2018), 391-397.

given to the heavenly over the earthly.

Each of these propositions concerning the interaction between Paul's missionary work and empire will be examined in detail below.

2.4.1 PROPOSITION 1: Paul relied on the framework, political structure, technology, and trade of the Roman Empire to carry out this mission.

From the time that he set out as a missionary with his colleague Barnabas around 47 C.E. until his death twenty years later, Paul relied on the framework and benefits of the Roman Empire to enable his travels and mission strategy. Although Paul partnered with or mentored individuals such as Timothy, Silas, and Luke, and worked with individual churches like the congregations in Corinth and Philippi, his ultimate aim was much broader. David Bosch describes how Paul's vision for the reach of the gospel bore a global character, which was framed by the empire in which he lived:

> Paul's missionary vision is worldwide, at least as regards the world known to him. Up to the time of the apostolic council (AD 48) the missionary outreach to Gentiles was probably confined to Syria and Cilicia (cf Gal 1:21; the church in Rome, which perhaps dates back to the early forties of the first century AD, began as a Jewish Christian church). Soon after the Council, however, Paul begins to see mission in "ecumenical" terms: the entire inhabited world has to be reached with the gospel. And since Rome is the capital of the empire, it is natural that he would contemplate a visit to this metropolis (cf Rom 1:13); however, when he is informed of the existence of a Christian community there, he postpones his visit to a later period when he would call upon the Roman Christians en route to Spain (Rom 15:24) (cf Zeller 1982:182). Meanwhile he concentrates his efforts in the predominantly Greek-speaking parts of the empire, in a region extending from Jerusalem to Illyricum (Rom 15:19). Soon, however, he would attempt to go to Spain.[141]

This section will consider three ways in which Paul benefitted from empire in his work. He executed his ministry by (1) relying on the imperial legal structure by pressing his

[141] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 130. Similarly, Stephen Neill describes Paul's empire-wide vision: "Paul was the greatest, and probably the most systematic, of all the early missionaries. It was his aim to work rapidly through all the Gentile countries to the uttermost ends of the world. Rome was not his goal; he planned to spend only a brief time with the Roman Christians, and then to move on to Spain – Spain, the pillars of Herakles, which to an age that knew nothing of new worlds in the further west was literally the ends of the inhabited earth." See Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions, Second Edition* (New York, Penguin Books, 1986), 26-27.

rights as a Roman citizen; (2) carrying out a strategy of planting churches in cities that would impact the surrounding province or colony; and (3) traveling on the ships which tied the cities of the empire together and enabled trade. Each of these three benefits afforded by empire that Paul utilized will be considered below.

2.4.1.a Legal

Although Paul was ethnically Jewish and a student of the esteemed rabbi Gamaliel, he held the coveted status of being a full citizen of Rome. In asking the question, "[H]ow did a Jewish family of Tarsus acquire this exceptional distinction?" F. F. Bruce postulates, "Presumably Paul's father, grandfather or even great-grandfather had rendered some outstanding service to the Roman cause."[142] Bruce lays out the causes for a person or family to receive full citizenship in the first century:

> If he was born a Roman citizen, his father must have been a Roman citizen before him. Roman citizenship was originally confined to freeborn natives of the city of Rome, but as Roman control of Italy and the Mediterranean lands extended, the citizenship was conferred on a number of other people who were not Roman by birth, including certain select provincials.[143]

Having been born into such a family, Paul would have enjoyed the following rights of Roman citizenship:

> Wherever he went throughout the Roman Empire, a Roman citizen was entitled to all the rights and privileges which Roman law provided, in addition to being liable to all the civic duties which Roman law imposed. A citizen's rights and privilege …included a fair public trial for a citizen accused of any crime, exemption from certain ignominious forms of punishment, and protection against summary execution. To none of these privileges could a non-citizen subject of Rome lay legal claim.[144]

As a citizen, Paul had at his discretion whether and when to exercise these rights when

[142] Bruce, 37.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Bruce, 38.

facing adversity or obstacles to his work as a missionary.

Two narratives in Acts relate how Paul employed the benefits of citizenship to achieve his aims. Acts 16 tells of the founding of the church in the city of Philippi. Paul and his companion Silas were placed in jail overnight after a riot ensued following Paul's exorcism of a demon from a fortune telling slave girl. The next morning, upon their release, Paul charges that, "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."[145] After the city magistrates come to the prison to appease the mistreated missionaries, Paul and Silas go meet with the first members of the new Philippian church. Paul again exercises the rights granted by his citizenship in Acts 25:9-12 by appealing to Caesar for a trial. Had he not done so, Paul would most likely have lost his life to Jewish assassins. The subsequent chapters of Acts follow Paul's transfer from Jerusalem to Caesarea, and then on to Rome. He undergoes this travel and receives imperial protection from Jewish assassins because of his having appealed to Caesar as a Roman citizen. Robert Linthicum identifies the reasons why Paul would have exercised this right of citizenship:

> [T]here were five clear benefits to Paul deciding to appeal his case to Caesar. First, it would resolve the stalemate in which he might otherwise remain for the rest of his life. Second, it would mean that his case would be heard directly by Caesar, who likely had little patience with Jewish religious arguments. Third, it would be held in Rome, which would physically distance Paul from both his accusers and those who sought his assassination. They were unlikely to travel to Rome to kill him, because if they were caught, they could not be protected by the Sanhedrin and would face possible execution. Fourth, he would be tried exclusively under Roman law, with no concern for sensibility to the Jewish religious establishment, therefore, the case was likely to be dismissed. Finally, appealing to Caesar meant that the emperor himself was going to hear a proclamation of the gospel by Paul.[146]

[145] Acts 16:37.

[146] Robert C. Linthicum, "The Apostle Paul's Acts of Power: Acts 22-28," in Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig, eds., *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004),

It is the rights afforded by Roman citizenship that allow Paul to cross the Mediterranean Sea and head to Rome, fulfilling both his desire and Christ's prophecy to speak before governing authorities. Luke 21:12 has Jesus foretell his followers that the enemies of the gospel "will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name." All of these incidents described by Christ happen to Paul, not just because of his prominence in among the Jewish people, but also because of the use of his Roman citizenship. Paul's use of his citizenship, a premier element of the empire itself, enables him to travel throughout the empire to carry out his work of proclamation and church planting.

2.4.1.b Cities

This section on the first proposition maintains that Paul relied on the framework and elements of the Roman Empire to carry out his ministry. James Thompson argues that the empire's boundaries provide the cartography for Paul's vision for his missionary work, as he operated with a "universal horizon" which "was undoubtedly shaped within the context of the Roman Empire."[147] Thompson draws the mental map that supplied Paul's sense of the geographic reach for his work:

> His mission from "Jerusalem to Illyricum" and then to Spain corresponds to Greek and roman understanding of the world as the area around the Mediterranean Sea. For Greeks and Romans, the world encompassed the area from the Pillars of Hercules in the west (which was called the end of the earth), the Euphrates River in the east, the Black Sea in the north, and the African desert in the south. Paul inherited a Roman view of the world as an organism with interdependent parts. This world was divided into provinces and smaller administrative units, which existed together in concord. Paul's geographic points of reference coincide with the ancient nomenclature for the provinces. According to the prominent view, the Roman Empire was a commonwealth of nations that brought races and social classes together. The Romans were even

305.

[147] Thompson, 178.

> familiar with the concept of a universal body composed of many members and guided by the Caesar, the head of the body. Paul envisions his own sphere of work as the lands in the west, leaving the other spheres to others.[148]

The hearts of these provinces and smaller administrative units were the cities of the empire. Capitalizing on the influential positions of these cities allowed Paul to pursue his empire-wide vision. David Bosch reports, "Adolf Harnack maintained that Paul's missionary strategy was designed so that the gospel would spread from the population centers into the surrounding regions."[149] This draw towards urban centers is due to the institution of the city in both Scripture and the ancient world having "three functions: to be a place of sacred space, a place of commercial activity, and a place of safety and social order," according to Scott Sunquist,[150]

Many of Paul's Epistles have as their titles the names of the cities from the Roman Empire: *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *Thessalonians*, *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, and *Colossians*. Having been born into a family in Tarsus, and then spending his adolescence and early adulthood in the city of Jerusalem formed Paul as an urban dweller himself, rather than having an agricultural background. This familiarity, as Stephen Neill suggests, allowed him to set to work upon reaching an urban center:

> It was Paul's custom to settle for a time in one of the greatest cities of the empire, and through his younger helpers to radiate out from that centre to the smaller cities of the region. It is pardonable exaggeration on the part of Luke, when he tells us that 'all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks'. As soon as a church had taken root and showed signs of being able to stand on its own feet under its local leaders, Paul felt free to move onwards towards a further fulfillment of his plan, that all the Gentiles might hear the word of the Lord and so the end might come.[151]

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[148] Ibid.

[149] Bosch, 157.

[150] Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 351.

[151] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions, Second Edition* (New York, Penguin Books, 1986), 26-27.

This comfortability with cities not only allowed Paul to carry out his missionary work of planting and guiding churches, but also to capitalize on their strategic location of influence within the empire.

Paul was not the only Christian carrying out ministry in the cities, which will be seen below in the section regarding the Jewish diaspora. However, the focus on cities by Paul and others, along with both Jewish and Christian migrations throughout the empire, wields an incredible outcome regarding the spread of the religion. In his book, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome*,[152] sociologist Rodney Stark endeavors to demonstrate how the Christian faith spread throughout the Roman Empire as an urban religion. He reports on the astonishing results of growth of Christianity from this strategy throughout the Roman Empire in the first century due to its capitalizing on the city structure:

> Within twenty years of the crucifixion, Christianity was transformed from a faith based in rural Galilee, to an urban movement reaching far beyond Palestine. In the beginning it was borne by nameless itinerant preachers and by rank-and-file Christians who shared their faith with relatives and friends. Soon they were joined by 'professional' missionaries such as Paul and his associates. Thus, while Jesus' ministry was limited primarily to the rural areas and the outskirts of towns, the Jesus movement quickly spread to the Greco-Roman cities, especially to those in the eastern, Hellenic end of the empire.[153]

Paul was able to visit, live in, and impact these cities largely due to the means of travel afforded by the Roman Empire, which will be demonstrated in the next section below.

2.4.1.c Travel by Ship

Although not usually considered a sea-faring people, such as the Phoenicians, Rodney

[152] Rodney Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006).

[153] Stark, 25.

Stark describes the nautical character of the Roman Empire. He suggests, "Rome was mainly a waterfront empire surrounding the Mediterranean Sea."[154] He contrasts this body of water with the grandeur of oceans, as he describes, "Almost a lake, the Mediterranean has very weak tides, is sheltered from storms, and lacks the offshore distances that make sailing far more dangerous on the great oceans."[155] Such a setting prompted the technological development of the ships used for trade and transport:

> The sailing ships used in this era were quite reliable, capacious, and much faster than any form of land transportation. During favorable weather, large grain transports from Egypt could make the voyage to Rome in less than three weeks. In addition, sailing routes often were much shorter than the best land routes, and they confronted neither hill nor dale. For these reasons, most long-distance travelers went by sea whenever they could, and many of them took their gods with them … These travelers were not missionaries; they spread their gods mainly by example.[156]

Stark argues that trade and travel helped in the spread of religion, which will be shown to be the case regarding the Jewish diaspora in the next section below. But unlike those whose religion unintentionally spread with their migration, Paul purposely functioned as a missionary of the new Christian faith, and proactively utilized the shipping system to carry out his work.

Acts 20-21 and 27-28 relate episodes where Paul travels by ship. In the first series of connections on his way to Jerusalem in Acts 20-21, Paul's travel on boats takes him to many port cities. Keener reports, "Because of uncertain breezes, ships' voyages along the south coast of Asia Minor were normally slow and tedious; ships frequently stopped at Rhodes."[157] The frequent stops allow Paul to visit with local church leaders at each of the

[154] Stark, 74.

[155] Ibid., 75.

[156] Ibid., 74-75.

[157] Keener, 3074.

ports:

> After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home. We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day.[158]

Paul would be taken by centurion aboard a ship to Rome to make his appeal to Caesar. The narratives of Acts 27-28 demonstrate, "Travel followed the trade routes. Sea travel was dangerous but frequent."[159] Whether it for merchants or military, "Sea transportation was mainly on the commercial cargo vessels, but travelers were always able to find a ship to carry them in any direction along the coasts of the Mediterranean, as we can see from Paul's experience."[160] Paul also experienced the reality of the danger of sea travel in a shipwreck on the island of Malta.[161]

As the narratives in Acts portray in Paul's traveling by ship, Rodney Stark recognizes that, in the popular imagination, "[m]any have attributed all" the "coming and going" of the empire's population "to the extensive network of Roman roads."[162] However, he dispels this stereotype of roads tying the empire together:

> In fact, the Roman roads were seriously deficient for most travelers, and very unsuited to transporting goods. The notion of *magnificent* Roman roads originated with

[158] Acts 21:1-7.

[159] Ferguson, 79.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Acts 27:39-28:2.

[162] Stark, 74.

> classicists who either never actually inspected one of the many surviving examples, or were so lacking in practical experience that they failed to notice such obvious shortcomings to the fact that the Roman roads were much "too narrow for large carts" or wagons and in many places were far too steep for anything but foot traffic. In addition, the Romans often did not build bridges, relying on fords that could be crossed on foot but usually were too deep and the banks too steep for carts and wagons.[163]

Instead of popular use by Rome's populace, the network of roads bore the primary function of securing imperial rule:

> These inadequacies of the Roman roads existed because, despite being "built and kept up at staggering public expense," their sole purpose was to permit soldiers to march quickly from one part of the empire to another. Of course, civilian pedestrians used them too, as did animal and human pack trains. But even the soldiers preferred to walk along the side of the roads whenever possible, and that's where nearly all civilian travelers walked or led their beasts. Why? Because the Roman roads were often paved with stone and therefore were hard on legs and feet when dry, and very slippery when wet, making them perilous on steep descents. Add to this the fact that Roman wagons had no brakes and that their front axles did not turn—they had to be skidded around the corners. No, it was not primarily roads that made people in this era so mobile. It was boats.[164]

As Stark has shown, these roads tied the empire together through the quick transport of troops, ensuring the exercise of imperial power. However, the biblical narrative is clear that Paul also traveled by Roman roads, despite Stark's qualifying statements. For example, Acts 19:1 reports that Paul traveled by road to reach the city of Ephesus.[165] Instead of relying solely on roads for travel by foot, Paul also made use of the shipping technology and trade routes of the empire to access the network of urban centers to carry out his mission work. The next section will show how Paul's reliance on the Jewish diaspora was also partly due to the shipping network of the empire.

2.4.2 PROPOSITION 2: Paul relied on the Jewish Diasporas (both previous and contemporary), which were caused by empire, to carry out this missionary work.

[163] Stark, 74.

[164] Ibid.

[165] See also John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Academic, 1999), 21.

As a member of the Jewish community, Paul enjoyed natural connections for visiting synagogues on his missionary travels. He was able to utilize this approach, not just due to his Roman citizenship, as we saw above, but also because of the Jewish Diaspora, the historical dispersion of his people group through forced or economic migration.

2.4.2.a Empires Shaped the Jewish Diaspora

One way to read the history of the Hebrew Bible is as a history of empire shaping the identity of the Jewish people. The birth of the nation of Israel is reported in the book of Exodus to have emerged from slavery in the kingdom of Egypt. The subsequent conquest of the Promised Land in Joshua attempted to occupy the land promised to their forefather Abraham. While the surrounding nations did not necessarily comprise empires, they were a network of kingdoms whose gods the people of Israel were commanded to refrain from worshiping. Failure to maintain exclusive worship of Yahweh resulted in the cycle of punishment-and-rescue in the book of Judges. Ongoing apostasy eventually brought on divine judgment in the form of the exile under Babylon, ruled by King Nebuchadnezzar. The dominant power changed over from Babylonians to the Medio-Persians, with the emperor Cyrus allowing some of the exiles to return and rebuild the Jewish capital of Jerusalem. The vestiges of these movements of the Jewish people had, by the first century, placed them in various locations:

> At that time we have ample evidence of Jewish settlements in Egypt and a hint of others in Asia Minor as far west as Sardis, capital of the kingdom of Lydia (the Sepharad of Obadiah 20). A large number of the exiles in Babylonia settled in their new home and did not avail themselves of permission to return to Judaea. Under Persian rule they were to be found in all the territories of the Persian Empire, even on the shore of the Caspian Sea; and Alexander's conquests enabled them to spared even farther afield.[166]

[166] Bruce, 30.

The intertestamental period saw the conquest by Alexander the Great, who was actually Macedonian but spread the Hellenic culture of Greece. Eugene Peterson recounts the grand sweep of history between imperial rulers over the Jewish people:

> In the time between Cyrus and Alexander, the Jewish community had gradually been dispersed all over the Persian/Greek world. The dispersion that had begun under the Babylonians was reversed by the Persians, whose policy was to repatriate exiled peoples back to their homelands so they could rebuild their places of worship. This back-and-forthness weakened any sense of place, further stirring the huge dispersion melting-pot. The process of dispersion was continued by the Greeks, who were great colonizers. Under their rule the Jews, earlier uprooted and later restored to Palestine, learned to make themselves at home virtually anywhere. After a hundred years or so of Greek rule, there were Jews in most of the major cities of the Mediterranean and Middle Easter world. Wherever they landed they established a synagogue, faithfully nurturing in the soil of their Holy Scriptures (the only soil left to them) their identity as God's people.[167]

By the first century C.E., then, both the Diaspora of Jews due to the Babylonian and Persian exiles and the more recent Hellenic Diaspora fostered the growth of Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean and east of Palestine:

> There was a Jewish population in Alexandria from its foundation in 331 B.C.; by the first century A.D. Jews formed a majority in two out of the city's five wards. About 300 B.C. the first Ptolemy settled a body of Jews in Cyrenaica to help ensure the loyalty of that province. A century later, the Seleucid king Antiochus III, with a similar purpose, moved many Jews into Phrygia and Lydia, and after he wrested Judaea and Coelesyria from the Ptolemies he encouraged Jewish settlement in Antioch, his capital, and other cities of the kingdom. In Rome itself there was a Jewish colony even before the incorporation of Judaea into the empire in 63 B.C., and it was greatly augmented in the years that followed. It is estimated that by the beginning of the first century A.D. there were between 40,000 and 60,000 Jews in Rome – about as many, probably, as in Jerusalem itself.[168]

Paul was both a member of the Jewish community in general, as well as a member of this Hellenic Jewish Diaspora community in the first century C.E. Rodney Stark describes this

[167] Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Spiritual Art of Reading* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 2006), 127-128.

[168] Bruce, 30.

community's characteristics and social status in the Roman Empire:

> Jews had long been congregating in cities outside Palestine, and this trend accelerated when it was encouraged by Alexander the Great and his heirs—hence the term Hellenic Diaspora, often used to distinguish the relocations of this time from earlier resettlements of Jews (such as their time in Egypt or the Babylonian Captivity). Too much probably has been made of the Diasporan communities as consisting primarily of traders and merchants. Many Diasporan Jews followed more humble callings, including many craftsmen—as in the case of Paul and some of his associates. In fact, some Diasporan communities consisted mainly of mercenary soldiers, as was true of the Elephantine community in Egypt; and others had been formed initially by discharged Jewish veterans after their mercenary service, as is the case of the Antioch community. Nevertheless, trade and commerce were of primary importance to the founding of most Diasporan communities, and to sustaining them.[169]

By the time of Paul's birth, Jewish people were spread throughout the empire.

Regarding the size of the Jewish population in the first century C.E., Stephen Neill reports that, "It is impossible to reckon how many they were, but some good authorities have placed the number as high as 7 per cent of the total population."[170] This group found itself alongside other people groups as neighbors throughout the empire. Stark explains, "The Jewish Diaspora was not unique; ethnic enclaves were common in the Greco-Roman cities."[171] For example, "Greek neighborhoods probably existed even in all of the non-Hellenic cities, and colonies of Syrians, Cretans, Phoenicians, Cypriots, Persians, Egyptians, and many others were widespread."[172] One unique characteristic that distinguished the Jewish communities of the Diaspora from their neighboring ethnic communities, however, regarded the adoption or syncretizing of religions in contrast to their neighbors:

> Like the Jews, all of these "sojourners" (as they were called in official documents, even after generations of residence) remained quite attached to their homeland, and "every people, or fragment of a people, thrown into a foreign land continued to

[169] Stark, 121.

[170] Neill, 25.

[171] Stark, 120.

[172] Ibid.

> worship its ancestral gods." The difference was that most of the sojourners were willing to worship local gods too, including the gods of each particular city and the deified emperors of the Imperial Cult, and to participate in "the frequent festivals and sacrifices," while devout Jews were not. This very clearly set the Jews apart and often stimulated anti-Semitism. But, unlike the Christians, people in the Jewish Diasporan communities usually were exempt from these pagan obligations, having successfully appealed to the authorities that their unwillingness to worship any other gods was inherent in their traditional faith—tradition being the whole basis for religious legitimacy in the eyes of the Roman authorities. Indeed, that is why conversion so unsettled Roman authorities: it involved renouncing the faith of one's ancestors.[173]

This fidelity to their religion of origin helped foster the reputation of the Jewish community that, though seemingly obstinate, bore a desirable spiritual attraction:

> These Jews were a vigorous, active, and at times turbulent people. For all their morose unfriendliness, they had come to exercise a remarkable influence on their neighbours, and to attract a considerable number of them to the Jewish faith. The quest for wisdom was an ancient passion with the Greeks, always in search of something new; the synagogue offered a profound and moving wisdom apparently more ancient than that of Homer. Monotheism was in the air; the Old Testament set forth a monotheism purer, more radical, and more personal than that of any other system known to the ancient world. Some Gentiles submitted to the rite of circumcision, and so became part of the people of the Jews; the majority remained in that category of 'God-fearers', interested spectators, who meet us so constantly in the pages of the Acts of the Apostles.[174]

Residence by the Jewish communities in their respective cities that allowed this interaction was the result of the preceding several centuries. The actions of empires in forcibly moving people around, such as the Babylonians and the Jewish people, or in the economic forces of empire prompting migration, such as in the Hellenic Diaspora, shaped the Jewish community at large. It was this context in which Christianity found an optimal setting for growth.

2.4.2.b Spread of Christianity Aided by the Jewish Diaspora

We saw above how Paul utilized the shipping lanes and networks of the empire to carry out his mission work. The presence of Jewish communities in the port cities from which

[173] Stark, 120.

[174] Neill, 25.

these ships would come and go enabled Paul to first engage the synagogues to present his message before approaching non-Jews. Concerning the relationship between Christianity and the Jewish Diaspora, Stark offers the following hypotheses (along with others not included here) regarding the placement of the communities of Jewish Diaspora:

- *The closer a city was to Jerusalem, the more likely that city was to have a significant Diasporan Jewish community.*
- *Diasporan Jewish communities tended to be located in port cities.*
- *City-size was not significantly related to the presence of Diasporan Jewish communities*.[175]

Stark also shows that many in the Jewish communities of these port cities throughout the Roman Empire would have found the introduction of Christianity friendly toward their existing beliefs and practices:

> In contrast with paganism, Christianity offered Diasporan Jews a chance to preserve virtually all of their religious capital, needing only to add to it, since Christianity preserved the entire Old Testament heritage. Although it made observance of many portions of the Jewish Law unnecessary, Christianity did not impose a new set of laws to be mastered. In addition, services in Christian congregations were very closely modeled on those of the synagogue, and in early days also were conducted in Greek; thus, a Hellenized Jew would have felt right at home. Finally, Christianity carefully stressed how its central message of salvation was the fulfillment of the messianic promises of orthodox Judaism.[176]

These similarities in teaching and religious life already present in Judaism proved a fertile ground for the spread of the Christian faith.

In addition to the Jewish adherents who converted to Christianity, the dispersion of Jewish communities and their religion had also produced the phenomena of the God-fearer, the Greek convert to Judaism that stopped short of circumcision. Neill explains how the permeation of the religion, ethics, and spiritual ideals offered by the Jewish

[175] Stark, 123.

[176] Ibid., 128.

communities throughout the empire had cultivated this subgroup who also proved ready to accept Christianity, as it fulfilled both their longings for Judaism while removing its obstacles to full conversion:

> It was in this group that the preaching of the Gospel found its most ready and its most immediate response. When it was made plain to these folks that, without undergoing the rite of circumcision, which both Greeks and Romans regarded as degrading and repulsive, they could win all that Judaism could offer them and a good deal besides, it was not hard for them to take one further step and to accept the faith of Jesus Christ. It was the presence of this prepared élite that differentiated the missions of the apostolic age from those of every subsequent time, and makes comparison almost impossible. These people, or the best of them, had been well trained in the Old Testament; they had accepted its moral as well as its theological ideas. Many of them brought to their Christian faith a basis of understanding and of disciplined character which made it natural for them to step into positions of leadership in the nascent Christian congregations, and, as it appears, in certain cases they became pioneers in the development of the Church's thought.[177]

These God-fearers and the Hellenized Jewish communities of the Diaspora served as people groups throughout the Roman Empire whom Paul engaged in his missionary work, as will be seen below.

2.4.2.c Paul's Reliance on the Jewish Diaspora

So far this chapter has shown how Paul used the political structure, geographic framework, and shipping of the Roman Empire to carry out his missionary work. The immediately preceding sections have recounted how the Jewish Diaspora of the first century was not only a product of empire, both Roman and those preceding it, but the Diaspora also aided Christianity in its growth in the first century. David Bosch identifies the "correlation of the Jewish and Gentile missions" as a "specifically Lukan contribution to the understanding of mission in the first century."[178] Bosch contends that in writing Acts, the author Luke saw the need to connect the spread of Christianity outside of

[177] Neill, 25-26.

[178] Bosch, 130.

Christianity to its Jewish origin:

> At the time of Luke's writing Jewish Christianity was probably largely a spent force; very few, if any, conversions of the Jews were taking place. In most Christian communities Gentiles predominated. However, the Gentile church could neither deny nor denounce its Jewish origins. It was Luke, the Gentile, who saw the need for rooting the Gentile church in Israel. He did this in a bold way: Jesus was first and foremost the Messiah of Israel and precisely for this reason also the Savior of the Gentiles.[179]

As a travel companion, Luke would have seen how Paul himself made use of the Jewish Diaspora, of which he was a member, in his missionary work of church planting throughout the Mediterranean. "Although the New Testament often describes Paul's mission as aimed at Gentiles, what scripture mostly reports him doing is missionizing to Hellenized Jews," according to Rodney Stark.[180]

As the opening section of the chapter described, Paul's method first had him first engage with the Jewish synagogue or leaders of a city before going to the Gentiles. This pattern was set in his first missionary endeavor with his colleague Barnabas in chapter thirteen of Acts. "The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues."[181] Later in this same chapter in Acts, they begin interacting with the non-Jewish population. However, Paul maintains the pattern of seeking out the Jewish community first, and, as Stark points out, "Paul himself admitted that it was much easier to convert Diasporan Jews than Gentiles, noting that efforts to convert the latter forced him to work," as he writes in 1 Corinthians 5:10, "'harder than any of [the other apostles.]'"[182] Like Bird, Stark pushes back against the accepted notion

[179] Bosch, 130.

[180] Stark, 135.

[181] Acts 13:4-5.

[182] Stark, 131.

of Paul as solely or primarily working outside the Jewish community. "Despite the tradition that his was mainly a mission to the Gentiles, and that that factor allowed the Christian church to burst beyond its Jewish origins," Stark observes that "the weight of scripture deals with Paul's mission to the Jews of the Hellenic Diaspora."[183] Acts 18 demonstrates this dynamic, when Paul interacts with Priscilla and Aquila, fellow Hellenic Jews of the Diaspora:

> After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.[184]

Paul's westward direction toward the end of his life did not preclude a concern for or engagement with Jews when possible, as Bird explains some of the background for this apparent shift in focus:

> A focus on the Gentiles in Paul's later missionary work was not a reaction to a failed Jewish mission; instead, it was attributable to the parting with the Antiochene church, where Paul attempted to move into a sphere where Jewish and Gentile divisions would be minimized, and to also move into new territories like Spain, where a negligible Jewish presence existed.[185]

In spending much of his energies engaging with the Jewish community in his missionary work, Paul made use of the Jewish Diaspora. The Diaspora was not just a reality of the Roman Empire, but was also a product of the preceding empires through the centuries, which supplied Paul both with his identity and initial target group. Although he engaged first with the Jewish community, he pursued the recognition that the work of the Holy Spirit was forming a new people, defined neither by Roman culture nor Jewish ethnicity,

[183] Ibid., 139.

[184] Acts 18:1-5.

[185] Bird,102.

as seen below.

2.4.3 PROPOSITION 3: Paul contextualized a universal message and global aim as he crossed cultural and social boundaries present in and enforced by empire.

Although Paul knew both the culture of the Hellenic Jewish Diaspora well, he was also conversant with Gentile society. He sought to champion neither of these cultures, but instead, to engage both of them with the gospel. In the same way that he crossed the geographic boundaries through the use of ships in his travel, he also broke beyond the cultural and social boundaries with the message that Jesus Christ was establishing a new humanity. This new human society was to be realized in the local Christian congregation.

2.4.3.a As a missionary, Paul translated Christianity from its Jewish background into the larger Greco-Roman society.

The preceding section showed how much of Paul's work was among Diasporan Jews, but the long-term effect of his work helped Christianity move beyond the ethnic and social boundaries of its original Jewish community. Although he worked with the LXX translation and himself did not translate the Scriptures of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, Paul translated the content of the faith from its Jewish background and initial audience into the idiom of the broader Greco-Roman world. In the process, he relied on the combination of his scholarly training and cosmopolitan upbringing to translate the message of Christianity from its Jewish roots into the larger society of the Roman Empire. Lamin Sanneh explains, "Christianity, from its origins, identified itself with the need to translate out of Aramaic and Hebrew, and from that position came to exert a dual force in it historical development."[186] This dual force, according to Sanneh, had an effect on both the Jewish origins of Christianity as well as upon the non-Jewish culture:

> One was the resolve to relativize its Judaic roots, with the consequence that it

[186] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989), 1.

> promoted significant aspects of those roots. The other was to destigmatize Gentile culture and adopt that culture as a natural extension of the life of the new religion. This action to destigmatize complemented the other action to relativize. Thus it was that the two subjects, the Judaic and the Gentile, became closely intertwined in the Christian dispensation, both crucial to the formative image of the new religion.[187]

Sanneh contends that Paul's treatment of culture set the template for the church in its missionary work as it engaged and interacted cultures and societies throughout the following centuries:

> Paul's legacy to the church includes this exacting vigilance over the true nature of culture. Christian life is indelibly marked with the stamp of culture, and faithful stewardship includes uttering the prophetic word in culture, and sometimes even against it. Paul was a cultural iconoclast in his defiance of the absolutist tendencies in culture, but he was not a cultural cynic, for in his view God's purposes are mediated through particular cultural streams. The mission of the church applied this insight by recognizing all cultures, and the languages in which they are embodied, as lawful in God's eyes, making it possible to render God's word into other languages.[188]

In recognizing both the limitations and divine use of culture, Paul, Lanneh suggests, forged a template for the subsequent mission of the church.

2.4.3.b Paul's missionary work sought to recognize a new humanity of the universal manifest in the local congregation.

As Paul communicated with existing congregations or his own church plants, or in visiting Jewish synagogues to share with them the message about Jesus, neither the Gentile nor Jewish residents of Greco-Roman society would have found the idea of individuals and households participating in a congregation completely alien. James Thompson explains the corresponding elements for Christian groups in both Jewish and Greek cultures:

> The term *ekklesia*, which Paul inherited from the earliest Palestinian community, could have resonated with non-Jewish listeners, who would have understood the church as a new kind of civic gathering. E. A. Judge and others have argued that the observer would have identified Christian groups as philosophical schools. … Numerous types of voluntary associations provide the background for the converts' understanding of community. Some of the voluntary associations incorporated persons

[187] Sanneh, 1.

[188] Ibid., 47.

> who shared the same craft or trade. Ritual and communal meals were common among their activities. These voluntary associations frequently functioned as burial societies. Pythagorean communities were characterized by a community of goods, a required daily regimen, and strict taboos on diet and clothing.[189]

The formation of congregations of people from both Jewish and Greek cultural backgrounds produced tension in what was required for full membership. Paul argued against the requirement for Christian converts to undergo the Jewish rite of circumcision, allowing Christian to pursue universal reach. In his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul describes the new reality for the Christian community:

> So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.[190]

Although his missionary pattern was to first engage Jews and then go to the Gentiles, in Christ, these ethnic and cultural distinctions disappear.

The effects of the gospel, for Paul, not only go beyond ethnic and cultural boundaries, but also liberate the local Christian community form the social and economic conventions of the Roman Empire, such as slavery. The quote above from Galatians finds an echo in Paul's Epistle the Colossians, as he again lists different ethnic groups and the practice of slavery. He tells the congregation in Colossae, "Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."[191] This new identity of a shared unity in Christ is not just descriptive, but is to be put into practice. Paul explains to them how to live this new reality out, casting off the expectations and social pressures of the larger society:

> Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with

[189] Thompson., 18-19.

[190] Galatians 3:26-29.

[191] Colossians 3:11.

> compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.[192]

This new humanity represented by and embodied in the Christian congregation was no longer defined by the social positions or characterizations as mandated by the larger society, but rather, gave everyone equal footing with their shared identity in Christ. David Bosch explains how both this aim of Paul's work and its highest value were unity:

> The churches that have come into existence as a consequence of Paul's mission find themselves in a world divided culturally (Greeks *v* barbarians), religiously (Jews *v* Gentiles), economically (rich *v* poor), and socially (free *v* slave). In the fledgling churches themselves (particularly the one in Corinth) there are factions, evidenced by disunity and bickering. However, Paul never acquiesces in this. He finds it impossible to give up on the unity of the one body, in spite of all differences. This motif is not just a strategic or pragmatic move against sectarian fragmentation. Rather, it is undergirded by a theological principle: once people have been "baptized into Christ" and have "put on Christ", there can be no longer any separation between Jew and Gentile, between slave and free, between male and female, between Greek and barbarian; now all are "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:27f). We are now "understood in terms of our baptism and not in terms of our birth" (Breytenbach 1986:21). Our unity is, indeed, non-negotiable. The church is the vanguard of the new creation and has, of necessity, to reflect the values of God's coming world.[193]

In agreement with Bosch, Thompson explains that, even though converts to Christianity would have found antecedents to the congregation in both Jewish and Greek society, the new social structure and values stood in stark distinction from those preceding cultural contexts:

> Paul's task was to define the community of believers in ways that did not conform to ancient concepts of community. When he converted people from different social classes and ethnic groups, he formed a community that was unparalleled in the ancient world. Thus his task was to build lasting communities, and his letters are attempts at ecclesial self-definition that challenged the common views of community.[194]

While the Christian congregations that Paul founded were to embody the value of a new

[192] Colossians 3:12-15.

[193] Bosch, 172.

[194] Thompson, 19. See also pp. 171-172.

humanity that shared unity in Christ, thereby setting aside the social conventions and expectations of the Roman Empire, the following section will convey that Paul did not actively seek to overturn that larger society.

2.4.4 PROPOSITION 4: Paul's Epistles and missionary work do not convey a harsh anti-imperial intent, but instead, demonstrate that he recognizes two empires, with ultimate allegiance given to the heavenly over the earthly.

The present research focuses on the work of missionaries and their relationship to empire. Although these missionaries might function as translators of language, sacred texts, or doctrinal concepts, these missionaries are not solely scholars. In their work, they are practitioners. This section demonstrates how Paul worked as a missionary, using his academic training and aptitude for translating religious concepts from one culture to another. Although he employed scholarly skills in his vocation, debated religious leaders, and even in one place gave a presentation for philosophers, his overall ministry focused on planting or pastoring churches, rather than engaging the academy, or seeking to influence and overturn the Roman Empire.

2.3.4.a Paul worked as a missionary who planted and supervised churches, not as an academic looking to influence or overturn society.

In Acts 17:22-31, Paul presents the gospel to the philosophers of the city of Athens at Mars Hill. In this famous speech, he presents the creator God of the Hebrews as finding its fulfillment in Christ. Verse 32 tells of the mixed response he receives, reporting, "When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, 'We want to hear you again on this subject.'" Although this speech demonstrates Paul's translating the Christian gospel from its Jewish background into the idiom and mindset of Greek culture, Paul does not normally engage with philosophers in his travels. While he takes advantage of each situation to explain his faith in Christ, such as being under house arrest in Rome, where he "welcomed all who came to see him," he primarily

focuses on the life and wellbeing of local congregations.[195]

Two recent schools of thought on Paul tend to set aside the focus of this work on planting or supervising local churches. These two scholarly trends, the first known as the New Perspective on Paul (hereafter NPP) and the second here called the anti-imperial reading of Paul, cast the apostle primarily as a thinker, writer, and, in the case of the latter, an activist, rather than as the practitioner he was. Starting with the NPP, Kirk MacGregor offers a description of this "school of thought in the New Testament scholarship" whose attempts "to reinterpret Paul and his epistles in light of his first-century Jewish context"[196] constituted its main goal:

> Among the movement's principal proponents are Duke New Testament scholar E. P. Sanders (1937-), Durham New Testament scholar James D. G. Dunn (1939-), and St. Andrews New Testament scholar N. T. Wright (1948-). The movement is a reaction to the Reformation perspective on Paul, which depicts him as arguing against a legalistic Jewish culture that seeks to earn salvation by works. The new perspective on Paul contends that Paul has been misread, claiming that Paul was actually combating Jews who believed in *sola gratia* (grace alone) and, rather than asserting that their works earned their salvation, boasted that their works identified them as covenant people of God. Thus ramifications of the new perspective on Paul affect our understanding of the Protestant doctrine of *sola fide* (justification by faith alone).[197]

N. T. Wright serves as the best known representative for this school, as he continues to author both scholarly books as well as offerings for popular reading. Wright's recovery of the original rabbinic context can prove a helpful corrective to imposing Reformation doctrines on the first century. In addition to recovering the Jewish background of Jesus, the New Testament as a whole, and for Paul's writings, Wright also spotlights the imperial context in which Paul wrote:

> [T]here are indeed echoes, and more than just echoes, of the rhetoric of imperial

[195] Acts 28:30.

[196] Kirk R. MacGregor, *Contemporary Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 341.

[197] Ibid.

> Rome in the writings of Paul. The material was available and widely known; Paul repeates his points sufficiently often for a credible volume to be attained both in individual passages and letters and in recurring themes; his critique coheres at all kinds of points with other themes in this theology; and the picture we thus get is, I suggest, enormously plausible historically. The history of interpretation remains, for interesting reasons, largely innocent of this way of reading him. But I think Paul himself would have been horrified if we ignored this dimension, and mightily relieved at the 'aha' which arises when, with these elements finally unveiled, we see his thought in the round. When I began to study Paul's theology of creation and covenant, Messiah and apocalyptic, I had no thought whatever of this political dimension. Likewise, most of the scholars who have recently drawn attention to the political dimension have eschewed any interest in Paul's wider theology. But I persist in thinking that these usually differentiated strands were in fact woven tightly together into the single fabric of his theology and life.[198]

Although Wright has recently published a biography on the apostle,[199] which helps to humanize the actual person under consideration, an emphasis on the content and context of Paul's writings apart from the recognition of Paul's primary vocation as a church planter effectively treats Paul more as an academic, rather than a practitioner.

Much more severe in its separation of Paul from his intent in planting or pastoring Christian congregations is the anti-imperial reading of Paul. For example, Richard Horsley and Neil Asher Silberman's treatment of "Paul's Letter to the Romans—the longest of his epistles preserved in the New Testament" [200] exemplifies this anti-imperial reading. They note that Romans "is also the most comprehensive explanation of [Paul's] theology and historical outlook," [201] and so find in it both antipathy towards and subversive plotting against the imperial power:

> While he had previously written letters to nurture and encourage assemblies that he had personally established, Paul now had different intentions in mind. He explicitly

[198] N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 79.

[199] N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018).

[200] Richard A. Horsley and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Message and the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World* (New York: Grossett/Putnam, 1997), 189. For a recent anti-imperial interpretation of the same Epistle, see Sylvia C. Keesmaat and Brian J. Walsh, *Romans Disarmed: Resisting Empire, Demanding Justice* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2019).

[201] Horsley and Silberman, 189.

> noted in the opening of the letter (1:10) that he had never visited the capital of the empire and the distinctive form of address he used—"To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints" (1:7)—hints at a possible difference in organization from the *ekklesiai* or "assemblies" to which his own letters generally refer. Many modern commentators have suggested that Paul's Letter to the Romans was a "scholastic diatribe" or rhetorical composition about philosophical or theological issues written according to classical literary conventions, but as we have seen throughout our story, abstract philosophical and theological issues can rarely be separated from the larger political, economic, and cultural milieu in which Paul and the other members of the Jesus Movement lived their lives. And whatever resonance this document may later have had in the minds of theologians and church leaders, its historical significance must be related clearly and directly to the specific political challenges that Paul faced as he prepared to depart for Jerusalem and then set out—via Rome—for the distant western provinces of the Roman Empire.[202]

Just as the NPP benefits biblical scholarship through the reminder of the Jewish context of the first century, so too Horsley and Silberman make readers aware that Paul was writing in a particular political setting. However, this latter approach casts aside or skew concerns which Paul addresses in writing churches on matters such as weekly corporate worship and the application of Christian ethics. Instead, anti-imperial interpretations read into Paul a pronounced eschatological emphasis that drives the Christian community:

> For Paul, total faith in God's saving power, as manifested in the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, was the ultimate political strategy for survival. To him, "sin" was both active participation in the regime of injustice and personal surrender to the pleasure of its material benefits. And in an uncompromisingly radical demand that few comfortable people—then or now—could ever accept, Paul sought to convince the members of the movement in Rome that the heart of their apocalyptic struggle was the battle against patronage, power, and privilege as it was symbolically manifest in the trappings of power and the rites of idolatry all over the world. But this was not a timeless ethical injunction. Paul was now growing impatient, and he appealed to the Roman community to help him immediately—to bring on the imminent Kingdom of God.[203]

Horsley and Silberman address his instructions in Romans 13 to obey the ruling earthly powers. However, they read these injunctions as a calculation for living within the

[202] Ibid.

[203] Horsley and Silverman, 189-190.

apocalyptic timeframe described above. They explain how their readings differs from those who take Paul's instructions at face value:

> Although a number of scholars have placed this passage [Romans 13:1-7] in the context of tactical caution, its clear implications suggest temporary resignation to the imminent and nothing should be done to endanger the crucial undertakings of the movement—"for salvation is nearer now that when we first believed" (13:11). Yet in pinning all his hopes on the power of a single demonstration of faithfulness by the leaders of the movement—directly confronting the authorities in Jerusalem—Paul was taking an enormous gamble. If Christ's *parousia* were to be somehow delayed, Paul's injunctions on good citizenship could merely become a code of continuing dutiful obedience to earthly power, not the foundation of a visionary community of truly free women and men.[204]

These schools of thought regarding Paul described above, especially the anti-imperial reading, fail to emphasize the degree to which the apostle functioned as a church planter, as a pastor working with congregations and their leaders, along with his ministry of public proclamation.

