Reading assignment: Moffett 297m-300; 463-468t; 474b-476m; 482-488; Leung, “Conversion..”

I. China in the 19th-20th c.

A. The Opium Wars (1839-44; 1856-60):

1. China loses control of its borders, ending myth of its supremacy and isolationism (297). British East India Company lost control of opium trade in 1834; Britain demanded free trade with China based on drug trade, but China was trying to stop drug trafficking (297). Led to first Opium War (1839-42).

2. Treaty of Nanjing (1842) opened China to opium as well as for missionaries. Hong Kong ceded to British, foreigners permitted to study Chinese; schools, buildings, churches built in ports (297).

3. Second Opium War (1856-60) – initiated by torture of a French priest inland, resulted in allowing foreigners to travel outside treaty ports and guaranteed freedom of worship and protection of Christians throughout empire (298).*

B. Taiping Rebellion (1851-64):

1. Hong Xiuquan failed govt examinations, read book by Liang Fa, began to have visions, formed God Worshipers Society. Affiliated with an American So. Baptist missionary, but left when the missionary told him he wasn’t ready for baptism. Hong claimed he was appointed by the God of the Christians as the Taiping (Great Peace) Son of Heaven to cleanse China of its sins, including driving out Buddhism, and the Manchu emperor (298-9).

2. Hong captured southern capital Nanjing in 1853 and established his own capital and said he was the True Lord (299). In 1852, Taiping rebels added third book to canon called “The Book of Heaven-Commanded Edicts.” – mixture of Bible, Chinese mythology, and imperial egocentric thinking.

3. Hong began to demand radical religious adherence. Manchu empire was eventually rescued by a Christian British general in 1864.

C. Chinese Christianity in late 19th c.

1. Catholics lost ¼ of membership by 1860 (463)

2. Reasons Chinese empire fell in late 19th c. often attributed to foreign missionaries, but Moffett says real reason:
   a) Incompetence of dynastic govt. and internal rebellions.
b) Humiliating impact of Opium Wars and the Boxer Rebellion in 1900.

D. China Inland Mission – largest Protestant missionary society in China (464) – arrived in 1866 (Hudson Taylor)
   2. Concentrated on missions in areas with few Christians.
   5. As a faith missionary society, CIM open to women as well as men (467).
   6. Early on, CIM welcomed indigenous ministers (possible reason for their success) (467).

E. Influence of Timothy Richard, Welsh Baptist (1869ff)
   1. Came to China with English Baptist Missionary Society in 1869 (474).
   2. Social activism gained favor with Chinese, especially during great famine of 1876-77, but was admired by govt, Confucianists, Buddhists (475).
   3. Criticized as syncretist by fellow Baptists.
   4. Richard's church planting method:
      a) Adaptation to Chinese ways
      b) Training Chinese leadership in group Bible studies to develop self-reliance.
      c) Choose among best converts to convert others (476)
      d) Love for Chinese.

F. Chinese Backlash – Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901).
   1. Reasons:
      a) Humiliation from Opium Wars
      b) Christian missions tainted by Christian nations' imperialistic behavior.
      c) Xenophobia – protest against all things foreign including Christianity (483)
      d) Rejection of western thought by intellectuals c. 1840-60.
      e) Mixture of resentment and admiration of west c. 1860-95
      f) 1895-1925 – after defeat by Japan and Boxer Rebellion, forced acceptance of Western superiority (484).

   2. Boxers – attacks against missionaries as foreigners, but fueled by drought, famine, weak central govt., rural instability, German intrusion, and encouraged by empress dowager (485).

A. Dilemma of Chinese Christians in 1949 – flee to Taiwan with nationalists or remain on mainland with Communist atheists (88).

B. Priorities of Chinese Christians –
   1. Evangelicals – evangelism, spiritual growth, church work. Secular work was unimportant.
   2. TSPM (Three-Self Patriotic Movement) – influenced by western Social Gospel, more concerned with national salvation than individual salvation (90). TSPM – self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating.
   3. TSPM believed in Christian social reconstruction of China and nation building in cooperation with Chinese Communist party.

C. Premier Zhou Enlai offered Chinese Christians subordinate role.


E. Origin of TSPM – Henry Venn 1850s came up with concept for missionary work in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

F. Cooperation between TSPM Christians and Chinese Communist party led to nationalization of churches (91).

G. Merging of public institutions including schools, forced churches to sever ties with foreign missions (92).

H. Wang Mingdao of Christian Tabernacle resisted nationalization on spiritual grounds, arrested with his wife.

I. Politicization, forced unification, and nationalization characteristics associated with TSPM rejected by Chinese evangelicals and their Salvationist orthodoxy. (93).

J. Flowers Campaign of 1958 – persecuted nationalists, church workers, and students who had studied abroad.

   1. Gang of Four and Red guard attacked intellectuals (96)
   2. Maoist radicals believed in evolution, materialism, and science. (97)
3. Mao became a semi-god for the radical Maoists. Red Guard had semi-religious character – study sessions, pilgrimages to Beijing, belief in Mao’s magical powers. (98)

L. Rise of Deng Xiaoping to power in 1978 created economic zones and began move toward market economy. (99)

M. Cultural Fever – intellectual interest in western culture due to disillusionment with Communism. (102)

N. Explanations for resurgent interest in Christianity by Paul Kauffman (104):
   1. power of God;
   2. result of suffering of Chinese Xians;
   3. awakening from Maoism; grew out of dedication of survivors of Cultural Revolution;
   4. adoption of Sinicized model of church planting;
   5. end result of prayer.
   6. TSPM felt growth was due to their own leadership, saying forced unification and indigenization of Chinese church led to growth.
   7. House church participants attribute growth to their work.

O. TSPM and house church proponents:
   1. TSPM accuse house churches of fundamentalist approach (105)
   2. House churches view TSPM leaders as government agents who seek to control church & minimize its influence in Chinese society.
   3. Leung Ka Lun analyzes distinctive forms of Chinese Christianity in rural and urban settings – rural Christians are both TSPM and house church and make up 80% of Chinese Christian population (105).
   4. Characteristic of urban Christians – motivated by deep religious concern, focused on eternal rewards, desire spiritual fulfillment, embrace personal salvation. TSPM Christians less concerned with social issues or cultural development (105).
   5. Even original “cultural” Christians were moved to the religious aspects of the faith becoming Christian converts after prolonged intellectual inquiry (106).
   6. Rural Christians had many spiritually minded believers with their faith commitments stronger than their cultural views, but traditional Chinese culture has influenced them to incorporate traditional cultural elements in their faith practices than urban TSPM churches due to their lack of training in systematic theology (106). Chinese cultural influence greater
in rural churches and manifested in millenialist and charismatic tendencies, pragmatic reasons for conversion such as healing, 
superstitious practices related to folk religions, and sometimes magic.

For Further Reading: