This Heathen People: The Cognitive Sources of American Missionary Westernizing Activities in Northern Siam, 1867-1889

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Abstract

Title of Thesis: This Heathen People: The Cognitive Sources of American Missionary Westernizing Activities in Northern Siam. 1867 - 1889.
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The study of American Presbyterian missionary activities in northern Siam presents the historian with a puzzle. While the missionaries went to convert the northern Thai to Christianity, the westernizing activities in which they engaged hampered that goal. Social scientific theory and a survey of nineteenth-century American Protestant missionary activities in other areas indicates that the source of missionary activities lay in their evangelical world view.

Evangelicals divided the world into two incompatible spheres, one good and the other evil. American evangelicals, consequently, perceived non-evangelicals as a threat and dealt with them by trying to convert them. Evangelicals embodied their dualism in a variety of missionary and reform movements which evolved a set of activities directed at exerting social control over American society through "moral therapy." The missionaries in northern Siam, products of the conservative Old School Presbyterian branch of nineteenth-century American evangelical culture, carried out the same set of activities as did the missionary and reform movements in the United States.

The thesis concludes that the Presbyterian missionaries in northern Siam carried out westernizing activities, even to the detriment of their stated goal of converting the region to Christianity because of their dualistic heritage. They assumed that in order to convert the northern Thai to Christianity they must replace northern Thai culture with American culture. Hence, their educational, medical, and technological activities were directed at created a "proper" cultural environment for establishing Christianity in northern Siam."

2006 Introduction

At some point around 1980 or thereafter, the Payap College Manuscript Division (now Payap University Archives) received a set of microfilm records of the Presbyterian Church's Siam and Laos Missions donated by Dr. Maen Pongudom. Dr Maen had just completed his landmark dissertation on American Presbyterian missionary attitudes towards Buddhism in Thailand, and he was kind enough to deposit this very important set of microfilmed records with the Manuscript Division. As the Head of the Division (and the only native language speaker of English on the staff), I took it upon myself to prepare the "finding aid" for these records and to that end began to delve into the contents of the microfilms. They contain the field correspondence and reports of all of the Presbyterian missionaries who served in Siam and northern Siam between 1840 and 1910, and the more I read these records the more upset I became. Back in the 1980s most missionaries and many Thai church leaders in the Church of Christ in Thailand believed that the Thai church was weak and leaderless because of the nature of Thai culture and society. One heard, not infrequently, the statement, "That's just the way they are," referring to "the Thai." What I found in the records of the missions, however, told a very different story. They revealed a massive prejudice against Thai culture, society, and religion embodied in missionary attitudes, behavior, and mission policies. Swinging to the other extreme, I came to feel that the churches were "the way they were" because of the missionaries!

My first reaction was anger, and I vented that anger in my privately published book, *Khrischak Muang Nua*. My second reaction was a deeper puzzlement regarding American Presbyterian missionary strategy, especially in northern Thailand. The missionaries, so far as I could see, went about their evangelistic enterprise in a manner guaranteed to minimize the number of converts they would gain while creating a great deal of friction with northern Thai society. They, furthermore, emphasized modernization at the expense of work with their churches, which again seemed obviously counter-productive over the long run. Behind the vagaries of health and personality conflicts, there also lay an almost all-pervasive approach to missions that wittingly eschewed the contextualization or accommodation of the Christian message. Why?

It was clear from the records that the missionaries brought their attitudes and prejudices with them from the United States, and the answer to my question could best be answered by further study of the American sources of missionary ideology and behavior. In the Fall of 1984, my family and I moved to Laurel, Maryland, and I took up studies in history at the University of Maryland. From the beginning, I intended to find an answer to my question about the nature of Presbyterian missionary motivation. The result of my search is this thesis.

Although not without its challenges and problems, I enjoyed the research and writing process and came away from UMD with an M.A. in American social history. I returned to Chiang Mai in January 1988, however, feeling that I had not actually found a satisfying answer to my question. The immediate sources of Presbyterian missionary thought in nineteenth-century northern Siam were still not clear to me, although I did have a much better idea of the larger American cultural attitudes, values, and belief systems the missionaries drew on to shape their policies in the North. But, how did they acquire those attitudes, values, and belief systems? That question lay fallow for more than a decade, awaiting further research, which I was finally able to carry out in the research I did for my doctoral dissertation, "Prelude to Irony."

"This Heathen People," nonetheless, represents an important step forward in my own thinking about Presbyterian missionary attitudes and their practice of mission in northern Thailand. As much as I enjoy the study of the past, I was never particularly interested in American church history until I started to do the research for this thesis. What I found was that the study of American Christianity and the church in the United States encompasses a rich variety of subjects, fields, and exciting issues that touch directly on the life of the churches of Thailand. I also began to appreciate the complexities of the worldviews that Presbyterian missionaries inherited from their own culture and times. It became clear that they brought with them to Siam a conservative evangelical fund of "common wisdom" widely accepted in their own nation, a wisdom that only a very few of them ever questioned or tried to transcend. Another thing I discovered was the crucial relationship between Western philosophical traditions and church history in Thailand, a theme that only emerges with more clarity in my doctoral research.