Because of this omission of Paul's ministry focus, Bird rejects the anti-imperial treatment, as he argues, "Paul's letter to the Romans is not a political manifesto conceived for social protest or militant resistance."[205] Instead, he clarifies that the epistle is "pastoral theology, albeit not a theology divorced from the sociopolitical realities of the Roman Mediterranean."[206] Bird surveys the theological depths of the letter and its applications for Christian living in its context:

> Romans is Paul's argument for his trans-ethnic gospel, one that unites Jews, Romans, Greeks, and Barbarians under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Rehearsing this gospel to the Romans was part of his effort to prevent the Roman house churches from fracturing along halakic lines pertaining to and whether one need observe the Jewish way of life. Yet the totalizing vision of Paul's gospel clearly competes with the Roman vision, with its preeminence of the emperor and the unchallenged hegemony of the empire over the eastern Mediterranean. The kingdom of Paul's Messiah did not

[204] Horsley and Silverman, 191.

[205] Bird, 253.

[206] Ibid.

> constitute a military threat to the Roman Empire, however; it was a social threat by establishing alternative modes of patronage and devotion, as well as expressions of family and kinship that competed with existing hierarchies, and it regarded Rome's religious tradition as blasphemous and dehumanizing. Paul's theology could not be baptized into the Roman imperium, but Rome could genuinely face the threat of being Christianized if Paul's theopolitical vision, with all its subversive social tendencies, ever took root—which is precisely what it did.[207]

Having offered a reading of Romans on its own terms, Bird assesses the anti-imperial treatment of Paul as a whole. He finds a "few problems with reading anti-imperial rhetoric into Paul's letters,"[208] laying them out one at a time:

> First, Paul's letters indicate that he was hardly consumed with political activism, and his focus pertained to establishing churches with harmonious relations between Jewish and Gentile believers. That does not necessarily make him apolitical, but he was hardly a political change agent. That should be unsurprising because in the New Testament the ratio of *Theos* to *Kaesar* is 30:1. Second, a further problem is that many of these so-called anti-imperial readings come at a time when anti-American sentiment (and anti-conservative American politics) is experiencing a cultural spike in the academy. One is left wondering then if Paul's apparent critique of Roman power is really a veiled critique of American foreign policy by left-leaning academics. Third, it need also be noted that the experience and expression of "empire" varied around the Mediterranean according to local circumstances. The visibility of the Roman Empire varied in rural Judea, Greek cities in Asia Minor, Romanized cities in Greece and Rome itself. Even members of the Pauline churches might have variegated experiences, good and bad, of Roman power. Fourth, much of Paul's language of salvation and Jesus' lordship is inherited from Septuigintal vocabulary and not imported from Roman socioreligious language. Fifth, however one spins the details, Romans 13:1-7 gives a clear affirmation of Paul's belief in the submission of Christians to state authorities. What Paul says here looks like political quietism, an affirmation of the status quo, not a script for sociopolitical resistance.[209]

In an appreciation of Paul that comports with that of Bird, Scott Sunquist helpfully captures both the reality and the practical nature of Paul's work and intent. "Contrary to the approach of many scholars," Sunquist argues, "Paul was not a modern-day theologian

[207] Bird, 253.

[208] Michael Bird, "'One Who Will Arise to Rule Over the Nations': Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Roman Empire," in Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica, eds. *Jesus Is Lord, Caesar Is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 148-149.

[209] Ibid., 149.

sitting in his air-conditioned office reflecting on word usage."[210] Here Sunquist implicitly barbs those modern academics who read Paul from a position of leisure. Nor was Paul, Sunquist continues, reflecting on "how he was really helping Jews and Gentiles resist empire, or how he was going to convince everyone that love is the answer."[211] Instead, the apostle dealt with the practical, often difficult, features of real-world ministry:

> Paul was commissioned to deliver a message from Jesus Christ and was struggling with languages, finances, rejection, and lack of places to stay. He was especially struggling and praying to establish new Christian communities along the highways of the late Roman Empire. He was persecuted for his stubborn refusal to deny his commission. His intent was to proclaim the Kingdom, and his writings were all in service of that commitment (or commission). His writings were, in fact, missionary letters, and they should be read *at least* from this perspective. They also shed light on matters of ethics, moral behavior, and relations to civil authorities—but incidentally, not essentially.[212]

Although he was writing "missionary letters" rather than political diatribes or strategies, Sunquist acknowledges that Paul does consider the relationship of Christians to the governing authorities, which is considered in the following section. The first two schools of interpretation of Paul mentioned above are helpful in remembering the greater context for both Paul and the Christian community in the first century C.E. The NPP helpfully reminds us that the Paul emerged from a Jewish rabbinic background. Also, the anti-imperial of Horsley and others bring to the fore some of the political and social pressures that both Paul and the congregations who received his letters would be facing. However, for myself, working in both pastoral ministry and cross-cultural missions, as well as engaging in academic missiological study, I find that Bird and Sunquist provide a more accurate and insightful reading of Paul's life and letters. These scholars recognize the apostle as an active church planter and pastor, reading his letters for what they say and

[210] Sunquist, 178.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Ibid.

address, while refraining from over-reading too much of the Jewish context or supposing intentions that are not stated in his texts.

2.4.4.b Paul's writings are not anti-imperial, but demonstrate allegiance to the divine over the earthly powers.

The debate described above centers not only on the intent of Paul's thought in his writings in general, but also specifically on his admonition for the Christians in the city of Rome to obey the governing authorities. He offers, in chapter thirteen of his Epistle to the Romans, a theological foundation for this civil obedience, as earthly rule is ultimately given by God and exercises divinely given will for the sake of earthly order. His instructions include the practical reality of paying taxes and giving proper respect to those who wield earthly power:

> Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.[213]

Paul continues along these lines when, in 1 Timothy 2, he calls for "petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving" to be given "for kings and all those in authority."[214] Other Epistles might appear to uphold the status quo of the imperial system, such as when Paul tells his readers in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, "to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life."

[213] Romans 13:1-7.

[214] 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

Similarly, in Philemon, Paul calls for the runaway slave Onesimus to be treated on equal footing within the setting of the house church, but does not call for the abolition of this convention of Roman society.

While Paul instructs these early congregations to obey the state, and does not actively foster the desire to overturn society, he also does not accept the promises of Rome. Seyoon Kim explains that there exists "a general agreement among commentators that with his critical remark on 'peace and security' (εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλει) in 1 Thess 5:3 Paul is expressing his disapproval of the central slogan of the Roman imperial propaganda, *pax et securitas* (peace and security), or *pax Romana*."[215] So while Paul does recognize that earthly rulers have their power given by God, the promises and propaganda of those rulers conflict with those of the Christian gospel. This rejection of false promises of security from the state for the eternal security of Christ resisted the powerful draw of paying obeisance, rather than Paul's prescribed respect and honor, to the emperor.

Although the preceding section critiqued some of the over-emphases of the NPP, N. T. Wright's description of the ubiquity and development of the "framework of imperial ideology," in which "the emperor-cult itself was the fastest growing religion in Paul's world, that of the eastern Mediterranean"[216] proves helpful:

> Augustus had consolidated his own position by declaring that Julius Caesar, his adopted father had been divinized after his murder; most subsequent emperors paid their predecessors the same compliment, often with the convenient fiction of getting someone to testify that they had seen the late ruler's soul ascending to heaven. The new emperor would then claim the title 'son of god', even though in most cases the sonship was adoptive.[217]

[215] Seyoon Kim, *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), 6.

[216] N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, 64.

[217] Ibid.

This development of imperial divinity was not found as strongly in the city of Rome, but grew stronger in to the east:

> Most of the early emperors were careful not to claim divine honours in Rome itself. 'Son of god' was quite sufficient. But in the East, where rulers and monarchs had long been regarded as divine, there was not only no problem but a strong pressure to establish the emperor-cult, not least because special rewards were available for cities that did so. The centre of Ephesus was rebuilt to highlight the imperial temple. The new imperial temple in Corinth was built on a plinth at the western end of the forum, deliberately higher than all the previous temples in the area. Games, festivals and celebrations of various sorts were organized in honour of the emperor; priesthoods were established; statues of the emperor and his family were constructed which borrowed motifs from the mainstream Greco-Roman pantheon.[218]

Wright summarizes, "As far as most of the Roman world was concerned, the 'divinity' of the emperor was obvious and uncontroversial."[219] In a god-like way, the emperor "and his troops had, after all, conquered the known world; they obviously possessed a greater power than anyone else's."[220] The question in such a context is whether Paul sought to take on the imperial claims to divinity directly.

While acknowledging the religious aura surrounding the emperor, Seyoon Kim argues that Paul's goal was not to lower Christ's work and person to the level of an earthly, human ruler in countering Caesar's status:

> Had Paul imagined Jesus' messianic reign in terms of a literal restoration of the Davidic kingship in Zion and a political subjugation of the nations, his Christology and eschatology would have been in the same category as the Roman imperial ideology and, as such, would mean a direct challenge to it. But his Christology was rather in the category of, and derived from, Jewish ascription of the universal lordship to Yahweh. Certainly Jewish Yahwehism also had political implications, as did Paul's Christology. But, for that reason, were the Jews accused of subverting the Roman imperial rule by their belief in God as their king and lord? Apparently only certain kinds of Jews (e.g., the revolutionaries with "zeal") took their Yahwehism to mean active resistance to the Roman rule, while the majority contented themselves with recognizing the political lordship of Caesar. But neither in Phil 2-3 nor in 1 Thess 4-5 do we find Paul interpreting his belief in the universal lordship of the Messiah Jesus

[218] Wright, 64-65.

[219] Ibid., 65.

[220] Ibid.

> in the "Zealotic" sense and calling the believers to resist Caesar's authority and regime.[221]

Kim shows that, for Paul, the goal of Christianity was neither to compete against nor take over the institutions of the state. For some, the alternative might seem too other-worldly, living out a disembodied faith that holds to an afterlife rather than engages the present life. To answer such a charge, Matthew Bates offers a helpful and clarifying understanding of Paul's definition of faith:

> The Greek word *pistis*, generally rendered "faith" or "belief," as it pertains to Christian salvation, quite simply has little correlation with "faith" and "belief" as these words are generally understood and used in contemporary Christian culture, and much to do with *allegiance*. At the center of Christianity, properly understood, is not the human response of faith or belief but rather the old-fashioned term *fidelity*.[222]

Such an understanding fits well within the imperial context, as Paul calls on the Christian community to give its ultimate allegiance to Christ over any earthly ruler or system as they seek to live as the community of Jesus within that existing system. Instead of promoting active resistance against the state or the figure of the emperor, Bates describes Paul's Christology as a celebration of ultimate divine rule:

> The true thrust of Paul's line of thought is that the resurrection served to trigger the exaltation of Jesus from his lowly status among the dead, so that he came to be installed in a position of sovereign authority. Previously he was the Son of God; now is the Son-of-God-in-Power, actively reigning until all his enemies are made a footstool for his feet (1 Cor. 15:25). In other words, in his earthly life Jesus was the anointed one, the one chosen as the royal Davidic Messiah (the Christ), but during his earthly sojourn he had not yet received his throne, he had not yet begun to reign as king. But the resurrection (and ascension) changed all this, as Jesus has now been enthroned at the right hand of God and is reigning as the Lord of heaven and earth. In fact, in summing up his presentation of the basic content of the gospel, Paul concludes by calling this Son-of-God-in-Power by slightly different titles that Paul prefers, "Jesus the *Christ* our *Lord*" (Rom. 1:4).[223]

Paul himself lived out this allegiance to Christ, eventually suffering martyrdom under the

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[221] Kim, 15-16.

[222] Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking the Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 15.

[223] Bates, 34.

Roman sword, most likely during the reign of Nero. The apostle's work, life, and writings convey how he demonstrated an allegiance to and interest in the Divine Empire while operating within the human empire. Chapter three will examine the role of emperor as patron or, as in the case of Paul's death, persecutor of the religion and its missionaries.

2.5 SUMMARY

The present chapter has offered an understanding of the biblical narrative as that of the establishment of Divine Empire. After doing so, the chapter demonstrated how the apostle Paul acted as a missionary who helped Christianity move beyond its ethnic community of origin by translating its teachings to the dominant culture of the Roman Empire. The main focus of his work was on planting and nurturing churches, but also took place through public proclamation. In order to carry out this work of presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ and founding and guiding churches, he relied on the framework and elements provided by the Roman Empire. Although Paul would eventually die under the sword of this same empire, he did not promote a hostile, anti-imperial message, nor did he foster a subversive movement with the aim to overtake the political power structure. For both himself and the churches with which he worked, Paul advocated the recognition that political structures and rulers are put in place by God as a means to maintain order and promote justice, while recognizing that each person and system is corrupted by sin. In awaiting the return of Christ, the Christian community is to live within the present earthly system while embodying and looking ahead to a future age where Christ's rule is shown in full. Allegiance to this heavenly kingdom supersedes that of loyalty to earthly kingdoms, which Paul demonstrates in his martyrdom. The following chapter will look at the earthly kingdom in the figure of the Christian emperor Constantine, comparing him with his Buddhist counterpart Ashoka.

CHAPTER THREE: COMPARISON OF TWO CONVERT EMPERORS

3.1 OVERVIEW

This chapter observes how both traditions of Buddhism and Christianity contain in their histories an emperor who converted to the religion and then used his office to promote his newfound faith. Just as the religions' founders Siddhartha Gautama and Jesus exhibit many parallels, so too do these key figures of Ashoka[224] (c. 300-232 B.C.E.) in India with Buddhism and Constantine (c. 272-337 C.E.) of the Roman Empire with Christianity share many characteristics. To whatever degree each of these emperors underwent an authentic conversion, each one convened religious councils, engaged in sacred building projects, and supported and sent out missionaries with imperial patronage. Whereas one theme of this present study focuses on scholar-missionaries who rely on empire in carrying out their work, the present chapter looks at two figures who are not primarily scholars, but wield the imperial power. Each of these two emperors was concerned with the doctrines of the religion, the unity of that religion's community, and applied the teachings in some way to society. However, neither of these converts was a scholar in his own right, although Ashoka engaged in more long-term philosophical concern for applying the ethics of Buddhism to his empire than his Christian counterpart. In both cases, the use of imperial power helped codify religious teachings and then proactively expanded each religion by sending out missionaries, which demonstrates the historical relationship and entanglements of empire with religious mission.

3.2 TWO EMPERORS OF CONSEQUENCE

[224] Throughout both this chapter and entire dissertation, I use the common spelling English spelling of "Ashoka" as the name for the Mauryan emperor. When different quotations throughout the chapter employ the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration's spelling of "Aśoka," or the transliteration of the Brahmi script as "Asoka," I have chosen to leave the spelling choice of the author quoted.

Recent decades have seen a renewed and dynamic debate over the effect that the Roman emperor Constantine had on the Christian religion. The Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder (1927-1997) in *The Politics of Jesus*[225] contends that the relationship between church and society changed with Constantine's conversion to the Christian faith through his appropriation of the religion. Yoder scholar John Nugent summarizes Yoder's main concern regarding Constantine:

> An important part of Yoder's social ethic and ecclesiology in his critique of what he calls Constantinianism, that is, the fusion of church and state most evident in the church's willingness to use the empire or state's coercive power structures—particularly, the sword—to assist in the church's mission. According to Yoder, this shift in the church's self-understanding began in the second century, gained momentum under Constantine, thrived under Theodosius, found its culmination in the crusades, and keeps reappearing throughout ecclesial history in new forms. Central to that shift is the fusion of church and society.[226]

Although Yoder personally betrayed his Mennonite pacifist theology and social ethics through decades of sexual abuse against women,[227] his works have made a significant impact regarding the interpretation of Christian history in its relationship between church and state. Another American theologian, Peter Leithart, has responded with *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom*.[228] In this work of defense, Leithart rejects Yoder's foundational premise regarding Constantine's effect on Christianity:

> Given that Augustine was the dominant theologian of the medieval West, it is hard to take seriously Yoder's claim that "Constantinian" merger remained the paradigm of

[225] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994).

[226] John C. Nugent, "A Yoderian Rejoinder to Peter J. Leithart's *Defending Constantine*," in John D. Roth, ed., *Constantine Revisited: Leithart, Yoder, and the Constantinian Debate* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 5.

[227] Mark Oppenheimer, "A Theologian's Influence, and Stained Past, Live On," *The New York Times,* October 13, 2013, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/12/us/john-howard-yoders-dark-past-and-influence-lives-on-for-mennonites.html (accessed May 14, 2019).

[228] Peter J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010).

> church-world relations through a millennium and beyond. Prior to Constantine, Christians saw the empire as a providential setting for the life of Jesus and the spread of the gospel … If "Constantinian" is taken to mean a "merger" of church and empire in which Christians identify some nation or empire or ruler with the movement of God in history, there was a brief, ambiguous "Constantinian moment" in the early fourth century, and there have been many tragic "Constantinian moments" since.[229]

In his judgment, Leithart declares with certainty, "There was no permanent, epochal 'Constantinian shift.'"[230] Nugent charges that this critic of Yoder, however, goes beyond a defense of Constantine, arguing, "Unfortunately, Leithart fails to appreciate the true basis for Yoder's Constantinian critique and therefore lodges accusations against him that do not stand under careful cross-examination."[231] Furthermore, Nugent notes that Leithart "indicates in the preface" of *Defending Constantine* that he "did not intend merely to defend Constantine in this book," but turns his defense of the emperor into a "prosecution against the legacy of" Yoder.[232] This volatile debate demonstrates that, almost 1,700 years after Constantine's adoption of Christianity, the emperor's conversion and patronage of the religion continue to evoke a dynamic conversation in the twenty first century. So while the question of the relationship of church and state is a modern debate, largely in its present form as a legacy of the Reformation and Enlightenment eras of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, the lives of these two ancient figures demonstrates that this complex matter stretches throughout history.

While not as hotly contested as an issue, the Indian emperor of the Mauryan Empire 322-187 B.C.E.), Ashoka also converted to a new faith and used his position as ruler to both

[229] Leithart, 286-287.

[230] Ibid., 287.

[231] Nugent, 5.

[232] Ibid.

influence the religion and support its propagation. Christmas Humphreys attributes the spread of Buddhism to Ashoka, who, after becoming an adherent, "as head of 'Church' and State, he rapidly converted Buddhism from a teaching popular in north-east India to a world religion."[233] The authenticity and degree of fullness of both of these emperors' conversions has undergone scrutiny and debate. Each of them had a transformative effect on his respective religion, and set up a model of the relationship of the religion to the power of the state for several subsequent centuries. In Ashoka's case, Alexander Wynne attributes not just the spreading of but the continued existence of Buddhism itself to the ruler's conversion and support:

> [P]erhaps the subsequent success of [Buddhism's] movement was largely due to the third century BC patronage of Asoka, a Buddhist convert who ruled the Mauryan empire, the largest pre-modern Indian polity (and one of the greatest empires of antiquity). A case can be made that without the aid of Asoka, the Buddhists would have remained a minor sect of ancient Magadha, before disappearing like other ascetic groups such as the Ajijikas.[234]

Ashoka did not just join the sangha, but possibly kept Buddhism alive and transmitted it to the larger world.

Similar to Ashoka, Constantine did not found or invent his religion, but helped to move it along. Paul Stephenson judges that Constantine executed the task of ruling an empire as it intersected with the vibrant and growing Christian movement:

> The historical magnitude of Constantine's life is explained by one fact: he was the first Roman emperor to convert to Christianity. But Constantine did not make Christianity the official religion of the Roman state, nor was his conversion the reason for the rapid growth of Christianity in the fourth century AD. The remarkable rise of a minority cult to majority faith in the eastern portion of the Roman Empire was driven by other factors, with which Constantine's life happened to coincide. His task was to handle the religious tumult and to harness its energy to his own interests. In doing so,

[233] Christmas Humphreys, *Buddhism* (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1962), 46.

[234] Alexander Wynne, *Buddhism: An Introduction* (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2015), 12.

> he made the Christian faith acceptable and accessible to those whom it would have had greatest difficulty reaching, far from the urbanized provinces of the east.[235]

Whether it is the survival of Buddhism with Ashoka, or solidifying and making Christianity accessible by Constantine, both of these rulers proved to be of great consequence regarding their engagement with their respective religions.

3.3 SIMILARITIES IN BACKGROUNDS

The main point of this chapter identifies the parallel of both Ashoka and Constantine converting to their new found faith and then supporting the missionary endeavors of their respective religions. These two historical figures share many other parallel attributes as well, which will be noted below as a list of significant similarities. In order to follow historical chronology, while considering these attributes, Ashoka will be examined first, followed by his Christian counterpart, as the Indian emperor ruled in the third century B.C.E., and his counterpart ruled in the fourth century C.E.

3.3.1 Sons of Rulers

Neither Ashoka (r. 268-232 B.C.E.) nor Constantine (r. 306-337) founded the empire he ruled. Instead, each one followed his father in coming to power. Asoka not only succeeded his father, but was, as Krüger reports, "the grandson of *Chandragupta*," founder of the Mauryan Empire, who "had halted the Macedonian forces of Alexander the Great in northern India in 325 BCE."[236] In succeeding his grandfather, and then later his father, "Asoka inherited what was already a mighty kingdom."[237] As his father had done,

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[235] Paul Stephenson, *Constantine: Roman Emperor, Christian Victor* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2010), 13.

[236] J. S. Krüger, *Buddhism from the Buddha to Asoka: Circumstances, Events, Practices, Teachings* (Pretoria: Sigma Press, 1991), 68.

[237] Krüger, 68.

he continued to expand the boundaries of the Mauryan Empire to become the largest empire in the history of the subcontinent of India.[238]

Over in the West, Constantine's ascension to the position of emperor was uncertain, as the ruling structure of the Roman Empire at the time of his adulthood was a tetrarchy. Established by Diocletian (r. 284-305), this rule by four leaders had an Augustus and a Caesar, the senior and subordinate ruler, in each of the Western and Eastern halves of the empire. Michael Grant explains the strategic purpose behind this structure:

> [Diocletian's] classic achievement was to establish the Tetrarchy, dividing the control of the empire between two Augusti and two Caesars. He had evidently decided that the increasing, simultaneous pressure on the frontiers from the Germans in the north and the Persians in the east made it impossible for a single man to dominate the entire situation: whereas from now onwards, after this change, every potential trouble-spot had a commander with imperial authority within a few days' riding. Moreover, the Tetrarchic division, with its military implications, was a safeguard against internal usurpers, of whom, during the past half-century of political upheaval, there had been far too many. …[E]arlier arrangements had envisaged a twofold division, but Diocletian added two Caesars to the two Augusti so as to multiply the rulership still further.[239]

Constantine's father, Constantius (r.293-306 C.E.), had been Augustus in the western portion. Constantius climbed his way from a humble upbringing, entering the army as a soldier, working his way up to his final rank.[240] Similarly, Buddhist tradition relates that Ashoka's grandfather Chandragupta also came from a poor family.[241] In this way, Constantine's father and Ashoka's grandfather both emerged from humble beginnings.

[238] Krüger, 68. See also Humphreys, 46.

[239] Michael Grant, *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times* (New York: History Book Club, 2000), 17-18.

[240] Stephenson, 5.

[241] John Middleton, ed., *World Monarchies and Dynasties* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 164.

One significant difference is that Chandragupta founded his empire, whereas Constantius became one of four rulers in an empire which had been in existence for three centuries.

3.3.2 Skilled Military Leaders

Like their fathers—and in Ashoka's case, grandfather—before them, each of these figures proved to be a formidable military leader and warrior in his own right. Romila Thapar recounts how Ashoka waged war in expanding the empire:

> The first major event of the reign of Aśoka which can be definitely dated was the Kalinga War and the conquest of Kalinga. The 13th Rock Edict states clearly that this event took place in the ninth year of Aśoka's reign, i.e. 260 B.C. The tone of this edict, in which he mentions his regret and remorse at the suffering in Kalinga, is not the regret of a man moved by a passing emotion, but the meaningful contrition of a man who was consciously aware of the sorrow he had caused.[242]

Whereas Ashoka's most notable campaigns took place after his ascension to the throne, Constantine had to demonstrate his military prowess in order to take power and secure the position of sole Augustus.[243] Grant recounts the profound situation that came about as a result of the new ruler's having overcome his rivals through his military superiority:

> And so Constantine was now the only Roman emperor. There had not been a sole, single emperor since the first two years of Diocletian (284-6), before he gave himself a colleague. Now Constantine reigned unchallenged. His title of *victor* was thoroughly and universally vindicated, even though it was in civil rather than foreign wars that he had gained the greatest military distinction (and Julian later commented that his foreign enemies had been less than impressive).[244]

Though separated by hundreds of years and fighting on separate continents, both emperors proved themselves as able military strategists.

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[242] Romila Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas, Third Edition* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 45.

[243] Stephenson, 113. See also Barry S. Strauss, *Ten Caesars: Roman Emperors from Augustus to Constantine* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019), 292-296.

[244] Grant, 50.

3.3.3 Killing off Potential Rivals

Both emperors are historically associated with their religious traditions and, as shown below, attempted to apply ethics from those religions to the societies they ruled. However, both Ashoka and Constantine displayed the cruel ability to kill off potential rivals in order to either gain or secure their power. Thapar reports that Ashoka practiced intrigue with family members, as in one account, "Aśoka had six of his brothers put to death."[245] Even among the backdrop of an abundance of legends regarding Ashoka's life, Thapar distills the clouded histories (including the hyperbolic inflation of the number of his brothers) to offer the assessment of Ashoka's path to power:

> Concerning the actual accession there is general agreement on the point that Aśoka was not the crown prince, and that there was a struggle among the princes for the throne. …The *Mahavamsa* states that Aśoka caused his eldest brother to be slain. Elsewhere in the same work and in the *Dipavamsa* there is mention of his having killed his nine-nine brothers, born of various wives to Bindusara.[246]

Whereas Ashoka removed his brothers as rivals, Grant reports that "Constantine murdered both his eldest son and his wife."[247] When considering the whole of the first Christian emperor's life and legacy, he identifies Constantine's use of state power against not only rivals but family members as a key feature of his personality:

> [H]e was also murderous, and many whom he murdered, or executed, included not only his rival Licinius (to whom he had promised survival) but also his own eldest son and his own second wife Fausta. There is no excusing those deaths, at any time or in any society. Certainly, it can be explained, as was suggested above, that powerful people are hardly ever nice, and that autocrats can do as they like, and if they want to commit murder, at the bidding of circumstances that seem to them to demand such action, then that is what they do. But this is no excuse. There are, and remain, certain

[245] Thapar, 32.

[246] Ibid., 31-32.

[247] Grant, 114.

> absolute standards, and by his death-dealing Constantine offended signally against them.[248]

Both of these emperors, then, share the characteristic of willingly exercising their power to have potential rivals, including family members, murdered by assassination or execution in order to acquire or retain their positions.

3.3.4 Unified the Empire through Centralized Rule

As mentioned above, Ashoka expanded the boundaries of the empire founded by his grandfather. Thapar postulates that the exercise of leadership through the first three generations would most likely have moved in a direction of centralization and uniformity:

> It is possible that during the reign of Candragupta Maurya, since the conquest was recent, Mauryan administration may have dealt leniently with them, allowing them to continue many of their older institutions, although the overall administration would be controlled by the Mauryan authorities. This system may have created the illusion of these tribes or of their cities being semi-independent. As the administration was expanded and began to gain greater control over the outlying provinces, these cities would increasingly lose their remaining independence, until, in the reign of Aśoka, they were completely amalgamated within the empire.[249]

The result for the "empire, administered by an efficient bureaucracy, extensively covered by good communications, and under the control of a powerful ruler," most likely would have been "as centralized as was possible during that period."[250] In a similar way, Constantine centralized power during his reign. Vasiliev explains how, building on the foundation of his predecessor, "the chief features of Diocletian's and Constantine's reforms were the definite establishment of absolute monarchical power and a strict separation of military and civil functions, which led to the creation of a large and complex

[248] Grant, 226.

[249] Thapar, 154.

[250] Ibid., 181.

bureaucracy."[251] So once the "empire was one and at peace," according to Grant, "Constantine's greatest desire was that it should be a unity."[252] He suggests that this desire for a unified state was the reason behind the "aim in mind that he favoured the Christians."[253] As a whole, however, his administration of the empire did not prove particularly efficient:

> [I]t must be concluded that Constantine's arrangements for taxation, although partially inherited and no doubt urgently required by the costly policies on which he had embarked, contributed largely to the failure of trade and agriculture, and caused widespread hostility to the state—an alienation which in turn proved to play a large part in the downfall of the western empire. It was a crushing tax system, which ultimately defeated its own purpose, because it destroyed the very people who had to pay the taxes. It was therefore imperative, if too much damage was not to be done, that Constantine's taxation policy should be backed up by efficient monetary plans, and this was only partially achieved, or rather, *was* achieved, but at the expense of the poorer population.[254]

In carrying out this scheme that placed such a demanding burden on the common people is one example of how he showed himself to operate as a "more openly autocratic ruler than the early Roman emperors had been."[255] The centralization process led by both Constantine and his counterpart Ashoka combine with the other elements of their rise to power, and military leadership to give their lives an interesting overall parallel.

3.4 SIMILARITIES REGARDING RELIGION

[251] A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire: Volume 1, 324-1453, Second English Edition* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), 64.

[252] Ibid., 50.

[253] Vasiliev, 50.

[254] Grant, 93.

[255] Grant continues, "The difference is summed up by the description of this later empire as the 'dominate'." Grant, 81.

Just as the lives of the two Buddhist and Christian emperors examined here exhibit many parallels, so too do their relationships to their adoptive religions bear many similarities. These shared dynamics include questions surrounding the nature of their conversions, their patronage of the religion, the application of the ethics of the respective religion to society, and their promotion of the religion through architectural construction. Finally, each one supported the missionary work of his respective religion.

3.4.1 Questions Concerning Conversion

Ashoka and Constantine each underwent a conversion to their newfound religions. As we have seen, the manner and degree of these conversions, however, has been the subject of inquiry and the cause of debate for historians and theologians. Both of these historical figures, however, demonstrate an ongoing and developing relationship to their adopted religion from the time of the conversion until their death.

Living about one hundred years after the Buddha, the traditional telling of Ashoka's coming to faith, according to Krüger, portrays the "bloodshed and suffering that he caused" as having "distressed him so much that he was converted to Buddhism and became a faithful lay disciple until his death."[256] Richard Salomon explains how the stories which were preserved in later, post-canonical texts from the Buddhist tradition present Ashoka "as the ideal Buddhist emperor and lavish patron of the sangha, one who gave up to it everything he owned, down to his last possession—half a myrobalan fruit."[257] In these accounts, the emperor appears "as an extremely wicked man suddenly converted to a life of piety," which, Tharpar concludes, "we may safely regard as a

[256] Krüger, 68.

[257] Richard Salomon, *The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhara: An Introduction with Selected Translations* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, Inc., 2018), 21.

fabrication of Buddhist authors."[258] He explains that these narratives of extreme change at the time of conversion "naturally increased the value of his piety as a Buddhist if he could be described as a thoroughly unworthy man prior to his conversion."[259] Thapar recounts in more detail some of the debate about the timing and nature of Ashoka's conversion:

> Much stress has been laid by historians on the question of the conversion of Aśoka to Buddhism. Some are of the opinion that it took place as a dramatic event soon after the Kalinga War, when the monarch was appalled by the suffering he had caused. Eggermont has tried to show that the conversion took place before the Kalinga War. The obvious doubt as regards the latter theory is whether as a recent convert to non-violent Buddhism Aśoka could have engaged in such a large-scale war. This view of Eggermont would suggest either that Aśoka had his own somewhat eccentric interpretation of the 'Middle Way', or else that his conversion to Buddhism was in fact not a conversion in the sense of a sudden change of heart involving a violent emotional upheaval.[260]

It will be shown below how Ashoka did not force all residents of his empire to practice Buddhism, although he did move away from the orthodoxy of the Brahmans while not standing in opposition to them.[261] Salomon explains that due to "this scrupulous neutrality, some historians have even questioned whether Asoka was really a Buddhist," but concludes that such "skepticism is excessive."[262] Salomon points to the physical evidence left behind that serves as a record of Ashoka's conversion to and practice of Buddhism:

> For in his explicitly Buddhist inscriptions, he speaks in a very direct and personal manner of his conviction and dedication to the Buddhist Dharma. For example, in his minor rock edicts Asoka confesses that although he had joined the Buddhist sangha as a lay follower, he felt dissatisfied with his spiritual progress during the first year and was now applying himself more diligently. Also, in his rock edict at Bairat in

[258] Thapar, 37.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Ibid., 42.

[261] Ibid., 204.

[262] Salomon, 20.

> Rajasthan he addresses himself directly to the local Buddhist monastic community and recommends seven canonical texts for special attention and study.[263]

The physical record left from the time of his rule, therefore, demonstrates that Ashoka apparently underwent a genuine conversion to the Buddhist faith.

These pillars also show that this conversion stands in contrast to a drastic, sudden change, even though in "Buddhist literature he appears as a fanatic, changing suddenly from extreme wickedness to extreme piety and eventually suffering at the hands of non-believers."[264] Such a description is like that of the apostle Paul, as recounted in chapter two. That case of the Christian missionary had the drastic change from leading in the hostile imprisonment and execution of Christians to becoming a believer in and disciple of Jesus. Instead, the historical record shows that Ashoka's adherence to Buddhism was not sudden, but grew during his rule. Just as the stone edicts establish his personal commitment to Buddhism, so too do these stone pillars demonstrate that the emperor's "fervour for Buddhism increased during his later years."[265] Thapar traces this evolution of the ruler's faith as shown through the progression of the edicts:

> In the earlier edicts he does not give the impression of being a recent convert to a new religion. None of the fanaticism and bigotry usually associated with new converts is anywhere apparent. The earlier edicts have an individuality and a humanitarianism which are peculiar to the monarch himself and are not merely the tenets of Buddhism, even though they were issued after his 'conversion'.[266]

The stone pillars which hold these edicts and some of their content will be discussed below, as Ashoka applied his new religion both to the landscape and for the moral betterment of his society. It was to keep rule over this imperial geography that required

[263] Salomon, 20.

[264] Thapar, 269.

[265] Ibid., 43.

[266] Ibid.

him to be remain, in the words of postcolonial commentator Pankaj Mishra, "only part Buddhist and couldn't have been otherwise while holding down an empire."[267] That the ruler "did not abolish capital punishment, or reduce his army, or federalize his empire" demonstrate that Ashoka's conversion did not fully take over his method of rule.[268] Regardless of these features of imperial rule, however, Ashoka's interest in and application of Buddhist ethics convey his adherence, even if limited, to the religion.

Like Ashoka, Constantine became an adherent of a relatively new religion, though almost three hundred years into its existence. He is "best known as the first Christian emperor."[269] This designation is not just because of his personal conversion, but because of what Grant calls "his conversion of the Roman imperial state to Christianity" is the reason "he became famous."[270] As is the case for his Buddhist counterpart, the authenticity and degree of Constantine's adherence to Christianity has served as the subject of debate. One matter that raises suspicion around the validity of Constantine's Christianity is the fact that it was not until 337 C.E., "at the very end of his life when he knew he was about to die, Constantine had himself baptized in a village near Nicomedia, by its bishop Eusebius (not the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius of Caesarea)."[271] If he were a genuine disciple of the Christian faith, then why would he wait until the end of his life to undergo the sacrament that all new adherents are required by Jesus to receive in Matthew 28:19?[272] Even while acknowledging the fact of Constantine's postponement of

[267] Pankaj Mishra, *An End to Suffering: The Buddha in the World* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), 303.

[268] Mishra, 303.

[269] Grant, 221.

[270] Ibid.

[271] Grant, 211.

[272] "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and

baptism until just prior to his death, along with the intrigue of murdering family members, Grant judges, "For there is no doubt that Constantine became wholeheartedly converted to Christianity – and we need not be too meticulous, as some are, to avoid the term 'conversion'."[273] Stephenson sets Constantine's candidacy for genuine conversion within a familial context that, having grown up as a "son of monotheists, brought up to venerate a single 'greatest god'" made him "an ideal candidate to embrace the empire's fastest growing faith."[274] As he went along, the more that Constantine embraced Christianity in a public way, his patron deity prior to 317, the Roman sun god, "gradually disappeared from his coins."[275] Surveying this progression, Stephenson explains how Constantine's conversion was one that developed over several years, during which he joined the religion to his own personality and style of rule:

> Constantine's conversion was a process that took him from a vision in 310, through divine visitations in a number of dreams, to his acceptance in 324 that he fought in the name of the singular god worshipped by his instructors and companions, Ossius of Cordoba and Lactantius. Once the truth of his new faith was clear to him, as emperor he demanded that all Christians understand and worship God in the same manner. While toleration was legislated for those who had not yet followed Constantine's path to enlightenment, Christian schismatics and heretics, those who recognized different authority or defended distinct dogmatic principles, were to be persuaded or, if necessary, forced into unity. And yet through his life, Constantine's own understanding of the faith changed with his advisers and spiritual guides, as Lactantius and Ossius departed and Eusebius of Nicomedia rose to prominence. The universal persecution of Christians was ended, but it was no longer a safe time to be a questioning Christian. Now the diversity of early opinion could no longer stand, and to argue was to challenge imperial authority. Synods were called to end discussion, not to facilitate it.[276]

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of the Holy Spirit." *New International Version*.

[273] Grant, 146.

[274] Stephenson, 167.

[275] Ibid., 173.

[276] Ibid., 305.

Not only was Constantine's public patronage of Christianity evidence of his conversion to the religion, then, but that the way he engaged the religion with his autocratic style of rule demonstrates his adoption of the faith. The following sections will explore how both Constantine's and Ashoka's ongoing process of conversion involved the ethics and visual cultures of new religions that each patronized to the societies they ruled.

3.4.2 Patronage of the Religion without Exclusion

Ashoka and Constantine both became adherents of their new faiths, giving the religion an elevated or even favored status. In doing so, however, each emperor did not outlaw the preexisting religions of their empire. In the case of Ashoka, John Strong suggests that, regarding his relationship to the Buddhist community of the sangha, Ashoka "must be seen as both king and layman."[277] However, the emperor's declarations that spread throughout his realm ensured the continuation of other religions. Lahiri points out, "Among the more striking aspects of the major edicts is the emperor's perception of himself as a sovereign spiritual guardian with social responsibilities."[278] This guardianship included the space for pluralism, as his "seventh edict includes an impassioned plea for the practice of religious tolerance."[279] The carvings in two other stone edicts mandate, "Tolerance for all sects, the honouring of elders in all religious communities, and the desire that religious sects live across his dominions were thus supervised and ensured as material events."[280] So although Ashoka embraced his Buddhist faith, he never outlawed the Brahmanic system from which it came.

[277] John S. Strong, *The Legend of King Asoka: A Study and Translation of the Asokavadana* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 89.

[278] Nayanjot Lahiri, *Ashoka in Ancient India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 195.

[279] Ibid.

[280] Ibid., 229.

Like Ashoka, Constantine gave his new faith of Christianity favored treatment, while allowing the existing Roman religions to continue. Kenneth Scott Latourette recounts how, even though Constantine "encouraged Christianity, his restrictions on paganism were relatively few."[281] He chose to not "persecute old faiths, but chiefly contented himself with giving the new every opportunity to grow peacefully."[282] Along those same lines, Grant describes the ruler's approach to the religious scene as "careful, and that was why his Christianization of the empire was only gradual."[283] This slow application embodied "Constantine's habit of ambiguity," which "is reflected in the slow and for a long time minimal infiltration of the coinage by Christianity."[284] As he solidified and grew in his power, he continued a series of actions to buttress the Christian church.[285] One group that did feel pressure after his conversion, however, was the community from which Christianity had emerged. Grant reports that, "To the Jews – the traditional foes of

[281] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity: The First Five Centuries*, *Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 174.

[282] Ibid.

[283] Grant, 155.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Latourette surveys the financial, legal, geographic, and political actions of favoritism shown to Chirstianity: "Constantine exempted the Christian clergy from all contributions to the state. While this was simply what was granted to priests of other recognized religions, it led to such a large influx into the ranks of the clergy that soon another edict forbade those of curial rank, on whom fell the heaviest burdens of the state, to become clergymen, and limited ordination to those whose exemption would work little loss to the government. Laws which had forbidden celibates and the childless to receive inheritances were annulled, possibly out of consideration for the clergy. Wills in favour of the Church were permitted. The manumission o slaves in churches in the presence of the bishop and clergy was legalized. A litigant was permitted to bring suit before a bishop and the latter's decision was to be accepted by civil officials. The Christian Sunday was placed in the same position as the pagan holidays by the suspension of the courts and of urban labour. Constantine ordered the provincial governors to respect the days in memory of the martyrs and to honour the festivals of the churches. He forbade Jews to stone such of their coreligionists as chose to become Christians. He kept about him Christian ecclesiastics and had his children educated in the Christian faith. He erected, enlarged, and embellished churches. He encouraged the bishops to do likewise and authorized them to call on the civil officials for assistance. When he moved his capital to the Bosphorus and there added to Byzantium until it became mainly a new city, he built many churches. Outwardly the New Rome must have seemed predominantly Christian." Larourette, 173-174.

Christianity and killers of Jesus – Constantine, as a devoted new convert to the Christian faith, was openly unsympathetic (the story that his mother Helena had once been a Jew was only rumour)."[286] This ill-treatment by Constantine can be attributed as one of the elemental factors for antisemitism throughout subsequent European history.

The situation of Christianity and other religions points to the greatest significant difference between the two contexts of Constantine and Ashoka. Constantine witnessed one of the most severe periods of persecution against Christianity as part of the tetrarchy under Diocletian. Though Buddhism was a minority religion, it was not persecuted the way that Christianity had been. David Bosch explains that prior to the Edict of Milan when both Constantine and Licinius in 313 C.E. which made Christianity a religion tolerated by the state, "Christians had always been at a disadvantage in the vast Roman Empire."[287] Before that decree, even during periods free of official persecution, "Christians suffered discrimination in many ways; they were almost always distrusted and suspected of disloyalty to the state, if not actually of being dangerous politically."[288] Latourette summarizes this history of Roman persecution against Christianity as an illegal religion, which found its zenith under Diocletian:

> As so the government turned to 'persecuting' these Christians with varying degrees of severity. Persecution is a vague term, but it involved making things as difficult for them as possible, and trying to induce them to toe the line, pay service or at least lip-service to the traditional pagan religion, and obey the emperor. There had been instances as long ago as Nero (54-68) and Marcus Aurelius (161-80), and famous 'persecutors' were Maximinus I Thrax (235-8), Trajanus Decius (249-51) and Valerian (253-60). But far the most serious and determined persecution was that of

[286] Grant, 182. Regarding Constantine's relationship to and treatment of the Jewish people in the Roman Empire, see James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2002).

[287] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 202.

[288] Ibid.

> Diocletian and his Caesar Galerius. Which of the two bore the major responsibility has been disputed. Efforts have been made to pin it on Galerius, but Diocletian evidently took the initiative (though not at the beginning of his reign).[289]

Having witnessed these actions against the Christian community by his superior, Diocletian, makes it more understandable why Constantine would not only have made Christianity a *religio licita*, but also a beneficiary of the power of the state. In contrast, Ashoka had not been in a situation in which he saw the need to eliminate the possibility for the persecution of his new religion. At the same time that they allowed the prior religions to continue, however, both emperors did take leadership over their new communities of faith.

3.4.3 Convening Religious Councils

Another action shared by both emperor converts was the convening of councils to solve disputes in their new religious communities. Regarding the Buddhist side, Krüger reports, "According to Sinhalese Theravada sources, the Third Council took place during the reign of Asoka," as during "that time Buddhism had to contend with a serious internal crisis, with the result that the emperor convened a council at his capital, Pataliputra."[290] Although this gathering has been attributed to the leadership of Ashoka, Thapar explains that the "authenticity of the tradition of the Third Council is in doubt owing to the fact that only the Pali sources mention it."[291] This council has been seen as key in the history of Buddhism, serving as one factor in the sending of missionaries to Sri Lanka, a foundational site for the development of the Theravada tradition.

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[289] Latourette, 172.

[290] Krüger, 70. Lahiri reports, "Those who believe that Ashoka facilitated the meeting of a Buddhist council to give the final touches to sacred Buddhist texts argue that it was likely to have been held [at Patna]." Lahiri, 251.

[291] Thapar, 54.

While the historicity of the Third Buddhist Council is not as clear as Constantine's convening the Council of Nicaea in 325 C.E., it would not be out of character for the Buddhist emperor to call together such an event, as historians can determine "from his edicts that Aśoka encouraged gatherings of various sects both Buddhist and non-Buddhist."[292] In the context of the Christian church experiencing division over theological formulations, it has already been shown that Stephenson argues that Constantine's personality and desire for enforced uniformity regarding the doctrine of the Trinity drove the occasion for the ecclesiastical gathering. The site of the gathering in Nicaea stands very close in proximity to Constantinople, the seat of the emperor's rule. David Potter asserts that both the close proximity and the desire for uniformity reflect Constantine's style of autocratic rule:

> It is hard at this distance to grasp the originality of what Constantine proposed to do; there had never been a universal creed, and bishops who were used to working with their own baptismal creeds are unlikely to have seen the need for such a statement. The decision to issue a creed as a universal definition of the faith looks very much like the sort of thing that an experienced imperial administrator would have decided on.[293]

To whatever degree these two councils were convened to promote stability for their respective empires, that such gatherings took place under the rule of Ashoka and Constantine serves as another parallel between the two rulers.

3.4.4 Adapting the Religion

As each of these two emperors encountered and came under the influence of his respective religion, he would embrace particular teachings and place special emphases on

[292] Thapar, 54.

[293] David Potter, *Constantine the Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 235.

doctrines, ethics, and visual representations of his own interest or personality. As mentioned at the opening of this chapter, these two figures do not fully fit in the focus of the study on scholar-missionaries who rely on imperial power for carrying out their work. But of the two emperors, Ashoka was the more philosophical in his approach. Upinder Singh reports, "Ashoka saw himself as an enlightened and energetic new-age monarch who would leave an indelible mark on history. He was keen that the impact of his thoughts and words should transcend time."[294] As such, he took the approach of distilling the moral contents of Buddhism, along with those of the broader religious context of his day, which he called the "*Dhamma*," and applied them both to his office and the society which he ruled. Thapar cautions that for "interpreting the term *Dhamma* we must beware of equating it with the Buddhist *Dhamma*, or any other accepted system which was called by this generic term."[295] Thapar defines what is meant by use of the term:

> The concept of *Dhamma* used in the sense of Law and Social Order was by no means new to Mauryan India. Aśoka, with the propagation of his *Dhamma*, made an attempt to humanize it and show that in fact what mattered most was virtuous behavior. …In the propagation of his *Dhamma* Aśoka was attempting to reform the narrow attitude of religious teaching, to protect the weak against the strong, and to promote throughout the empire a consciousness of social behavior so broad in its scope, that no cultural group could object to it.[296]

In this way, he falls more in the direction of a scholar, or at least a philosopher, more similar to the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 C.E.), the esteemed stoic philosopher, than Constantine. Thapar explains how, in Ashoka's thinking, "Dhamma was a way of life," as it was "the essence of what he had culled from the moral teachings of the various thinkers known to him, and probably his own experience of life," which

[294] Upinder Singh, *Political Violence in Ancient India* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 42.

[295] Thapar, 227.

[296] Ibid.

"was based on a high degree of social ethics and civic responsibility."[297] Thapar concludes, in appropriating Buddhist ethics and applying them to society in his role as king, that it "is indeed no paradox to say that Aśoka's political use of Buddhism did not exclude him from joining the ranks of the sincere believers."[298] In exercising power in this way, Ashoka balanced the idealistic aims of the religion with the pragmatism of his office:

> He did not ignore the practical usefulness of the religion to himself both as a man and a ruler. As in every religion, there was a discrepancy between theory and practice, the two being made to tally eventually by each individual believer according to his personal needs and his special environment. These little adjustments when accumulated in a society can often colour the original teachings of a religious leader. An example of this in the political sphere with reference to Aśoka can be cited in connection with the Buddhist idea of kingship. Early Buddhism preached the theory of *Mahasammatta*, the Great Elect, a contractual theory based on an agreement between the population and the person whom they elect as king. The king was regarded as serving the state, the collection of his taxes being due.[299]

In this monarchical role, then, Ashoka attempted to balance the expectations of the Buddhist religion with the practicalities of not just ruling an empire, but an empire with a religious diversity that included the brahmanic religion out of which Buddhism arose.

In contrast to the philosopher-king style of Ashoka, Constantine engaged in less sophisticated ruminations on the faith. Grant explains the Christian emperor's overall approach to doctrinal study:

> Constantine had no great taste for speculation, and not much knowledge of the Bible. But he worked hard to give his simple, emotional, somewhat weird beliefs a scriptural backing, and spent many hours in theological study, especially in his later years. Yet

[297] Ibid., 206.

[298] Thapar, 206.

[299] Ibid., 185.

> his religion has been called a crude fetishism, and was said to be at the mercy of any theologian who caught his ear.[300]

As shown earlier in this chapter, Constantine fully embraced the power of his throne, ruling with an autocratic style. Following the defeat of his rival Licinius in 324, Constantine laid out publicly his intentions regarding Christianity. Grant explains that "it was his belief that Christianity was the one force which could effectively bring the jarring elements together."[301] However, in his authoritarian manner, this took the shape of "his own brand of Christianity," as "he issued laws warning against 'heresies', seeing it as his duty to banish error in religion."[302] This strong-handed approach regarding the church fit the overall temperament of his career. Along these lines, Stephenson explains how the emperor drew from his Roman and military background: "Constantine identified aspects of Christianity that correlated best with his own expectations of a religion."[303] Having attained his office as a conquering warrior, he forged a "militant interpretation of Christianity," which "was founded on the Roman understanding of the interactions between faith and power."[304] Through this lens, the Christian god became for Constantine the "bringer of victory, the 'greatest god' (in Latin, the *summus deus*) who had hitherto been misidentified as Zeus or Jupiter, or as the Sun."[305] Bosch argues that this emphasis on royal power worked its influence into the decisions of the council organized by Constantine, which did more than pursue theological unity within the church:

> The Council of Nicea, convened in AD 325 by Emperor Constantine, tended—albeit unconsciously—to clothe Christ with the aid of the attributes and titles of the

[300] Grant, 151.

[301] Grant, 170.

[302] Ibid.

[303] Stephenson, 13.

[304] Ibid.

[305] Ibid.

> emperor. "Christ became a majestic king who granted an audience in the liturgy, in a monumental basilica the architecture and decorations of which gave expression to his glory" (van der Aalst 1974:120—my translation). The humanity of Christ was not denied; however, his humanness was underexposed in Byzantine devotion, liturgy, and theology… What began in primitive Christianity as a bold confession in the face of the emperor cult that Jesus was Lord ("Kyrios Iesous!"), ended in a compromise where the emperor was to rule in "time" and Christ in "eternity."[306]

So although he convened the Council of Nicaea to address detailed statements in theological formulations, Constantine himself placed an emphasis on the power, image, and ritual of his office more than on the ethics of Christianity.

In the mode of not just an adherent, but as a ruler over the religion, he forged for himself and his successors a unique role in the worship life of the church:

> Constantine the Great called himself the "bishop (*episkopos*) of those outside the Church" while other emperors were honored with the liturgical titles of priest and high-priest. Indeed, the Byzantine emperor had certain liturgical privileges. He had the right to enter the sanctuary reserved for the clergy and for those in the minor orders; he could preach to the congregation; he gave himself communion in the manner of the clergy; he censed the icons and the congregation with the censer and blessed the congregation with the three-candle and two-candle candelabra (symbolizing the Holy Trinity and the two natures of Christ), a prerogative of bishops. However, it must be remembered that the emperor was not ordained to the priesthood. Only priests and bishops could celebrate the sacraments of the church. The boundary was clearly defined and could not be crossed: although the emperor was not an ordinary layman, he was also not a priest.[307]

Whereas Ashoka was both layperson and king regarding his relationship to the sangha, then, Constantine resided in a space between common participant and fully ordained clergy. His interpreting the faith through his military and monarchical lenses, combined with taking on this role of semi-clergy and ecclesiastical overseer laid out the blueprint for his successors in the Byzantine imperial idiom:

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[306] Bosch, 202.

[307] Harry J. Magoulias, *Byzantine Christianity: Emperor, Church and the West* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982), 9-10.

> The Byzantine conviction of the interpenetration between heaven and earth was so profound that acclamations frequently stated that the emperor reigned jointly with Christ. Also the emperor occupied only the left side of his throne, as the right was left empty for Christ, his co-ruler. Because of the emperor's unique relation to God, with whom he shared the government of the world, the emperor was described as sacred and divine. Everything connected with his person partook of this sanctity—the palace, his vestments, the imperial properties.[308]

Having described this relationship between ruler and church, Magoulis cautions against portraying Constantine's involvement with the doctrinal and liturgical life of the church too negatively, as doing so constituted "one of the most controversial topics of medieval history."[309] This controversy was the pejorative charge made against the role of the emperor in the church of the East, in the mode of Constantine:

> Some Western scholars, whose attitudes have been colored by their Latin, Anglo-Saxon and Germanic backgrounds, have accused the Byzantine emperors of being guilty of Caesaropapism. The term itself was coined in the West and discloses a special bias, implying that the Byzantine emperor exercised absolute control over the church, even in matters of doctrine. The claim that the Byzantine emperor was both Caesar and pope is misleading. No pope, in the course of Byzantine history, had the authority, outside an ecumenical council, to pronounce alone on dogma. When certain emperors did interfere in church affairs they did so because they conceived such action to be their prerogative as supreme ruler and viceregent of God, and not because their authority usurped that of any pope.[310]

Instead, Magoulis argues that the "foremost duty of the Byzantine emperor … was to lead his subjects to God and to guard the purity of the true faith."[311] To whatever degree this goal was achieved, Constantine, like Ashoka before him, interpreted the religion to which he ascribed both from his own background and from his role as a ruler, while also adapting it to his personality and time in office. Neither of them took on the full clerical

[308] Magoulis, 9.

[309] Ibid., 15.

[310] Ibid.

[311] Ibid.

office of a Buddhist monk or a Christian priest, but both became heavily involved in the life of the sangha and church.

3.4.5 Applying the Religion to Society

Showing the initiative to convene religious councils demonstrates that both Ashoka and Constantine did not keep the practice of their respective religion private, limited to their personal lives. Such public patronage by both rulers exhibited in their applying their own version of the religious teachings and ethics to the religious community and to society is consistent in this section, and to the physical landscape will be examined in the following one.

In Ashoka's estimation, applying the ethics of Buddhist teaching over the society he ruled necessarily came as a responsibility of his office. Lahiri characterizes "the communicator *par excellence* of ancient India" as having "spent a great deal of time thinking through and having messages about his conception of morality engraved on stone for public consumption."[312] The result was an interesting mix, according to Upinder Singh, of "[m]etaphysics, ethics, and politics," which, when "combined in a unique way," had a "resulting synthesis" that "was propagated through a single-minded, zealous, and elaborately organized propaganda campaign."[313] To make this happen, Mishra reports that Ashoka "instituted a new centralized bureaucracy ('officers of *dharma*') to supervise his Buddhist reforms."[314] The public on the receiving end was subject to what Singh describes as "two ideas of empire—one political, the other moral, with the latter

[312] Lahiri, 7.

[313] Singh, 56.

[314] Mishra, 303.

encompassing the former."[315] In a way that parallels Augustine's two cities and Luther's two kingdoms, these two 'empires' encompassed all those under his domain:

> His conception of his constituency extended beyond political subjecthood to all living beings (panas, jivas, bhutas), including both humans and animals. His claim that his campaign of *dhamma-vijaya* (victory through dhamma), which consisted of propagating and inculcating virtue and goodness among people, had been a resounding success everything indicates that the moral empire required no political and moral empires, but there is no doubt that ultimately, it was the moral aspect of both the individual and the state that Ashoka considered most important.[316]

Singh characterizes this *dhamma* as a "new idiosyncratic synthesis that was rooted in the king's personal faith in Buddhism but bore the strong stamp of his own reflections on the fundamental goals of life and power."[317] Whereas he achieved his position and expanded the boundaries of the Mauryan empire through violent bloodshed, Ashoka used his position to attempt to put into place the Buddhist ethic of doing no harm:

> Nonviolence (*avihimsa, analambha*) toward all living beings was a central aspect of Ashoka's dhamma. Interestingly, animals are singled out for special mention in this regard. Major rock edict 1 talks about the killing of animals in three contexts—in sacrificial rituals, popular festivals, and the royal kitchen. … the emphasis on nonviolence was accompanied by the advocacy of a positive attitude of caring. Ashoka asserts that the appropriate conduct toward all living beings includes gentleness (sayama) and compassion (daya). Nonviolence was transformed into a central positive principle of personal conduct and the emperor's political agenda.[318]

The scope for this grand project encompassed the "radical and audacious aim—the moral transformation of all humankind."[319] At the same time, it must be recognized that Ashoka's reasons for spreading the *dhamma* were not completely altruistic, but, as Thapar points out, bore practical benefits as well:

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[315] Singh, 56.

[316] Singh, 47.

[317] Ibid., 56.

[318] Ibid., 49.

[319] Ibid., 56.

> By moving away from orthodox Brahmanism though not opposing it, and by giving open support to Buddhism and certain other sects such as the Ajivikas, he was seeking the potential support of non-orthodox elements which may eventually have succeeded in weaning the people away from orthodoxy, and in the end making his own principles more acceptable to the populace. He was aided in this by the fact that these sects had the support of the newly risen commercial class and the mass of the population that was not antagonistic to them. In addition to this, the new beliefs were not violently opposed to the old and it was therefore possible to bring about a compromise. Thus Aśoka saw the practical advantage of adopting the idea of the *Dhamma*.[320]

To whatever degree political and financial benefits served as a factor for the implementation of his social ethic, he shares an expedient pragmatism with Constantine. But while it has been shown above that Constantine appears most interested in centralizing state power in the throne, Grant ascribes some amount of motivation to his "Christian influences" that "prompted Constantine's repeated legal attempts to improve personal morality."[321] He also shares with Ashoka a universal vision for the spread of his religion, which Peter Leithart addresses. As we have seen, Leithart serves as an apologist for the intentions and effects of Constantine's rule, and writes positively regarding the emperor's sense of calling regarding the Christian faith and its societal context:

> Constantine himself had a deep sense of historical destiny, and as a result his foreign policy was guided in part by the desire to extend the church's reach. He envisioned a universal empire united in confession of the Nicene Creed, an empire that would have a symbolic center in the Church on Golgotha in Jerusalem and that would stretch to India and Ethiopia and someday include even Persia. But Constantine did not necessarily regard annexation into the Roman empire as an essential element of that vision. He seems instead to have envisioned a Christian commonwealth. Perhaps the empire would have remained dominant, but in Constantine's cosmopolitan mind it would not have been coextensive with "Christ's dominion."[322]

[320] Thapar, 182.

[321] Grant, 183.

[322] Leithart, 288.

Such a grand, universal intention resonates with that of Ashoka. To whatever degree each figure underwent a genuine religious conversion, the adoption of and support for each figure's new religion helped strengthen the emperor's position pragmatically, even if he held a universal aim for the benefits offered by the faith. Both of these rulers would use both the construction of sacred architecture and the sending of missionaries to help carry out the larger vision.

3.4.6 Sacred Construction Projects

For an emperor to become a practitioner of a religion, they not only have the ability to give that religion legal or preferred status, but they also hold the power of the purse. With such financial power, both of the converts of this present study set about to apply their devotion of the new religion to the physical landscape through sacred building projects. In the case of Buddhist history, Ashoka is remembered for the two types of edifices of stone pillars and stupas. Beginning with the stone pillar edicts, as described in section 3.4.1, Ashoka spread the *dhamma* through his inscriptions. Dineschandra Sircar categorizes the different types of inscriptions commissioned by the emperor:

> Ashoka's inscriptions can be broadly divided into two classes, viz., those engraved on rocks and those on pillars of stone. The rock inscriptions fall into three groups, viz., Minor Rock Edicts, Rock Edicts, and Cave Inscriptions. The pillar inscriptions may be classified under three subdivisions, viz., Minor Pillar Edicts, Pillar Inscriptions, and Pillar Edicts.[323]

Many of these pillars still exist, testifying both to the teachings that Ashoka wanted to spread, along with his broad areas of rule and outreach.

[323] Dineschandra Sircar, *Inscriptions of Asoka, Third Edition* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, 1975), 25.

The other type of architectural structure are the many stupas he endowed. Snodgrass defines a stupa as "a Buddhist building, but the field of analytical enquiry has been extended beyond the borders of Buddhism to include the symbolic formulations of Brahmanism."[324] It has a "symbolic form that pullulates throughout South, Southeast, and East Asia."[325] Snodgrass points out how, in "its Indian manifestations it is an extreme case in terms of architectural function: it has no usable interior space and its construction has a basic simplicity."[326] Donald Lopez provides the background for how this type of structure became part of the Buddhist tradition:

> [The Buddha] is said to have instructed his followers to cremate his body and distribute the relics that remained among various groups of his followers, who were to enshrine them in hemispherical reliquaries called stupas. For all Buddhist schools, the stupa became a reference point denoting the Buddha's presence in the landscape. Early texts and the archaeological records link stupa worship with the Buddha's life and especially the key sites in his career, such as the site of his birth, enlightenment, first teaching, and death.[327]

Just as described by Lopez, Ashoka is portrayed by tradition to have done just as described in building stupas to carry out this devotional practice:

> His most important act of patronage, reported in the Legends of Asoka, was to retrieve the relics of the Buddha, which after his nirvana had been divided and buried in eight stupas, and to redistribute them into 84,000 stupas, which he had caused to be constructed throughout the earth on a single day and which came to be known as the *dharmarajika*, the stupas "of the Dharma-king."[328]

[324] Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1988), 8.

[325] Snodgrass, 8.

[326] Ibid, i.

[327] Donald S. Lopez, Jr., "Introduction," in Lopez, ed., *Buddhism in Practice: Abridged Edition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 20.

[328] Salomon, 21.

In the way that Ashoka would serve as a model of Buddhist kingship throughout Southeast Asia, so too would the form of the stupa become a common feature of the landscape of that region.

This transformation of the physical landscape through sacred construction embodies a strong a missionary element. On the one hand, the content of the pillars conveys the underlying mission which Ashoka viewed himself as carrying out in his rule:

> The dominant impression remaining at the end of the pillar edicts is the unusually inclusive character of Ashoka's endeavor—the new directions, as well as the number of humans and other species sought to be uplifted by the new directions. The emperor's self-image as a *people's* monarch emerges movingly and powerfully. No emperor in the ancient world expresses such deep and abiding concern for the underprivileged, the dispossessed, the suffering, the oppressed, both human and animal. No other emperor of the ancient world is heard saying that his principal duty ought to mean visiting people personally.[329]

This seemingly altruistic desire on the part of a benevolent ruler, however, is not the sole purpose achieved by these markers. Kinnard lays out a twofold effect of Ashoka's pillars, explaining how "his edicts inscribed on stone pillars and slabs throughout his realm" allowed the emperor "to very effectively spread the teachings of the Buddha," while simultaneously demonstrating "the legitimacy of his own dharmic political rule across an incredibly large expanse of land."[330] As such, the extant pillars and stupas provide a material testimony for both the breadth of his rule, along with missionary activity due to Ashoka's commissioning of Buddhist missions. Several centuries later, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim to India and translator Xuanzang (602-664 C.E.) attributed stupas that

[329] Lahiri, 276-277.

[330] Jacob N. Kinnard, *The Emergence of Buddhism* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 40.

he saw on his travels to Ashoka.[331] His travels indicate the distances and various places of these missions:

> [Xuanzang] mentions two *stupas* which he saw in southern India, one in the Cola kingdom, and one in the Pandya kingdom, both said to have been built by Aśoka. This would suggest that Buddhist missionaries may have reached those areas. The Chinese pilgrim refers to further stupas built by Asoka and by Mahinda in the kingdom south of the river Cauvery.[332]

To have a Chinese monk centuries later record the existence of Ashoka's Buddhist stupas testifies to the transnational spread of Buddhism in its first millennium. This universalization was the aim from the beginning, as Diana Eck explains that when "no sooner had the Buddha given up his earthly body than it was cremated and the ashes distributed to the kings of the several great dynasties of India," this "division and distribution are, indeed, a form of unification and universalization."[333] So "during the time of Ashoka, the number of stupa reliquaries were said to be a legendary eighty-four thousand,"[334] the emperor's faithfulness in this distribution through the building of stupas wielded not only the unifying effect for the rule of empire, but the universalizing effect of mission in spreading Buddhism beyond the boundaries of rule and culture.

This duality of bearing both a conquering element of empire and a missionary or evangelistic element of the emperor's sacred building projects holds true for Constantine as well. Grant reports that, after giving legal recognition to the Christian religion, "Constantine's prolific erection of Christian basilicas and other buildings, on a scale

[331] Lahiri, 44.

[332] Thapar, 169.

[333] Diana Eck, *India: A Sacred Geography* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2012), 288.

[334] Ibid.

which, despite respect for antique traditions, amounted to an architectural revolution."[335] This broad endeavor constituted "an architectural revolution, meant that the whole empire did not contain enough architects and builders to construct what he wanted them to construct, as he himself complained in letters."[336] David Chidester portrays this undertaking of imperial power displayed through sacred construction as "the struggle over the ownership of sacred space," in which "Constantine continued to engage in symbolic warfare on behalf of his Christian empire."[337] Chidester traces the effect that these building projects had in the development of the religion:

> Under Constantine, a new Christian sense of sacred space was developed. Like any production of sacred space, the consecration of Christian holy places depended upon the practice of ritual. Obviously, the new churches constructed in Palestine became locations for Christian ritual. But another ritual practice—pilgrimage—certified the sanctity of Christian holy places. Although there is some evidence of Christians visiting Jerusalem and Palestine before Constantine, the explosion of popular interest in Christian pilgrimage during the fourth century was unprecedented.[338]

The resulting effect of the building of sacred spaces was not just to foster pilgrimage. Constantine's religious constructions, while making an imperial claim on both the sacred sites and the land as a whole, fostered a profound change of the practice of the religion by the larger population. Because of these constructions in the traditional holy city, the "sacred calendar of the Christian year was coordinated with the holy places."[339] The result was that "all ritual in Jerusalem became a kind of pilgrimage requiring participants to move from site to site in a regular procession through Bethlehem, Golgotha, the Tomb,

[335] Grant, 193.

[336] Ibid.

[337] David Chidester, *Christianity: A Global History* (New York: HarperOne, 2000), 105.

[338] Ibid., 107.

[339] Ibid., 108.

the Mount of Olives, and other holy places of the Christian story."[340] However, since not everyone could travel to Jerusalem, those who "stayed at home in their local churches and imaginatively visited the holy places through the annual sacred calendar of the liturgy."[341] This vicarious sense of worship produced the "lasting legacy of the Christian empire," in which the "emphasis on the importance of sacred places introduced under Constantine continued to inform the ritual life of the Christian life."[342] The emperor's impulse for construction of sacred buildings, then, not only changed the landscape, but also shaped the long term worship of the Christian community.

In serving as visible witnesses to the religion, Constantine's architectural endeavors also bore a missionary effort. The story of how Eastern Orthodox Christianity came to the Russian peoples in the late tenth century C.E. testifies to an evangelistic effect of the sacred architecture tradition. Although Constantine did not oversee the construction of the Hagia Sophia, it happened as part of the legacy of Constantine's sacred, celebrating his influence in the city he founded as the new capital of the empire. As such, the basilica embodies the legacy of his imprint on Eastern Christianity. J. M. Hussey recounts the traditional story of one of the greatest steps in having the Russian people become Eastern Orthodox Christians:

> [I]t is clear that this time the acceptance of Christianity by the Kievan ruler meant that his state, and later on other Russian regions, were firmly linked to the Orthodox Church under the guidance of the patriarchate of Constantinople. This momentous decision was given prominence in the Russian *Primary Chronicle* where the Kievan ruler is described as weighing up the merits of various faiths—Muslim, Jewish, and Christian, both Roman and Greek. Finally he decided for the Greek Church after the deep impression made on his envoys by the splendid liturgical rites in Hagia Sophia

[340] Ibid.

[341] Ibid.

[342] Ibid.

> where he felt that God surely dwelt among men. It is generally agreed that much of this is legendary, but even so there are strands of truth.[343]

This conversion of Russia through Kiev is the most celebrated legend about the witness of the beauty of Byzantine architecture and exquisite worship space, but was not an isolated incident, as this "Kievan ruler was not alone in being impressed by the splendor of Orthodox worship."[344] This example demonstrates how, like Ashoka before him, Constantine's construction projects on holy sites had a missionary influence in spreading the religion.

3.4.7 Imperial Support for Sending Missionaries

The immediately two preceding sections have portrayed how the emperors under consideration each had a universal vision for the spread and application of his religion. This vision for moving the faith both to and even beyond the boundaries of empire played out both in terms of morality, as well as through sacred architecture, which embodied an evangelistic message and the content of religious teachings through physical structures. Both emperors shared the practice of not just having a worldwide dream of spreading his religion, but actually patronized missionaries, sending them out to spread the faith.

As conveyed in the section above, in which Ashoka pursued both a political empire and a moral one, so too did he fund two corresponding types of missions. In the political realm, he engaged in diplomatic missions, which Thapar describes:

> These missions were the main contact that Aśoka had with neighboring countries. They can be described as embassies, though the word mission is more appropriate. Their main purpose was to acquaint the countries they visited with the policies of Aśoka, particularly that of *Dhamma*. They were not resident in any single country for

[343] J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 119.

[344] Ibid.

> a long period. They may be compared to modern goodwill missions, moving from area to area, addressing the local people, exchanging gifts and messages, and generally helping to create an interest in the ideas and peoples of the country from which they come.[345]

More than such diplomatic outreach, however, "perhaps his most lasting and far-reaching contributions to the history of Buddhism were the missions that he sent out from India."[346] Kinnard suggests that these missionary endeavors "allowed Buddhism to expand beyond its homeland and develop into the world religion that it is today."[347] Stefan Anacker offers a broad summary of the breadth of, and distances covered by, missionaries sent out by Ashoka:

> According to traditional accounts, corroborated in part by epigraphical evidence, Asoka sent missionaries of Buddhism to *Kasmir*, *Karnataka*, *North Kanara*, *Konkan*, *Maharastra*, the *Northwest Regions*, the *Himalayan Regions*, *Suvarnabhumi* (probably here meaning Burma—the Talaing Buddhist community of Thaton claims its origin with Asoka's mission), and *Ceylon* (this mission being headed by Asoka's son, or brother, *Mahinda*). It is through these missionary efforts of Asoka that Buddhism first becomes an "international" religion, and they served as a model for later Indian kings to send missionaries across the sea (e.g., *Iksvaku Virapurusadatta's* missionaries to Ceylon and Burma).[348]

Krüger includes Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Egypt as recipients of Ashokan missions in the West.[349] Due to this diverse and broad list of destinations, Krüger describes what transpired during the Ashoka's period of rule marked the beginning of Buddhism's "international character."[350] This attribution of the spread of Buddhism to Ashoka goes

[345] Thapar, 158.

[346] Kinnard, 40.

[347] Kinnard, 40.

[348] Stefan Anacker, "Asoka and the Missionary Activity of the Buddhists," in Charles S. Prebish, ed. *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), 27-28.

[349] Krüger, 69.

[350] Ibid., 13.

back to the earliest centuries, as Richard Salomon summarizes how "The Legends of Ashoka" portray the emperor as patron of missions:

> This widespread legend about Asoka can be understood as a symbolic or mythologized presentation of his role in promoting the spread of Buddhism beyond its original homeland in central north India and into vast territories and sphere of influence, comprising not only nearly all of the Indian subcontinent but also adjoining areas of Afghanistan. In short, Asoka is portrayed as the patron who changed Buddhism from a regional religion into a pan-Indian, and eventually a pan-Asian, one.[351]

One of the areas that received Ashoka's Buddhist missionaries was the Gandhāran civilization, which resided in what are today parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Over the past couple of decades, Salomon has led the effort of preserving and translating ancient documents of Gandhāra. He describes the effects of Ashoka's mission to this part of Asia:

> With the spread of Gandhāran cultural and political power into Central Asia, particularly under the Kuṣāṇa emperors in the first and second centuries CE, Gandhāra came to be directly linked into the commerce of the silk roads, tapping into the lucrative trade in luxury goods between China and the Western world. This source of wealth was no doubt one of the major factors in the power and prosperity of the Kuṣāṇas. Besides the economic benefits that the silk road traffic brought to Gandhāra, it also provided cultural and artistic stimuli leading to the development of an eclectic Buddhist culture incorporating Central Asian and Hellenistic ideas and imagery, while also opening the way for the exportation of Buddhism into Central Asia and China.[352]

This latter effort of Ashoka's patronized mission to Gandhāra will show its significance in chapter five, as Buddhism will find its way into China via the Silk Road.

Like Ashoka with Buddhism, Constantine not only viewed spreading Christianity as one of his duties, but put imperial support behind it. Scott Sunquist notes how, as the first Christian emperor, Constantine joined the company of other Christian kings whose actions transformed Christian missionary work due to royal support:

[351] Salomon, 21.

[352] Salomon, 12.

> The first major shift took place when these struggling missional and worshiping communities began to garner royal support. When kings and other rulers began to convert, mission theology was turned upside down. Abgar IX (who ruled 179-86); the Christian king of the Roman client kingdom of Osrhoene (the capital of which was Edessa); Tiridates the Great, the Armenian king (who converted to Christianity in 301); and Constantine the Great (who ruled 306-37) were three of the earliest Christian rulers. All were in Asia and all ushered in a new age of missionary understanding. Since both Armenia and Osrhoene were client kingdoms, or bargaining properties for Rome and Persia, it is the later semi-converted Roman emperor Constantine who really set in motion a new understanding of Christian identity, and thus of Christian mission. Suddenly, under the rule of one emperor, Christianity was transformed from persecuted minority cult to favored faith. This imperial support continued in the West (Europe) even when non-Christian tribes invaded from the north and east.[353]

Whereas Sunquist establishes that Constantine used the power of his office, David Bosch describes how the emperor's decision to send out Christian missionaries set the template for entangling imperial work with missionary work for the succeeding centuries:

> The Christian emperor, Constantine, was now called to guide the world back to God. In the Byzantine Empire attempts would time and again be made to let the unity of the empire coincide with the unity of the faith. The Henotikon of Emperor Zenon (AD 482), the Ekthesis of Heraclius (AD 638), and the Typos of Constantius II (AD 648) were all measures taken to assure the indissoluble unity of the interests of church and state… In this kind of atmosphere it was to be expected that mission would be as much a concern of the emperor as of the church. As "imitator of God" the emperor united in himself both religious and political offices… The objectives of the state coincided with the objectives of the church and vice versa, and this applied to mission as well… The practice of direct royal involvement in the missionary enterprise would persist throughout the Middle Ages and, in fact, into the modern era.[354]

This pattern would continue to be employed by those who were the on the receiving end of the Constantinian-style missions. For example, Bosch describes the "Russian Orthodox mission of the Kiev princes," who had been dazzled by the artistic grandeur of the

[353] "The story was very different in Asia, where imperial support waned and large intercultural faiths (Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and later Islam) persecuted Christian communities. Christian mission looks very different when Christianity is a royally favored faith." Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 28-29.

[354] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 205.

imperial city, as a "political project" which "went hand in hand with colonialist expansion northward and northeastward into the interior of Russia."[355] As they carried out their part of the greater missionary endeavor, "Evangelization became virtually coterminous with 'Russification.'"[356] What had been novel for Constantine in joining state power to the mission of the church became the norm for those who followed.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The debates concerning the degree and authenticity regarding Ashoka's and Constantine's conversions to and favoritism shown for their respective religions will continue into the foreseeable future. This present section considers the long-term effects of their conversions and patronage, and then closes with a summary of the content covered throughout the chapter.

3.5.1 Legacies of the Emperor Converts

Ashoka disseminated his understanding of the teachings of Buddhism, the *dhamma*, through the inscriptions on pillars and rocks. These artifacts offer a testament of not only his message to the people he ruled over, but also serve as historical resources for his understanding of the core of Buddhist ethics. The emperor's legacy, however, is much greater than records carved into stone. His engagement with the religion served as a model for the idea of Buddhist kingship in Southeast Asia over the next several centuries. Donald Swearer explains that this "relationship between Buddhism and the rise of the monarchical states in the classical period of Southeast Asian history is customarily

[355] Ibid.

[356] Ibid.

referred to as symbiotic," which is "one of mutual benefit."[357] He identifies the roles of the various agents within this symbiotic system:

> Rulers supported Buddhism because it provided a cosmology in which the king was accorded the central place and a view of society in which the human community was dependent on the role of the king. Ideologically, Buddhism legitimated kingship, providing a metaphysical rationale and moral basis for its existence. The Buddhist *sangha*, in turn, supported Southeast Asian monarchs because of the material well-being, success, and popularity of institutional Buddhism depended to a significant degree on the approval, support, and largess of the ruling classes.[358]

In this system, the model of Ashoka as attempting to live out and spread the *dhamma* functions as an example of the role of the king as "moral exemplar."[359] As such, "his power and, hence, his effectiveness rest on his virtue."[360] To the degree that Ashoka lived out this ideal, and with all of the imperial patronage offered to Buddhism during his reign, Robert Montgomery notes, "Buddhism remained a religion of the rulers attempting to establish a moral order for ruling over diverse peoples."[361] So while the religion "gained its greatest recognition in India during the during the Mauryan period when imperial control was extended over many small kingdoms and republics," it would later disappear from the land of its birth and original imperial support.[362] Montgomery speculates why the religion waned in India but spread elsewhere:

> In the long run, Buddhism failed to win over the peoples of South Asia (India), who continued to follow their popular religions and live within the established caste system under the leadership of the high caste brahman priests. However, the people of

[357] Donald K. Swearer, "Buddhism in Southeast Asia" in Joseph M. Kitagawa and Mark D. Cummings, eds., *Buddhism and Asian History*, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1989), 112. See also Max Deeg, "*Aśoka*: Model Ruler without a Name?" in Patrick Olivelle, Janice Leoshko, and Himanshu Prabha Ray, eds., *Reimagining Aśoka: Memory and History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 365.

[358] Swearer, 112.

[359] Ibid.

[360] Ibid.

[361] Robert L. Montgomery, *Why Religions Spread: The Expansion of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam with Implications for Missions – Second Edition* (Black Mountain: Crossing Lines Publishing, 2012), 195.

[362] Ibid.

> Sri Lanka were very receptive to Buddhism, which came to them from somewhat distant and nonthreatening Northern India. Furthermore, Buddhism clearly contributed to establishing the Sinhalese as a distinct ethnic group from nearby and competing Tamil kingdoms in South India, a distinction that continues to this day.[363]

As Montgomery observes, Sri Lanka was a context that received the missionary work promoted by Ashoka. The Buddhist community on this island became the foundation of the Theravada tradition, the oldest of the three larger branches of Buddhism. This growth gives an example for the contention, as demonstrated throughout this chapter, that Ashoka's patronage of both the religion and its missionary work was key to helping it become a global religion.

Christianity could very well have become a global faith prior to Constantine's rule, but, as this chapter has demonstrated, the emperor recast the religion to suit his personality while offering it the strength of imperial rule. His historic legacy is found in how his actions, in the words of David Potter, "changed the world."[364] Potter describes how this fundamental change, the legacy of Constantine's patronage is still experienced today:

> For many millions of people across this planet, an institution that he introduced and promoted has become a central part of their lives; they use or hear the words that he approved. In the twenty-first century, Constantine is best known as the Roman emperor who converted to Christianity and in so doing made it possible for Christianity to become a world religion. Without Constantine, Christianity probably would not occupy the place that it does today. Without him it is unlikely that Christianity would have emerged from the mass of conflicting, if often quite similar, belief systems coexisting in the empire into which he was born. Even if there are fewer practicing Christians than there were a couple of generations ago, the immense impact of Christian thought upon the behaviors and thinking of the many generations who came after Constantine makes it very difficult to imagine a world without it. When he was born around AD 282, it would have been far easier to imagine a world in which Christianity had a marginal place.[365]

[363] Ibid., 195.

[364] Potter, 1.

[365] Ibid.

It did not take just the judgment of history long-removed to recognize the stature of his person and rule as, upon his death in 337 C.E., his memory was "met with rare and deep appreciation from many different points of view."[366] Vasiliev reports the homages paid to the ruler through history through the bestowing of a variety of titles:

> The Roman senate, according to the historian of the fourth century, Eutropius, enrolled Constantine among the gods; history has named him "the Great"; and the church has proclaimed him a saint and equal of the Apostles (*Isoapostolic*). Modern historians have likened him to Peter of Russia and Napoleon.[367]

As quoted earlier, Peter Leithart acts as an apologist for the good of Constantine's reign and legacy. He joins in this line of positive tributes to the emperor, arguing that Constantine's religious patronage did not compromise Christianity, but rather, helped keep it from being overtaken by the state:

> Whatever his intentions, over the long run, Constantine's support of the church strengthened the church's status as an alternative society and polity within the Roman Empire. Already during Constantine's lifetime, and even more during the reigns of his sons, church leaders became more aggressively confrontational toward the empire, fighting to protect the church's independence from imperial intrusions.[368]

Leithart, however, places himself at odds with the majority opinion of most modern historians and missiologists. A. James Reimer recounts how Constantine's favor given to the church led eventually to exclusion and violence against other religions and communities:

> Whatever good intentions Constantine may have had about not using violence or force in religious matters, at the point where Christianity was identified as the theological underpinning of the destiny of the Empire, the military defense of the "homeland" became a moral and ethical obligation also for Christians, and particularly for Christians. The "proof" of this came in subsequent years with the development of the Just War theory. Already Constantine had made a special case out of the Jews and the schismatic "heretics." Very soon this was applied to the other religions. Between 325 and 381, State and Church became allies against heretics. In the time period of 390-

[366] Vasiliev, 65.

[367] Vasiliev, 65

[368] Leithart, 304.

> 392, pagan temples were closed. In 420, Augustine, the father of the Just War principles mentioned above, gave his approval to coercive-repressive measures against Christian dissenters. Whereas much earlier, Christians had been excluded from the army, by 436 non-Christians were excluded from the military.[369]

As the tables turned on non-Christian religions, the relationship between church and state grew stronger.

In addition to its relationship with the state, Constantine's support of Christianity changed both the nature of conversion to the religion for the individual, as well as for whole other societies engaged through missions. Regarding the manner of conversion of the individual, Kenneth Scott Latourette traces the historical effects of linking the church to the power of the imperial government:

> It became a state religion and eventually the only official cult of the Roman Empire. Before many years, the Emperors were placing paganism under disabilities and after a few decades were seeking to stamp it out. Under such circumstances, conversion often ceased to be primarily from the conviction of the religious value of the faith to the individual. For many it was now a matter of policy. Others entered the Church because of official pressure or because their friends and neighbours were doing so. Christianity became identified with Graeco-Roman civilization. While by the years 500 the erstwhile rivals had not been entirely eliminated, the vast majority of the population of the Empire called themselves Christian. Of the several types of Christianity, the state gave its support to one. After some vacillation, it settled down to the endorsement of that which was recognized at Nicaea as orthodox.[370]

Bosch agrees with Latourette that this joining together of church and state subsequently became "a symbiotic relationship between church and state, manifested during the Middle Ages in the interdependence between the pope and the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire."[371] This interdependence resulted in having "the membership of church and state

[369] A. James Reimer, "Constantine: From Religious Pluralism to Christian Hegemony," in Michael R. Ott, ed. *The Future of Religion: Toward a Reconciled Society* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 90.

[370] Latourette, 172.

[371] Bosch, 274.

for all practical purposes overlapped during the entire period from Constantine to the dawn of the modern era."[372] Those holding political power, in such a setting, exercised a dual role, "since the rulers explicitly acknowledged that they were as much responsible for the religious and moral life of their subjects as they were for politics."[373] In this arrangement, "the realms of religion and politics were, somehow, held together."[374] This role of the ruler over both church and society did not remain limited to the Christendom of Europe, but would later be exported overseas. Bosch traces the history through the Medieval and Reformation eras, leading to the transmission of the Roman Catholic Church to non-European continents:

> Even where pope and emperor were at loggerheads, they both continued to operate within the framework of interdependence and of the Christian faith—in other words, within the framework of "Christendom" or the corpus Christianum. The Reformation dealt a severe blow to this symbiosis, since the Western church was now no longer one. Meanwhile the Holy Roman Empire had also begun to disintegrate into several nation-states. The idea of Christendom remained intact, however; in each European country the church was "established" as state church—Anglican in England, Presbyterian in Scotland, Reformed in the Netherlands, Lutheran in Scandinavia and some of the German territories, Roman Catholic in most of Southern Europe, etc. It was difficult to differentiate between political, cultural, and religious elements and activities, since they all merged into one. This made it completely natural for the first European colonizing powers, Portugal and Spain, to assume that they, as Christian monarchs, had the divine right to subdue pagan peoples … and that therefore colonization and Christianization not only went hand in hand but were two sides of the same coin.[375]

Montgomery accents this change regarding the power of the sword with the church in stating that, "before Constantine in the fourth century, there was no sense in which

[372] Ibid., 401.

[373] Ibid.

[374] Bosch, 401.

[375] Ibid., 274-275.

Christianity was associated with outside political-military domination."[376] The effect of state power behind Christian evangelization and cross-cultural missionary work, according to Bosch, was to enter into a new context with power over the recipients:

> After Constantine, when the erstwhile *religio illicita* became the religion of the establishment, the church became the bearer of culture. Its missionary outreach thus meant a movement from the civilized to "savages" and from a "superior" culture to "inferior" cultures—a process in which the latter had to be subdued, if not eradicated. Thus Christian mission, as a matter of course, presupposed the disintegration of the cultures into which it penetrated. Where such disintegration did not take place, mission had only limited success (as in the case of some Asian cultures—cf Gensichen 1985:122; Pieris 1986).[377]

The favoritism shown to Christianity by Constantine, who used his power to convene a council to determine doctrine as well as send out missionaries, opened the way to the future path of the use of power in the greater missionary endeavor through the ages.