This thesis also marked an important step in my understanding of how Western cultures, including my own, have dealt with other cultures around the world. While it is nothing new to many, for me the discovery of the Euro-centric concept of dualism, which European colonists imported into North America, has helped me to better understand missionary history and my own personal story. This is not to say that Asian cultures are without their own dualistic attitudes towards the world around them. Ethnic Thais, for example, have inherited a dualism that divides space into opposing spheres of civilized territory and wilderness. Anything having to do with the forest, thus, is considered dangerous and even evil, including the "forest people" (*khon pa*) who live there-hence the nasty prejudice many lowland Thais hold against hill tribal Thais (Karen, Lahu, etc.). Western dualism, however, has traditionally divided space on religious grounds into incompatible spheres of good and evil, God and Satan. In the United States, at least, this dualistic approach taints nearly all of American cultures. Ronald Regan's famous description of the former Soviet Union as an "evil empire" is a notable example of how Americans look at the world generally.

The years that I worked on "This Heathen People," 1984 through 1987, have many happy associations for me and for my family. We lived in Laurel, Maryland, and involved ourselves in the life of the Laurel Presbyterian Church. My history of that congregation is a by-product of the research I was already doing on Presbyterian missionary history. I did most of the research for this thesis at McKeldin Library in the days when the on line catalog was just coming into use. The endless hours at McKeldin were good hours. That was the "old" McKeldin with its dim & dingy old-fashioned stacks that snaked through the building here and there. In the greater world of historical scholarship, "This Heathen People" is an exceedingly humble piece of journeyman's history. In the much smaller world of the study of Thai church history, it represents an important second step in the academic development of that field. I mentioned Dr. Maen's dissertation above. Dr. Maen first explored some of the themes that I later took up, and he was the one who initiated the critical historiographical study of the Western missionary movement in Thailand. Unfortunately, once Dr. Maen returned to Thailand his life took several turns all of them leading him away from further historical research and writing. For better and for worse, I took it upon myself to build on this work by pursuing further critical study of the Presbyterian missionaries (and, eventually, others).

"This Heathen People" is an important work in the study of Thai church and missions history, and I am glad to finally get it up and running on this website. I trust it will be of some use to visitors to *herbswanson.com*. Please do remember that the thesis is protected by copyright laws and that it is not to be downloaded or copied in full. Shorter quotations for academic purposes are, however, perfectly in order. Enjoy!

Herb Swanson
Ban Dok Daeng
July 2006

Edition Notes

This is the third version of "This Heathen People" and differs in important ways from either of the previous versions. The **first version** is, of course, the hardcopy original approved by the University of Maryland in 1987. The **second version** was the first electronic version of the thesis, which was uploaded onto *herbswanson.com* in 2006. At that time, I corrected a number of spelling mistakes, changed awkward wording in a couple of places, and made a few changes in style. The pagination was not that of the original, and unfortunately I had lost my computer files for the Introduction and Chapter Three. They had to be scanned, which introduced a raft of mistakes some of which survived into the electronic version. I was not able to capture the Thai script that I used for some citations in Chapter One, and I had to substitute a translated English title for the Thai title.

This current version (2012) of "This Heathen People" is the **third version**. As it turned out, some ten pages of Chapter Three did not "make it" into the first electronic version, and I wasn't in a position to correct the problem until now. For this version, those pages had to be scanned again, and more mistakes have crept into the text even as I have found and corrected others. Readers will note that there is no pagination indicated at all in this version. Those who need it for citations may rely on the PDF version for each chapter.

1987 Introduction

In early April 1867. the first western Protestant missionaries to work in northern Siam[1] arrived in Chiang Mai, Siam, the chief city of the region. The Rev. Daniel and Sophia McGilvary were American Presbyterians. Until that time no westerners had lived permanently in Chiang Mai, and, indeed, the western world knew very little about the northern Siam. The Siamese government itself claimed only nominal suzerainty over its northern territories, and the world events of the nineteenth century had left northern Siam largely untouched. The arrival of the McGilvarys, therefore, marked a significant event in the history of northern Siam. Profound political and social changes followed.

The McGilvarys and the Presbyterian missionaries who followed them contributed to that change. They introduced western medicine, education, ideas, and technologies into the region. They allied themselves with the growing political power of the Siamese government and helped to increase that power. Their preaching and promotion of an alien religion weakened traditional structures and values. In short, the American Presbyterian missionaries introduced the western world into northern Siam.[2]

Yet, the significance of the American Presbyterian missionaries as agents of social change has left historians with a puzzle. The missionaries went to northern Siam for the single purpose of propagating their Protestant Christian faith. Nothing else mattered to them nearly so much as the Christianization of northern Siam.[3] While they changed northern Thai society In many areas, however, a series of historical studies suggests that what these missionaries actually did contributed little to attaining their stated goal.