3.5.2 Summary

Each of these two imperial figures went from the faith of his upbringing to converting to the new religions of Buddhism and Christianity. This conversion process was not sudden, but developed throughout his rule—and in the case of Constantine, included undergoing baptism just prior to death. Both leaders allowed other religions to continue in their empires. But whereas Ashoka's Buddhism would not flourish in the land of his rule, Christianity would, having been declared by Constantine as a legal religion with the Edict of Milan in 313 C.E., eventually overtake and displace the pagan religions of the Roman Empire, as Christianity would become the official religion in 380 C.E.. Each one took the religion from his personal devotion and applied the work of empire to the religion through codification (convening councils and public morality), physical construction (buildings of

[376] Montgomery, 199.

[377] Bosch, 448.

worship and shrines), and geographic expansion (sending missionaries). In these ways, Ashoka and Constantine raised their religions from minority status to enjoying imperial endorsement and protection. Through this process, each religion underwent change in its relationship to the world. Ashoka and Constantine turned their respective adoptive religions from non-political communities into both political structures and visual testaments upon the physical landscape. In so doing, each of these emperors, then, merged his newfound faith with the geographic domain of his rule. Although each religion may have continued in its trajectory to becoming a global faith without their involvement, it is clear that both of these emperors played a pivotal function through their active promotion of the religion. Through their direct influence, the religions spread through the conversion, protection, and patronage of an emperor. While these two historical figures differ from the others in that they themselves are not full time missionaries, they demonstrate the thesis of this research by showing how empire, in these cases through the patronage of emperors, supported the missionary work of the new religion.

CHAPTER 4: COMPARISON OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE MISSIONARY RELIGIONS INTO CHINA

4.1 OVERVIEW

This present study has so far compared the missionary endeavors of the Buddhist and Christian religions, considering the relationship of each one to empire. This comparative approach will now be applied in the present chapter to the entrance of these religions, Buddhism and Christianity, specifically, Protestant Christianity, into China. Although the introductions of these faiths to China was separated by about one and a half millennia, the entrance of each of these two traditions is tied to the trade of commodities. In the case of Buddhism, that commodity is silk, as the demand for this material good, produced by one empire and desired by another, caused the formation of the networks that constituted the Silk Road. This travel network enabled the spread of Buddhism from India throughout Central Asia and, finally, east into China. Protestant Christianity's penetration of China was tied to the two commodities of tea and opium. The British developed a love for tea but had nothing that the Chinese wanted on an equal level of demand. The British Empire, through the East India Company and the Royal Navy, remedied this imbalance by the forced opening up of the country to import opium produced in and exported from India. Although the missionary community in general looked with abhorrence on the opium trade and its effects on the Chinese population, the narcotic's forced entrance into the country allowed the movement of missionaries throughout the interior.

4.1.a Mahayana Buddhism and Protestant Christianity

This chapter considers specifically Mahayana Buddhism and Protestant Christianity. Although Mahayana was not the only form of Buddhism to enter China, it took root, continued its development, and then spread beyond the country. Similarly, Roman

Catholicism's introduction to China preceded Protestantism by four centuries and continues to exist there until this day. This chapter, however, narrows in on and compares the traditions of Mahayana Buddhism and Protestant Christianity for a few reasons:

a) The two traditions share an emphasis on broad application, opening up the means to salvation to a larger number of people than compared with the tradition from which each one emerged. American missiologist Timothy Tennent identifies this shared characteristic between Protestantism and the Mahayana tradition:

> Although there are numerous strands of 'salvation by grace through faith' teachings in non-Christian religions, nowhere is the doctrine so clearly stated and, at least on the surface, so remarkably parallel to Protestant Christianity than in the popular *Jodo Shin Shu* (True Pure Land) stream of Mahayana Buddhism.[378]

This chapter will consider how the Mahayana stream of Buddhism was introduced to China, and then spread to Japan.

b) Both Mahayana Buddhism and Protestant Christianity each entered China as a foreign religion, underwent adaptation to the Chinese context, and have spread from beyond there. In the case of Buddhism, the Chan tradition developed in China and then was exported to Japan, where it is known as Zen. Chapter six will, in turn, consider the transmission of Zen to the West.

c) Each has undergone both periods of flourishing and persecution in China.

d) Each entered China through the framework of empire, specifically tied to the trade of commodities.

[378] Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church Is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 136-137.

The first part of this chapter demonstrates how Mahayana entered China through the Silk Road, which itself came about because of the strong desire to purchase the commodity of silk by the upper classes of the Roman Empire. Travelling by this route, the missionary figure of Kumārajīva, the renowned translator, proved significant in helping to contextualize Buddhism in China. The second, longer portion of the chapter explores the framework of the British Empire, whose global reach and nautical technology allowed Protestant missionaries to carry out their work, and also forced the Chinese to open the entire country to the opium trade.[379] The result of this forced opening gave Protestant missionaries access to the whole of China.

4.2 THE SILK ROAD

From its beginning, Buddhism has functioned and spread as a missionary religion, as the religion's founder sent his followers out to pass on his teachings. One convert in the early centuries of this movement was Ashoka, the Mauryan emperor who accelerated the process of sending out missionaries, as presented in the preceding chapter. In addition to the founding of the Buddhist community in Sri Lanka which came about partly as a result of the Ashoka's patronage of mission work, the emperor's missionaries went north into Central Asia. Concerning this spread, Richard Foltz reports how the archaeological record testifies to the transmission and geographic direction of Buddhism:

> The abundance of Buddhist remains from the area of Marv[380] dating to as early as the first century CE, as well as linguistic evidence show the evolution of Buddhist terminology via Parthian, demonstrate that Buddhism traveled first northwest out of

[379] There are more biographical resources available for the figures from the more recent history of Protestant missions compared to the period covering Kumārajīva. Most of the biographical accounts of Kumārajīva are hagiographic. See Robert E. Burswell, Jr., and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. s.v. "Kumārajīva," (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 412.

[380] Ancient desert oasis city located in current day Turkmenistan.

> the subcontinent into the Iranian world, and then eastward along the Silk Road to China.[381]

This Silk Road to which Foltz refers was not one specific roadway, but rather a network of trade routes. These routes were primarily land-based and linked two continents together. Craig Benjamin explains the overall composition and significance of the Silk Road, which he refers to in the plural:

> During a period of roughly three and a half centuries, between the late second century before the Common Era (BCE) and the mid-third century of the Common Era (CE), many of the human communities dwelling within the vast Afro-Eurasian world zone became linked together into an interconnected system of exchanges via a network of routes today known as the Silk Roads. This "First Silk Roads Era" resulted in the most significant transregional commercial and cultural interactions experienced by humans to this point.[382]

The material and cultural effects of this mutual transfer of goods and societal influences was profound, as products spread from one end of a continent to the far end of another. To illustrate the broad reach that the Silk Road enabled, Peter Frankopan provides examples of the origins and destinations of specific commodities and cultural styles:

> Two millennia ago, silks made by hand in China were being worn by the rich and powerful in Carthage and other cities in the Mediterranean, while pottery manufactured in southern France could be found in England and in the Persian Gulf. Spices and condiments grown in India were being used in the kitchens of Xinjiang, as they were in those of Rome. Buildings in northern Afghanistan carried inscriptions in Greek, while horse from Central Asia were being ridden proudly thousands of miles away to the east.[383]

The exchanges that took place were not limited to commodities, goods, and artistic styles, as Benjamin contends, "Arguably the most significant consequence of this sharing of spiritual concepts was the spread of the South Asian ideology of Buddhism into East and

[381] Richard Foltz, *Religions of the Silk Road: Premodern Patterns of Globalization, Second Edition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 50-51.

[382] Craig Benjamin, *Empires of Ancient Eurasia: The First Silk Roads Era, 100 BCE-250 CE* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1.

[383] Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 26.

Southeast Asia."[384] This migration of the religion resulted in "a diffusion of tremendous consequence to the untold millions of humans ever since."[385] Even before the transmission of Buddhism, or even the trade network's namesake product of silk, the origins of the Silk Road came about due to another type of commodity.

The impetus for the trade route actually began with the Chinese desire for horses. The pursuit of these animals arose following a thirteen-year westward journey. Begun in 139 B.C.E., an emissary returned to report to Wudi, the emperor of the Han dynasty, about the neighboring people groups.[386] Foltz recounts the subsequent engagement that took place:

> For the next 20 years or so this trade seems to have thrived. Wudi was particularly keen on obtaining horses from a place called Dayuan, probably the Ferghana valley in modern Uzbekistan, which Zhang had visited. The Chinese referred to these mounts as "heavenly horses" that "sweat blood." The people of Dayuan were reluctant to part with large numbers of them, however, and eventually in 104 BCE the Han emperor sent his general, Li Guangli, at the head of a large army with instructions to acquire these horses by force. Supplies were insufficient and much of the army starved en route. Massively reinforced by Wudi, the Chinese reached their destination only after two years and finally succeeded in getting the inhabitants of Dayuan to capitulate. In the end the Chinese only managed to bring home 30 or so of the "heavenly horses," but the trade route had been definitively opened and its eastern portion put under Han control.[387]

Although China secured regional control over the trade routes, the eventual effect would result in a broader scope. The network of trade routes begun with the Han dynasty's quest to secure horses would eventually link together two imperial civilizations on two separate, though connected, continents:

> Even if it is true that internal trade *within* the Han and Roman Empires was carried on at higher volumes and at greater monetary value than the transregional trade *between*

[384] Benjamin, 2.

[385] Ibid. See also 276.

[386] Foltz, 3-4.

[387] Ibid., 4.

> these two vast imperial states, collectively the regional and transregional land and maritime routes of the First Silk Roads Era constituted an enormous, vibrant, interconnected Eurasia-wide globalization that included virtually every single agrarian civilization, city-state, regional culture, pastoral nomadic confederation and hunter-forager band that lived anywhere within this vast world zone.[388]

Whereas from China's origin point, the pursuit of acquiring horses laid the foundation for the Silk Road, on the other end, the desire for a Chinese commodity prompted the organization of these trade passages.

The stability offered by the victories of the Roman military to secure and expand its geographic boundaries resulted in economic flourishing. The change from the Roman Republic to Empire took place with the ascension of Octavian (63 B.C.E.-14 C.E.) to become Caesar Augustus in 27 B.C.E.. Benjamin explains, "Augustus was able to restore peace to a state that had been fractured by more than a century of civil war."[389] The political stability afforded by his rule allowed Roman aristocrats to develop a love for silk. It was in "this new climate of the *Pax Romana* or Roman Peace," ensured by the might of the Roman military, "that the demand for silk and other Asian luxuries intensified, leading directly to the connection of most of the civilizations and peoples of Eurasia into a single exchange network."[390] In addition to silk, Xinru Liu recounts how, as the empire grew, so did its consumption of goods from beyond its borders:

> The ever expanding empire incorporated all sorts of people and goods from the Mediterranean coasts and further east. In the first century CE, at the same time that the oases around the Takla Makan Desert were developing into caravan cities, the roman emperors and wealthy citizens took great interest in the products brought to them from caravan cities on the edges of the Syrian and Jordanian deserts.[391]

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[388] Benjamin, 282.

[389] Ibid., 278.

[390] Ibid., 278-279.

[391] Xinru Liu, *The Silk Road in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20.

These goods made their way on the backs of pack animals. From oasis to oasis, city to city, traversing from one end of the route to the other, the form of animal transportation changed with the geography and climate. Foltz describes the means by and pace at which the treasured products made their way, slowly but surely, across deserts and mountains:

> Caravan travelers transported their goods and personal belongings mainly on horses, mules, and donkeys. For desert regions camels were used: dromedaries in southwestern Asia and Bactrians in the colder, higher elevations of Inner Asia. In the most extreme conditions the choice was rather a yak or a *hainag*, which was a cross between a bully-yak and a cow. Donkeys and mules carried packs, while horses, oxen, and camels often drew carts. The pace, set by the camels, was tediously slow: four miles an hour unloaded, and two-and-a-half to three miles an hour when loaded up. The average load was around 300 pounds per camel. At this pace, a caravan might cover 30 miles a day.[392]

Out of these packs, Benjamin reports, "silk was the most important material commodity that was moved along this network of land and maritime routes."[393] It was because of its status as the prized export that "justifies the continued use of the label coined in the nineteenth century by Ferdinand von Richthofen, the *Silk Roads*."[394] Liu explains how the opposite ends of the routes had different origins and relationships to their respective empires:

> Unlike the Chinese Han government, which promoted the development of oases to defend the government, the Romans inherited their eastern trade routes from the earlier Hellenistic powers and the Arabs. The caravan cities in Arabic-speaking lands had been established long before the arrival of the Romans or the silks. However, the rise of Rome as an imperial power created a large market for the goods carried by the overland camel trade. Spices, perfumes, and silk—the newest, most luxurious textile (which during the Roman era was made mostly in China)—became the most valuable items. The expansion of the Roman Empire meant new goods for its wealthy citizens and greater prosperity for the empire as a whole. The Roman Empire had therefore a

[392] Foltz, 11.

[393] Benjamin, 276.

[394] Ibid.

> keen interest in protecting the eastern caravan routes, with the result that it placed a new emphasis on its frontier in the Middle East.[395]

The work of the Roman and Chinese empires, then, prompted the configuration of what came to be known as the Silk Road. These two imperial powers were not at war with one another, however, but each sought to acquire and consume commodities through trade, which could lead to an imbalance.

By the first century C.E., the Roman philosopher and military commander Pliny the Elder (23-79 C.E.) complained that the Romans' appetite for silk outweighed that of their Chinese counterparts. Liu explains that, despite his ignorance of this import from the East, Pliny found it ubiquitous in his society, affecting the economic health of the empire:

> That he in fact knew relatively little about silk is not surprising, since it was only during his lifetime that the Silk Road trade first began to deliver large quantities of silk to Roman markets. Indeed, he claimed that so much Chinese silk was being purchased in Roman markets that the treasury of the empire was bleeding: wealthy Roman women were buying so many fine silk fabrics to adorn themselves that Rome's supply of bullion was being depleted.[396]

Interestingly, this same charge against China of a trade imbalance was made over Britain's importation of tea in the nineteenth century, prompting the Opium Wars, which will be recounted below. A similar resentment continues to take expression in the twenty first century as, at the time of this writing, the American President Donald Trump is instigating a trade war with China over a long term trade imbalance.[397] But back in the ancient world, Benjamin suggests that the most profound export that traveled the silk road went from India to China:

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[395] Liu, 20-21.

[396] Ibid., 20.

[397] For example, see Orange Wang, "China Ridicules US Basis for Tariffs, Saying 'Real' Trade Imbalance Is Only a Third of What Donald Trump Claims," *South China Morning Post*, https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3013462/china-ridicules-us-basic-tariffs-real-trade-imbalance-only (accessed June 6, 2019).

> But what ultimately makes this period of ancient history so important is the exchange of nonmaterial "commodities" that occurred in parallel with the commercial interactions. Because of the demand for silk and other luxury goods, a range of different crop species and agricultural technologies, religions, and ideologies, languages, artistic styles and epidemic diseases also spread across Eurasia, with profound consequences for subsequent human and environmental history.[398]

This movement and exchange of ideas included both Nestorian Christianity[399] and Buddhism, the latter of which will be covered in the next section.

4.3 KUMĀRAJĪVA AND THE BUDDHIST PENETRATION OF CHINA

As has been demonstrated, around the turn of the Current Era, the Silk Road trade routes connected China in the east to the Roman Empire in the west. The formation of the Silk Road coincided with the rise and spread of what today are now known as world religions. Foltz explains that, "With the appearance of proselytizing religions came missionaries," who would take advantage of these land routes.[400] Doing so would not have been too surprising, as in both Buddhist and Christian missions, missionary-scholars went along with trade.[401] These trade routes proved to be well-suited not only for the movement of goods and persons, but also in allowing cultural influences,[402] philosophical concepts, and

[398] Benjamin, 276.

[399] John Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 14-15.

[400] Foltz, 12.

[401] Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 50.

[402] For example, Foltz offers evidence for the influence on Hellenism on Buddhism: "It is in the Kushan period that the Buddha is first depicted in human form, a development that some scholars have attributed to Greek influence. Statues and busts of the so-called Gandhara school, which developed under the Kushans, show a marked blending of Indian and Greek elements, and formed the basis for the later development of Buddhist art in China and elsewhere. A late first-century statue of the Buddha flanked by two bodhisattvas, with an inscription mentioning the transferral of merit, may be the earliest explicit evidence yet discovered of Mahayana ideas." Foltz, 45-46.

religions to migrate. Foltz surveys the ancient and premodern religions that undertook passage along the economic system:

> Buddhists, then Christians and Manicheans, and finally Sufi Muslims latched onto caravans that would take them and their "spiritual goods" into new lands. As new religious traditions carried by the Silk Road disseminated eastwards and took root along the way, travelers were increasingly able to find coreligionists in even the most far-flung and out-of-the-way places who could provide them with assistance and fellowship, and to whom in return they could bring some contact (and often cash donations) from the outside world.[403]

This movement of ideas fostered by the trade networks strengthened both regional civilizations and ancient global society. Christopher Beckwith explains, "The official support of distinctive organized world religions spread literacy and developed distinctive literature-based cultures that further redefined and imperial states," which led to the founding "of most of the ethnolinguistic regions of the premodern Old World."[404] This literacy should not be measured by today's modern standards, as Beckwith cautions, "By no means was everyone educated and literate."[405] Instead, "in most kingdoms and empires throughout Eurasia those who needed to be able to read and write could do so in one language or another."[406] Part of Buddhism's centuries-long challenge of entering China, however, would come from its meeting a culture with strong preexisting literary and philosophical traditions. But before considering that conflict, we will first look at the arrival of the religion.

[403] Foltz, 12.

[404] Christopher J. Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 155.

[405] Ibid.

[406] Ibid.

On the question of dating the advent of Buddhism in China, the history remains unclear. Sinologist Erik Zürcher concedes that in "actual fact, it is unknown when Buddhism entered China."[407] He infers from both geography and historical criticism how the process most likely took place:

> It must have slowly infiltrated from the North-West, via the two branches of the continental silkroad which entered Chinese territory at Dunhuang, and from there through the corridor of Gansu to the "region within the Passes" and the North China plain, where in Later Han times the capital Luoyang was situated. This infiltration must have taken place between the first half of the first century BC the period of the consolidation of the Chinese power in Central Asia and the middle of the first century AD, when the existence of Buddhism is attested for the first time in contemporary Chinese sources.[408]

Even after entering China, however, it would take a few centuries for the religion to contextualize. Zürcher explains that "the factor of sheer distance between China and India" resulted in an "infrequency of direct contact between the monastic communities in china and religious centers in the homeland of Buddhism," which produced significant "consequences for the way in which Buddhism developed in China."[409] Foltz reports how, not satisfied with the rudimentary understanding of the religion, "Beginning no later than 260 CE, Chinese Buddhist monks began to travel to India in order to discover for themselves the sources of their faith."[410] He explains that because these new adherents of

[407] Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China, Third Edition with a Forward by Stephen F. Teiser* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 22.

[408] Zürcher, 22-23. Similarly, John Powers explains, "Contemporary scholars… consider it more likely that Buddhism arrived in China via the Silk Road in first century CE. Then a major thoroughfare, the Silk Road wound its way through northern India and Central Asia and terminated in Luoyang, where the White Horse Temple … was constructed in 65 CE." Powers, "Buddhas and Buddhisms," John Powers, ed. *The Buddhist World* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 46.

[409] Erik Zürcher, "Buddhism in China," in Jospeh M. Kitagaw and Mark D. Cummings, eds., *Buddhism and Asian History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 140.

[410] Foltz, 54.

Buddhism wanted to move beyond a surface level understanding of Buddhist texts and their teachings, they pursued a deeper encounter of the religion and its homeland:

> Fifty-four of these pilgrims are mentioned in Chinese sources, although there were probably many more who remain anonymous. These desire of these monks to experience India firsthand went beyond the desire to acquire original texts, however. They also wished to visit personally the sites associated with the life of the historical Buddha. Additionally, they hoped to find authoritative teachers of the Buddhist tradition, doubting the orthodoxy in some cases of Buddhist proponents in China.[411]

But as the numbers who of those able to travel to India proved relatively few, the problems caused by an insufficient grasp of language remained. As Zürcher identifies, lack of a solid grasp of the language going in both directions laid a faulty groundwork for understanding Buddhist doctrines:

> Chinese masters had no firsthand knowledge of Indian Buddhism; throughout the history of Chinese Buddhism, only a handful of Chinese are known to have mastered Sanskrit. On the other hand, the foreign missionaries who came to China (some from India, but as often from Buddhist centers in Central and Southeast Asia) seldom were fluent in Chinese. The production of Chinese versions of Buddhist texts typically was done by a translation team, the foreign master reciting the text and making, mostly with the help of a bilingual interpreter, a very crude translation, that was written with the help of a bilingual interpreter, a very crude translation, that was written down and afterward revised and polished by Chinese assistants.[412]

The result was, as Benjamin identifies, "that for many Chinese, Buddhism was initially presented as a variant of Daoism."[413] This misunderstanding would prevent the religion from becoming embedded in the society, because if it was "to really gain a hold in China, the faith needed to win converts among the people."[414] Doing so would prove extremely

[411] Also, "Many pilgrims brought home relics as well, such as teeth or bones believed to be the Buddha's." Foltz, 54.

[412] Zurcher, "Buddhism in China," 140.

[413] "The first challenge to this endeavor was translating the Buddhist texts, which were full of foreign ideas and names, into Chinese linguistic and cultural terms. An early solution was to try and adapt as many Buddhist concepts as possible to preexisting Daoist ideas. This meant, for example, that the Buddhist ideal of Nirvana was soon translated as *wuwei*, the Daoist notion of disengagement. And the word *Dao* itself (which means 'the way') was now used to translate the Buddhist idea of *Dharma*, or divine law." Benjamin, 262.

[414] Ibid.

difficult, as the new religion bumped up against a society that already had undergone a few millennia of development. Zürcher depicts the profound challenges of this encounter:

> Once it had entered China, Buddhism was confronted with formidable obstacles: a colossal empire and a civilization dominated by political and social ideas and norms that had been crystalized in the course of centuries. Especially at the level of the cultural elite, these dominant ideas ran counter to some of the most fundamental notions of Buddhism, both as a doctrine and as an institution. As representatives of the orthodox Confucian tradition, the Chinese literati maintained a worldview that was essentially pragmatic and secular, despite their assent to certain religious ideas belonging to the sphere of "political theology." … As a doctrine, Buddhism was bound to meet with the disapproval of the Confucian elite, who maintained that the basic ideals of human existence are to be realized in this life, and that doctrines must be appreciated according to their practical applicability and sociopolitical effectiveness rather than for their metaphysical qualities.[415]

If it remained stuck at this level, the religion would never fully undergo a sinicization process, always considered a foreign import.

The remedy for the misappropriation of Daoist concepts to explain Buddhist teachings arrived in the person of Kumārajīva (344-413 C.E.), whom Arthur Wright identifies as "the greatest of the missionary translators and perhaps the greatest translator of all time."[416] Coming from outside of China, his mother was reportedly a Kuchean princess, and his father came from India.[417] Having undergone his education in Kashmir, Prabodh Chandra Bagchi celebrates Kumārajīva as the "first to introduce in a systematic matter the Mahāyāna in China."[418] Zürcher provides a biography of the translator's life and career:

> Kumārajīva had been born in Kuchā in 350 AD from noble parents (on his mother's side he was related to the ruling family Kuchā). As a boy he studied at Kashmir where

[415] Zürcher, "Buddhism in China," 141.

[416] Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 63.

[417] Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, *India and China: Interactions through Buddhism and Diplomacy; A Collection of Essays by Professor Prabodh Chandra Bagchi*, compiled by Bangwei Wang and Tansen Sen (New York: Anthem Press, 2011), 19.

[418] Ibid.

> he became well-acquainted with the Sarvāstivāda doctrine; three years later he was converted to Mahāyāna at Kashgar … by the same Buddhayaśas who would later join him at Chang'an. His great fame as a Buddhist master and as a scholar in several fields (including vedic literature and mantic arts) spread to China, and when in 384 AD Fu Jian's general Lu Guang …conquered Kuchā, he took the unfortunate [Kumārajīva] with him as a valuable piece of booty, using his advice during his further campaigns and making him at the same time the object of his not very delicate jokes. Nothing is known about the seventeen years of Kumārajīva's life at Liangzhou (Gansu) where Lu Guang had founded an independent state; in 401 the "Tibetan" ruler Yao Xing conquered this "Later Liang" and Kumārajīva changed masters. Early in 402 he arrived at Chang'an and became there the *purohita* of the Later Qin, excessively venerated by the members of the ruling family, and the leader of several thousands of disciples from all quarters of the empire.[419]

This missionary served as the key figure of the crucial period that Zürcher terms the "formative phase" of the development of Chinese Buddhism, c. 300-589 C.E..[420] Zürcher identifies the areas of society with which the formerly foreign religion was able to engage during this era:

> Intellectually, it marks the penetration of Buddhism into the educated minority, and within the clergy itself, the formation of an elite group of scholarly monks. During this period Buddhism spread to all regions of China and to all social levels, including the Chinese and "barbarian" courts. By the end of this period the stage was set for the rise of indigenous Chinese Buddhist schools.[421]

This penetration happened largely, though not solely, as the legacy of Kumārajīva's work, who arrived in the capital of Chang'an in 401.[422] Benjamin reports how the missionary

[419] Zürcher, 226.

[420] "Politically, the formative phase covers the period of division, during which northern China was occupied by a great number of 'barbarian' dynasties of conquest, while the Yangtze basin and southern China were governed by a series of feeble Chinese dynasties." Zürcher, "Buddhism in China," 143.

[421] Ibid.

[422] Wright, 63. Kenneth Ch'en offers the account of the missionary's journey to the capital city: "In 379 the fame of Kumārajīva reached China through the report of a Chinese monk, Seng-ch'un, who had traveled to Kucha. Immediately efforts were made by Fu Chien, ruler of the Former Ch'in Dynasty, to get Kumārajīva to the capital in Ch'ang-an. These efforts were to be frustrated for almost two decades, mainly because of the activities of one Lü Kuang, the general sent by Fu Chien to subdue the Kucha kingdom. Being a non-Buddhist, Lü Kuang treated Kumārajīva with all kinds of indignities, and kept him in Liang-chou in northwestern China for seventeen years, in spite of repeated pleas from the Yao family Ch'ang-an to send him east. Finally in exasperation Yao Hsing dispatched armies to Liang-chou to defeat Lü and to bring Kumārajīva to Ch'ang-an in 401." See Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: An Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton

"established a huge translation school in Chang'an that employed several thousand monks to accurately translate many of the major and very lengthy Buddhist texts into Chinese."[423] From the beginning of his time in the capital, Kumārajīva relied on state power, including the benefit of living in "royal quarters"[424] to carry out his work of translating the faith into the Chinese language and mindset:

> Fortunately he found a royal patron, and Chinese monks were assembled from far and near to work with him in translating the sacred texts. This was a "highly structured project," suggestive of the cooperative enterprises of scientists today. There were corps of specialists at all levels: those who discussed doctrinal questions with Kumārajīva; those who checked the new translations against the old and imperfect ones; hundreds of editors, subeditors, and copyists. The quality and quantity of the translations produced by these men in the space of eight years is truly astounding. Thanks to their efforts the ideas of Mahayana Buddhism were presented in Chinese with far greater clarity and precision than ever before. Śūnyatā — Nāgārjuna's concept of the void—was disentangled from the Taoist terminology which had obscured and distorted it, and this and other key doctrines of Buddhism were made comprehensible enough to lay the intellectual foundations of the great age of independent Chinese Buddhism that was to follow.[425]

Kumārajīva's translation of the three treatises of "the *Chung-lun* (*Treatise on the Middle*), the *Po-lun* (*Treatise in One Hundred Verses*), and the *Shih-erh-men lun* (*Treatise on the Twelve Gates*)," together formed the foundation "for the establishment of an important Mahayana School in China, the San-lun or School of the Three Treatises."[426] De Bary credits the translation work in these three pieces as providing "an effective blow against the metaphysical salons which flourished in the South during the fourth and fifth centuries, interpreting Buddhism in largely Taoist terms."[427] Thus did Kumārajīva help

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University Press, 1964), 82-83.

[423] Benjamin, 262.

[424] Ch'en, 109.

[425] Wright, 63.

[426] Ch'en, 84.

[427] William Theodore de Bary, ed., *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan* (New York: Vintage

break the Daoist stranglehold on a proper understanding of Buddhism, allowing the formerly alien religion to become part of the Chinese landscape.

Kumārajīva relied on royal patronage for his translation work, but also provided assistance to the state. According to Tansen Sen, the missionary was "known to have assisted the Chinese rulers in military and state affairs."[428] The results of his endeavors, then, would not only include the penetration of Buddhism to a deeper, more authentic level, but would also allow Buddhism to become co-opted by those wielding governmental power, as Wright relates the acts of a ruler from a century later:

> Among the monarchs who embraced and promoted Buddhism, the best known is Emperor Wu of the Liang (reigned 502-49). He himself took the Buddhist vows and on several occasions literally "gave himself" to a Buddhist temple, requiring his ministers to "ransom" him with huge gifts to the temple. On the Buddha's birthday in 504 he ordered the imperial relatives, the nobles, and the officials to forsake Taoism and embrace Buddhism. In 517 he decreed the destruction of the temples of the Taoists—whose religion had steadily grown in power and influence (partly through its selective borrowing from Buddhism)—and ordered the Taoist adepts to return to lay life. He patterned himself after the new Buddhist model of kingly behavior, and his efforts won him titles which suggest the fusion of Chinese and Buddhist political sanctions. He was called Huang-ti p'u-sa (Emperor Boddhisattva), Chiu-shih p'usa (Savior Boddhisattva), and P'u-sa t'ien-tzu (Boddhisattva Son of Heaven).[429]

In this way, Emperor Wu is reminiscent of Ashoka from chapter three through the patronage of the Buddhist religion. State power promoting Buddhism in China did not just happen with the devotion of a single ruler, however, but also assisted in the geographic spread of the Chinese people. Whereas Emperor Wu might have persecuted Daoism as he championed his chosen religion, Buddhism displayed an element of flexible strength that Confucianism lacked when encountering other religious systems. As the

Books, 1972), 144.

[428] Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 36.

[429] Wright, 51.

ethnic Chinese people expanded the boundaries of the land they occupied, they found Buddhism a stronger tool than the long-established cultural philosophy of Confucianism for such encounters:

> As Chinese colonists slowly moved into the old aboriginal areas, they brought Buddhism with them, often in the person of officials or incoming gentry who combined Buddhism as a personal religion with old Confucian-rooted ideas and techniques for bringing Chinese civilization to "the natives." Buddhism was seen as a "civilizing" competitor against native shamanistic rites—a field of competition in which Confucianism was ill-equipped.[430]

In these ways of both receiving royal patronage and giving assistance in colonizing through the spread of Chinese civilization, Buddhism as a religion found itself in partnership with China's imperial structure, power, and influence.

4.3.a Legacy

The process of the movement of Buddhism from India to China continues to wield a profound influence both in Asia and worldwide. Benjamin explains the reality of how the Silk Road continues to influence the current global situation: "Today, some 2,000 years later, Buddhism remains one of the great cultural bonds shared by billions of people in Asia and beyond, one of the many legacies that the modern world owes to the First Silk Roads Era."[431] As shown above, this network of trade routes was organized to connect two empires at opposite ends, and everyone in-between. These trade routes forged the path through which Buddhism would travel from its home in India to Central Asia and then China. After taking several centuries to get established, its time in China put its own stamp on the religion, helping to strengthen the Mahayana tradition, and exporting Chan Buddhism to Japan, where it is called Zen. De Bary recounts this historical development

[430] Wright, 54.

[431] Benjamin, 282.

and transfer of this Buddhist school:

> By the Sung dynasty (960-1279), Ch'an was virtually all that remained of Buddhism in China and it had a very deep influence on many aspects of the brilliant Sung culture, especially in art, poetry, and philosophy. The Sung is also known as the period of remarkable activity in overseas trade, which at least for a time was conducted largely under private auspices, rather than as a government monopoly. Here too Ch'an played an important role, for its resourceful and adventurous adherents took part in commercial enterprises, and their temples along the southeast coast of China served as hostels for merchants and distribution for foreign goods. Ch'an missionaries often accompanied trading missions to Japan. It is understandable, then, why Ch'an Buddhism should have deeply implanted itself on Japanese soil at this time, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[432]

Chapter six will demonstrate how Zen itself became joined to empire in and through the rise of nationalism in Japan.

So far this chapter has conveyed how the transmission of Buddhism to, and later from, China by missionaries was able to take place because of empire—the trade routes set up by empire, the economic appetite for imports enabled by the strength of the Roman Empire, and the patronage of Chinese emperors for missionaries like Kumārajīva, who himself would work, at times, on behalf of the state. Kumārajīva proved key in introducing Mahayana Buddhism in a substantive way to China, and for translating the doctrines of the religion with a degree of quality and integrity that had been lacking. These areas of overlap or cooperation between Buddhist mission in general and missionaries in particular with the state convey that this interaction served as a key step in the global dissemination of Buddhism. The rest of the chapter moves the examination forward in time 1,500 years to the arrival of Protestant Christianity to China.

[432] de Bary, 355-356.

4.3 PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY'S ENTRANCE INTO CHINA: THE LINE FROM JONATHAN EDWARDS TO ROBERT MORRISON

Protestantism's missionary endeavors to China fit within a larger history of Christianity and its overall engagement with the country. As mentioned above, Christianity first arrived in China in the Nestorian form via the Silk Road. Daniel Bays reports that in 638 C.E., "the group of Nestorians around Alopen built the first Christian church in China, in Chang'an."[433] This tradition disappeared from China by the tenth century.[434] Roman Catholicism made its first appearance in China between 1245 and 1253 when "Innocent IV commissioned two different Franciscan-led diplomatic missions to the Mongols."[435] The Catholic engagement with China, however, increased with the arrival of the Jesuits from Europe, with its best known figure Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) possessing an honored grave in Beijing.[436] The intentional introduction of Protestant Christianity through missionary work in China took place with Robert Morrison (1782-1834). As such, Morrison's arrival in 1807 was a key moment in what Kenneth Scott Latourette termed the "Great Century of Christian Missions."[437] The framework that allowed Morrison to go there, however, arose as a result of the global reach and development of the British Empire.

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[433] Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 9.

[434] Ibid., 10.

[435] Ibid., 12.

[436] Ibid., 17. For a thorough account of the Jesuit effort in China, see Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[437] Latourette employs this phrase "The Great Century" to entitle volumes 4-6 of his *History of the Expansion of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970). Timothy Tennent demarcates the "great century" as the period that "spans from the publication of An Enquiry by William Carey to the 1910 conference in Edinburgh, which is regarded as the world's first global missionary conference." See Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Theology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2010), 256.

Chapter one of this study defines empire as the crossing of boundaries for the purpose of acquiring and consuming commodities. The second chapter conveys the narrative of the biblical fall in Genesis 3 as having humanity transgress a boundary of rule in order to take and consume food—the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One can employ this lens of appetite as a way to understand the historical development and growth of the British Empire. Lizzie Cunningham offers such an approach in *The Hungry Empire: How Britain's Quest for Food Shaped the Modern World*.[438] In this work, she casts the historical narrative as a process of expansion driven by the desire to gratify appetites: "From the sixteenth century, when the British started to venture out across the oceans, they went in search of food."[439] Cunningham provides a broad summary of the different goods pursued by the English, and how their importation helped change the social and economic structure of British society:

> West Country fishermen began bringing cargoes of salt cod back from Newfoundland in the 1570s, and in the next century East India Company carracks unloaded missions of pounds of pepper and spices at London's East India docks. Before then, food imports had catered for the wealthy, who drank burgundy wines with their heavily spiced meals and poured Italian olive oil on their salad greens. In the sixteenth century, the dried figs and currants, citrus fruits, almonds and spices that English merchants acquired in Antwerp in exchange for woolens accounted for only a tenth of all England's imports. But over the following centuries foodstuffs went from playing a negligible role in England's trade to center stage. By 1775, half (by value) of all good Britain imported were foodstuffs, and West Indian sugar had ousted linen from first place as the most valuable of all the country's imports. In fact, with a value of over £2.3 million, West Indian sugar was now worth more than all the manufactured goods arriving on Britain's shores. By now, food imports were no longer just for the rich.[440]

[438] Lizzie Cunningham, *The Hungry Empire: How Britain's Quest for Food Shaped the Modern World* (London: The Bodley Head, 2017.

[439] Ibid., xvi.

[440] Ibid..

In their global expansion, however, the British contrasted with their imperial competitors of the Spanish and French in that they not only imported, but then would colonize and settle the land from which the goods came. Such was the case, according to Jayme Sokolow, in that "Britain's North American colonies were quite different from the French and Spanish empires because they grew quickly as a result of European migration."[441] From the very start, these colonies "were oriented around agriculture and trade."[442] Rather than just locate and extract resources, for "the English, access to what they saw as virginal, untamed land and not native labor was the focus of their colonization efforts."[443] The result was a more strongly rooted empire, occupying and developing the land with future producers and trading partners, instead of just the resources it offered. Such was the case in which one of the most influential Protestant missionaries and theologians found himself.

4.3.a Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd

It may seem counterintuitive to begin the account of Protestant Christianity's entrance into China by looking at a preacher almost a century before in the American colonies. However, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) proved to effect a global influence on Christian missions, which includes Protestant missionary work in China. Edwards pastored a church in Northampton, Massachusetts, for twenty-four years, from 1726-1750. His Congregational church descended from the Puritans, whose ancestors had come over to the colony during the preceding century. Regarding his work as a theologian, historian

[441] Jayme A. Sokolow, *The Great Encounter: Native Peoples and European Settlers in the Americas, 1492-1800* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2003), 142.

[442] Ibid.

[443] Ibid.

Mark Noll argues that, as a Calvinist theologian who employed the tools and thought of the Enlightenment, Edwards "was the greatest evangelical mind in America."[444] So how does Jonathan Edwards, a pastor and theologian in the British colony of Massachusetts in the first half of the eighteenth century have a bearing on the Great Century of Christian Missions, particularly Protestant missions in China in the nineteenth century? Following are a few ways that Edwards connects to the subsequent Protestant missionary movement.

a) The First Great Awakening

Edwards studied at Yale College in preparation for ministry, then joined his grandfather to pastor the church in Northampton. While there, Edwards chronicled the manifestations occurring in the spiritual revival of the 1730s-1740s that would later be called the First Great Awakening. He published these observations of the revival as *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737). His account popularized this spiritual movement from New England to the transatlantic community of all of the colonies on the North American continent and back in the British Isles. As mentioned in chapter one of this study, this movement helped lay the groundwork for the separation of the colonies from Britain to form the United States. The First Great Awakening would lay the groundwork for the Second Great Awakening, which began in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Odd Arne Westad explains that "most of the nineteenth-century missionaries were British or American Protestants," who "were young men and women inspired by the Great Awakening in the United States and

[444] Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 60.

evangelical revivals in Britain."[445] So Edwards' participation in and promotion of the First Great Awakening wielded long term political and missionary effects.

b) The Founding of Princeton Seminary

Oliver Crisp and Douglas Sweeney ascribe to Edwards a place of profound influence in global history. They offer the assessment, "In short, Edwards has become one of the few Protestant leaders who have changed the world forever—through his ministry, his writings, and the labors of his followers."[446] Crisp and Sweeney recount how, in the following century, Edwards' influence went beyond the former American colonies:

> Edwardsian Calvinism did not decline but flourished in the decades of the early nineteenth century, spreading quickly to Britain and Europe through a network we might well call the Christian republic of letters, and to other parts of the world by means of the modern missions movement (which Edwards himself helped to inspire).[447]

This influence of Edwards spread largely through "the influential Princeton Theological Seminary," in the state of New Jersey.[448] It was in that institution where "most American Presbyterian ministers matriculated in the nineteenth century."[449] Edwards' influence was not just through the numerical output in the number of clergy that would graduate from the institution, but came about because, "for many professors and students," the school "provided not only one possible view of correct

[445] Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the Modern World since 1750* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 70.

[446] Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, "Postscript," in Oliver D. Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds., *After Jonathan Edwards: The Courses of the New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 254.

[447] Crisp and Douglas A. Sweeney, 254.

[448] Ibid.

[449] Ibid.

theology but the one and only true view of Protestant doctrine."[450] Although Edwards studied at Yale, he was connected to a group of clergy who established Princeton, originally called the College of New Jersey, in 1746.[451] The occasion that caused the founding of the new seminary in the colony of New Jersey was the expulsion of David Brainerd from Edwards' alma mater of Yale in 1741.[452] A number of ministers dissatisfied with Yale's influence on the ministerial system started the new seminary at Princeton, and Brainerd would later become a missionary to the indigenous tribe of the Delaware Indians. Later on, Edwards would accept the call to serve as the school's president, but died of a smallpox inoculation a few days after his installation. Although Edwards' death took place soon after the beginning of his work as president, his presence loomed over the nineteenth century.[453] His legacy, however, was both the institution and his theological influence on it and beyond. Kirk MacGregor describes the role as a bastion of Protestant orthodoxy that Princeton would come to play for more than one hundred years:

> From 1812 to 1921, an enormously influential movement arose at Princeton Theological Seminary that aimed to reclaim theology as the queen of the sciences against Kantian skepticism, to establish the total authority and reliability of Scripture against speculative methods in biblical scholarship, and to defend the historic doctrines of Christianity in general and the Reformed tradition in particular against the doctrinal revisionism of Schleiermacher. Known as Princeton theology or the Princeton school of theology (sometimes "Old Princeton" in distinction to post-1921 Princeton, which does not share its views),

[450] Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 557.

[451] George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 215.

[452] Ibid., 330-331.

[453] Crisp and Sweeney, 180.

> this dynasty of theological scholarship remains a stronghold for many contemporary evangelicals.[454]

An example of a graduate of this "Old Princeton," which the following chapter will look briefly at, is found in George Leslie Mackay (1844-1901), the celebrated Presbyterian missionary in Taiwan. Mackay grew up in Canada, but underwent his theological training in New Jersey. His example demonstrates how, both through Edwards' writings and his influence on Princeton's founding and its subsequent reliance on his thought, Edwards influenced global missions.

c) **Missionary to the Native Americans**

Following his long stint at Northampton, Edwards himself served as a cross-cultural missionary from 1751-1758. In this role, he was a missionary-pastor to the Mohican tribe of Native Americans and English settlers in the town of Stockbridge. Having both the indigenous people and the colonists live in the same village, however, provoked tension. Marsden explains why Edwards was able to work in a situation that both made converts of the native people while allowing the British to move in and cultivate the land:

> For Edwards the preeminent goal was to reach the Indians with the Gospel. Working from a Constantinian perspective, he never questioned the premise that God used Christian empires to bring his message to unevangelized peoples. In his view the crucial concern was that as the British advanced they not neglect to teach the Indians Reformed Christianity. That was first a spiritual duty, but it also had a humane cultural program. Once Christianized and taught European ways, Indians could live at peace with their new neighbors, benefitting from a civilization that had much to offer. In the meantime, Christians like Woodbridge, who were true fathers to the Indians, might properly turn a profit fitting their own position, so long as they did so honestly.[455]

[454] Kirk R. MacGregor, *Contemporary Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 64.

[455] Marsden 408-409.

In this experience, Edwards worked earnestly as a missionary with an indigenous tribe, but turned out to also serve as an agent of empire by helping to develop a town into which the British colonists would move. The result was that the incoming residents would eventually push out the Native Americans.[456] In this season of his life, then, Edwards, served as an eighteenth century missionary who unintentionally acted on behalf of empire.

d) Publishing David Brainerd's *Journals*

As both the chronicler of the First Great Awakening, and as a dominant theologian over the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Edwards is known for his written theological resources. In the case of missions, however, one publication also paved the way for the revivalism of the nineteenth century, from which much of the nineteenth century's ranks of missionaries drew. This group includes many of the missionaries of the China Inland Mission, which will be considered below. Above it was mentioned that the expulsion of David Brainerd from Yale occasioned the founding of the College of New Jersey, later known as Princeton Theological Seminary. Brainerd served as a missionary to the Delaware Indian tribe from 1743-

[456] Marsden explains, "The issue was the classic one that would plague every mission to the natives during the era of English and American expansion. Closely following the missionaries were settlers who, even if sympathetic to the mission, had stronger interests in their own lands, their economic opportunities, and the security of their expanding families. Though Stockbridge was still predominantly a town for Indians, it was nonetheless an English town. The Indians were used to a more communal system of ownership and reluctant to adopt the more individualized English model; yet they also knew they had to play by the English rules if their claims were to continue to be recognized. The New Englanders, familiar with their own system, kept outmaneuvering them. No one had told them, the Indians complained to a government committee late in 1749, that the number of English families would be expanded from four to the current ten. The New Englanders were also buying up some of the best land or not mentioning that in measuring some of the acreage they traded they were including ponds and swamps. Most irritating to the Indians were the land maneuvers of Squire Ephraim Williams and his adult sons, who were building the family fortune by consolidating claims to choice real estate. John Sergeant, Ephraim Williams' son-in-law, had served as a sort of buffer between the Indians and the Williamses, but with their pastor removed, the Indians' distrust of the Williams clan increased." Marsden, 378-379.

1746. He has also traditionally been known as the fiancé of Edwards' daughter Jerusha (1730-1748). Historian George Marsden describes this mischaracterization as "one of the history's fabled spiritual love tales" that "has led to much speculation."[457] Marsden reports, "Legend has it that they were betrothed," but informs that "there is no real evidence for that."[458] Instead, it seemed that David and Jerusha "cared deeply for each other, even if their deepest loves were for things spiritual."[459] Brainerd suffered an early death, probably due to the ravages of extensive wilderness travels and the missionary lifestyle on his body. Honoring the mutual admiration of this younger colleague with his daughter, "Edwards had Jerusha's wilted body buried next to Brainerd's."[460] Marsden suggests that Edwards worked through his grief of both his younger colleague and his daughter by editing Brainerd's journals:

> Jonathan himself loved Brainerd. Immediately after the young man's death, he set aside some of his own cherished projects to edit Brainerd's diaries, which he would eventually publish as *An Account of the Life of David Brainerd*. … The death of [Edwards' daughter] Jerusha, who may have been helping with the project, only increased his zeal to see it completed.[461]

This publication both inspired others and served as a training manual for mission work conducted throughout the British Empire, as will be seen in the cases of William Carey and Robert Morrison below.

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[457] Marsden, 329.

[458] Ibid.

[459] Ibid., 328.

[460] "On his deathbed David had told Jerusha that he would not have been able to bear parting with her if he had not been sure that they would spend eternity together. Edwards was confident that their souls were already blissfully united in Christ, yet in what seems for him an unusual display of earthly sentiment, he placed her remains next to Brainerd's awaiting the bodily resurrection." Marsden, 328.

[461] Ibid., 329.

The above factors demonstrate how it was the imperial framework built through the penetration of the North American continent that allowed both Brainerd and Edwards to carry out their missionary work among the Native American tribes. They both were British colonists, descendants of the Puritans who, as citizens of the empire, emigrated over from England. Brainerd's written journals not only provided inspiration for William Carey, but also served as the model for Morrison and others with the London Missionary Society on how to carry out missionary work. Mission work done in the context of one part of the British Empire—a colonist among the indigenous peoples of New England—was spread by another missionary and theologian through the technology of the printing press among the transatlantic English-speaking people. This work conveyed the approach of Edwards, who, as we have seen, was an unwitting agent of empire. As the more developed the mission work became in an "Indian town," the more that town became an embodiment and extension of English civilization and, in turn, the British Empire. In this way, Edward's mission work served as effectively clearing the way for the entrenchment of British rule. Brainerd's journals used as teaching manuals were the product of missionary work in the first British Empire (1583-1783), and so, set up the model for some of the historically significant efforts that took place in Asia in the era of the second British Empire (1783-1945).

4.3.b William Carey

Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd lived in and carried out missionary work in the First British Empire. The close of the War for Independence (1775-1783) and the loss of the American colonies, which became the United States, in 1783, marked the unofficial end of the era recognized as the First British Empire. While retaining Canada in North America and interests in the Caribbean, the Second British Empire moved its focus to the

continents of Asia and Africa. Now in Asia, transitioning from a context of wilderness inhabited by tribal societies in North America to civilizations established for millennia with their own long-developed philosophical systems and religious traditions. Lawrence James, though conveying cultural prejudice against the indigenous peoples of North America in his explanation, describes the change in approach in the second era:

> Hitherto, imperial conquest and annexation had been confined to America and accompanied by emigration from Britain. Along with the emigrants had gone Christianity, British political values and systems of government which had been reproduced in the colonies. In India things had been different. In the space of sixty years the Company had acquired provinces that possessed their own machinery of government, which had evolved along autocratic lines and sophisticated, well-organised societies with their own deeply-rooted religions and customs.[462]

In the Asian context, the greatest force in bringing in British imperial rule, even when unofficial, was the East India Company (EIC), often called the Company. The EIC received its royal charter in 1600 as one of the world's first joint stock companies, was taken over by the British government in 1833, and later ceased operations in 1874. While providing the imports to meet the demands of English consumers, Parsons explains that the stock owners and executives of the EIC "in London never planned to acquire an empire, but they were powerless to prevent their opportunistic employees from parasitizing Asian imperial systems."[463] In examining how the East India Company took over the Indian province of Bengal, and later the rest of the subcontinent, Timothy Parsons shows how a trading company functioned as a military arm of the United Kingdom:

> [I]t is remarkable that United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies, more commonly known as the East India Company (EIC), managed to seize control of such an important Mughal province. Initially, the EIC was just one of nineteen chartered companies that mobilized capital for risky foreign trading ventures

[462] Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1994), 135.

[463] Parsons, 173.

> in seventeenth-century England. Established in 1600, its charter from Queen Elizabeth I granted it a monopoly over all British trade with the East Indies and the implicit authority to negotiate commercial treaties, establish settlements, and, by implication, wage wars.[464]

Parsons describes how this new form of empire through corporation manifested an innovative way of carrying out imperial aims:

> The result was a new kind of private Asian imperial state that was very different from the early modern empires of the Western Hemisphere. Where Spanish, Portuguese, English, and French territories in the Americas quickly took on a colonial dimension by attracting significant numbers of European settlers, corporate conquerors in Asia built their empires by grafting themselves onto preexisting indigenous systems of imperial rule.[465]

What began as a for-profit trading endeavor grew into the largest, strongest empire the world had known.[466]

It was in this new context that William Carey (1761-1834) went from England to India as a missionary. As Carey's reputation in history assigns him the role of the "father of the modern missionary movement,"[467] Allen Yeh explains how his "reputation comes from him being the one to popularize the Great Commission as binding for all Christians."[468] For a tradition so based on the understanding of the gospel of grace, the historical moment of Carey's call to missions seems surprising:

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[464] Parsons, 170-171.

[465] Ibid., 175.

[466] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 306.

[467] David A. Schattschneider, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research,* Volume: 22 issue: 1, January 1, 1998, 22 (Accessed June 27, 2019). See also Neill, *History*, 222.

[468] Allen Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology: Twenty-First Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016), 31.

> Prior to his writing *An Enquiry*,[469] most Protestants believed that Matthew 28:16-20 was binding only for the original eleven disciples. This despite the fact that the Reformation started in 1517—so it was over 250 additional years before missions became a widespread belief among Protestants! …Carey's advocacy of this Copernican shift in missional thinking caused a spate of voluntary missionary societies (Protestants' answer to Catholic monastic orders, at least as far as an organizational structure for missions was concerned) to spring into existence and the launching of thousands for the task of missions worldwide.[470]

When considering the political and cultural contexts at the turn of the nineteenth century, Scott Sunquist suggests that, in addition to the evangelical revivals back home, "the second element that made the missionary movement possible was global trading and colonialism."[471] So the call from Carey to active global, cross-cultural missions fit into the development of the thinking of his society at the time. Parsons explains, "British imperial thinkers became increasingly confident that, as a free people, they had a duty to develop the world that God had given them."[472] But Neill explains that the timing "of Carey's arrival in India was not propitious for the foundation of a mission," being that the EIC was a "commercial company which was in the process of transforming itself into an empire."[473] By that point, it had gotten so far that "by now was the dominant power in

[469] *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, 1792.

[470] Yeh offers the commentary, "With the five hundredth anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation at hand (October 31, 2017), it is concerning that widespread missions has existed for less than half of Protestant history." Yeh, 31.

[471] Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in the Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 94.

[472] Parsons, 177. Similarly, Bosch explains, "By the second decade of the nineteenth century things began to change. In 1813 Parliament opened the door for "the introduction of useful knowledge, and religious and moral improvement" in India (and subsequently also in other colonies). This was, in effect, the beginning of what later became known as "benevolent colonialism," which meant that the colonial power consciously took responsibility for the welfare of the inhabitants of its colonies. It also meant that missionaries were henceforth allowed to operate more or less freely." Bosch, 307.

[473] Neill, *History*, 223.

India."[474] The EIC proved "suspicious of missionaries and hostile to their entrance."[475] This suspicion against missionaries arose from the "fear that the disturbance caused by the preaching of the Gospel might threaten their always uncertain control of their dominions."[476] Carey went to India and persisted, through many difficulties, spending forty-one years total in his adoptive country.

Above it was stated that Jonathan Edwards had a global effect on Protestant missions, and one means of this effect took place largely through his influence on Carey. David Calhoun recounts how Brainerd's journals both inspired and instructed Carey and his colleagues in carrying out their mission:

> As William Carey prepared to go to India, Brainerd's Life was "almost a second Bible." When Carey, Ward, and Marshman signed the historic agreement that laid down the principles of their missionary work at Serampore, they agreed to "often look at Brainerd in the woods of America, pouring out his very soul before God for the perishing heathen without whose salvation nothing could make him happy."[477]

This admiration for his forebear appears in Carey's influential *An Enquiry*, which looks to Brainerd a few times as an exemplar of missionary work, like the apostle Paul.[478] Just as it did for Carey, Edwards' work on Brainerd became the standard for the great century of missions:

> One of the reasons for this popularity was simply because the biography was accessible at a time when not many primary accounts were. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, *The Life of David Brainerd* was one of the few published accounts

[474] Neill, *History*, 223

[475] Ibid.

[476] Ibid.

[477] David B. Calhoun. "David Brainerd: 'A Constant Stream.'" *Knowing and Doing: A Teaching Quarterly for the Discipleship of Heart and Mind* (Summer 2011), http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/247 (Accessed January 20, 2019), 33.

[478] William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens.* William Carey University. https://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf (Accessed June 27, 2019), 36, 87.

> of a missionary experience widely available in English—one of the others being David Cranz's *The History of Greenland*, which contained a wealth of material related to Moravian missions in Greenland. Edwards's biography of Brainerd led its readers to view David Brainerd as a self-denying, devoted, and successful missionary willing and able to endure great hardships on behalf of his religion. Throughout the text, the reader follows Brainerd's missionary career amongst the Native Americans in North America. He travelled by horseback thousands of miles alone, across rugged terrain, and subjected his body and mind to impressive trials, all on behalf of God. This all took its toil on Brainerd, who frequently battled illnesses yet remained meek, zealous, and submissive.[479]

Subsequent history has given Carey an even more legendary status than his hero, as Carey left a legacy of igniting the Protestant missionary movement, engaging in biblical translation, and founded a college and university in India.

4.3.c Robert Morrison

Whereas William Carey is celebrated as the father of modern missions, Robert Morrison's (1782-1834) notoriety comes from being the first Protestant missionary to China. John Mark Terry and Robert L. Gallagher offer an overview of Morrison's ministry career after arriving in 1807:

> He worked under the London Missionary Society. The British East India Company refused to transport a missionary to China, so he had to travel by way of America. … Morrison had to study the Chinese language secretly because the emperor of China had forbidden his people to teach the "foreign devils" to speak Chinese. Morrison's fluency in Chinese enabled him to support himself by working as a translator for the East India Company. In 1823 he published his translation of the Chinese Bible. His Chinese dictionary proved invaluable for the many missionaries who followed him to China. He, too, preached for seven years before winning his first convert, and he baptized only twelve converts in all.[480]

[479] Christopher A. Daily, *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 79-80.

[480] John Mark Terry and Robert L. Gallagher, *Encountering the History of Missions: From the Early Church to Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 253.

As a pioneer missionary in Asia, Morrison would emulate Carey in a few key ways. Both figures share similarities in coming from humble backgrounds, suffering widowhood while overseas and remarrying. Regarding their actual work, first, like Carey, Morrison found Brainerd's journals to be both an inspiration and a model for mission work. When Morrison underwent his training with the London Missionary Society (LMS), the head of education David Bogue (1750-1825) used Brainerd's story as a model for trainees.[481] Christopher Daily explains why the LMS looked to Brainerd as a standard for its missionaries-in-training:

> To the evangelicals, like Christ, Brainerd demonstrated focus and perseverance in the face of suffering and hardship. He sacrificed his own health for his missionary calling, making him an overwhelming source of inspiration and admiration amongst those involved in the evangelical Protestant missionary movements of the early nineteenth century. It is not surprising, then, that he featured so prominently in the Gosport training programme and was presented to the LMS candidates as a role model.[482]

Second, Morrison engaged in language translation work. According to Gallagher and Terry, "Carey set the pattern for modern missions when he gave most of his attention and considerable talent to transplanting the Bible."[483] Unlike Carey, Morrison focused on the one language of Chinese, whereas Carey tried his hand at many languages:

> During his forty-one years in India, Carey translated all or part of the Bible into thirty-five languages. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, spent sixteen years translating the Bible into Chinese. Of course, Adoniram Judson and Robert Moffat did the same in Burma and South Africa, respectively. These early missionaries, though not trained in linguistics, labored long and hard to provide the Scriptures to their people. Notice, though, that they also worked at evangelism, leadership training, and church development. The speed and accuracy of Bible translation increased considerably through the work of specialized Bible translators.[484]

[481] Daily, 79.

[482] Ibid., 80.

[483] Gallagher and Terry, 314-315.

[484] Ibid.

Studying the Chinese language and spending years producing resources in the language, Morrison is representative of the subjects described by missiologist Andrew Walls in his chapter "The Nineteenth-Century Missionary as Scholar."[485] Whereas Carey served as a key inspiration for the missions movement, Morrison's legacy also includes the foundation of British and Western academic study of both the Chinese language and culture:

> When Robert Morrison was appointed a missionary to China in 1807, the entire Chinese resources of British academic libraries consisted of one manuscript in the British Museum and one in the Royal Society, and not a person in Britain read or spoke Chinese. When Morrison returned on his first and only furlough (now the translator of the Bible and author of a massive Chinese dictionary), he took steps to establish an Oriental philological institute. Missionaries such as James Legge, the greatest English-speaking sinologist of the nineteenth century, and J. N. Farquhar, who did so much to interpret Indian literature in the twentieth, helped to open up the West to classical religious, philosophical, and historical texts of Asia.[486]

His contributions to the development of scholarship regarding China filled what the missionary saw as a great need. Hancock explains, "Critical of Western ignorance, Morrison was never bewitched by China's mystique or oblivious to its flaws."[487] However, Morrison always maintained a main focus on the mission of making disciples, as for "good or ill, he had come to do a job: China, he was sure, needed the gospel message he bore."[488] So although his association with the EIC would taint his reputation

[485] Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian Movement in History: Studies in the Transmission of the Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), 187-198.

[486] Ibid., 148.

[487] Christopher Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism* (New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 37.

[488] Ibid.

in his later years,[489] Morrison never fully exchanged his primary vocation of missionary to that of diplomat or corporate administrator.

The main funder of Morrison's translation work in China was the East India Company. Like Carey, Morrison was not given passage aboard an EIC ship, due to the Company's mistrust of missionaries.[490] Despite this refusal, Morrison worked as a translator for the East India Company, beginning in 1808.[491] He did not set out to work for the Company, but in the year after his arrival, found doing so, as Neill describes, most practical for income and residency:

> Once arrived, and having attained to some mastery of the Chinese language, Morrison secured permission to reside near Canton by the simple expedient of making himself indispensable. Few of the foreigners in Canton learned Chinese. They needed a translator. Morrison was available and willing to accept appointment. The deal was made. By accepting this secular employment, at a salary which eventually reached £1300 a year, Morrison gained three great advantages. His residence in Canton became legal, if such a term can be used of the residence of any foreigner at that time. He became financially independent. He was able to go ahead with the great work, which before his death included the translation of the entire Bible into Chinese and the production of a dictionary which for its date is a work of notable excellence.[492]

His choice of employer, however, caused concern back home. Hancock reports, "News of Morrison's appointment with the EIC aroused strong feelings back in Britain: the Honourable Company was renowned for their hostility to missionaries in India."[493] Working two jobs, one with the EIC and the other for the LMS, "Long hours of

[489] Hancock, 233.

[490] Neill, *Colonialism*, 128.

[491] Hancock, 64.

[492] Neill, *Colonialism*, 128.

[493] Hancock, 67.

painstaking study lay behind long hours of public and official duty."[494] But the arrangement allowed him to undertake his long-term endeavor, as "between 1809 and 1813, Morrison turned from being a competent to an excellent interpreter of Chinese in many of its written and spoken forms."[495] These skills enabled him to "work on his 'grand project', the English-Chinese Dictionary proceeded steadily, but slowly, encouraged by both the LMS and the EIC. … Though it appeared in parts, the whole Dictionary was not finally completed and printed until 1823."[496] Morrison also produced a Chinese translation of the Bible for the LMS.[497]

Morrison's reliance upon the EIC for income continued with his family following his death. Hancock reports, "Despite concerns in 1832 that the EIC would not provide a pension," Morrison's widow and second wife Eliza "received a half pension from the EIC for the remainder of her life."[498] These payments were not just offered to fulfill legal requirements, but also "in gratitude and respect for her husband's work."[499] The relationship did not just continue with his wife, but extended into the next generation as well. After Morrison's passing, "his oldest son, John Robert, took over his father's work as a missionary with the LMS and translator and Chinese secretary for the EIC."[500] Whereas Robert's first aim was for the gospel over the Company and empire, the priorities appeared to switch over time for his son John Robert, whose administrative role

[494] Hancock, 72.

[495] Ibid.

[496] Ibid., 76.

[497] Ibid., 75.

[498] Ibid., 247.

[499] Ibid.

[500] Ibid., 246.

for the state outgrew that of his father, who taught him the language and modeled statesmanship:

> John Robert had a first-class teacher, and became a worthy heir and successor. His first publication, the *Chinese Commercial Guide*, appeared in 1833. During the 1839-40 conflict with China, Morrison Jr translated all official communications, and during the campaigns of 1840-42, he was attached to the British military headquarters. With the secession of Hong Kong, John Robert became a member of the legislative and executive council, and officiating colonial secretary in Hong Kong. He died of malaria in Hong Kong in the autumn of 1843, his death, declared the English plenipotentiary, Sir Henry Pottinger, being 'a positive national calamity'. He was buried beside his parents in Macao.[501]

It was these military conflicts to which John Robert was attached that paved the way for a deeper penetration of China by both the EIC and Protestant missionaries in the subsequent decades. For the latter of these aims, Hancock argues that, without Morrison's, contributions, Protestant Christianity would have been on even less secure footing to begin its long-term residence in China:

> In the 25 years between Morrison's death and the Treaty of Tientsin, which forced an unequal treaty on a reluctant Qing Emperor, and enforced missionary access on a (largely) reluctant people, Protestant Christianity established a fragile presence in China. Morrison and the LMS share a vision for an indigenous, independent Chinese Church: this was only partially fulfilled in coming decades. Much work was done, by many remarkable Chinese and Western Christians, but culturally and numerically the impact was small. Morrison's legacy was, however, perpetuated in his successors and in the resources he provided for them through his Chinese materials and Chinese Bible. Little would have been achieved without him.[502]

This dual legacy in the person and work of Robert Morrison, through which the entrance of Protestant Christianity into China came, embodies the partnership between religious mission and empire. Morrison was assigned to China and under the supervision of the

[501] Hancock, 246.

[502] Ibid., 248. Hancock also eulogizes the missionary, writing, "Morrison's death left a legacy not only of learning and literature, but in the millions of Christian lives who gave themselves for China or served Christ in China. No one could ever replace Morrison, but different individuals and different institutions carried forward different aspects of his life and labour." Hancock, 245.

London Missionary Society, but had his mission largely funded by the East India Company. Whereas he spent years translating the Bible for future missionaries and the Chinese church, his dictionary was desired by the LMS, the EIC, and formed the foundation of British academic study of Chinese language and culture. Morrison's work in producing language resources and in his son's work on behalf of both the EIC and British imperial structures embody this connection between mission work and empire. Like the later missionary, Hudson Taylor, Morrison was respectful of Chinese culture, engaging it rigorously. In contrast, Taylor was able to penetrate deeply into China because of the military victories in the intervening years.

4.4 PROTESTANTISM PENETRATES CHINA: THE OPIUM TRADE AND JAMES HUDSON TAYLOR

The previous section traced a line from Jonathan Edwards and his younger colleague David Brainerd in the early part of the eighteenth century to the arrival of Robert Morrison as a missionary in China in the early nineteenth century. Morrison brought with him Protestant Christianity to China, but was able to carry out his mission work because of his employment as a translator with the East India Company. This current section looks at the years following Morrison, demonstrating how the EIC escalated its penetration of China with the opium trade. Through the two Opium Wars of 1841-42 and 1856-60, the EIC and British government forced China to not only require its markets to allow the sale of opium, but also to allow foreign missionaries access to the interior of the entire country. James Hudson Taylor's (1832-1905) China Inland Mission (CIM) organization took advantage of the stipulations of the treaties that allowed Western missionaries to travel unhindered. Hudson made use of these benefits gained through the Opium Wars, even as he spoke against the opium trade to his British government.

4.4.a The Opium Trade, Opium Wars, and Unequal Treaties

As the decades of the nineteenth century moved forward, the East India Company continued to grow in its broad reach and strength. David Cannadine writes that, although it "was still ostensibly a trading enterprise," with its own military, "the inexorable expansion of the territory it controlled meant the company's employees, and the British officials who oversaw them, increasingly came to see themselves as rulers rather than traders."[503] The EIC had used its muscle to effectively take over the Indian subcontinent, and so would exercise its military strength in China to keep itself from suffering a trade deficit.[504] Setting the context underlying these conflicts, Nicholas Dirks diagnoses how the British appetite for tea led to the loss of the country's financial reserves:

> There were two problems with tea… The first was that the Chinese initially accepted only silver bullion in exchange for tea. Gradually the Chinese did become interested in various Indian products, including cotton piece goods and, increasingly, opium. The "country trade," as it was increasingly known, was developed in effect to produce and then export local goods for the China trade, to substitute "currency" for the bullion that had increasingly drained the Company's finances. The second problem, and this intensified as opium became the principal item of exchange for tea, was fear that reliance on a producer not controllable through direct colonial means could be dangerous.[505]

If the problem for a British company trading with China was that "the Chinese wouldn't accept wool," as Fraser and Rimas describe, "the Company decided to give them drugs

[503] David Cannadine, *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom, 1800-1906* (New York: Viking, 2017), 120.

[504] "As a result of the preference among the laboring classes for liberally sweetened tea, the value of East India Company imports of the herb increased one hundred-fold between 1700 and 1774 and tea now overtook textiles as the Company's most valuable trading commodity. The loss of the American colonies in 1783 made the British government all the more determined to raise revenue from its remaining colonies. In 1784, in an attempt to boost the China trade, while at the same time pulling the rug from under the feet of tea smugglers, Parliament slashed the tax on tea imports, bringing the price of the lowest-quality bohea dust down from 12s. to 2s. a pound. Tea imports more than doubled again to 30 million lb per annum. Tea was by now a truly mass consumer item and the Exchequer reaped the rewards: tea duties in the 1830s amounted to over £3 million and accounted for one tenth the government's income." Cunningham, 148.

[505] Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2006), 143-144.

instead."[506] Neill describes why opium, "which is small, light, durable and expensive," proved to be such an effective commodity for trade in China:[507]

> In exporting opium to China the British government in India believed itself to have found a solution to its economic problems. Opium is small in bulk, light, not quickly perishable, and very expensive. The revenue derived from the export duties was an essential item in the Indian government's budget, and could not be surrendered, as was alleged, without financial collapse. Moreover, the provision of such a useful and expensive piece of merchandise was of the greatest help to the East India Company in paying its debts to China. Legally or illegally, clandestinely or openly, the Chinese were determined to have opium, and they were prepared to pay the price demanded.[508]

Having found a product to offset the imbalance produced by Britain's desire for Chinese goods, the EIC determined to get the narcotic to market from India to its destination. Fraser and Rimas provide the background to the triangular configuration of the opium trade:

> Britain's infamous opium trade had actually begun a few decades before, in 1757, when the Company broke a series of agreements with the young nawab of Bengal, forcing him to fight the Battle of Palashi. A famous victory for colonial interests, it ended after a mere eight hours of bloodshed that left Bengal under the Company banner. One of the first acts of the new leadership was to seize control of the region's opium production, commandeering the entire crop and then regulating prices. Years later, when the Chinese refused to buy British textiles, the Company was able to institute a triangle trade. Its ships carried British goods to Bengal, traded them for opium, and dumped the narcotics on a Chinese populace that had already developed an addiction, courtesy of Dutch dealers.[509]

Cannadine explains that "even though its importation had been banned by the emperor," the EIC traded opium from Indian in "exchange for silks, porcelain and (especially) tea,"

[506] Evan D. G. Fraser and Andrew Rimas, *Empires of Food: Feast, Famine, and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations* (New York: Free Press, 2010), 206.

[507] Neill, *Colonialism*, 131.

[508] Ibid., 131-132.

[509] Fraser and Rimas, 206.

which their customers back home and in other colonies wanted.[510] The result was the number of opium addicts in China reaching into the millions by 1830.[511]

To stem the damage of addiction among its population, the Qing government seized 20,000 barrels of opium in 1839 and, again, closed the country to the importation of opium. The British government responded by employing its technological advantage over the Chinese military in the First Opium War of 1841-42. Having demonstrated naval superiority over the French at sea, the British Royal Navy needed to take control of the interiors of the countries under its influence. Herman explains how the crafting of the gunboat met this need, allowing for the enforcement of British rule throughout its interior:

> At one end, the impact of technology on sea power spawned iron behemoths like the *Devastation* and *Dreadnought*. At the other end, it produced the gunboat. Never more than 200 feet long and usually with a crew of only thirty or forty, the steam-powered gunboat became the ubiquitous symbol of the Victorian navy's global responsibilities. … Usually commanded by a single lieutenant, often in his twenties, the gunboat not only gave its name to a new form of international diplomacy, "gunboat diplomacy," it also gave the Royal Navy its last dying sense of swashbuckling adventure.[512]

Unlike India, China was not formally part of Britain's empire. However, the EIC's trade, enforced through military means, extended British rule through unofficial or soft empire, both in China and elsewhere:

> The advent of the gunboat allowed Great Britain to penetrate and dominate larger tracts of the world than ever before, while letting other countries such as France follow its example. After 1865 the British Empire grew on average more than 100,000 square miles a year. Over the next couple decades, thanks to the gunboat, the familiar schoolroom map of the world "colored red" by British possession took shape.[513]

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[510] Cannadine, 122.

[511] Ibid.

[512] Arthur Herman, *To Rule the Waves: How the British Navy Shaped the Modern World* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), 460.

[513] Ibid., 462.

To force China to open its ports to the importation of opium, the gunboat proved precisely suited for the rivers and lakes of the empire.[514] James describes the overwhelming effect that British brought in their initial attack with this new technology:

> The war was a severe shock to the Chinese who knew nothing of the technology of their adversaries. In every engagement the Chinese were, in the words of an eyewitness, 'unable to contend against the fearful weapons of their determined foe.' He had been astonished when, during the early fighting, a Congreve war rocket struck a junk which then caught fire and exploded, killing all its crew. When the British landed at Amoy in September 1841 they suffered no losses, but their musket volleys killed at least a hundred Chinese who were armed with matchlocks and bladed weapons.[515]

The gunboat proved effective because of the combination of its armored strength, steam-power propulsion, and firepower of its armaments. Herman explains how the first gunboat put to use in this war effectively functioned as a joint-venture between the EIC and Royal Navy:

> Built at Birkenhead and weighing 660 tons with two pivot-mounted 32-pounders and two 60-horsepower Forrest engines, the *Nemesis* was a private venture by the East India Company. But its captain, William Hall, was a former Royal Navy Officer, who took the *Nemesis* up the Pearl and Wampoa rivers to bombard Chinese forts and open up China to British trade—which in 1840 largely meant opium from India. Hall enthused to the East India's directors about the *Nemesis* and her devastating effects on the Chinese: "They are more afraid of her than all the line-of-battleships put together," he chortled. "She's worth her weight in gold."[516]

The British overwhelmed the Chinese with the superior naval power of the gunboat. Victory allowed Britain to not only use their new technology, but to establish a military presence in the country:

> The Yangtze campaign paid off politically. A stunned Chinese government signed the Treaty of Nanking which confirmed British possession of Hong Kong and opened

[514] "Gunboats that year [1858] helped Dr. Livingstone to secure the Zambezi River against slave traders, the British Museum to protect archaeologists on a dig in Cyrene, and the Archbishop of Canterbury to get some missionaries out of trouble in Borneo." Herman, 461.

[515] James, 236-237.

[516] Herman, 460.

> Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Shanghai and Ningpo to British commerce. The apparatus of unofficial empire was soon in place: consulates were established; British subjects were allowed exemption from Chinese jurisdiction; a naval base with coaling facilities was set up at Shanghai; and British men-o'-war were permitted to patrol Chinese rivers and coastal waters. France and the United States quickly followed Britain's example and were granted similar privileges.[517]

Military success led to the first of what are known as the two "Unequal Treaties."[518] Neill recounts the terms of the concessions from China: "Five ports, Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai, were to be opened to foreign residence." In addition, foreigners would enjoy "the right to the protection of their consuls, now at last officially recognized, and to trial in one of their own consular courts," known as "extra-territoriality."[519] The Second Opium War in 1856-60 solidified British power in China, as well as strengthened the influence of its fellow foreign powers.[520]

The Opium Wars and Unequal Treaties resulted in profoundly significant changes. Politically, they established Western dominance over China. In military terms, James explains how, in the first war, "China's technical backwardness and vulnerability had been exposed and Britain had made itself the major commercial and military power in the region."[521] Britain's legacy would be confirmed through having control of the newly

[517] James, 237.

[518] Neill, *Colonialism*, 132-133.

[519] Ibid., 133.

[520] "Like its predecessor, the Second Opium War of 1856-8 was an exercise in intimidation. This time, however, the French collaborated, using as their excuse the murder of a missionary, a ploy they adopted to justify the simultaneous aggression in Annam and Cambodia. While the Anglo-French forces battered ports along the Canton River, Lord Elgin was ordered to China with powers to settle outstanding differences between Britain and its government. The result was the Treaty of Tientsin of 1858 which granted fresh concessions to foreign business interests and legalized the opium trade." James, 238.

[521] Ibid., 237.

created port of Hong Kong until 1997.[522] It would also dominate China's trade for the rest of the century:

> For forty years after 1860 Britain dominated China's commerce. In 1895 Britain enjoyed two-thirds of all China's foreign trade, which then totaled £53.2 million. Opium remained at the head of the list of China's imports, accounting for an average of £10 million a year during the 1880s, with Lancashire cottonware in second place with an annual value of about £3 million.[523]

Military domination and control of trade would not be the only outcome of the wars and their terms. Regarding religion, Neill explains the significance of the second treaty for the status of Christianity in this mission context:

> The second war of the European Powers with China had ended in 1858 with a series of treaties between China and the several European nations. There were some differences between the treaties, and certain doubts in the interpretation of them. But basically they were all the same: in addition to according permission to foreigners to travel in the interior beyond the Treaty Ports (now increased to sixteen), they guaranteed toleration of Christianity and protection in the practice of their faith not only for missionaries but (either in so many words or by implication) for Chinese Christians also. Clearly the door had been opened wide for the peaceful penetration of China by the Christian forces, but those peaceful forces were entering with a hedge of all too warlike bayonets behind them.[524]

The terms of these treaties allowed Protestant Christianity to gain full entrance into the country, which the English missionary James Hudson Taylor exercised for the China Inland Mission.

4.4.b James Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission

The popular history of Christian mission work regards James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) as a hero who suffered much to bring the gospel into China. By spurning the

[522] Herman, 460.

[523] James, 241.

[524] Neill, 274-275.

accoutrements of the Victorian missionaries who lived in compounds, often enjoying the lavish comforts of house servants and the celebration of English culture, Taylor went to great lengths to both identify with the people of China, and impact the breadth of its land. Neill offers a brief summary of the first part of Taylor's life in China:

> James Hudson Taylor had come to China in 1854, at the age of twenty-one, under the Chinese Evangelization Society, a curiously incompetent body which almost wholly failed to meet its obligations, and after an inglorious career went into dissolution. In seven years, Taylor learned Chinese, made long journeys in the company of William Burns, married, was led to resign from the Chinese Evangelization Society and to depend on God alone for everything, and, perhaps most important of all, to adopt Chinese dress as the most obvious method of self-identification with the Chinese people.[525]

Although Taylor is remembered for his pragmatic approach, in his own day, his academic pursuits gained some amount of recognition. Doyle surveys the many areas of study undertaken by Taylor, and the recognitions and memberships bestowed upon him throughout his life:

> He set an example for others not only in tireless labors and travels, as have seen, but also as a diligent scholar, though not an academic like James Legge. His daily Bible reading was done in Hebrew, Greek, and English. To gain entrance to medical school, he had to pass examinations in Latin, Greek, German, and French, as well as geography, mathematics, mechanics, chemistry, zoology, and botany. After qualifying as a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons and then receiving his Licentiate in Midwifery, he continued his study of medicine, both Western and Chinese, but also read widely in mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, Chinese history and culture, and theology. He was an avid naturalist, observing and classifying the varied flora and fauna of China that so fascinated him. For his reports on such subjects and on the topography and cities of China, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society. He eventually learned not only Mandarin, but Shanghainese, the Tiechiu dialect of Swatow, and the Ningbo dialect, the last well enough to revise a vernacular version of the New Testament that had been made for speakers of that tongue.[526]

[525] Neill, *History,* 282.

[526] G. Wright Doyle, "J. Hudson Taylor: Advocate for China's Inland Millions" in Doyle, ed., *Builders of the Chinese Church: Pioneer Protestant Missionaries and Chinese Church Leaders* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2015), 117.

Like his predecessor Morrison, these accomplishments convey that Taylor functioned to some degree as an orientalist of the nineteenth century. His greatest accomplishment was not just to live an adventurous life as a student of China, or as a sacrificial missionary bearing an innovative method of identifying with the people of his context. Instead, Taylor eventually carried out his vision of reaching the whole of China with Christian missionaries of the China Inland Mission (CIM):

> The great service rendered by the CIM was that it demonstrated the possibility of residence in every corner of China. During the last third of the century, missionary societies of every conceivable kind, and other organizations such as the YMCA, extended themselves through the length and breadth of the land, and, though missionaries were never very many in relation to the total population, the occupation of China in outline was completed. Many missionaries did not agree with Hudson Taylor's methods, regarding his work as dangerously superficial; none, perhaps, remained completely untouched by the challenge of the mobility, the simplicity, and the devotion of the missionaries of the CIM.[527]

To carry out this grand plan required a flexibility uncommon to the mission agencies of the mid-nineteenth century. Neill summarizes the five principles Taylor built into the culture of the CIM's approach to mission:

1. The mission was to be interdenominational…
2. A door was opened for those of little formal education…
3. The direction of the mission would be in China, not in England—a change of far-reaching significance. And the director would have full authority to direct…
4. Missionaries would wear Chinese dress, and as far as possible identify themselves with the Chinese people.
5. The primary aim of the mission was always to be widespread evangelism. The shepherding of Churches and education could be undertaken, but not to such an extent as to hide or hinder the one central and commanding purpose.[528]

[527] Neill, *History*, 284.

[528] Adapted from Neill, *History*, 283.

These emphases on broad exposure, openness to candidates of various backgrounds, and identification with the Chinese people coalesced to draw large numbers of applicants from the English speaking world who went to all the provinces of China.

Taylor's CIM was only able to enter China's inland because of the Opium Wars and Unequal Treaties forced on the Qing government by the British. Up to this point, no other missionaries had made full use of the possibilities offered by the terms of settlement from the wars:

> In China, the new-found liberty granted by the treaties encouraged rapid increase in Protestant work. Many new societies entered in, and the new freedom of movement made possible many things that could not be attempted under the old restrictions. Yet movement was carried out only within a very restricted area. In 1865, no Protestant missionary was to be seen in eleven of the eighteen provinces of China, and in the seven 'occupied' provinces the area of missionary penetration had not reached far from the coast, except for a number of stations in the Yangtze valley.[529]

Reaching the interior of the country required a strategic shift, which included making use of the treaties' terms. Alvyn Austin reports, "However pious his rhetoric," Taylor "was determined to enter 'Inland China' by enforcing his treaty rights if necessary."[530] This attitude would undergo tempering, as Taylor would "change his mind later, after the bitter experience with the heavy hand of British diplomacy."[531] In such a reality, Doyle describes what carrying out this vision actually required:

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[529] Neill, *History*, 282.

[530] Alvyn Austin, *China's Millions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 119.

[531] Ibid. Neill relates one such episode of Taylor experiencing British protection: "The Chinese may have felt that the alliance between the missions and the western governments had at length been fatally sealed. It was, however, very far from being the case that the British people, at least, were prepared in all circumstances and at all times to support the missionaries. One episode of the year 1868 makes this strikingly clear. The China Inland Mission, under the leadership of Hudson Taylor, had gone far ahead of other Protestant missions in penetrating inland China. The missionaries wore Chinese dress, and as far as possible identified themselves with the customs and even the prejudices of the Chinese people; Taylor had instructed them to avoid recourse to the European consular officials, and to win their way by love alone. In June 1868 Taylor with his wife and four children together with a number of colleagues arrived in the city of Yangchow. In August a violent riot broke out. The Chinese authorities made a notable display of courtesy, dilatoriness and disregard of realities.

> In coming decades, both Hudson Taylor and some of his colleagues would go on long and arduous journeys throughout the length and breadth of China, learning as much as they could about the land and its people, and scouting out possible centers for missionaries to settle. They were almost always accompanied by Chinese helpers, whom Taylor considered essential both for evangelism and for the nurture and leadership of local churches. Taylor and his fellow missionaries were nearly killed in 1868, when a riot broke out in Yangzhou. Though he reported the incident first to the local mandarin and then to the British consul, he was aghast at the ensuing use of military force to cow the Chinese into protecting the foreign missionaries, and thereafter foreswore any dependence on foreign power, relying only on the providential protection of God.[532]

The treaties had provisions to allow missionaries to travel throughout the country, immune to China's laws. As they traveled the land to carry out their work, they encountered another aspect of the reality of British domination in the opium trade. Even while undertaking to supplant the religious and cultural systems of the preceding millennia with the introduction of Christianity, the missionaries were horrified by the effects of the opium trade, which produced such conditions described by Kathleen Lodwick:

> The ravages of opium were no respecters of class in China. Most foreigners thought that the majority of users were coolies, but addicts could be found at all levels of society, from the imperial court to the beggar in the street. All ages of people smoked. Some children, particularly boys, were addicted, having been given the drug by parents who thought it would stimulate their growth or cure illnesses. Addicts were certainly not considered good marriage prospects, but some did marry, and some matchmakers concealed the addiction. Although the average life span of the addict was not long—estimates vary from thirty to forty years—addicts in their sixties who had been using opium for thirty years were not unknown.[533]

No lives were actually lost, but for a time the missionaries were in the gravest danger and had to withdraw to Chinkiang. The British authorities took a serious view of these happenings, and of the total failure of the Chinese authorities to carry out their responsibility, as accepted under the treaty, for the safety of foreigners in their territories. The sequel was that British gun-boats sailed far up the Yangtze river, ready to bombard the offending city; the Chinese gave way; on November 18 the Taylors reentered Yangchow in triumph under British protection." Neill, *Colonialism*, 144.

[532] Doyle, 109-110.

[533] Kathleen L. Lodwick, *Crusaders against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 21.

Having witnessed these horrors, "Missionaries on leave in their home countries and missionary boards of the various churches represented in China … served to publicize the opium problem."[534] As a prominent leader, Taylor himself pushed a unified response of the mission agencies against the trade:

> Missionary conferences, such as the interdenominational Centenary Conference of the Protestant Missions of the World held in 1888, took up the issue of the opium trade, the involvement of the British government in it, the question of the Indian government's opium revenues, and the effects of the trade on the Chinese as points of discussion. The Rev. J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, told the conference, "I am profoundly convinced that the opium traffic is doing more evil in China in a week than Missions are doing good in a year." At the meeting representatives of the missions in India also expressed their beliefs that the opium trade was harming India as well as China, and they blamed the Indian government for its policy of financing itself through opium revenues.[535]

In these efforts, Taylor led the campaign not just to denounce the trade, but to confront the complicity of the home country's government in the destructive system:

> The Rev. Taylor proposed a resolution calling for the conference, which represented "most of the Protestant Missionary Societies of the Christian world," to acknowledge "the incalculable evils, physical, moral, and social, which continue to be wrought in China through the opium trade—a trade which has strongly prejudiced the people of China against all Missionary effort." The resolution also deplored the "position occupied by Great Britain, through its Indian administration, in the manufacture of the drug, and in the promotion of a trade which is one huge ministry to vice." The resolution called for the complete suppression of the opium trade and appealed "to Christians of Great Britain and Ireland to plead earnestly with God, and to give themselves no rest, until this great evil is entirely removed." Copies of the resolution were sent to the prime minister and the secretary of state for India.[536]

While Taylor's organization regarded itself as fighting against the opium trade both in China and Britain, they were able to go inland in the first place because of British military

[534] Lodwick, 50.

[535] Ibid.

[536] Ibid., 50-51.

strength in forcing the Qing government to allow opium into the country, a historical process which ruined the people.

This example of Taylor and his connections to British military and economic policy illustrates how even a missionary remembered as respectful of many features of the local culture also served, however unwillingly or unknowingly, as an agent of imperialism. Regarding such duality, Daniel Bays surveys the nineteenth century to understand the mindset for why missionaries like Taylor allowed themselves to rely on British or Western imperial power to carry out their religious work:

> It is not surprising that there were no missionary protests in either the war of 1839–1842 or that of 1856–1860 against the means by which the British government and its military forces advanced foreign interests in China. …[The missionaries] were not only beneficiaries of the results, but some were active participants in the process of forcing the treaty system on China. Actually the tradition of missionary involvement in Sino-foreign diplomacy and politics goes back to the Jesuits at court in the Qing dynasty, and the more than twenty-year employment of Protestant pioneer Robert Morrison as interpreter-translator for the BEIC from about 1810 to the 1830s. He also was a part of the British government's failed 1816 Amherst embassy to Beijing … it is striking how natural it was for missionaries to enlist themselves in a project that essentially put China permanently in a handicapped position of inequality, unable to pursue her own national goals. What seemed a natural thing in 1860, however, 60 years on would be labeled "imperialism," with all the negative connotations that the term still has today. The missionaries of mid-century saw only the furtherance of the cause of the Gospel in the edifice of the treaty system which had been erected by 1860. They plunged into institution-building with enthusiasm, expending increasing resources of personnel, finances, and material.[537]

Reliance upon the imperial framework should not be regarded as the main focus of Taylor's legacy. His strategic approach to penetrate all the interior of China with the Christian gospel resulted in, upon his passing, having "left behind the largest foreign missionary organization in China," as well as the new reality that "several other missionary societies had been brought into being largely as a result of Taylor's itinerant

[537] Bays, 59-60.

work of promoting the cause of China in Europe, North America, and Australia."[538] At the end of his life, "the CIM had 828 missionaries; there were 1152 Chinese workers, 18,625 baptized Christians, 418 churches, 1424 mission stations, and 150 schools."[539] Although the CIM suffered the most casualties among the killings of the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, they chose to not press for recompense from the local Chinese.[540] This decision demonstrated not just a commitment to the gospel of forgiveness, but also to the people of China.

4.5 INCULTURATION

This chapter has recounted how both Buddhism and Christianity entered China. Each of these religions eventually took root in the country, undergoing a process of inculturation, or adaptation to the culture, and then continued the process of global dissemination. Scott Pacey reports, "Buddhism entered China several centuries after the Buddha's death," where it "continued to thrive and develop even as it declined in India."[541] This Sinitic form of Buddhism, which went from China to Korea and Japan in the fourth and seventh centuries C.E., respectively, came "to occupy a central position in East Asian religious and philosophical thought."[542] This process happened over several centuries because, as Kenneth Ch'en explains, China "[a]lready possessed of a high level of civilization when

[538] Doyle, 121.

[539] Ibid., 121, fn. 32.

[540] Neill, *History*, 288.

[541] Scott Pacey, "Sinitic Buddhism in China, Korea, and Japan," in John Powers, ed., *The Buddhist World* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 88.

[542] Ibid.

Buddhism was introduced."[543] He explains the challenge this presented for the new religion:

> [T]he Chinese were not totally overwhelmed by the new religion. It is true that for a few centuries, the Chinese were captivated by the overpowering religious panorama brought in with Buddhism, but in time, what some scholars call the basic personality or the local genius of the Chinese began manifesting itself. By this local genius or national character is meant the sum total of the cultural traits which the vast majority of the Chinese adhered to, traits that had been developed by them during their long history. It was through the manifestation of this local genius that they were able to choose ideas from the Indian religion and modify them to fit the Chinese situation.[544]

One key adaptation of Mahāyāna Buddhism to Chinese culture was what Kenneth Ch'en describes as the "metamorphosis" of the office of the bodisattvas in elevating their status and, in some cases, changing their genders.[545] He notes that this transformation "took place in China, not in India or Central Asia, and through these changes the bodhisattvas became much more closely identified with Chinese life ideals and therefore more acceptable to the Chinese."[546]

Above it was shown how Kumārajīva played a key role as translator in enabling the religion to overcome its identification with Daoist teachings. In addition to Daoism, Buddhism also encountered the other main established Chinese religious and thought system of Confucianism. In order to survive in China, the "the sangha accepted and came to terms with the prevailing Confucian ideology of the supremacy of the state over any religious association within its borders."[547] Ch'en recounts how, during the Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.), Buddhist monks capitulated to the rule of the government:

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[543] Kenneth Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton. Princeton University Press, 2015), 5.

[544] Ibid., 5-6.

[545] Ibid.

[546] Ibid., 8.

[547] Ibid., 124.

> Instead of being individuals who claimed to be above and beyond the secular state, they became part of the political system, they obeyed the laws of the state, and they served the state in various capacities. Viewed in the perspective of Chinese history, we may say that these developments in the positions of the sangha and the monks in China represent but still another aspect of the gradual acculturation of Buddhism to the Chinese scene. The Buddhist monk became a Chinese subject, the monastic community a Chinese religious organization subject to the jurisdiction of the imperial bureaucracy. Buddhism had become Sinicized politically.[548]

As a more recent arrival, Protestant Christianity continues to undergo this inculturation process regarding the need to negotiate its relationship to the state. After years of civil war (1927-1949) against the Nationalists in China, the Communist Party declared victory, establishing the People's Republic of China in 1949. The following year, the government expelled all foreign missionaries, requiring the Chinese church to survive on its own. Douglas Jacobsen describes the overall arrangement since that time of two types of churches that occupy two ends of the spectrum in relationship to the government:

> Non-Catholic Christianity in contemporary Chinse continues to be divided between the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the related China Christian Council (TSPM/CCC) which represent the old "above ground" church, and the unregistered "underground" house churches. That kind of language is, however, becoming increasingly anachronistic. Rather than being clumped into just two categories, Chinese churches now fall along a spectrum of options ranging from the government-registered TSPM/CCC churches … through a variety of open, but unregistered churches (some of which are very large) in many of China's rapidly growing cities … to traditional "underground" churches, which are found mostly in the more rural areas of the country.[549]

For the most part, Jacobsen's description of the spectrum of churches regarding their cooperation with and openness to the state has held. However, the final chapter of this study will convey how, in recent years, the government under Xi Jinping's leadership has pressured house churches to conform fully to state oversight. The inculturation process of both religions show that each, in their respective historical periods of centuries-long

[548] Ch'en, 124.

[549] Douglas G. Jacobsen, *The World's Christians: Who They Are, Where They Are, and How They Got There* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 199.

entrance into the country, had to grapple with the Confucian cultural assumptions regarding the state over religion.

4.6 SUMMARY

The desire for Chinese commodities set up the conditions which allowed Mahayana Buddhism and Protestant Christianity to gain entrance into China. The demand for the Chinese product of silk by the Roman Empire caused the formation of the Silk Road trading routes, by which Buddhism gained entrance into China. In contrast, the British appetite for tea resulted in a trade deficit with China. The British remedied this imbalance through the Opium Wars, forcing China to open its borders beyond the port cities to the Western powers, allowing the sale of opium, and the uninhibited travel of Western citizens. Missionary organizations took advantage of this opening to penetrate the whole of China. The result was, even with its imperial associations, Protestant Christianity took root in China to become an indigenous form of Christianity.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE BUDDHIST MISSION IN THE SECULAR CITY

5.1 OVERVIEW

Chapter two examined the relationship between the Roman Empire and the Christian missionary Paul in the first century C.E. His reliance on the framework, structure, and features of the empire allowed him to help move Christianity beyond its Jewish ethnic community of origin to become a global religion. The overall present thesis proposes that imperial power, whether friendly or in opposition, propels or aids the missionaries of Buddhism and Christianity in their work. This present chapter will show that, like Paul in chapter two, the negative pressure of imperial power helped propel the Dalai Lama onto the global stage in the twentieth century. Before looking at the life and work of the Dalai Lama, however, the example of another Buddhist spokesperson from earlier in the twentieth century will be offered. Consideration will be given to the relationship between the Japanese Empire and the Zen Buddhist missionary to the West, D. T. Suzuki. The study will then focus on Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet. The imperial actions of the People's Republic of China in its takeover of Tibet in 1959 provoked the escape of the Dalai Lama to India. In the succeeding sixty years of his exile, he has functioned on the world stage as a missionary to the West.

5.2. LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY: D. T. Suzuki, Zen Buddhism, and the Japanese Empire

The preceding chapter identified the nineteenth century as "The Great Century of Missions."[550] As this present research has shown, such a designation might have been the case because it was also the century of the acceleration and fullness of Western imperial

[550] As referenced in the previous chapter, Timothy Tennent identifies the "great century" as the period that "spans from the publication of An Enquiry by William Carey to the 1910 conference in Edinburgh, which is regarded as the world's first global missionary conference." See Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Theology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2010), 256.

expansion. In the second half of the century, one Asian nation followed the example of its Western counterparts. With the Meiji Restoration in 1868, which ended the rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867), the Japanese imperial monarchy was restored, allowing Japan to undertake the project of industrial modernization and military buildup.[551] The nation began its imperial expansion with the first Sino-Japanese War from 1894-1895, the victory of which gave Japan rule over the island of Taiwan for the next fifty years. The expansion throughout Asia and the Pacific continued until Japan's defeat by the Allied Powers in the Second World War in 1945.

5.2.a The Resurgence of Japanese Buddhism

One of the byproducts of the rise of Japan's national and industrial power was the resurgence of Japanese Buddhism. This return to strength of the religion might seem surprising as, "At the outset of the Meiji era, an effort was made to establish Shinto as the state religion in order to fortify the foundation of imperial rule."[552] Hane and Perez recount the official outbreak of hostility against Buddhism from the state in these early years of the Meiji Restoration:

> Initially the government established the Jingikan (Department of Shinto) and placed it above the Dajōkan. Steps were taken to end the syncretic tendencies that had prevailed between Shinto and Buddhism in the past. The Shintoists initiated a frenzied move to suppress Buddhism, and consequently many Buddhist buildings and artifacts were damaged or destroyed. The anti-Buddhist trend at the center was followed by many local authorities with the result that a large number of Buddhist temples were eliminated.[553]

[551] Mikiso Hane and Louis G. Perez, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey – Fourth Edition* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2009), 83.

[552] Ibid., 103.

[553] Ibid., 106-107.

The negative campaign during this period prompted a response from the Buddhist establishment:

> Having lost the patronage and protection of the ruling class, and being confronted with challenges from Shinto and Christianity, some Buddhist leaders began to bestir themselves from centuries of relative inaction. They endeavored to revivify the religion that had lost its vitality during the halcyon days of Tokugawa rule, where every person was required to register with a Buddhist temple.[554]

Rather than offer a negative response that was primarily a protest or fight against the state, however, the Buddhist establishment chose the route of collaboration. Brian Daizen Victoria explains the reasons for selecting this posture:

> Buddhist leaders were quick to realize that their best hope of reviving their faith was to align themselves with the increasingly nationalistic sentiment of the times. They concluded that one way of demonstrating their usefulness to Japan's new nationalistic leaders was to support an anti-Christian campaign, which came to be known as "refuting evil [Christianity] and exalting righteousness" (*haja kensho*).[555]

The original "policy of actively suppressing Buddhism" by the state was "soon abandoned," however, in order "to check the activities of the extreme anti-Buddhists."[556] The government came to see how "popular support of Buddhism could not be eradicated."[557] In addition, the concern also arose "that the vacuum created by the weakening of Buddhism might be filled by Christianity."[558] This religion from the West enjoyed both the appeal of its witness through social action and the backing of political power from its home countries.

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[554] Hane and Perez, 107.

[555] Brian Daizen Victoria, *Zen at War—Second Edition* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 6.

[556] Hane and Perez, 107.

[557] Ibid.

[558] Ibid.

The modernization project by Japan required adopting some of the liberal values of the Western countries that Japan looked to as models. In the "ardent desire to be accepted by the West, the Meiji leaders adopted the principle of religious freedom in 1873, thus putting an end to the long proscription against Christianity."[559] This allowance came about as a result of the pressure from those nations:

> The Western powers were, of course, most concerned about the ongoing prohibition of Christianity in Japan. As a result, in 1873 the government reluctantly agreed to abolish this prohibition, a decision which led to a rapid increase in the numbers of both Western Christian missions and missionaries entering the country. Even as they continued their own struggle to free themselves from government control, many Buddhist leaders took this occasion to renew and deepen their earlier attacks on Christianity. In so doing, they allied themselves with Shinto, Confucian, and other nationalist leaders.[560]

With both Christianity's presence and mission work no longer banned, Buddhists appropriated elements of this recently-arrived competitor. Judith Snodgrass explains how Christian missionary and social activity prompted the Buddhist engagement with society:

> Christian social activities were both a model and stimulus for this. Reform leaders, aware of the importance of establishing a broad base of support in the community, urged the Buddhist community to observe the growing goodwill that Christian missions were establishing among the general population through such efforts as their hospitals, charities, and famine relief and to emulate their model.[561]

Snodgrass contends that this strategy of emulation worked, as Buddhism in Japan found "social relevance through the promotion of philanthropic works."[562] Such engagement served as "a response to the charges that Buddhism was otherworldly, its support a drain on society."[563] On the one hand, Christianity's mission work had the implicit backing of

[559] Hane and Perez, 107.

[560] Victoria, 10.

[561] Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 126.

[562] Snodgrass, 126.

[563] Ibid.

Western power. Its missionary work prompted an active Buddhist engagement with society. Furthermore, this resurgence of Buddhism did not just see increased activity and renewal in Japan, but was to accompany the rise of Japan as an industrial, military, and imperial power on the world's stage. This entrance to exposure abroad came about first through the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893.

5.2.b D. T. Suzuki as Missionary to the West

The event of the parliament, held at the same time as the Columbian Exposition, "provided a model of interreligious dialogue."[564] A Japanese Buddhist delegation attended, but Judith Snodgrass suggests that they "did not succeed in winning Western regard for Japanese Buddhism at that time," because "Mahayana Buddhism remained excluded from academic consideration."[565] However, the lack of focus on the specific tradition "did not detract from the importance of the event as a strategy in the Japanese discourse."[566] This success was due, in the view of those back home because, for the "delegation itself, Japanese inclusion and participation in the international conference at Chicago, was an event that could be interpreted to the Japanese audience to support Buddhist revival."[567] The effect abroad was less on promoting the religion, according to Snodgrass, and more on showcasing Japan's entrance on the global stage:

> Although Japanese Buddhism has been a strong and growing presence in America since the 1950s, the most significant immediate impact of the delegation on its Western audience may have been not in conveying knowledge of the Mahayana teachings but in its contribution to the wider Japanese project at the exposition, the

[564] David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 262.

[565] Snodgrass, 273.

[566] Ibid.

[567] Ibid.

> campaign to establish that Japan was a civilized nation, so closely tied to the concurrent diplomatic campaign for treaty revision.[568]

Even so, as the "delegation to Chicago had been a strategy in the defense of Buddhism against Western encroachment in Japan, and it had achieved its initial, modest, purpose," the result of establishing strength abroad in turn strengthened the religion back home.[569]

The decade following the parliament spanned the time between the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). These years proved to be a "short period of peace which lasted from 1896 to 1903," that gave "time for Buddhist scholars to turn their attention to the theoretical side of the relationship between Buddhism, the state, and war."[570] Snodgrass notes, "There can be little surprise that writings of this period show a pride in Japan's military heritage."[571] Against this backdrop of rising nationalistic sentiment, Brian Daizen Victoria observes that, "Interestingly, it was the twenty-six year-old Buddhist scholar and student of Zen, D. T. Suzuki, who took the lead in this effort."[572] Daisetsu Teitarō Suzuki (1870–1966) was a "Japanese scholar of Zen Buddhism, widely regarded as the person most responsible for introducing Zen thought to the West."[573] Working in the mode of the scholar-missionary, "Suzuki was a prolific author in both Japanese and English, and eventually came to be renown in both academic traditions."[574] This bilingual proficiency allowed him to produce a corpus that bridged his

[568] Snodgrass, 276.

[569] Ibid., 251.

[570] Victoria, 22.

[571] Snodgrass, 269.

[572] Victoria, 22.

[573] Robert E. Burswell, Jr., and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., s.v. "Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro," *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 878.

[574] Ibid.

Japanese society of origin with the society in which he functioned as a missionary through scholarship:

> Altogether, Suzuki wrote more than 100 works in both English and Japanese; he also founded the English language *Eastern Buddhists* in 1927, which he and Lane edited together. He was also president of the Cambridge Buddhist Association. His lectures and books propelled him into popularity during the middle part of the twentieth century. His specialty seems to have been his ability to use language to explain the futility of language, a paradox that delighted and inspired his American audiences.[575]

This sizeable output "provided the basis of what the West know of Japanese Buddhism at both popular and scholarly levels." [576] The body of works also "contributed substantially to the by now popularly accepted equation of Zen with Eastern Buddhism, and the attribution to it of the culture and civilization of Japan."[577] Suzuki favored both the Mahayana tradition in general and Zen Buddhism in particular, as he considered Zen to be the essence of Buddhism, most "suited to the Far Eastern mind."[578] Appearing to fit the stereotype of the bookish academic, Diane Morgan reports, "Although he was an essentially modest and shy man, Suzuki's influence spread beyond America, and many of the most brilliant minds of the century were deeply influenced by him."[579] Those who came under the influence of his writings included Alan Watts (1915-1973), the British popularizer of Zen Buddhism.[580]

5.2.c Charges of Suzuki's Militarism

[575] Diane Morgan, *The Buddhist Experience in America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 180.

[576] Snodgrass, 259.

[577] Ibid.

[578] Ibid., 266. See also Charles S. Prebish and Martin Baumann, eds., *Westward Dharma: Buddhism beyond Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 221-222.

[579] Morgan, 180.

[580] Ibid., 181.

In contrast to Snodgrass's assessment regarding the Japanese Buddhist contingent's participation in the World Parliament of Religions, Suzuki himself credits the Chicago event in 1893 as the successful entrance of Buddhism into Western society. Although he did not attend the conference, but travelled to the U.S. shortly afterwards, he explains in a biographical essay, "To my way of thinking, people must realize that it was the World's Parliament of Religions which introduced Buddhism to America, and that it was after this conference that American interest in Buddhism began to emerge."[581] However, Victoria ties Suzuki's work from these earliest days immediately following the conference to the rise of Japanese nationalism. Victoria identifies in Suzuki's 1896 book *A Treatise on the New [Meaning of] Religion,* how at this early stage, Suzuki constructed the foundation for wedding Zen to the warfare necessary for imperial ambitions:

> Suzuki laid out … the fundamental positions that Buddhist leaders would collectively adhere to until Japan's defeat in 1945: (1) Japan has the right to pursue its commercial and trade ambitions as it sees fit; (2) should "unruly heathens" (*jama gedo*) of any country interfere with that right, they deserve to be punished for interfering with the progress of all humanity; (3) such punishment will be carried out with the full and unconditional support of Japan's religions, for it is undertaken with no other goal in mind than to ensure that justice prevails; (4) soldiers must, without the slightest hesitation or regret, offer up their lives to the state in carrying out such religion-sanctioned punishment; and (5) discharging one's duty to the state on the battlefield is a religious act.[582]

Victoria discerns in Suzuki's writings not only the seeds connecting religion to warfare, but a framework that would later justify the violent expansion and atrocities committed by the Empire of Japan in the first half of the twentieth century:

> By the end of the Russo-Japanese War in September 1905, the foundation had been laid for institutional Buddhism's basic attitudes toward Japan's military activities. In addition to Suzuki's five underlying principles identified above, we may add the following three points: (1) Japan's wars are not only just but are, in fact, expressions

[581] D. T. Suzuki, "An Autobiographical Account," in Masao Abe, ed., *A Zen Life: D. T. Suzuki Remembered* (New York: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1986), 20.

[582] Victoria, 25.

> of Buddhist compassion; (2) fighting to the death in Japan's wars is an opportunity to repay the debt of gratitude owed to both the Buddha and the emperor; (3) the Japanese army is composed (or, at least, ought to be composed) of tens of thousands of bodhisattvas, ever ready to make the ultimate sacrifice. Their goal is not only the defense of their country, but the rescue of fellow members of the "Mongolian race" from the hands of the Western, white, and Christian imperialists.[583]

If Victoria's portrayal is accurate, then Suzuki would be operating as a missionary of Zen Buddhism whose work of transmitting the religion beyond his home culture is aided directly through, as well as contributing to, the exercise of imperial power.

5.2.d In Defense of Suzuki

Evidence makes itself available that mitigates against the depiction of Suzuki as an enabler and champion of militaristic empire. Countering Victoria's negative characterization is the fact that Suzuki promoted the "emphasis on the Indian and Chinese foundations of Japanese Buddhism (at a time when Japanese nationalist interpretations were the order of the day)," the result of which "eventually brought him wide respect at home."[584] Also, his academic esteem and popular reputation abroad grew after the demise of the Japanese Empire. Suzuki "remained in Japan during World War II, but in 1950, after the war, he returned to the United States and lectured on Zen Buddhism at a number of universities, including Columbia University, where he was a long-time visiting professor."[585] Directly countering the charges made by Victoria concerning the seemingly warfare-like elements in his writings, Kemmyō Taira Satō argues, "Suzuki is appealing for a positive, determined engagement with the culture of the West as a way not only to enrich Japanese culture but also to revive the life of Japanese Buddhism."[586] Regarding

[583] Victoria, 30.

[584] Burswell and Lopez, 878.

[585] Ibid.

[586] Kemmyō Taira Satō, "D. T. Suzuki and the Question of War," translated in Collaboration with Thomas

the question of militarism, Satō writes, "Far from an expression of enthusiasm for the Asian war," suggesting instead that "it is indicative of precisely those qualities in Suzuki that caused him to oppose the outlook and actions that led the militarists to invade the continent."[587] Even so, Victoria's characterization rely on the text of Suzuki's own words.

As Suzuki's writings contain these troubling elements, personal testimony might also counter the charges of militarism against him. One such voice who portrays Suzuki in a positive light speaks from a Christian witness. Though a Roman Catholic, the Trappist monk Thomas Merton (1915-1968) took deep interest in Buddhism, meeting at different times with Suzuki. Merton reports, "It was my good fortune to meet with Dr. Suzuki and to have a couple of all too short conversations with him. The experience was not only rewarding, but I would say it was unforgettable."[588] Regarding Suzuki's level of influence with the West, Merton writes, "There is no question that Dr. Suzuki brought to this age of dialogue a very special gift of his own: a capacity to apprehend and to occupy the precise standpoints where communication could hope to be effective."[589] Merton ascribes this successful engagement to the mixture of Suzuki's scholarly aptitude and linguistic ability:

> The uniqueness of Dr. Suzuki's work lies in the directness with which an Asian thinker has been able to communicate his own experience of a profound and ancient tradition in a Western language. This is quite a different proposition from the more or less trustworthy translations of Eastern texts by Western scholars with no experience of Asian spiritual values, or oven the experience of Asian traditions acquired by Westerners.[590]

Kirchner, *The Eastern Buddhist* 39/1: 109.

[587] Satō, 109.

[588] Thomas Merton, "D. T. Suzuki: The Man and His Work," in Masao Abe, ed., *A Zen Life: D. T. Suzuki Remembered* (New York: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1986), 122.

[589] Ibid., 121.

[590] Ibid., 124.

As one who publicly sought peace in global affairs, Merton held a favorable assessment of Suzuki's person and legacy. In contrast with Victoria's charges of Suzuki's nationalist sentiment, Merton credits his Japanese colleague as not only a scholar, but as a reconciler:

> In any event, his work remains with us as a great gift, as one of the unique spiritual and intellectual achievements of our time. It is above all precious to us in the way it has moved East and West closer together, bringing Japan and America into agreement on a deep level, when everything seems to conspire to breed conflict, division, incomprehension, confusion, and war. Our time has not always excelled in the works of peace. We can be proud of a contemporary who has devoted his life to those works, and done so with much success.[591]

Regardless of whether Suzuki was an ardent supporter of Japanese nationalism, both his public engagement with the West and his presentation and promotion of Zen Buddhism to the West began with Japanese Buddhism's proactive resurgence, which tied itself to nationalism, as well as Japan's attempts to carry itself as an imperial power on par with its Western counterparts. In these ways, his missionary work as a translator both of texts and religious concepts was tied to the ascendancy of a rising imperial power.

5.2.e George Leslie Mackay as Christian Missionary within the Japanese Empire

Collaboration with the emerging Empire of Japan was not just limited to the state religion of Shinto and Japanese Buddhism's resurgence, but examples from Christian missions are available as well. One case resides in the story of George Leslie Mackay (1844-1901), the first Canadian Presbyterian missionary to Taiwan, known as Formosa at the time. In today's contemporary mindset, Mackay's legacy of planting churches throughout the island (which still exist as a Presbyterian denomination), founding a hospital, marrying a Taiwanese woman,[592] and establishing schools, including the first girls' school there,

[591] Merton, 126.

[592] Angela Lu Fulton, "Taiwan's 'black-bearded barbarian': The enduring legacy of missionary George Leslie Mackay," *World Magazine*, September 17, 2018, https://world.wng.org/2018/09/taiwan_s_black_bearded_barbarian (accessed March 29, 2019).

makes him a hero in modern Taiwan.[593] The popular imagination does not cast Mackay as an imperial agent of the West or Japan, which took over the island in 1895 following the first Sino-Japanese War. However, the change of rule over Taiwan affected both the Christian community and Mackay's missionary work:

> During his furlough, the Sino-Japanese War dramatically transformed the situation of the Christians in Taiwan. Claimed as a colonial prize by the victorious Japanese, Formosa was to become a showcase of Japan's ability to administer an empire as efficiently as the Western powers. Although Mackay stated his optimistic belief that the change in government would ultimately prove a blessing, the transition brought a host of new problems. Perhaps most obvious was the Japanese insistence that all educational and medical facilities on the island conform to modern Western standards. To survive under Japanese rule, Mackay clearly would need to adjust his missionary methods to satisfy colonial administrators.[594]

Mary Goodwin considers Mackay's approach alongside that of a later missionary couple who would also serve on the island. The American Lillian Dickson (1901-1983) was the wife of James Dickson (1900-1967), the founder of Taiwan Theological College in Tainan, south of Mackay's base on the northern end of the island.[595] Lillian left a large body of writing about their missionary work with descriptions of the people, culture, and geography of Taiwan.[596] Goodwin points out the complications that these three North American missionaries encountered, or at times exacerbated, in their work with the different people groups on the island:

> The emplacement of their life writing is further complicated by the approaches both missionaries used in Taiwan–primarily medical missionary work–as well as the

[593] See Charlie Smith, "Film celebrates Canadian missionary George Leslie Mackay, who irrevocably changed Taiwan," *Georgia Straight*, June 25, 2017, https://www.straight.com/movies/919261/film-celebrates-canadian-missionary-george-leslie-mackay-who-irrevocably-changed (accessed March 29, 2019).

[594] James R. Rohrer, "The Legacy of George Leslie Mackay," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 34, No. 4, October 2010, 225.

[595] Mary Goodwin, "Heroic Memoirs from a Hot Country: Taiwan Missionary Life Writing," Clyde R. Forsberg Jr., ed., *The Life and Legacy of George Leslie Mackay: An Interdisciplinary Study of Canada's First Presbyterian Missionary to Northern Taiwan (1872-1901)* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 81.

[596] Ibid., 74.

> populations targeted by both missionaries, as they both worked extensively with Taiwan aboriginal peoples in the remote mountain areas. Throughout the decades Mackay and Dickson worked in Taiwan, the aboriginal populations were involved in struggles for survival against other dominant groups–the Chinese settlers of the plains and cities, as well as the colonial Japanese government. Mackay and Dickson, among other Western missionaries in the area, played many-sided roles both in bringing the various groups together, and occasionally, in pitting them against each other.[597]

Regarding the final period of his ministry, Clyde Forsberg offers the assessment that "Mackay supported the Japanese occupation of Formosa to his dying day and with conviction."[598] Throughout his time on Taiwan, then, Mackay found it permissible, or possibly even necessary, to cooperate with those in power to carry out his work of establishing the institutions of churches, a hospital, and schools.

In considering both the contributions and the complications of how Mackay's missionary work related to power structures and political developments, it is helpful to remember both his personal background, as well as the history of missionary work in Taiwan prior to his arrival. The first Protestant missionaries on the island had been the Dutch Reformed in the seventeenth century. Like Mackay, they became involved with the power struggles between various groups:

> Protestant missionaries played a decisive role in the territorial expansion of the Dutch East India Company on Formosa. They put their stamp on this process in various ways: they manipulated the policy-making of the governor and skillfully exploited the dynamics of intervillage violence while introducing the concept of centralized power to native Formosan society. The establishment of colonial rule had indeed been brought about by the synergy of church and state with judicious timing of when to strike when the iron was hot.[599]

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[597] Goodwin, 77.

[598] Clyde R. Forsberg Jr, "Pan Celtic Anglo-Saxonism, the Polar Eden, and Crossing Racial Divides: The Interesting Case of George Leslie Mackay," Forsberg, *The Life and Legacy of George Leslie Mackay*, 112.

[599] Leonard Blussé, "Retribution and Remorse: The Interaction between the Administration and the Protestant Mission in Early Colonial Formosa," in Gyan Prakash, ed., *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 178.

Mackay arrived in Taiwan two centuries later to repeat some of the same dynamics. Considering his personal history, he hailed from Canada and underwent theological training at Princeton Theological Seminary in the United States. Both Canada and the U.S. were the offspring of the British Empire and, at the time, Canada's international dealings were under the direction and control of Britain as part of the Commonwealth.[600] Combined with his Scottish ethnic descent conveyed through his Presbyterian affiliation, Mackay himself was a product of empire, namely, the legacy of the British Empire. Arriving in Taiwan, he worked within the context of the final days of the Qing dynasty's presence, whose presence from the Chinese mainland could be characterized as an imperial rule. Mackay then navigated the change in rule over Taiwan from China to Japan.

The example of Mackay is offered here to demonstrate that both Buddhist and Christian missionaries cooperated with Japanese imperial power, at least in the early part of the twentieth century. Offering representatives from both religions here ensures against the appearance of impugning the Buddhist tradition with the example of the charges of Suzuki's nationalistic sentiments. The rest of this chapter will demonstrate the thesis of imperial power prompting missionary work by considering the case of another Buddhist spokesperson to the West. Unlike D. T. Suzuki, however, the Dalai Lama's appearance on the global stage as an unintentional missionary to the West was due to his resisting against the imperial power exercised in the invasion of the People's Republic of China

[600] A resolution proposed in 1917 to give the dominions under the control of the British Empire, such as Canada, full status as "autonomous nations" was put into full effect with the Statute of Westminster in 1931. See Roger Sarty, "The Interplay of Defence and Foreign Policy," in Robert Bothwell and Jean Daudelin, eds., *Canada Among Nations, 2008: 100 Years of Canadian Foreign Policy* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008), 116.

into Tibet. To ask this question, however, requires looking at the development of the office of the Dalai Lama and its connections to China's claim over the land of Tibet.

5.3 China's Claims over Tibet

The region of Tibet provides a geographic buffer for China against India. Occupation of the Tibetan plateau by the newly inaugurated People's Republic of China in the 1950s "would move China's border from the Yangtze River to the Himalayas, giving Peking an almost impregnable buffer against land armies sweeping across from India eastward or from Pakistan and eastern Turkistan northeastward."[601] Politically, such an annexation "would eliminate the possibility of a free Tibet becoming a staging ground for imperialists in London, Washington, or Tokyo."[602] As the region contained abundant natural resources, making it "[t]raditionally known as 'the treasure house of the west,' Tibet also held vast quantities of copper, lead, gold, and zinc, along with million[s] of acres of forests and—unknown to Mao at the time—reserves of oil, uranium, and borax. It had resources that China could use to grow."[603] The question is whether, and to what degree, China has the right to claim that Tibet has been under its rule in history.

The disagreement over whether Tibet and China are distinctly separate countries did not begin in the mid-twentieth century with the victory of the Communists over the Nationalists in establishing the People's Republic of China in 1949. Instead, the original entanglements between Tibet and China go back centuries, though the two entities

[601] Stephan Talty, *Escape from the Land of Snows: The Young Dalai Lama's Harrowing Flight to Freedom and the Making of a Spiritual Hero* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2011), 43.

[602] Ibid.

[603] Ibid.

interpret their historical relationship differently. Peter Schwieger explains how, in one sense, Tibet's identity as a distinct kingdom or country has, from the very beginning, been reliant upon a concern over the existence and strength of its Chinese neighbor:

> The foundation for what we call "Tibet" was laid between the seventh and the first half of the ninth century A.D. During that period, Tibet developed from a decentralized clan society into a mighty kingdom competing against Tang Dynasty China for control of the Inner Asian trade routes, known today as the Silk Road. It was the only period in Tibetan history in which nearly the whole of what now—ethnically, culturally, and linguistically— constitutes Tibet was unified under a single Tibetan ruler.[604]

Between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, following the collapse of a system of kings who comprised their own Tibetan empire, "The dominant role in Tibetan societies was now occupied by the Lamas, the personal spiritual teachers competent to transmit powerful esoteric teachings."[605] Journalist and author Tim Johnson summarizes the history of how the office of Dalai Lama rose to prominence among the lamas throughout the country:

> Since Buddhism's appearance in Tibet around the seventh century, its followers have uniquely come to believe that a few hundred senior lamas, or *tulkus*, have mastered the death and rebirth process, choosing the manner of their rebirth and returning continuously to help humanity achieve enlightenment. Over the centuries, Tibetan Buddhism branched into four major schools, and the most revered in the largest Gelugpa tradition are the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. By the seventeenth century, the Dalai Lama was established as the predominant political and spiritual power in central Tibet.[606]

Over the next few hundred years leading up to the thirteenth century, the political and religious structures and cultures of Tibet became intertwined, as "Tibet thus evolved into a religion-centric culture unified by Mahāyāna Buddhism in its special form of

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[604] Peter Schwieger, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China: A Political History of the Tibetan Institution of Reincarnation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 7.

[605] Ibid.

[606] Tim Johnson, *Tragedy in Crimson: How the Dalai Lama Conquered the World but Lost the Battle with China* (New York: Nation Books, 2011), 4.

Vajrayāna, perceived generally nowadays as a 'unique culture.'"[607] The resulting Buddhist identity helped pull Tibet's self-conception westward, away from China:

> This view is enhanced by the fact that the clerical Tibetan elite began distinguishing themselves from others by narrating a coherent history of common origin, common fate, and a common project of salvation. This history links Tibet more strongly to the Buddhist India of the past than to imperial China and Inner Asia.[608]

On the eastern side, China, of course, would hold a different view regarding Tibet's identity.

Ana Cristina Lopes characterizes the contrasting interpretations of whether and when Tibet and China forged a binding relationship when she states, "It could indeed be said that different views of history are at the very core of the clash between Tibetan and Chinese worldviews."[609] Lopes explains the historical foundation for the case for China's entitlement over the region:

> Chinese claims over Tibet go back to the thirteenth century. According to the Chinese version of history, it was during that time that Tibet became an integral part of Chinese territory. This argument is based on the Mongol conquest of both regions. In general terms, Tibetans and Chinese agree that the crucial encounter in 1247 between the Tibetan spiritual master Sakya Pandita (1182-1251) and the powerful Mongol prince Goden Khan (d. 1253), the grandson of Genghis Khan (d. 1227), marked the beginning of important changes in the power structure of Tibet.[610]

China later would also come under the foreign rule of the Mongolians in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368). Just prior to the official beginning of their domination of China, when the Mongols took advantage of the Lama power structure in Tibet:

> When the Mongols in 1249 brought most of the Tibetan areas under their rule, the Lamas presented themselves as prominent figures. Through them, the Mongols were

[607] Johnson, 4.

[608] Ibid.

[609] Ana Cristina O. Lopes, *Tibetan Buddhism in Diaspora: Cultural Re-signification in Practice and Institutions* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 15.

[610] Ibid.

> able to govern Tibet. The social and political role that the Lamas already had was thereby enhanced. The head Lamas of Sakya Monastery and their families administered Tibet as vassals of the Mongols. On several occasions, the Mongols had to reinforce their political authority by sending in military forces. After Qubilai Qan had finally established the Yuan Dynasty in China through the final defeat of the Southern Song in 1279, Tibet became part of the Yuan Empire.[611]

Taking on more of a self-consciously Buddhist identity through the assumption of power by the Lamas in the centuries leading up to the Mongol invasion actually planted the seeds for the future claim of imperial China over Tibet.

A few centuries later, the emperors of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) "began enforcing their sovereignty over Tibet in the early part of the eighteenth century right up to the end of the nineteenth century."[612] During this period, "essentially none of the Dalai Lamas exercised any political power of his own."[613] This process, however, elevated the office and spiritual aura of the Dalai Lama:

> [I]n their efforts to attain social and political stability, the Qing emperors had fashioned the Dalai Lama into the sacred head of the Ganden Podrang government, and thus inadvertently helped promote the image of Tibet as a country guided by the incarnations of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. When after more than two centuries the institution of the Dalai Lama was occupied once again by charismatic personalities, this image had become such a strong force in Tibetan politics that it could no longer be controlled by the new Chinese governments.[614]

By the end of the Qing dynasty, China suffered the intrusion of Western powers. The volatile crises of the nineteenth century, notably the Opium Wars (1839-42, 1856-60), the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64), and the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), all increased the

[611] Schwieger, 8.

[612] Ibid., 221.

[613] Ibid.

[614] Ibid.

foreign penetration of China. These events took their toll on the strength of the Qing government, thereby diminishing its hold on Tibet:

> The Qing dynasty began to dramatically weaken in the mid-nineteenth century when rising imperialist powers such as England and Russia started to impinge on its territories. By 1911, China had descended into a patchwork of warring chieftains and provinces, and after 1923, Tibet began to consider itself a fully independent nation. But it failed to grasp its best chance at autonomy, even declining to petition the United Nations for recognition as a sovereign state. Tibet, the keeper of the Dharma, remained locked behind its wind-whipped summits.[615]

In 1904, however, just prior to the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, the Chinese still viewed Tibet as under their domain, and wanted to communicate as much to the Western powers. Gordon Stewart reports, "Although not an integral part of the empire," at that time, "Tibet was viewed by the Chinese as a dependency in the context of their shared traditional religio-political obligations."[616] To prove such a view, Chinese leaders pointed to pieces of evidence existed for these claims:

> [T]he two Ambans stationed in Lhasa were symbols of that claimed authority. Chinese officials also argued in diplomatic meetings with Western representatives like [British Embassador in Peking, Sir Ernest] Satow that their eighteenth-century military operations in Tibet had effectively taken over the country.[617]

Against the threat of subjugation, while also taking advantage of the turmoil happening in China, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso (1876-1933) set out to ensure the independence of his nation from the threat of its neighbor. According to Talty, this Dalai Lama's "great mission in his lifetime had been to modernize the country and usher Tibet into the company of independent nations."[618] The religious and political leader accurately "believed that the age-old threat from Tibet's ancient adversary, China, would return,

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[615] That is, "Until a resurgent China, under Mao Zedong, returned." Talty, 38.

[616] Gordon T. Stewart, *Journeys to Empire: Enlightenment, Imperialism, and the British Encounter with Tibet, 1774-1904* (New York, 2009), 256.

[617] Stewart, 256.

[618] Talty, 9.

more powerful than ever."[619] Without the internationally recognized status of statehood, he foresaw "that his nation, backward and isolationist in the extreme, would prove to be very easy prey for its huge neighbor."[620] The first step to avert such a fate would be to pursue a sovereignty recognized by other nations:

> In the face of imminent Chinese threat, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and his government would then appeal to British India. Coordinated by Sir Henry McMahon, representative of British India, the Simla Convention was held between 1913 and 1914 as an attempt to solve the crisis between Tibet and China. Through this convention, and with British support, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama tried to reaffirm Tibet's autonomy from China. The Chinese, however, not agreeing with the terms of the accord, decided not to sign it. Tibet and Great Britain nevertheless signed it, thus creating the only international document that recognized Tibetan autonomy.[621]

As the only international document recognizing Tibetan independence at that time, the declaration produced mixed results. Lopes explains that "certain level of ambivalence … characterized Anglo-Tibetan relations."[622] Just as Tibet's location between China and India appealed to China, so too did its strategic locale have an attraction for India's rulers. So a strong measure of self-interest colored the British deliberations with Tibet:

> One the one hand, they were determined by British India's commercial need to gain access to the Himalayan region, and the Tibetan determination to prevent that from happening. While on the other hand, the British represented an important counterbalance to Chinese ambitions for Tibetan territory, as British commercial interests in Tibet caused Great Britain to delegitimize Chinese claims over the country.[623]

As part of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's overall emancipation and modernization project, however, Talty offers the bleak assessment that "by the time of his death, it was clear that

[619] Talty, 9.

[620] Ibid.

[621] Lopes, 18.

[622] Ibid.

[623] Ibid.

he'd utterly failed in this mission."[624] Instead of deeper connections with the rest of the world to counterbalance China's threat, the current moved in the opposite direction:

> The leaders of Tibet's great monasteries thought that opening the country to the world would spell the end of their domination and the end of Tibet's role as the keeper of the Dharma. They equated modernity with atheism. Westerners were seen as *Tendra*, enemies of the faith, and enemies of the men and institutions that supported the faith. One monk remembered that, growing up, he was taught that India was the holiest place on earth but that "everywhere else is to be feared." It was even permitted to kill intruders rather than let them contaminate Tibet.[625]

Although all that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama envisioned for his country failed to be realized, Ana Lopes contends that the period did effectively grant Tibet authenticity for its claim of autonomy:

> With the collapse of the Qing dynasty and the subsequent establishment of the Republic of China (1912-49), it is generally agreed among Tibetan and western scholars that Tibet became a de facto independent territory. The Chinese official position, however, is that the "continuous rule over Tibet" was effective also during this period.[626]

When the Fourteenth Dalai Lama would succeed his predecessor and come of age in his office, he would face the question of to what degree to follow his predecessor's attempts to guarantee Tibet's independence, but in the face of a military invasion.

5.4 THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA AND THE THREAT OF CHINA

The office of the Dalai Lama presents a religious figure whose leadership functions to offer political and cultural unity to Tibet. Although the position is one of great influence and power, the person occupying the office is not descended from royalty. Instead, a search process over the next few years following the death of the preceding Lama ensues

[624] Talty, 9.

[625] Ibid.

[626] Lopes, 18.

to locate his successor, who could emerge far away from the Potala Palace in the capital city of Lhasa. Such is the case with the current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso (b. 1935), who tells about his own humble beginnings:

> I was born on the fifth day of the firth month in the Wood Pig year according to the Tibetan calendar, or July 6, 1935, in the Western calendar. … The name of my village is Takster, or "Roaring Tiger." When I was a child, it was a poor little commune, built on a hill overlooking a wide valley. The grazing land was used not by farmers but by nomads, because of the unpredictable weather in the region. When I was little, my family, along with about twenty others, earned a meager living from the land.[627]

He expresses gratitude for his "modest origins," because if he "had been born in a rich or aristocratic family," he would not have been able to "share the concerns of the simple people of Tibet," for whom he strives to use his position "to make their living conditions better."[628] Elizabeth Swanepoel recounts the story of how the identification of this reincarnation of the Dalai Lama took place:

> After the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lame, the then Regent of Tibet sought divine guidance in order to find the next Dalai Lama. He received visions of the boy's small house with unusual gutters as well as of a gold-roofed monastery nearby. Two years later, in 1935, a search party of lamas arrived in the village of Takster, in the province of Amdo, where they located the monastery as well as the house with the strange gutters. The family's remarkable two-year old boy, Lhamo Dhondrup, immediately recognized the head lama from Sera Monastery, who had disguised himself as a servant. The boy also identified items that had belonged to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, claiming that they were his. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama had been found.[629]

The young boy would later be taken to Lhasa and installed in his position. During his time in office, the threat from China was always present, with pressure put on the young Lama to conform to the larger neighbor's agenda for domination.

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[627] The Dalai Lama, with Sofia Stril-Rever, trans. Charlotte Mandell, *My Spiritual Journey: Personal Reflections, Teachings, and Talks* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 37.

[628] Ibid., 39.

[629] Elizabeth Swanepoel, "The Female Quest for Enlightenment: Compassion and Patience in Transforming Gender Bias in Tibetan Buddhism, with Specific Reference to Western Tibetan Nuns and Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 2013), 32.

As has been shown above, the history of Tibet, Buddhism, and the office of the Dalai Lama regarding empire and China rose out of a back-and-forth, somewhat dialectical process. The disintegration of the Tibetan empire led to the rule of lamas. The Yuan dynasty of Mongol rule utilized the power structure of this rule through lamas to extend their own rule over Tibet. This subjugation of Tibet gave imperial China its first historic claim over the region. As Schwieger demonstrates, the Qing dynasty would co-opt the Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation to make its claim over Tibet. Against this same foreign power, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama attempted to use the period of the weakening of the Qing dynasty and the period following to establish Tibetan autonomy. However, the nation's inability to both open itself up to the international community and to modernize its industry and military to the degree needed to keep China at bay allowed the People's Republic to make a successful invasion.

5.4.a Chinese Invasion

The People's Republic of China was able to overwhelm the Tibetan army and occupy Tibet because of its superior fighting force and weaponry. Talty describes the scale of the opening assault:

> In 1950, when the Dalai Lama was fifteen, the twentieth century arrived in Tibet in the form of the People's Liberation Army. Some 80,000 battle-trained Chinese soldiers crossed the "Ghost River" that separates China from the Tibetan province of Chamdo. The Tibetan army that faced them was badly trained, badly equipped, and, at 8,500 soldiers and officers, almost ludicrously undermanned, a legacy of the monasteries' distrust of the military.[630]

Although China had shown itself weaker during the preceding century in its attempts to withstand the entrance of foreign empires, the interactions with Western powers and its own war against Japan and civil war made it familiar with, and have the desire to use, modern weaponry and technology. In contrast, Tibet had largely stayed pre-modern in

[630] Talty, 41.

many ways and would not have contact with much of the rest of the world. The unstoppable march forward of the Chinese army prompted the departure of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, as on "March 17, 1959, he was forced to escape to India."[631] He has remained in exile ever since, working from Dharamsala, India, as his adopted home.

The Dalai Lama has not returned to his homeland since his departure. For the conquering Chinese "to immediately replace the Tibetan worldview with a communist, materialistic worldview," they would implement "practices of transgression and violence created a space in which Tibetan culture would be torn apart."[632] This resulted in creating, according to Lopes, "a space of death that can be described as the other face of the communist civilizing project, which, at least in theory, aimed at bettering the lives of Tibetans."[633] A few decades on in this process, Talty concedes that there have been benefits for the Tibetans from Chinese rule:

> The Chinese have unquestionably done good things in Tibet. They've poured billions into the country, built infrastructure that could sustain growth, especially in mineral extraction and agriculture, for years. They've curbed the worst abuses of the monastic system (the monasteries survive now by private donations).[634]

Now considered a province by the People's Republic, the question of which approach to carry out the continuing Sinicization process of Tibet causes friction among those in leadership:

> The Chinese today simply aren't the monolithic villains that some in the pro-independence movement paint them as, nor are they intent on wiping out Tibetan culture by diktat. But the policy struggle that was going on in 1950 between those

[631] Charlie Campbell, "The Dalai Lama Has Been the Face of Buddhism for 60 Years. China Wants to Change That," *Time* March 7, 2019, http://time.com/longform/dalai-lama-60-year-exile/ (accessed March 8, 2019).

[632] Lopes, 20.

[633] Ibid.

[634] Talty, 251.

> who favor engaging the Tibetans and those who want to violently suppress them, is still being played out in Beijing, and there are competing cliques, each with their own personalities and bureaucrats and career considerations.[635]

But whether or not modernization and reform from the Chinese have improved their daily lives, for the ethnic Tibetans who still live there, "Lhasa exists around an absence."[636] Talty reports from his travels in that city how the "Chinese have outlawed anything to do with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama—books, photographs, everything."[637] However, the spiritual presence of the beloved leader has not been stamped out. Talty observes that "everywhere I looked, men and women were bowing and praying to him as if he had never left."[638] This inspirational figure, however, has not returned in person since his departure in 1959.

5.5 MISSIONARY TO THE SECULAR CITY

Although noting above the historical case for its claim over Tibet, the invasion by China functions as an expansion of empire. This imperial incursion propelled the Fourteenth Dalai Lama to function as an unintentional missionary of Tibetan Buddhism on the global stage. This propulsion prompted by empire has not just been of the one man, but Lopes notes, "The imperialist ambitions of China … have sparked the spectacular spread of Tibetan Buddhism worldwide, and especially in western countries." [639] But it is the Dalai Lama who serves as a unifying symbol both for Tibet and its religion in the world's view. Johnson explains, "In recent times, nearly all followers of Tibetan Buddhism, regardless

[635] Talty, 251.

[636] Ibid., 258.

[637] Ibid.

[638] Ibid., 258.

[639] Lopes, 1.

of tradition, have come to venerate him as a savior being, and his prominence has grown far beyond the arc of the Himalayas."[640] To witness the reality of this prominence, it is helpful to move our focus from the city of Lhasa to Seattle, a center of global influence in the twenty first century, as an example of the Dalai Lama's work as a missionary. Like Lhasa, it too is a city that has been shaped by the interests of competing empires.

5.5.a The Pacific Northwest: A Contest of Empires

The city of Seattle resides in the state of Washington in the Pacific Northwest of the U.S.A. This urban center serves as the main metropolis for the region, with the smaller sibling city of Portland to the south in Oregon, and Vancouver a few hours north on the other side of the Canadian border. As part of the Pacific Rim, its maritime location and rich natural resources, such as furs, fishing, and timber, made it a desirable place in past history for three expanding powers, who encroached upon the original residents. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the "back-and-forth struggle for control between Native Peoples and British, American, and Russian traders defines the fur trade story."[641] David Jepsena and David Norberg recount how the region of the Pacific Northwest in "this era saw the rise of intensely guarded economic boundaries."[642] The threat of Russians investing heavily in the region appeared after they started in the fur trade following a 1741 expedition which "found a lucrative market for sea otter furs in China."[643] Although most Russian fishing took place in the area off the Alaskan coast,

[640] Johnson, 4.

[641] David J. Jepsen and David J. Norberg, *Contested Boundaries: A New Pacific Northwest History* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2017), 35.

[642] Ibid.

[643] Ibid., 36.

"Rumors suggested the company considered building a post near the Columbia River in 1810," and they "did establish an agricultural settlement in northern California in 1812."[644] To the relief of the British and American interests, for the most part, "Russian traders remained on the fringes of the Pacific Northwest, leaving opportunities for other nations."[645] Jepsena and Norberg explain how trade and the extraction of natural resources fueled the political ambitions of the respective powers interested in the region:

> All parties wanted to derive the most benefit from trade and Euro-American traders fought bitterly to drive competing nations from the field. Additionally, trading companies held political goals. In the Pacific Northwest, a contested region for much of its early history, trade allowed nations like Great Britain and the United States to enhance their claims. Importantly, trade expanded beyond furs, especially after the British Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) entered the region in 1821. By the 1840s, the company engaged in logging, fishing, and commercial agriculture, strengthening British dominance in the region. Ironically, diversification, especially in farming, actually hurt Britain's long-term interests and allowed Americans to challenge British claims. The bounty of their fields showcased the region's potential and, combined with the company's policy of buying food from local farmers, actively encouraged American settlement, undermining both trade and British power. Finally, trade led to the first sustained interactions between Native Peoples and Euro-Americans. Both sides recognized trade's benefits, motivating them to negotiate and compromise. They forged complicated, mutually beneficial relationships in which neither side maintained complete control.[646]

Eventually, of course, the areas comprising what would later be founded as the states of Washington, Oregon, the northern portion of California, along with Alaska to the north, all became part of the United States, or the American Empire. The territory of British Columbia, which contains the city of Vancouver, eventually became a Canadian province.

[644] Jepsen and Norberg, 36.

[645] Ibid.

[646] Ibid., 36-37.

This resource-rich area that was a contested treasure for the three imperial powers of Great Britain, the United States, and Russia eventually became a leading center of global commerce, technological development, and popular culture. The Pacific Northwest's history, landscape, and resources all converged to cultivate a broad influence:

> With the emerging global economy, resource extraction and manufacturing operations declined or moved overseas while high-tech industries, finance, commerce, and service industries thrived. The Northwest found itself well positioned to capitalize on these developments. Deep-water ports and trade relations with Asia first developed during the fur trade two centuries earlier. These connections helped make the region a powerhouse in international trade. Additionally, the beauty of the area's natural environment facilitated the rise of tourism. Luck also played a role, as economic trendsetters like Microsoft's Bill Gates and Paul Allen hailed from the region by mere happenstance.[647]

Since the 1980s, the region's flagship city of Seattle in the state of Washington has become one of the most influential cities in the world. Nike is located in the neighboring city of Portland, Oregon, part of the Pacific Northwest. In the 1980s, the Nike company undertook worldwide marketing campaigns that made global advertisement and consumption what it is today. Seattle is the location for the airline company Boeing, the coffee company Starbucks, and the online giant Amazon, which is in the process of reshaping global commerce. No longer known primarily for the beauty of its pine covered mountains and rocky shorelines, the region has become a leader of technological innovation on par with Silicon Valley:

> Beyond Microsoft and its off-shoots, Amazon.com, founded by Jeff Bezos in a Bellevue area garage in 1995, started as an online bookseller and expanded into an international retailer and provider of web services. With $88 billion in revenue in 2014 the company grew into a prominent fixture in the region's economy. Other notable companies with a Northwestern presence include Cray, PopCap Games, Adobe and Nintendo. Cray supercomputers and PopCap maintained their headquarters in Seattle, while San Jose based Adobe built offices in Seattle and Japan's video game company, Nintendo, employed roughly 650 at its North American headquarters in Redmond as of 2010. Tech's influence spread far beyond the Puget Sound region.

[647] Jepsen and Norberg, 322.

> Notably, the Milken Institute marked the Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton region in Oregon and the Boise City-Nampa area in Idaho as the nation's number two and three centers for "Semiconductor and other electronic component manufacturing." Intel, which dominates Oregon's "Silicone Forest," is most known for its computer processors and is a leading employer with more than 19,000 workers in the state.[648]

The cultural, commercial, and technological influence of these companies make Seattle, as the powerhouse of a region at the forefront of commerce, technology, and culture, a city of profound influence both on the North American continent, and for the entire world.

5.5.b Seattle: Representative of the Secular City[649]

In addition to its technological and corporate influences, the Pacific Northwest is also known for is its high degree of non-religiosity, or secularism. Christian theologian Matthew Kaemingk offers a spiritual cartography of the region:

> Including the province of British Columbia and the states of Washington and Oregon, the region of 'Cascadia' has long been labelled by journalists as the 'most secular' region in North America. Be it 'pagan Portlandia,' 'Sacrilegious Seattle,' or 'Vulgar Vancouver,' their journalistic alliteration paints the region with an equally broad and godless brush. Christians living in the region have largely accepted this journalistic portrait of the region as a bastion of all things 'secular.' They despair that their home has hardened itself over with an impenetrable secular shield.[650]

Technology and consumerism on their own fail to fill the void. Lopes describes a resultant spiritual ache of the West: "On this side of the planet, the signs of

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[648] Jepsen and Norberg, 324.

[649] I am borrowing the phrase of "the secular city" from the title of Harvey Cox's best known work. Harvey Gallagher Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective – Anniversary Edition* (New York: Collier Books, 1990). Whereas Cox foresaw formal religion fading as society adopted religious values, I apply the phrase here to describe the non-religious, or secular, character of the Pacific Northwest in general and Seattle in particular. Cox later conceded that his "secular city" thesis did not prove to be realized, as global religion underwent a resurgence in the latter half of the twentieth century. See Cox, *The Future of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).

[650] Matthew Kaemingk, "Postcard from the Pacific Northwest: What does the future hold for secularism in the West?" *Comment Magazine*, https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/4647/a-postcard-from-the-pacific-northwest/ (accessed April 20, 2018).

impermanence are more evident than ever, laid bare by the transience of modern life."[651] In this context of the highly secular, technologically innovate and economically influential city of Seattle, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama made a visit in 2008. Mirroring the size of the crusades of the Christian evangelist Billy Graham, the organizers of the Seeds of Compassion conference "said about 51,000 people — many of them families — listened under sunny skies to the Dalai Lama speak about compassion."[652] Speaking at Qwest Field, the home of the Seattle Seahawks, the city's North American football team,[653] the Tibetan leader offered a "wide-ranging, 45-minute address" in which he "called for the elimination of nuclear weapons and spoke of the role of women in nurturing compassion."[654] His presentation also "discussed the need for nonviolence," proposing that the "21st century should be a 'century of dialogue.'"[655] While the Dalai Lama was not recruiting the audience specifically to convert to and practice Buddhism, he championed ethics from both his own tradition and those shared with other traditions.

The astounding turnout of secular Westerners for the Seeds of Compassion conference exemplifies the Dalai Lama's role as a Buddhist missionary, as the city of Seattle embodies the values and produces much of the culture for the secular West. This large crowd demonstrated a growing interest in the leader and his teachings, as the "last time the Dalai Lama visited Seattle, in 1993, his total audience was perhaps a tenth of what is

[651] Lopes, 1.

[652] Laura Myers, "Dalai Lama Draws 50,000 to Seattle Stadium." Reuters.com April 12, 2008, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-dalailama/dalai-lama-draws-50000-to-seattle-stadium-idUSN1241877720080412 (accessed April 2, 2019).

[653] William Yardley, "Dalai Lama Visits Seattle, and Fits Right In." *The New York Times* April 11, 2008, https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/11/world/americas/11iht-seattle.1.11902279.html (accessed April 2, 2019).

[654] Myers, "Dalai Lama Draws 50,000."

[655] Ibid.

expected this time."[656] Having so many people to attend the conference, the majority of whom were of white European descent, demonstrates both their interest in spirituality and in the Dalai Lama's function as a religious figure in the contemporary context. Disaffiliation from Christianity, the dominant religion throughout the history of American culture left a spiritual vacuum:

> Much of Seattle has long had Sunday mornings free. Some Lutheran churches in the old Scandinavian fishing neighborhoods of Ballard have been converted to housing. Churches downtown have been sold. The Episcopal cathedral, on a hill overlooking the city, has struggled with budgets and internal politics. [657]

In addition to empty church buildings on Sunday mornings, Christianity in the West has, in recent decades, endured several scandals. The Roman Catholic Church continues to weather its clergy sex abuse scandal in several countries. Evangelical and charismatic Christianity have regular news stories regarding the abuse of power and money, often tied to megachurches and television preachers. In contrast, while Buddhism as a whole and Tibetan Buddhism specifically will have their own conflicts, scandals, and abuses of power, these are not well known in Western media. Therefore, the freshness and lack of familiarity of some of the background to Westerners makes both the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism appear to be a fresh, innocent, authentic, and pure religious expression. The religion also resonates with the practical nature of American culture:

> One of Buddhism's greatest advantages, as both a religion and a philosophy, is that it is goal-oriented and practical. Pragmatic Americans like Buddhism because it works, whether they understand its finer points or not. They are attracted, seemingly in equal numbers, to its exotic origins, elegant philosophy, practical nature, and peaceful practices.[658]

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[656] Yardley, "Dalai Lama Visits Seattle."

[657] Ibid.

[658] Morgan, 3. David McMahon attributes some of the attraction of Westerners to Buddhism to the disenchantment experienced through the secularization of modernity. See David L. McMahon, *The Making of Buddhist Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 11-13.

Had the People's Republic of China not invaded Lhasa in 1959, prompting the exile in Dharmasala, then the Dalai Lama most likely would not have become a global religious figure, stepping in to fill the spiritual vacuum:

> In the six decades since, the leader of the world's most secluded people has become the most recognizable face of a religion practiced by nearly 500 million people worldwide. But his prominence extends beyond the borders of his own faith, with many practices endorsed by Buddhists, like mindfulness and meditation, permeating the lives of millions more around the world. What's more, the lowly farmer's son named as a "God-King" in his childhood has been embraced by the West since his exile. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 and was heralded in Martin Scorcese's 1997 biopic. The cause of Tibetan self-rule remains alive in Western minds thanks to admirers ranging from Richard Gere to the Beastie Boys to Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who calls him a "messenger of hope for millions of people around the world."[659]

In this role, the Dalai Lama serves as the public representative for global Buddhism. But just as the apostle Paul was not the only missionary to spread Christianity in the Roman Empire, so neither is the Dalai Lama the sole bearer of Tibetan or Vajrayāna Buddhism to the West, even if he is the most prominent.[660]

5.6 THE DALAI LAMA DEMONSTRATES THESIS OF A MISSIONARY CONNECTED TO EMPIRE

The second chapter of this work examined the life and work of the apostle Paul as a Christian missionary who both interacted with and whose work was propelled by the Roman Empire. Though separated by twenty centuries, the current Dalai Lama shares

[659] Charlie Campbell, "The Dalai Lama Has Been the Face of Buddhism for 60 Years. China Wants to Change That," *Time*, March 7, 2019, http://time.com/longform/dalai-lama-60-year-exile/ (accessed March 8, 2019).

[660] For a brief survey of the other schools and key figures of Tibetan Buddhism in the United States, see Diane Morgan, *The Buddhist Experience in America,* 223-239.

some characteristics parallel to Paul. Like the apostle, the Dalai Lama underwent religious training from an early age:

> At the age of eighteen, when Chinese occupation was looming, he received the rank of Geshe or "Doctor of Divinity." This title requires intensive training under the strict authority of teachers, and his teachers were even more demanding than normal since they were training him for an exceptional fate.[661]

In contrast to his Christian counterpart, however, the Dalai Lama was raised on the level of royalty from the time he was identified as a toddler and then installed into office as a young boy. Paul, as related in chapter two, grew up in a diaspora family with the trade of tent making.

Like the Dalai Lama, Paul experienced persecution from the ruling imperial power. Although he was not exiled from his homeland permanently, as the Dalai Lama has been since 1959, the apostle underwent periods of imprisonment, and two years of house arrest in the city of Rome. Paul was eventually, according to history, martyred just outside the city of Rome, being beheaded by the sword. While the Dalai Lama has not been martyred by the Chinese government, many other monks and nuns were, and he has lived under the pressure of the Chinese government campaign against him. In 1996, the Dalai Lama's former tutor and Austrian friend Heinrich Harrer (1912-2006) could write that it appeared that his former student had won the battle for public opinion against China:

> The admiration and reverence for the Dalai Lama has grown widely in the world in the past years. To the dismay of the Chinese, popular demand for Tibet's independence has been increasing throughout the world, due mainly to the endeavors and charisma of the Dalai Lama. Slowly the world has come to realize the extent to which Tibet's culture has been mutilated.[662]

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[661] The Dalai Lama, with Sofia Stril-Rever, trans. Charlotte Mandell, *My Spiritual Journey: Personal Reflections, Teachings, and Talks* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 51.

[662] Heinrich Harrer, *Seven Year in Tibet*, transl. Richard Graves (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 1996), 329.

But in the more than two decades since that writing, the strength of global economics has shifted the balance back in China's favor, "as old age makes travel more difficult, and as China's political clout has grown, the Dalai Lama's influence has waned."[663] Such disappointment at the end of one's life is a reality with which Paul could empathize. In one of his last writings, he laments that "everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me."[664] Although both leaders wielded great influence, such as speaking with kings or presidents, they also suffered times of difficulty and persecution.

The most significant contrast with Paul concerning this present study is that the Dalai Lama did not set out to be a missionary who would intentionally cross ethnic, political, and social boundaries in order to transmit his faith. Instead, he found himself an unintentional figure on the global stage as part of the Tibetan Diaspora caused by China's invasion. Although Paul grew up as a member of the Jewish Diaspora and took advantage of his connections to its widespread to carry out his mission work, as shown in chapter two, the Dalai Lama's escape and exile inaugurated the Tibetan Diaspora. In contrast to Paul, then, the Dalai Lama has been an unintentional missionary, yet he is a missionary of Vajrayāna or Tibetan Buddhism nonetheless.

5.6.a Tibetan Buddhist Diaspora

In a memoir of her family's departure from Chinese-occupied Tibet, Yangzom Brauen relates an interpretation for the events of the twentieth century that resulted in the Tibetan Diaspora. In this telling, the invasion serves as a fulfillment of a larger, foreordained story to get the Tibetan form of Buddhism to the world:

[663] Charlie Campbell, "The Dalai Lama Has Been the Face of Buddhism for 60 Years. China Wants to Change That," *Time* March 7, 2019, http://time.com/longform/dalai-lama-60-year-exile/ (accessed March 8, 2019).

[664] 2 Timothy 1:15. *New International Version*.

> In the winter of 1959, the same year the Dalai Lama went into exile and a prophecy made by Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, was being fulfilled in a terrible way. This ostensibly 1,200-year-old prophecy says: "When the iron bird flies and horses run on wheels, the Tibetan people will be scattered like ants across the face of the earth and Buddhist teachings will reach the land of the red man." The iron birds, or Chinese planes, were flying over our land, and the horses on wheels, or Chinese trains, had brought troops to the border, forcing my mother and grandparents on their perilous journey.[665]

Associating this prophecy with the Chinese invasion recasts the Tibetan Diaspora as a larger cosmic drama with a purpose for Vajrayāna Buddhism beyond Tibet's geographic borders. Prior to China's takeover, "it is estimated that about 20 percent of the Tibetan population were Lamas (Buddhist monks)."[666] The horrific campaign against Buddhist clergy and structures resulted in having an "untold number of them, and of lay Tibetans as well, were tortured and murdered, and over 6,000 monasteries were destroyed."[667] The persecution drove Buddhist clergy to leave their homeland, as the "Dalai Lama and thousands of others, including the most important of the Lamas, were forced into exile."[668] This forced emigration included not just the people, but the religion with its teachings, artifacts, and stylistic iconography with them:

> However, this exile resulted in the dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism into all parts of the world. As the Tibetan people, both laypersons and monks, were forced from their homeland, they brought with them their priceless texts and treasured rites. What had hitherto been an unknown and mysterious practice from a remote and mysterious land flowered into one of the most respected and widely known branches of the great Buddhist tradition.[669]

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[665] Yangzom Brauen, *Across Many Mountains: A Tibetan Family's Epic Journey from Oppression to Freedom* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011), 6.

[666] Morgan, 211.

[667] Ibid.

[668] Ibid.

[669] Ibid.

Morgan describes the unintended outcome of this persecution and resultant exile as, "What started as an unmitigated disaster for the country of Tibet turned into a spiritual gift for the Western world."[670] Whereas D. T. Suzuki popularized Zen in the mid-twentieth century, by the turn of the twenty-first century, "about one third of the Buddhist centers in North American adhere[d] to the Tibetan tradition."[671] Morgan explains how media exposure has proven to be an essential factor in building public awareness for the Dalai Lama:

> Hollywood's current interest in Tibet and in the Dalai Lama has had an enormous impact on American understanding of this exotic form of Buddhism. Curiously, the Dalai Lama was not even permitted a visa to get into this country as recently as 1979—the U.S. government was at the time extremely anxious not to offend China. This changed, however, after the massacre at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, and public sentiment for Tibet became overwhelming. When the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1989, his standing as an international leader became impossible to ignore.[672]

As mentioned above, in the way that the apostle Paul was not the only missionary to spread Christianity in the Roman Empire, so neither is the Dalai Lama the sole bearer of Tibetan or Vajrayāna Buddhism to the West, even if he is the most prominent.[673] But with its background of cultural Christianity and egalitarian impulses, such a movement of Westerners towards the Tibetan form of Buddhism could seem surprising:

> Despite coming from an authoritarian, nondemocratic tradition, Tibetan Buddhism, for the most part, adapted quickly to American customs. It has been the general practice for Tibetan monks to set up a center, and then leave its upkeep and administration to senior American students. Most Tibetan monasteries are now firmly under American control, even though they may retain the nominal leadership of a Tibetan Lama. Religiously, however, the essential elements have remained unchanged. … Whether because of the inherent power and mystique of Tibetan Buddhism, or because of the tragedy of its birthplace, Americans are drawn to this

[670] Morgan, 211.

[671] Ibid., 212.

[672] Ibid.

[673] For a brief survey of the other schools and key figures of Tibetan Buddhism in the United States, see Diane Morgan, *The Buddhist Experience in America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 223-239.

> rich and occult tradition. Tibetan Lamas and their teaching continue to be in great demand.[674]

When considering Vajrayāna's complex doctrines, along with its complicated syncretizing of Buddhism and Tibetan shamanism, it may be the mystique that Morgan mentions which has served as one of the strongest factors drawing Westerners to venerate the Dalai Lama and his religion.

Daniel Lopez, in his book, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*,[675] addresses this Western tendency to idealize and romanticize all things Tibet. He explains how the West conceived of "Tibet prior to Chinese invasion and colonization" to have been "an idyllic society devoted to the practice of Buddhism."[676] As such, it was a utopian "nation that required no police force because its people voluntarily observed the laws of karma, a society in which, through the workings of an 'inner democracy,' a peasant boy might become a great lama."[677] The reality was that of a country similar to others with social stratification and corruption:

> [T]raditional Tibet, like any complex society, had great inequalities, with power monopolized by an elite composed of a small aristocracy, the hierarchs of various sects (including incarnate lamas), and the great Geluk monasteries. The subordinate members of the society included nonaristocratic laymen, non-Buddhists, and women.[678]

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[674] Morgan, 239.

[675] Donald S. Lopez, Jr, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[676] Ibid., 9.

[677] Ibid.

[678] Ibid.

This idealization of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhism and Tibet itself all proves somewhat ironic, as doing so represents a pendulum swing from an opposite sentiment in the West's first awareness of Tibet:

> The turn-of-the-century colonialist saw incarnate lamas as "an incarnation of all vices and corruptions, instead of the souls of the departed Lamas." In contrast, an extreme form of the view held by many in the West today argues that the Tibetan "gross national product of enlightened persons must have been proportionately higher than any other country ever." Although the sons of peasants were chosen as Dalai Lamas and the sons of nomads mastered the monastic curriculum to become respected scholars and abbots, the system of incarnation was not a cosmic meritocracy above the mundane world of power and politics.[679]

These two ends of the spectrum continue to provide the images with how Tibet is presented to the world. Lopez observes that, "In the continual play of opposites, the view of old Tibet as good is put forward by the Tibetan government-in-exile."[680] This cause has taken on broader significance as, according to Evan Osnos, during the Dalai Lama's time in "exile, he won the Nobel Peace Prize and helped turn Tibetans, in the words of his friend Robert Thurman, a Columbia University professor and former monk, into 'the baby seals of the human-rights movement.'"[681] The Western idealized notion of Tibet and its religion as embodying spiritual purity then casts the conflict with China in cosmic terms:

> The Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet was perceived not as a conquest of one despotic state by another, but as yet another case of opposites, the powers of darkness against the powers of light. The invasion of Tibet by the People's Liberation Army in 1950 was (and often is still) represented as an undifferentiated mass of godless Communists overrunning a peaceful land devoted only to ethereal pursuits, victimizing not only millions of Tibetans but the sometimes more lamented Buddhist dharma as well. Tibet embodies the spiritual and the ancient, China the material and the modern. Tibetans are superhuman, Chinese are subhuman. According to this logic of opposites China must be debased for Tibet to be exalted; for there to be an

[679] Lopez, 9.

[680] Ibid.

[681] Evan Osnos, *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 282.

> enlightened Orient there must be a benighted Orient; the angelic requires the demonic.[682]

In turn, the Chinese utilize the "representation of old Tibet as bad, so familiar from European accounts of the nineteenth century" for the benefit of "their campaign to incorporate the nation of Tibet into China."[683] Despite, or possibly because of, the tendencies to romanticize Tibet, its expression of Buddhism has become the default version of the larger Buddhist tradition in the minds of potential converts. Whether one sides with Tibet's concern or accedes to China's case for ownership of Tibet, the Dalai Lama and his compatriots would not have brought Tibetan Buddhism to the world stage without this conflict.

5.6.b Questions Regarding the Dalai Lama as Missionary

Having demonstrated that the Dalai Lama has served as the best known public representative of the Tibetan Diaspora caused by the Chinese takeover, two significant questions of whether or not this figure functions as a missionary will be considered. The first question concerns whether he can be considered to be in the league of the scholar-missionaries who have been the focus of this research. The second question considers the intent and content of his work, considering whether he actively strives to make converts to the Buddhist faith.

The first question inquires of to what degree the Dalai Lama fits alongside the other case studies of this dissertation. One might ask whether he is a scholar-missionary, such as the apostle Paul, portrayed in chapter two. Or whether he should be counted among Buddhist

[682] Lopez, 6-7.

[683] Ibid., 10-11. I first encountered this view from my adult students to whom I taught English in 1994-95, as described in chapter one.

translators like Kumārajīva (344-413 C.E.) from chapter four. That same chapter included Jonathan Edwards, whom historian Mark Noll praises as "the greatest evangelical mind in American history and one of the truly seminal thinkers in Christian history of the last few centuries."[684] In that same chapter, both William Carey and Robert Morrison were missionaries who began whole fields of study with their translation work. Should the Dalai Lama be counted in this group of scholar-missionaries? After all, he writes and speaks at a popular level on the level of a major celebrity. Despite the global recognition, however, he maintains a lifestyle consistent with his life as a cleric:

> The Dalai Lama calls himself a "simple monk and—despite the world tours and the entourage and security that surround him—lives a Spartan life, following a strict daily schedule. He resides in bare quarters and sleeps in a small room with spare furnishings, as befits a monk. In warm weather at home, he prefers flip-flops of the kind worn by the poor farmers of India; his T-shirts fray from use.[685]

To counter the question of the legitimacy of scholarship for such a popular figure, Pico Iyer recounts how, on hearing the Dalai Lama speak, he realized that the amount of learning the leader underwent while growing up served as intense academic training, which qualifies him as a scholar:

> Like the most impressive experts in any field, the Dalai Lama tempted us to forget that he had studied for eighteen years and faced an oral examination by thirty scholars of logic, thirty-five doctors of metaphysics, and thirty-five experts on the Noble Path; indeed, his warmth and everyday humanity meant that many of us spoke to him as if he were truly one of us.[686]

Through the training required for his position, the Dalai Lama was prepared rigorously for knowledge of the Buddhist dharma, effectively making him an expert in his field.

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[684] Mark Knoll, *Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 1994), 24.

[685] Daniel Goleman, *A Force for Good: The Dalai Lama's Vision for Our World* (New York: Bantam Books, 2015), 85.

[686] Pico Iyer, *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 150.

His studies did not end with the grueling exams required for his office, but instead, have been constant throughout his life. Like D. T. Suzuki before him, the Dalai Lama has explored how Western psychology and Buddhism might interact.[687] This pursuit began even prior to his exile, when he began to show interest in how his Buddhist background might intersect and interact with other disciplines:

> I began by approaching the sciences with the curiosity of an insatiable boy who grew up in Tibet. Then I gradually became aware of the colossal importance of science and technology in understanding the contemporary world. Not only did I try to grasp scientific concepts, but I also wanted to explore the wider implications of the recent advances in science for the field of human knowledge and technological ability. The specific realms of science that I have explored over the years are subatomic physics, cosmology, biology, and psychology.[688]

He also explains how, in "their methodology, both traditions" of science and Buddhism "insist on the role of empiricism."[689] He applies this approach to the two systems:

> Thus, in Buddhist investigation, out of the three sources of knowledge—experience, reason, and testimony—it is experiential proof that takes precedence, with reason coming second and testimony last. That means that, in Buddhist questioning of reality, at least in principle, empirical proof holds sway over scriptural authority, no matter how venerated a scripture may be. Even in the case of knowledge deduced by reasoning or inference, its validity must ultimately be confirmed by factual experience. Because of this methodological viewpoint, I have often pointed out to my Buddhist colleagues that the empirically verified discoveries made by modern astronomy should compel us to modify and, in some cases, reject many aspects of traditional cosmology expounded in ancient religious treatises.[690]

These attempts to synthesize Buddhism with Western psychology and science demonstrate not only the Dalai Lama as a scholar-practitioner, but also demonstrates that he functions as a missionary through the contextualization of his message.

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[687] Charles S. Prebish and Martin Baumann, eds., *Westward Dharma: Buddhism beyond Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 352.

[688] The Dalai Lama, 119-120.

[689] Ibid., 121.

[690] Ibid.

The second question of whether the Dalai Lama serves as a missionary of Buddhism considers the content of his public teaching. Although the Dalai Lama "believes even though the teachings of the Buddha are relevant and useful for humanity," Pubri Bharati explains the leader's conviction that "enabling people to lead constructive and satisfying lives as other religions do, it is not mandatory for anyone to be religious in the conventional sense," while he stresses that it "is important to be spiritual."[691] A few decades ago, the Dalai Lama realized the obstacles presented for the audience if he were to continue to work from a highly technical and academic posture:

> Very soon after the Dalai Lama began traveling to the West, he saw … that he achieved nothing by giving the sorts of highly technical lectures on epistemology and metaphysics he delivered in 1979. The Buddha himself was acclaimed for his "skillful means" and, especially, for his ability to talk to those who did not know, or even, perhaps, distrusted his teachings (finding the right way, for example, to cool down parents upset that they had lost their children to him.) Thus the Fourteenth Dalai Lama slowly shifted toward delivering lectures on "basic human values," as he puts it, that could be of use to anyone who listened and equipped listeners not with new theories but with practical measures for everyday life. These fundamentals—that anger backfires against the one who feels it, that kindness helps us if only by making us feel better, that ignoring another's perspective is to create problems for yourself in the long run—are as basic to the Buddhist, as the earth's being 93 million miles from the sun. Every culture has its own words for the figures, even its own symbols, but the law universally applies.[692]

Unlike the apostle Paul who lived out the intent to produce converts to Christianity and found church communities, the Dalai Lama has not tried to actively convert people to Buddhism:

> There have always been two sets of audiences as the Dalai Lama toured the world: those interested in Buddhism, who attend his religious teachings, and the large throngs at his public talks. As the years have passed, his personal mission leaves him

[691] Puri Bharati, *Engaged Buddhism: The Dalai Lama's Worldview* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 126.

[692] Iyer, 103.

> less interested in addressing the same crowds of Buddhists over and over; his religious appearances have dropped in number as his public talks have increased.[693]

Some of his own appropriation of a liberal approach regarding religion serves unintentionally as a contextualization to the Western mindset actually proves a draw for admirers to become practitioners:

> [T]he Dalai Lama makes it clear that he would not like people to convert to Buddhism since it could result in a clash of cultural and religious traditions. This 'liberal compromise', which the Dalai Lama emphasizes, makes Buddhism attractive to Westerners, who can hold on to the comfort of their original faiths while adopting those elements of Buddhism they find attractive.[694]

Such engagement demonstrates that the Dalai Lama, then, has been an unintentional missionary of Buddhism for the past six decades. Had the People's Republic of China not undertaken a full invasion, he would not have left Tibet as part of a larger diaspora. But the reality caused him and thousands of other lamas to carry the religion from the Himalayas to the world. The above statements also convey that he sounds more interested in helping to spread religious ethics, rather than bring converts into his own religion. However much he might downplay the institutional or specifically Buddhist elements in his presentations, he remains the figure most associated with global Buddhism, and has served as its representative. In these ways, he has functioned as a missionary who contextualizes teachings from his faith to present them to persons outside the religious community of origin.

One final effort in these last years of his life that the Dalai Lama is making to ensure Tibetan Buddhism permanently breaks beyond the ethnic and geographic boundaries of its country of origin is to open up its future to exist outside of Tibet and China. *Time*

[693] Goleman, 17.

[694] Bharati, 130.

magazine reports on how China would like to use the process of choosing the next incarnation of the office, the Fifteenth Dalai Lama, to bring Tibetan Buddhism and, thereby, Tibet, under its control:

> No doubt the party's desire to name a Dalai Lama stems from the fact that there are 244 million Buddhists in China — a cohort that dwarfs the CCP membership by 3 to 1. The party craves legitimizing its power above all else and believes yoking it to the institution of the Dalai Lama will provide that. But Beijing clearly also hopes it will be a symbolic final nail in the coffin of Tibetan self-rule, completing the absorption of Tibet into the People's Republic of China that began seven decades ago.[695]

Rather than ensure the lineage of his office, the Dalai Lama is open to having the position cease with his own expiration, as he suggests, "I don't think it is important to preserve the institution of the Dalai Lama."[696] He conveys his willingness to sacrifice the office for the sake of the people and religion:

> We should make a clear distinction between safeguarding Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism, on the one hand, and preserving the office of the Dalai Lama, on the other. This institution, like others appears at a given moment in time and then disappears. Tibetan Buddhism and its cultural heritage, however, will remain as long as the Tibetan people."[697]

While his primary concern is the Tibetan people, getting rid of the office altogether, or having a future incarnation emerge from outside of Tibet would help keep the Tibetan Buddhist tradition accessible to its present and future global audience.

5.7 SUMMARY

This chapter has looked at two Buddhist figures, D. T. Suzuki from Japan and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama from Tibet, who functioned as missionaries in bringing Buddhism from Asia to the West. Each of them, in his own way, exemplifies the thesis that the spread of missionary religions bear a close connection to imperial forces. Suzuki's

[695] Campbell, "The Dalai Lama has been the Face."

[696] The Dalai Lama, 61.

[697] Ibid.

writings and influence were tied to the rise of Japan's empire, regardless of whether his work actively promoted imperial thinking and tied Buddhism to militarism. In contrast, the Dalai Lama unintentionally became a missionary of Buddhism to the world as a result of the force of an occupying imperial power that propelled both a people group and its leaders beyond the boundaries of the original ethnic community. Had the imperial actions of China not taken place, the missionary religion would not have reached quite as broad an audience which it has, and the Dalai Lama would not have the global recognition which he now bears. Having moved through the events of the late nineteenth century through to the present day, the concluding chapter will give consideration to the climate for empire as it relates to missionary religions in these first decades of the twenty first century.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The overall purpose of this dissertation set out to explore the relationship between the missionary activity of the intentionally proselytizing religions of Christianity and Buddhism with the activities or framework of empire. This complex interplay, as conveyed in the first chapter, became one of long-term importance to me as I joined the centuries-long tradition of Protestant missionary work after college. Going to China raised for me the question of whether my teaching English in Asia served as a continuation of missionaries acting as unwitting agents of Western empires. As I continued working in Christian ministry and engaged in academic study in the areas of theology, missiology, and comparative religion, I wanted to consider whether this relationship between missionary endeavors and imperial factors was limited to Christianity, or takes place in other religions. Buddhism appeared to exhibit the strongest parallel to Christianity in having a founder who sent out his disciples to make more disciples or adherents from outside of the ethnic community of origin, a process which would allow the religion to become a global movement. To carry out such a study, the new academic discipline of comparative missiology appeared suitable to explore the entanglements between the missionary religions and empires in both Christianity and its counterpart of Buddhism.

My thesis demonstrated by this present research endeavors to show that in the transmission of the missionary religions of Christianity and Buddhism, missionaries, particularly key scholar-missionaries who translated the respective religion, have relied on the framework and strength of empire, whether intentionally or unintentionally, to translate the faith into a new culture. The second chapter demonstrated that such was the case with the apostle Paul, the figure most associated with the missionary activity first

century C.E. Christian movement. Paul's reliance on the framework, features, and dynamics of empire has him serve as a model of the scholar-missionary who interacts with empire in both positive and negative ways. The second chapter also expanded on the definition of empire by offering a biblical theology in which human empire was cast as the attempt of humanity to cross divinely prescribed boundaries with the intent to rival divine rule. The conflict between human and divine empires is shown in the historical example of Constantine in the fourth century C.E. The third chapter reported how both religions of Christianity and Buddhism had emperors who converted to the respective faith—Constantine to Christianity and Ashoka to Buddhism—and then used the strength of their offices to both support the religion and send out missionaries to continue the process of global transmission.

The fourth chapter applied the thesis to the context of China. The entrance of Buddhism and Christianity each serves as a historical test case to demonstrate the reliance of missionaries upon the framework or strength of empire. In the case of the chronologically earlier religion to arrive, Buddhism came into China through the Silk Road trade routes. The most prominent missionary was Kumārajīva of the fourth and fifth centuries C.E., who applied his skills as a scholar to translate Buddhist teachings into the Chinese language and thought system, moving it beyond the surface level interpretation which had conflated Buddhist doctrine with Daoist teachings. As a result of Kumārajīva's work, Mahayana Buddhism took root in China, and then spread abroad to other countries, such as Japan. Moving ahead one and a half millennia, Protestant Christianity entered China through the person of Robert Morrison in the early nineteenth century. Prior to him, the seventeenth century theologian Jonathan Edwards, by publishing the journals of the American missionary David Brainerd, influenced British missionaries like Morrison as well as William Carey, the founder of the modern missionary movement. Having been so

inspired, Morrison's missionary work was possible only because of his employment by the East India Company, which itself was one of the strongest factors of building the British Empire in Asia. The EIC would impose its military strength over China in order to force the sale of opium to offset a trade imbalance with the United Kingdom. The China Inland Mission, the organization founded by Morrison's successor, James Hudson Taylor, was able to gain access into the interior of China by utilizing the terms of the "Unequal Treaties" of the Opium Wars that gave Western powers and their citizens, including Christian missionaries, unhindered travel and immunity throughout the country.

China was not just on the receiving end of religious mission, but also has been a sending country as well. Mahayana Buddhism birthed one branch in China called Ch'an Buddhism, which migrated to Japan, where it is called Zen. Chapter five recounted how Zen Buddhism became tied to the rise of Japanese nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of the key figures in this conversation that fostered Zen Buddhism's support for the rise of the Japanese Empire in the first half of the twentieth century was D. T. Suzuki, who rose to prominence as a popular author in the West. Whether he actively supported the empire or has been misinterpreted as having done so, Suzuki functioned as a key figure in introducing Zen Buddhism to new students and adherents in the USA, UK, and other English speaking countries. Although he was not driven out from his native country, Suzuki was similar to another Buddhist spokesperson with a global reach, the Dalai Lama. This figure, Tenzin Gyatso, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, has, since 1959, lived in exile after fleeing his home of Tibet. The imperial action of Chinese occupation prompted his departure. While Tibet has not experienced liberation from its Chinese occupiers, the largest result of the spiritual leader's exile has been the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism to a global audience, particularly in the West.

Considering the above historical case studies, the research undertaken for this dissertation demonstrates that both of the missionary religions of Buddhism and Christianity have interacted with and relied on the frameworks, features, and dynamics of empire in order to move from one context to another. These entanglements between religious figures and imperial powers are not limited to the early centuries of the religions' origins, but is a process that has continued through subsequent centuries into modern times.

6.2 FURTHER AREAS OF STUDY

This current study has considered several different case studies in history while focusing the question of the relationship between missionaries and empire. Below are a few topics that have been raised in the current research that could be deserving of further study.

6.2.1 Ashoka and Constantine

This present study is not the first to draw parallels between the emperors Constantine and Ashoka, and the third chapter has examined a number of similarities between these two historic figures. However, the observations made here are only initial, and a much more thorough work regarding these two pivotal characters would benefit the fields of history, comparative religion, and, when touching or expanding upon the work done here, the new field of comparative missiology.

6.2.2 New Missionary Religions

This study has explored the relationship between missions and empire in two the world's largest religious traditions, which are twenty-five hundred years of history in the case of Buddhism, and two thousand years for Christianity. When set against this backdrop,

religions that are even one or two centuries old and are growing can be considered a new religion. One newer religion upon which to apply this thesis would be Mormonism, although some might argue that Mormonism has already reached the status of world religion.[698] This new religion was begun in the nineteenth century when Joseph Smith (1805-1844) claimed to have been given the texts and supernatural translation instruments to convey a third testament for the Bible. In addition to the Hebrew Bible, which Christians call the Old Testament, and the specifically Christian books that comprise the New Testament, the *Book of Mormon* presents narratives for an ancient civilization in North America. Mormonism is now based in Salt Lake City, Utah, because of the nineteenth century migration led by Brigham Young (1801-1877) to the American West. The religion began in the American nation, a legacy of British Empire. In order to spread its teachings, Mormonism requires young adults to undertake a two-year mission trip. Mitt Romney (b. 1947) was the Republican candidate for the American presidency in 2012, but lost to the incumbent Barack Obama. Had Romney been elected, a Mormon who had gone on a mission himself, would serve in the most powerful political and, as Commander in Chief, military role in the world.

Another prominent new religion is Falun Gong, which was established in 1992 in China by Li Hongzhi (b.1951). Primarily a set of meditation and exercise techniques, it embodies traditional Chinese religious sensibilities by containing a mixture of elements from Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.[699] Although the Chinese government originally supported this movement, it became wary of the new religion's independence

[698] Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," in *Latter-day Saints Social Life: Social Research on the LDS Church and its Members* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1998), 1–8.

[699] Benjamin Penny, *The Religion of Falun Gong* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 4-6.

and popularity, and so in 1999, began to suppress it. News of the demonstrations at Tiananmen Square gave Falun Gong global publicity.[700] Both of these examples of Mormonism and Falun Gong are new religions, in that the former is almost only two hundred years old, while the latter has not yet reached thirty years, and so both comprise short time spans against the backdrop of the larger world religions. Each of these religions have achieved global reach, which partly has been fueled by oppression from the state of its founding. This thesis of the application of oppressive imperial power causes the expansion of that religion, in this case recognizing both the US and China as being such, could be applied to both of these and other newer religious movements.

6.2.3 Diaspora Missiology and Empire

The introductory chapter noted the recent development of the field of diaspora missiology, which is "a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God's redemptive mission among people living outside their place of origin."[701] While this present study has focused on how scholar-missionaries pursued missionary work under imperial patronage or by imperial pressure, further studies might explore the domain of diaspora missiology by examining how imperial action has caused the migrations of people groups. These movements of peoples result in the dispersion of religions, as was the case with Paul as part of and capitalizing on the Jewish diaspora within the Roman Empire in chapter two, and the Dalai Lama's rise to prominence as a result of the invasion of Tibet by the People's Republic of China, which caused today's Tibetan diaspora, as explored in chapter five.

[700] Maria Hsia Chang, *Falun Gong: End of Days* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 9, 14-17.

[701] "The Seoul Declaration of Diaspora Missiology," *Lausanne Movement*, https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/the-seoul-declaration-on-diaspora-missiology (accessed July 4, 2018).

One significant theme of this present research has been the dominance of British Empire in recent centuries. One legacy of the British imperial history is the growth of Christian churches in the UK, particularly in the capital city:

> London is the epicenter for growing churches. Between 2005 and 2012, overall church attendance (not membership) in London went from 620,000 people to 720,000, a 16 percent increase. The number of churches increased by two a week, from 4,100 to 4,800. During this time, the city welcomed immigrants both from Europe and the rest of the world, its population growing from 7 million to 8 million in 10 years. Many of those newcomers were Christians and sought a church that spoke their language. More than 50 different languages are spoken in London's churches; 14 percent of all the services held in the city are not in English.[702]

Many of these congregations emerge from diaspora communities, which themselves have emigrated to and settled in the country of the empire which exerted power over their homelands. Finally, another example of empire causing migration is found in the imperial-like actions of the United States in the Middle East in recent decades resulting in violent imbalances that have driven Christians from countries in the region.[703] In each of these cases, future research could examine the relationship between the spread or decline of the religion and the diaspora community, which itself formed due to imperial influence or action.

6.3 EMPIRE ON THE HORIZON

I began this study by relating how, as an American growing up in the 1970s-80s, I had been taught that empire was something that the United States broke from and stood

[702] Peter Brierly, "Churches Outnumber Pubs in the UK," *Christianity Today*, May 28, 2019, https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2019/may/churches-outnumber-pubs-in-uk-london-attendance-pentecostal.html (accessed July 4, 2019).

[703] See Robin Wright, "War, Terrorism, and the Christian Exodus from the Middle East," *The New Yorker*, April 14, 2017, https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/war-terrorism-and-the-christian-exodus-from-the-middle-east (accessed July 4, 2019).

against, rather than practiced. My study of history beginning in college and continuing into seminary began to convince me otherwise. During the years that I have formally engaged in this present research, 2017-2019, events have taken place and trends have intensified that indicate the possibility of a return to formal empire. Before listing those indications, however, it is helpful to understand the context leading up to current expectations for this century.

6.3.1 The Context of the Twenty-first Century

The Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910 forecast an optimistic outlook for the twentieth century. The conference's motto, "The evangelization of the world in this generation,"[704] conveyed the confidence of the direction of Protestant Christianity's spread from Europe to the rest of the world. Four years later, however, World War I destroyed that optimistic attitude. Three decades later, the Second World War effectively brought an end to the global framework of European empire. At the one-hundred-year mark, centennial events were held to commemorate, reflect upon, and continue the work of the Edinburgh Conference. Missiologist Allen Yeh reports that he attended five events—four in 2010, one in 2012—which all commemorated the 1910 conference. In addition to a centennial celebration in Edinburgh, the other gatherings were held in Boston, Cape Town, Tokyo, and in the country of Costa Rica. The geographic diversity represented in the collection of these locations demonstrates Christianity's spread throughout the twentieth century. This shift of Christianity from the West in the early twentieth century to the majority or two thirds world by the end of the twentieth century has been identified by Philip Jenkins as *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global*

[704] Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, Co., 2009), 8.

Christianity.[705] Yeh, however, considers the dynamics caused by such a shift and terms the new situation "Polycentric Missiology."[706] He describes these dynamics and how they produce a new reality regarding Christian missions:

> In the twenty-first century, missions is "From Everyone to Everywhere" (hence the subtitle of this book) because, instead of being unidirectional, it is polycentric and polydirectional. World Christianity is not just a momentary trend; it looks like it is here to stay. His includes *every* continent on earth, where every Christian can be mobilized to be a missionary to any land. This necessitates that we do mission differently, as the demographics of the world have changed drastically. We now live in an age of *partnership*, not *paternalism*, and V.S. Azariah's cry of "Give us friends!" from a century ago resounds in our ears and hearts as the Two-Thirds World churches have now come into their own.[707]

In this new reality, "more Christians now live in the non-Western world than in the West."[708] This demographic inversion "calls into question the older concept of western missions to the non-Western world being primarily evangelistic."[709] Yeh describes how this new setting flattens the world into one without religious power centers, no longer divided into sending and receiving countries:

> If there are far more Christians in Africa than in Europe, do we really need to keep sending missionaries to Africa to evangelize? Perhaps Africans now need to be going to Europe (and they are)! This is called reverse mission, as we see that the largest church in London is Nigerian and the Chinese are evangelizing westward across the Silk Road with their "Back to Jerusalem movement." Mongolia is the biggest mission-sending nation in the world per capita, Korea has four of the ten largest churches in the world, and Pentecostalism is the fastest-growing form of Christianity around the world (especially in nations like Brazil). Linked with the rapid growth of

[705] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity, Third Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[706] Allen Yeh, *Polycentric Missiology: Twenty-First Century Mission from Everyone to Everywhere* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016).

[707] Ibid., 216.

[708] Ibid., 18.

[709] Ibid.

> Two-Thirds World Christianity, however, is the ever-increasing threat of the prosperity, or health-and-wealth gospel.[710]

It would seem in this new era of the twenty-first century, which Yeh describes with this reverse mission going out from former colonies of empire or receiving countries of Christian mission, that the world evinces an egalitarian framework contrasting with the imperial assumptions of a century ago. In the preceding section, I suggested that diaspora missiology related to this reverse directional flow as a legacy of empires would make for a beneficial area of academic study. Such an understanding of the current global context, as promoted by Yeh, comports with the theories of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri regarding empire in the current century.[711] Bruce Ellis Benson and Peter Goodwin Hetzel summarize the contentions of Hardt and Negri regarding the global political framework:

> In their books *Empire* and *Multitude*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri challenge this conception of political empire, arguing that "empire" is much more complicated. On the one hand they acknowledge that the United States does have this status as the remaining superpower. On the other hand, they question its power as a nation-state, given the emerging power of the global economy. With the ever-strengthening power of free-market capitalism, they argue that the power of the United States will inevitably fade. The result is that power will no longer be localized or even manageable, since the global economic empire belongs to everyone and no one.[712]

In such as setting, it would seem that the current global configuration has moved from a world dominated by empires in the first half of the twentieth century to one of city-based, polycentric mission, as Yeh describes. At the time of writing, however, the end of this second decade of the twenty-first century is showing strong signs of the possibility of the return of formal empire. These possibilities include a formal American empire.

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[710] Yeh, 18-19.

[711] See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), and *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

[712] Bruce Ellis Benson and Peter Goodwin Hetzel, eds., *Evangelicals and Empire: Alternatives to the Status Quo*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008), 12.

6.3.2 The Possibility of a Formal Return to Empire

Donald Trump won the 2016 election for the American presidency partly by denouncing the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. So he would seem to be a political leader who eschews empire and imperial impulses. When looking at his words and actions, however, a few themes related to empire stand out.

6.3.2.a Legacies of Past Empires

The first imperial theme notes how Trump plays off the legacy of the residual resentment of the citizens of one former empire against another. In announcing his candidacy for presidency on June 16, 2015, in New York City, Trump accented his main theme with a promise to shut down illegal immigration. He cast Latinx persons as villains when he said, "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best."[713] Riding the resentment against people crossing the southern border to provide cheap labor, he continued, "They're sending people that have lots of problems, and they're bringing those problems with us. They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists."[714] He did add, "And some, I assume, are good people,"[715] but his overall point was clear. By playing off the anti-immigrant, anti-Hispanic resentment against persons from Mexico and from countries from Central America, Trump tapped into the residual resentment of the centuries-past contest between the British and Spanish Empires.

[713] Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "Donald Trump's False Comments Connecting Mexican Immigrants and Crime," *The Washington Post*, July 8, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/08/donald-trumps-false-comments-connecting-mexican-immigrants-and-crime/ (accessed July 6, 2019).

[714] Ibid.

[715] Ibid.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the British Empire gained victory over the rival French and Spanish empires to gain control of all of North America, except for Mexico. The thirteen colonies that broke from the empire in the late eighteenth century continued to carry out that imperial project by continuing trade with the parent country, and through mass migration of persons from European countries in the following century and a half. The immigrants and their descendants journeyed across the Atlantic Ocean with the promises of the possibility of land and prosperity. The pursuit and realization of these promises resulted in subduing and removing the indigenous peoples in westward expansion. Trump's promise of the renewal of prosperity to economically challenged regions, coupled with the promise to remove the supposed dangers of illegal immigration, particularly Latin American immigration, are promises to restore the situation to the progeny of those who benefitted from the framework supplied by first the British and later American empires. Trump ascended to the American presidency by evoking the resentment of whites, largely of Western European descent, against people from Spanish-speaking countries.

6.3.2.b Populist Promise of a Return to Prosperity

Part of the resentment that fueled Trump's rise came from the white working class and poor whites. Should he gain the presidency, Trump promised economic renewal to those suffering from the loss of manufacturing and the breakdown of community stability in the Rust Belt of the Midwestern Great Lakes, the former powerhouse of the industrial era. This appeal was also given to rural areas, which included the region of Appalachia, which is known for providing the fuel for the furnaces of manufacturing through the coal industry.[716] In one of his presidential debates against Hillary Clinton, Trump charged that

[716] Both leading up to and in response to Trump's presidential victory, J. D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* provided first person insight and reflection to explain the cultural mood and

his opponent's husband signing of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) resulted in "the worst trade deal the U.S. has ever signed, and has and continues to kill American jobs."[717] As he lost the popular vote while relying on the Electoral College to win, Trump appealed to the poor working class of Appalachia, those who had suffered economically from the loss of manufacturing in the Rust Belt region, as well as farmers throughout the Midwest. His appealing to these groups to restore economic prosperity and financial security is reminiscent of Julius Caesar's harnessing the anxiety of the economically displaced in the first century B.C.E., which Timothy Parsons describes:

> While tribute from client states and provincial taxes poured new riches into Rome, the imperial windfall had an enormous hidden cost. The common farmers, who made up the backbone of the early republican armies, faced bankruptcy because they could not compete with cheap grain from Sicily and Spain. Many gravitated to the city of Rome to take advantage of the free grain ration after wealthy and connected families bought up their lands. This urban poor became a dangerous rabble ready to support any conquering hero who promised to feed and entertain them.[718]

This second point is tied to the first in that those Americans who felt economically displaced by globalization viewed Hispanic immigrants as the ones who took their jobs away and threatened their safety.

6.3.2.c Direct Proposal for Empire

During the course of conducting this study, Erik Prince (b. 1969) publicly made the case during 2017 both to the American President Donald Trump and aimed at the American public for a feature of outright empire. Prince is the brother of Betsy DeVos, the current

context of Trump's support among the dispossessed of Appalachia. See J. D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016).

[717] Stephen Gandell, "Donald Trump Says NAFTA Was the Worst Trade Deal the U.S. Ever Signed," *Fortune.* September 27, 2016. http://fortune.com/2016/09/27/presidential-debate-nafta-agreement/ (accessed February 12, 2018).

[718] Timothy H. Parsons, *The Rule of Empires: Those Who Built Them, Those Who Endured Them, and Why They Always Fail* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 31.

Secretary of Education for the Trump administration.[719] He is best known as the founder of Blackwater, the private mercenary company relied upon by the US government in the first years of the Iraq War. Mike Kuhlenbeck summarizes Prince's rise to prominence:

> Following in his father's footsteps, Erik Prince became a US Navy SEAL and earned the rank of lieutenant. Prince founded Blackwater in 1997, serving as the company's CEO in 2009 and as chairman in 2010 before finally selling the enterprise that year. When Blackwater changed its name to Xe Services in 2009 and then to Academi two years later, it was assumed to be in response to the bad publicity and public outcry against company practices during Prince's time at the helm. Courtesy of the election of born-again Christian George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004, Prince's company would reap the benefits of Bush-era policies.[720]

Prince continues to be a figure of controversy, including accusations that he lied to a congressional committee regarding a meeting with Russian representatives prior to Trump's inauguration.[721] In 2017, he appeared on television[722] and published an opinion column in the *Wall Street Journal* in which he publicly pressed the President to appoint a viceroy to finish up the US occupation of Afghanistan, bringing an end to America's longest war.[723] The first step that Prince advises is for Trump to "consolidate authority in Afghanistan with one person: an American viceroy."[724] Implicit in Prince's proposal is that he should be the qualified leader to take up such a post. This individual "would lead

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[719] Prince was born into the Dutch Reformed community of West Michigan, where my denomination of the Christian Reformed Church and its sibling denomination of the Reformed Church in America are both based.

[720] Mike Kuhlenbeck, "Theocratic Mercenary Erik Prince and the Christian Right," *The Humanist*, June 19, 2018, https://thehumanist.com/magazine/july-august-2018/features/theocratic-mercenary-erik-prince-christian-right (accessed May 21, 2019).

[721] Alexandra Hutzler, "'Strong Evidence' Erik Prince Lied to Congress, Says Adam Schiff as He Announces Criminal Referral for Trump Ally," *Newsweek*, April 30, 2019, https://www.newsweek.com/adam-schiff-lied-congress-erik-prince-1409771 (accessed July 7, 2019).

[722] "Blackwater Founder Erik Prince Proposes Privatizing Afghanistan War," *CBS News*, August 8, 2017, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/blackwater-founder-erik-prince-privatize-afghanistan-war-contractors/ (accessed July 7, 2019).

[723] Erik D. Prince, "The MacArthur Model for Afghanistan" *Wall Street Journal*, May 31, 2017 https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-macarthur-model-for-afghanistan-1496269058 (accessed February 13, 2018).

[724] Ibid.

all U.S. government and coalition efforts—including command, budget, policy, promotion and contracting," and, like a viceroy or proconsul, would "report directly to the president."[725] One great benefit of this plan, according to Prince, is to cost-effectively end the war:

> In Afghanistan, the viceroy approach would reduce rampant fraud by focusing spending on initiatives that further the central strategy, rather than handing cash to every outstretched hand from a U.S. system bereft of institutional memory.[726]

Another stated role for this post is having the authority to wage war with decision-making taking place on site, allowing for the emerging Afghan government to gain stability:

> Second, Mr. Trump should authorize his viceroy to set rules of engagement in collaboration with the elected Afghan government to make better decisions, faster. Troops fighting for their lives should not have to ask a lawyer sitting in air conditioning 500 miles away for permission to drop a bomb. Our plodding, hand wringing and overcaution have prolonged the war—and the suffering it bears upon the Afghan population. Give the leadership on the ground the authority and responsibility to finish the job.[727]

Through his transformation of warfare through Blackwater, Prince has, in his career, affected, and continues to influence, global events. He has not only functioned as an agent or leader of empire in Iraq, but is pushing to become a viceroy of American rule over another country.

Although Prince's plan offers the strategy on how the US can exit from Afghanistan, it is interesting that he uses the choice of "viceroy." Jürgen Osterhammel offers a definition of the term "viceroy" based on several historical examples:

> The most important functional position mediating between the ruler and his commoner subjects is the viceroy, loosely defined as the head of the political

[725] Prince, "The MacArthur Model."

[726] Ibid.

[727] Ibid.

> hierarchy in a given territorial unit at the periphery… He was always a peripheral autocrat, possessing virtually unchallenged authority.[728]

Osterhammel qualifies the term by setting it necessarily within an imperial structure by stating, "Without a king or emperor at home there could, of course, be no 'viceroy.'"[729] Not only does Prince use the language of empire to make his case, but also points to the East India Company as an example to follow for corporate efficiency. However, the EIC went from unofficial to official empire when taken over in full by the British government with the Government of India Act in 1858, as reported in chapter four. The fact that Prince pushes to have a position of viceroy over Afghanistan demonstrates that empire is a current possibility, and not a past institution.

6.3.2.d Lifelong Rule of the Strongman

Donald Trump appeals to many Americans, including evangelical Christians, because of his brash and even autocratic manner. In this current decade of the twenty-first century, he shares the global stage with two other presidents who have not only shown themselves to be authoritarian in their own countries, but have also set themselves up for lifelong rule. In succeeding Yeltsin as President of the Russian Federation in 2000, Vladimir Putin began erasing his predecessor's legacy since, according to Steven Lee Myers, "Popular

[728] "In the context of a general discussion, there is no need for being fastidious about terminology. There were 'viceroys' under this designation in the Portuguese (vice-rei), Spanish (virrey), and Russian (namestnik) empires, in British India after 1858, in Ireland (where the Lord Lieutenant was styled viceroy from the 1870s onwards), in nineteenth-century Egypt under nominal Ottoman overlordship (the khedive, more than a simple wali), in the Japanese empire after 1895 and in Qing China (zongdu). Under different circumstances, the term 'governor-general' meant almost the same thing, as in Dutch Batavia since 1610 (gouverneur-generaal), in South Asia under the East India Company between 1774 and 1858, and, under modern republican auspices, in the Philippines under US rule, or in French Algeria and Indochina. The types of political system at home differed widely while the functional attributes of the office of governor-general showed a much greater similarity over time and space." Jürgen Osterhammel, "The Imperial Viceroy: Reflections on an Historical Type," in Jeroen Duindam and Sabine Dabringhaus, eds., *The Dynastic Centre and the Provinces: Agents & Interactions* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2014), 19-20.

[729] Ibid., 20.

will, in Putin's view, was the road to chaos."[730] President Putin's rule eroded the democratic freedoms in exchange for a sense of stability after a volatile decade. In the intervening years, including a stint as Prime Minister due to constitutional term limits, he maneuvered to set himself up as the Russian president for life. Considering Putin's style and performance as the Russian leader, *The Economist* assesses, "The kind of rule Mr Putin has gradually fashioned over his years in power has more in common with a tsar than with a Soviet politburo chief, let alone a democratically elected leader."[731] Similarly, the current Chinese President Xi Jinping was able to elminate term limits, allowing him to lead both the Chinese Communist Party and, in turn, the People's Republic of China, indefinitely. Willy Lan, a professor in Hong Kong, was quoted saying, "Xi Jinping now has an institutional guarantee of support. He can be emperor for life – staying in power as long as his health allows."[732] Trump's public affinity for authoritarian rulers, including Kim Jong Un of North Korea, has raised the concern that he would like to follow his Russian and Chinese counterpart to get rid of term limits:

> One difference between Putin and Xi in their maneuverings and that of Trump is that the Russian and Chinese presidents have found success… Comedian and political commentator Bill Maher warned voters days before the 2016 presidential election, "Once fascists get power, they don't give it up. You've got President Trump for life."[733]

Trump regularly jokes about staying in power longer than the Constitution allows. Christian right leader Jerry Falwell, Jr., the current president and son of the founder of

[730] Steven Lee Myers, *The New Tsar: The Rise and Reign of Vladimir Putin* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 262.

[731] "Enter Tsar Vladimir," *The Economist*, October 28th-November 3rd 2017, 23.

[732] Steven Jiang and Katie Hunt, "Chinese President Xi cements his grip on power with rare party move," CNN, October 24, 2017, http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/24/asia/china-xi-jinping-thought/index.html (accessed January 22, 2018).

[733] Nick Romano, "Donald Trump: Bill Maher warns he could be president for life, blasts media," *Entertainment Weekly*, November 11, 2016, http://ew.com/article/2016/11/05/bill-maher-donald-trump-could-be-president-life-blasts-media/ (accessed February 26, 2018).

Liberty University, suggested publicly that Trump should enjoy an extra two years to his term to make up for federal investigation into his election.[734] This encouragement from a Christian leader to abandon the American Constitution and the rule of law is an alarming harbinger of the possibility of the transformation of the presidency to a lifelong ruler, which can effectively become an emperor.

6.3.2.e Role of a Protecting Champion Emperor

Trump's characterization of Hispanic immigrants described above would seem to be counter-Christian in character. However, his presidential victory required the support of evangelical Christians, who gave him overwhelming support. The website of the progressive evangelical magazine *Sojourners* makes the charge that Trump, when needing a boost in approval ratings or popular assurance, returns to this voting base:

> While many white evangelicals want to deny that racism was a motivating factor in their decision to vote for Trump, this administration understands how much its claim to legitimacy depends on the values cultivated by 40 years of "culture wars" that framed traditional white values as "biblical" while branding progressive proposals for systemic change as "secular" and "anti-Christian."[735]

That Trump speaks in language that resonates with white Christians, particularly evangelicals, who make up his most devoted supporters, presents the irony that they, statistically, are not strong church goers. Timothy Carney suggests that Trump appeals to those who are not only disenfranchised economically, but disenchanted from church while considering themselves Christian:

> Economic collapse goes hand in hand with the desiccation of religious institutions. When factories or coal mines close, some portion of the population flees. Still others

[734] Natasha Bertrand and Darren Samuelsohn, "What if Trump Won't Accept a 20202 Defeat?," *Politico*, June 21, 2019, https://www.politico.com/story/2019/06/21/trump-election-2020-1374589 (accessed July 7, 2019).

[735] Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, "Trump Turns to Christian Nationalists When He Feels Vulnerable," *Sojourners*, January 29, 2019, https://sojo.net/articles/trump-turns-christian-nationalists-when-he-feels-vulnerable (accessed January 29, 2019).

> stop going to church—white Americans are less likely to attend religious services when they are unemployed, sociologist Brad Wilcox reported in a study titled "No Money, No Honey, No Church." A church built for a few hundred families has trouble maintaining itself when a third of them leave.[736]

Both as a candidate and as president, Donald Trump has presented himself as a protector of Christians both in the U.S. and abroad. During the 2016 campaign, candidate Trump often called on Christians "to quit being the 'silent' majority and stand up for their beliefs."[737] When asked how evangelicals could continue to support when allegations of his adulterous relationship with a pornographic actress became public, Tony Perkins told *Politico* that Christians "were tired of being kicked around by Barack Obama and his leftists. And I think they are finally glad that there's somebody on the playground that is willing to punch the bully."[738] Regarding Christians overseas, Trump "is also outspoken on the need to defend Christians in Muslim countries, and other countries where they are being persecuted."[739] In one of the Republican debates, Trump spoke as a defender of Christians abroad, warning what he would do to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other Islamic terrorists:

> "You look at the Middle East, they're chopping off heads, they're chopping off the heads of Christians and anybody else that happens to be in the way, they're drowning people in steel cages, and now we're talking about waterboarding… It's fine, and if we want to go stronger, I'd go stronger too. Because frankly, that's the way I feel. Can you imagine these people, these animals, over in the Middle East that chop off heads, sitting around talking and seeing that we're having a hard problem with

[736] Timothy P. Carney, "Why Ex-churchgoers Flock to Trump," *Philanthropy Daily*, January 23, 2019, https://www.philanthropydaily.com/why-ex-churchgoers-flocked-to-trump/ (accessed January 29, 2019). I have encountered this in the past couple years with people who show no commitment to a local church or Christian lifestyle, but see Trump as a champion of Christianity.

[737] Phyllis Schlafly, Ed Martin, and Brett M. Decker, *The Conservative Case for Trump* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2016), 93.

[738] Zack Stanton, "Tony Perkins: Trump Gets 'a Mulligan' on Life, Stormy Daniels," *Politico Magazine*, January 23, 2018, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/01/23/tony-perkins-evangelicals-donald-trump-stormy-daniels-216498 (accessed February 12, 2018).

[739] Schlafly, 93.

> waterboarding? We should go for waterboarding and we should go tougher than waterboarding."[740]

In speaking this way of concern for the plight of Christians overseas, and in his promises to promote the interests of evangelicals in the US, Trump appears to take on a role like that of Constantine. Chapter three of this study reported how, in response to the persecutions against the Christian community that he had witnessed, Constantine gave the religion legal status in the empire. But rather than equating him with Constantine, evangelicals have connected him to a different emperor – Cyrus from the book of Ezra. Daniel Bock explains how this imperial moniker was originally bestowed upon Trump not by an evangelical Christian but by Israeli politician:

> Following the 45th president's announcement earlier this year that the US embassy in Israel would move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the Israeli Prime Minister remarked, "I want to tell you that the Jewish people have a long memory, so we remember the proclamation of the great king, Cyrus the Great, Persian king 2,500 years ago. He proclaimed that the Jewish exiles in Babylon could come back and rebuild our Temple in Jerusalem."[741]

By casting him in the role of Cyrus, evangelicals are able to look past Trump's moral failings. Roger Olson explains why this group of the electorate who claim to be devout finds such a strong affinity with a president who does not attend church regularly, lies daily to the public, and is a thrice-married adulterer:

> [M]any evangelical Trump-supporters who call him "our Cyrus" *mean* that, even though he is not a Christian and his character is highly questionable, he is a pagan raised up by God to deliver and defend American Christians and "Christian America" from the secular and even anti-Christian political "left" that is determined to criminalize true, real, authentic Christianity (as they believe is already happening in some European countries and in Canada). Their hope and belief is that Trump will

[740] Tessa Berenson, "Donald Trump Defends Torture at Republican Debate," *Time*, March 4, 2016, http://time.com/4247397/donald-trump-waterboarding-torture/ (accessed February 12, 2018).

[741] Daniel Bock, "Is Trump Our Cyrus? The Old Testament Case for Yes and No," *Christianity Today*, October 29, 2018, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/october-web-only/donald-trump-cyrus-prophecy-old-testament.html (accessed November 2, 2018).

> appoint federal judges and Supreme Court judges who will "undo" Roe v Wade and gay marriage and free Christians (and others) to refuse to do business with gays.[742]

This role of champion of evangelicals has also crossed over to missionary support. Rev. Andrew Brunson is an American missionary with Evangelical Presbyterian Church denomination[743] who had lived in Turkey for two decades prior to being imprisoned by that government for two years. The Turkish government charged him as a spy working supporting a militant Islamic group in its attempt to overthrow the state. As a news article from *Time* magazine relays, Trump's economic pressure on Turkey helped secure Brunson's release and return to the US:

> He was discharged not because the "Turkish justice system" deemed him innocent but rather because the Turks were afraid that Trump would unleash another series of tweets that could undermine the Turkish lira and contribute to an already galloping inflation. Turkey is at the beginning of a deep recession that risks undermining the very foundations of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's economic edifice and possibly his electoral coalition.[744]

This instance of using the economic power of his position to secure the release of an American citizen falls in line with the work of the American presidency. In this case, however, Trump acted as the protector of an evangelical Christian missionary, embodying that mode of Cyrus or Constantine as the imperial protector.

In the way that Trump appreciates Putin's autocratic style of rule, as described above, the two leaders also share the comparison with previous emperors defending the faithful. Russia watcher Agnia Grigas explains that, even before Putin's time but continuing under

[742] Roger Olson, "Is Trump 'Our Cyrus?' A Critical American-Christian Explanation and Response," *Roger E. Olson*, August 27, 2018, https://www.patheos.com/blogs/rogereolson/2018/08/is-trump-our-cyrus-a-critical-american-christian-explanation-and-response/ (accessed November 2, 2018).

[743] The Evangelical Presbyterian Church is a denomination that is in "Ecclesiastical Fellowship" with my own denomination, the Christian Reformed Church in North America. See "Relationships," https://www.crcna.org/eirc/relationships (accessed July 7, 2019).

[744] Henri Barkey, "Why the Trump Administration and Turkey Don't Win in Pastor Andrew Brunson's Release," *Time*, October 12, 2019, https://time.com/5423893/andrew-brunson-turkey-trump/ (accessed July 6, 2019).

him, "Russia has increasingly followed a policy of reimperialization of the territories that used to form the historic Russian Empire and the Soviet Union utilizing the Russian compatriots as a tool of its ambitions."[745] Grigas identifies Russia's trajectory as following the diaspora of Russian speakers throughout neighboring countries.[746] Beyond the question of both Putin's and Russia's interests is that of the relationship between the state, or its leader, and the Russian Orthodox Church, as Putin has fostered a close relationship with the church. This close partnership bears the significant irony that Putin held a notable position as a lieutenant colonel in the KGB of the Soviet Union, the intelligence organization of an officially atheist state.[747] Throughout the twentieth century, the Soviets repressed religion, tried to stamp out the Orthodox Church, killed many of its priests, and closed its monasteries and churches.[748] The surprising irony goes further in that Putin and the nationalistic Russia now represent a Christendom protecting the social and religious values once held by now secular societies in the West. Prior to Trump, Conservative Christians in the US found in Putin a traditionalist counterpoint to the progressive agenda of President Obama.[749] In a biased opinion column for RT.com,

[745] Agnia Grigas, *Beyond Crimea: The New Russian Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 250.

[746] Ibid., 251-253.

[747] Myers, 44-45.

[748] Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church, New Edition* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 148.

[749] Casey Michael reports that, "America's Christian fundamentalists followed Putin's moves with glee—all the more after then-President Barack Obama earned a second term, and same-sex rights charged forward. In 2013, Moscow pushed an "anti-propaganda law" specifically targeting the country's beleaguered LGBT population. Despite widespread condemnation throughout the West, members of America's Religious Right tripped over themselves in supporting the Kremlin. Likewise, as a *Daily Beast* report found, the "anti-propaganda law," like the anti-abortion measures before it, didn't arise in some kind of retrograde ether, but "had emerged from a years-long, carefully crafted campaign to influence governments to adopt a Christian-Right legal framework"—stemming from the efforts of both American and Russian WCF officials who had "successfully disseminated a U.S.-born culture war that's wreaking havoc on women and queer folks all around the world." Even Moscow's ban on Americans adopting Russian children that year managed to gain support within the U.S.'s far right, with Christian fundamentalists praising Putin's move as preventing children from living with same-sex parents." Casey Michael, "How Russia Became the Leader of the Global Christian Right: While the U.S. Passed Gay-Rights Laws, Moscow Moved Hard the Other Way," *Politico Magazine*, February 9, 2017, https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/02/how-russia-became-a-leader-of-the-worldwide-christian-

the former *Russian Times*, Iben Thranholm praises Putin's military involvement in Syria as the work of protecting Christians, and places Putin in the role of a modern day Constantine:

> These persecuted Christians are in dire need of a champion, a great power able and willing to defend them. They obviously accept such help as is offered. Syrian Christians have expressed great elation and gratitude that the Russians have taken decisive steps to put an end to the slaughter of Christians that has been going on for more than four years. To many Christians around the world, Putin may become the 21st Century Constantine, the Roman emperor who helped the Christians of his day by putting an end to the persecutions endured under the Roman Empire. Constantine also conferred privileges on the Christian church that allowed it to become strong enough to have a positive impact on society. Putin may turn out to play the same role in the history of our day and recreate the Christian superpower that used to be the role played by the West, but which the West has abandoned.[750]

In this role, Putin has shown himself to not just seek the partnership and support of the Russian Orthodox Church for political support at home, but in the case of Crimea, has demonstrated his willingness to help bolster the work of the church abroad.[751] In the past year, these Russian imperial maneuvers have provoked a schism within the global Orthodox community regarding oversight of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.[752]

Turning the focus to China, just as much as President Xi's consolidation of power, China's investment in the continent of Africa has resulted in warnings against Chinese imperialism. Gideon Rachman describes this process taking place over the past few years:

> Where many in the West saw only despair and disappointment in Africa, the Chinese had spotted opportunity. China's rapidly growing industrial economy needed raw

right-214755 (accessed January 22, 2018).

[750] Iben Thranholm, "Russia – A Game Changer for Global Christianity," *RT*, November 10, 2015, https://www.rt.com/op-edge/321447-christians-isis-religion-putin/ (accessed January 22, 2018).

[751] Felix Corley, "CRIMEA: 'Anti-Missionary' Prosecutions Double in 2018," *Forum 18 News Service*, January 9, 2018, http://www.forum18.org/archive.php?article_id=2441, (accessed March 10, 2019).

[752] Peter Kenny, "Russian Orthodox Church Cuts Ties with Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople over Ukraine," *Ecumenical News*, September 15, 2018, https://www.ecumenicalnews.com/article/russian-orthodox-church-cuts-ties-with-ecumenical-patriarch-of-constantinople-over-ukraine/60607.htm, (accessed July 7, 2019).

> materials, and Africa was rich in those. Many African nations badly needed new infrastructure, and Chinese construction companies were available and eager. The speed of China's rise from poverty also meant that Chinese businesspeople and workers were less likely to be dismayed by African conditions than their more cosseted Western counterparts: dirt roads, hungry people, and corrupt bureaucrats were familiar enough in China itself.[753]

More effectively than an explicit declaration of rule, Howard French suggests that it is "the human activity, migration, that provides the most striking parallels with imperial patterns of the past."[754] This large movement from China to Africa, he argues, "of these newcomers on this scale is arguably the latest chapter in a very long narrative of empire construction through emigration."[755] Perhaps the dominance of Xi's presidency, recent strains of Chinese imperialism (even if unofficial), and the migration of Chinese nationals westward will be viewed as providential by Chinese Christians. Richard Cook suggests that the continued widening of China's global presence, in tandem with the growth of the Chinese church, might even recast the history of Western dominance related to the missionary enterprise:

> A balanced and nuanced understanding of missions in the imperialist past may help missionary efforts in the twenty-first century. As China emerges as an economic superpower, Chinese perceptions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century imperialism may shift. China, seeking markets and resources around the globe, may eventually attribute slightly more benign motives to previous forms of Western imperialism. Moreover, Chinese Christians may see more clearly the potential hazards of pursuing missions in the context of national global expansion. If China emerges as a Christian force in global missions, questions of Chinese evangelical identity will also continue to evolve.[756]

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[753] Gideon Rachman, *Easternization: War and Peace in the Asian Century* (New York: Other Press, 2017), 225. See also Dambisa Moyo, Chapter Seven, "The Chinese Are Our Friends," *Dead Aid: Why Aid to Africa Is Not Working and How There Is Another Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 98-113.

[754] Howard W. French, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2014), 262-263.

[755] French, 263.

[756] Richard R. Cook, "Overcoming Missions Guilt: Robert Morrison, Liang Fa, and the Opium Wars," in Richard R. Cook and David W. Pao, eds., *After Imperialism: Christian Identity in China and the Global Evangelical Movement* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 45.

Along these lines, this current movement to Africa makes the continent the latest destination of a long-term dissemination of ethnic Chinese.

Mainland China's economy began to open up to free markets in the early 1980s under Deng Xiaoping, but economic opportunities abroad prompted Chinese to emigrate from the Mainland over the past few centuries, starting with the establishment of a strong presence throughout Southeast Asia. A decade ago, Philip Jenkins suggested the possibility of the protection of the diaspora of Chinese Christians offering a pretense for Chinese imperial movement southward:

> Perhaps sixty million ethnic Chinese live around the Pacific Rim, where many have become enthusiastically Christian. This ethnic-religious presence creates tensions with mainly Muslim societies in countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, where pogroms and persecution have erupted over the past fifteen years. A perceived need to protect overseas Chinese Christians could provide the grounds for a future Chinese government to justify expansion into South-East Asia.[757]

Since the time of that cautious prediction, however, Xi Jinping has ascended to power, as recounted above. His rule so far has demonstrated that Xi, like his Communist official father before him, shows himself more supportive of Buddhism than other religions.[758] Long time China-watcher Nicholas Kristof shares that even the Dalai Lama, under lifelong exile from and painted antagonistically by China, has shown himself to be "enthusiastic about Xi Jinping, the current Chinese leader. He spoke admiringly of Xi's anti-corruption campaign, said Xi's mother was 'very religious, a very devout Buddhist,' and noted Xi himself had spoken positively of Buddhism."[759] Noting this predisposition,

[757] Philip Jenkins, "BRICS of Faith: New Categories in Religious Geography," http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/p/jpj1/BRICS.pdf (accessed January 22, 2018).

[758] Ian Johnson, *The Souls of China: The Return of Religion after Mao* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2017), 223-225.

[759] Nicholas Kristof, "Dalai Lama Gets Mischievous," *The Seattle Times*, July 16, 2015, https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/dalai-lama-gets-mischievous/ (accessed February 19, 2018).

Ian Johnson reports that, "If Xi was favorably disposed toward Buddhism, he seems to have had more troubles with Christianity."[760] Johnson describes the antagonistic approach towards churches prior to his becoming president:

> From 2002 to 2007, he served as party leader of Zhejiang Province, where his administration received a black eye when it confronted local Christians. A congregation in the township of Xiaoshan had built a church, but the government declared it illegal and tried to demolish it in 2005. Police moved in, but members of the congregation quickly organized, and hundreds of believers flooded into the area. Although the government eventually succeeded in tearing down the church, it became one of the most embarrassing episodes in Xi's period in Zhejiang.[761]

The suppression of Christianity has continued in recent years, with the government closing hundreds of churches over the past year.[762] Mark Galli reports on what this increased pressure, or even persecution, looks like:

> Under the current administration of President Xi Jinping… the government is tearing down some churches (like the 50,000-member Golden Lampstand Church in Shanxi Province in January) and closing others (most notably, Zion Church, Beijing's largest house church). The Chinese government is working furiously to recreate the church in its image. Regulations announced last year formalized policy that has, in practice, been in effect for some years now: Religious leaders are required to "conduct religious activities in the Chinese context, practice core socialist values, carry forward the fine traditions of the Chinese nation, and actively explore religious thought which conforms to the reality in China." So the government is removing crosses from their steeples and replacing them with the national flag; inside, the crosses are being replaced with pictures of President Xi. Congregations must sing patriot songs in worship. Parents can't bring their children to church.[763]

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[760] Johnson, 224.

[761] Ibid.

[762] Lily Kuo, "In China, They're Closing Churches, Jailing Pastors – and Even Rewriting Scripture," *The Guardian*, January 13, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/13/china-christians-religious-persecution-translation-bible (accessed July 7, 2019).

[763] Mark Galli, "What to Do About Persecution in China," *Christianity Today*, October 16, 2018, https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2018/november/persecution-prayer-china-xi-jinping.html, (accessed November 2, 2018).

This antagonism is not just practiced against Christianity, however, as the Chinese government has placed more than one million ethnic Muslim Uighurs into concentration camps.[764]

These Uighurs live in the northwest of China, along the tradition route of the Silk Road. Like its predecessors of Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity, Islam gained entrance into China through the trade routes of the Silk Road. Xi is looking to utilize this ancient route to strengthen China's influence and economy, as *The New Yorker* reports:

> In 2013, President Xi Jinping announced that the Silk Road would be reborn as the Belt and Road Initiative, the most ambitious infrastructure project the world has ever known—and the most expensive. Its expected cost is more than a trillion dollars. When complete, the Belt and Road will connect, by China's accounting, sixty-five per cent of the world's population and thirty per cent of global G.D.P. So far, sixty-eight countries have signed on.[765]

While the government that Xi leads appears to support Buddhism while actively suppressing the free expression of Christianity, the promotion of economic development along the Silk Road follows the same direction that the Chinese church has charted. Chinese Christians view their geographic placement as strategic for their involvement in global mission, as MacGregor describes:

> Currently the Back to Jerusalem movement has dispatched more than a hundred thousand Chinese missionaries for the task, a missionary force twice as large as any mobilized by North America. Nevertheless, the Chinese church plans for the majority of these missionaries to be self-supporting, employing their skills and vocations to relocate all along the ancient Silk Road. This strategy will enable the missionaries to

[764] Jane Perlez, "With Pressure and Persuasion, China Deflects Criticism of Its Camps for Muslims," *The New York Times*, April 8, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/08/world/asia/china-muslims-camps.html (accessed July 7, 2019).

[765] "A New Silk Road: China Is Investing Billions in Building Pathways to Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East." *The New Yorker*, January 8, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/01/08/a-new-silk-road (accessed March 5, 2018).

> integrate into their host cultures without suspicion and circumvent the monetary and administrative obstacles that frequently hinder Western missions organizations.[766]

So even though Xi might not be friendly to Chinese Christianity, his prominent investment in the Silk Road benefits the church in its mission.

Whether the countries that Xi, Trump, or Putin preside over ever take on the title of "empire," these three leaders have acted in ways with imperial characteristics. As each of them has entanglements with religions in their countries, the actions of these presidents and their governments will most likely continue to affect the global framework for the ongoing missionary work of religion.

[766] Kirk R. MacGregor, *Contemporary Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 320.

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