Maen Pongudom's study of the methods the Presbyterian missionaries used to spread their religious message in nineteenth-century Siam, for example, shows that their words, ideas, and methods failed to communicate meaningfully in Thai culture. Maen argues that communication strategies like those of the early Christian apologists could have succeeded in Siam. But the American Protestant missionaries failed to use such strategies.[4] Alex Smith's study of missionary evangelism argues that the missionaries failed to convert large numbers of Siamese to Christianity because their activities failed to promote the growth and strength of the churches they established. They did not, that is, establish a strong indigenous base for spreading their message.[5] My own research indicates that the Presbyterian mission In northern Siam devoted so much attention to medical and educational work it distracted Itself from its evangelistic mission. That mission expended most of Its energy and resources In activities that failed to promote the conversion of large numbers of northern Thai. [6]

The puzzle is this: why did the missionaries In northern Siam not do what they came to do, namely, convert the people to Christianity? Why did they, instead, go off on what appears in retrospect to have been an evangelistically unproductive tangent? Since that "tangent" Introduced significant social change Into northern Siam. The apparent contradiction between missionary goals and activities provides a key to understanding the form and content of nineteenth-century westernization In that region.

In a vague, general way, the records of the Presbyterian missionaries In northern Siam point to a solution to the puzzle missionary activity In northern Siam propounded. Those records show that the missionaries clothed themselves in a rigidly prejudicial attitude about northern Thai culture and religion that prevented northern Thai values from influencing the missionaries

in return. External circumstances and events in northern Siam did not force the missionaries to act In certain ways. It would seem, then, quite possible that they brought the puzzle of their activities with them and that Its origins lay In the sociocultural heritage of the missionaries themselves.

It is the thesis of this study that the westernizing activities of the Presbyterian missionaries in northern Siam grew out of their nineteenth-century American sociocultural heritage. Ideas reveal the consciousness of people and play a significant part in shaping human events because of the powerful influence they have over people's beliefs and actions. In short, meaningful human activity grows out of Ideas. It follows that the riddles of missionary activity In northern Siam could have their sources and their solutions in the cognitive consciousness of nineteenth-century American evangelical[7] culture.

While this study is an exercise in "intellectual history." It focuses not ideas in and of themselves but, rather, on how those ideas influenced activities of the Presbyterian missionaries in northern Siam. It seeks to understand why the missionaries built schools and hospitals, opened a press, and utilized various technologies at the expense of their stated goal. The purpose here is to examine how the missionaries thought about themselves, their religion, and their work in order to understand why they acted as they did.

As the following chapters describe, missionary thought encompassed a number of interrelated concepts that formed a coherent, complex worldview. At the core of that world view rested the idea of dualism, a deceptively simple concept that taught that all of reality was divided Into two distinct, incompatible spheres. The missionaries believed that they represented the sphere of Truth while northern Thai culture and religion stood within the sphere of Evil. The dualism of the Laos Mission originated In its nineteenth-century conservative evangelical heritage. and the bulk of this thesis traces the lines of that heritage from the United States to northern Siam.

The evangelical ideas of conversion and revivalism gave substance to evangelical dualism by teaching evangelicals how to deal with anyone who did not think or act like they did. Conservative evangelicals interpreted their dualism to mean that they must convert non-evangelicals to their piety. Revivalism provided one means for achieving those conversions. The language and methods of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy and nineteenth-century American Presbyterian theology further refined the dualism of the Laos Mission so that it did, in fact, appear to them to be entirely sensible and logical.

The ideas of conversion and revivalism and the philosophical systems of Scottish philosophy and Presbyterian theology interacted with each other and with dualism through yet another set of ideas that included millennialism, progress, America as the Chosen Nation, and providence. These concepts encompassed all of time within the categories of dualism, provided conservative evangelicals with a philosophy of history. gave religious meaning to political structures, and equipped evangelical Americans with a supreme confidence in the tightness of their beliefs.

Each of these ideas presupposed and gave meaning to the rest. Millennialism. the expectation of the Second Coming of Christ, promoted a belief in progress. Evangelicals linked the idea of progress, in turn, to the working of providence in human affairs. They then. in another turn, equated providence and progress with the place of their nation In world affairs. They believed that through the leading of providence American would progressively usher in the Millennium of God's reign on earth.

And each of these Ideas propelled conservative American evangelicals to action. They believed that they must act to speed the coming of the Millennium. They could do so partly by converting infidels, savages, and heathens through revivalistic efforts and partly by engaging in moral and social reform movements that would allow them to exercise control over society for the good of society. Evangelical control of society, so conservative evangelicals reasoned, would protect the moral fiber of the nation, make it worthy of its status as the New Israel, and promote the perfection of society that must come to attain the Millennium.

Conservative evangelicals lived out this whole set of dualistic ideas In a complimentary set of activities that it evolved over decades of trying to convert the world to Protestant Christianity. It used education and a variety of technological changes to spread the Protestant message and plant it firmly in the minds of its own children and the many non-evangelical groups found in the United States and around the world. Conservative evangelicals expected that education would help reform the nation by teaching all Americans "the knowledge of the Lord" needed for America to achieve the Millennium. The advance of American technology reinforced nineteenth-century evangelical belief In the progressive perfection of American society provided, of course, that evangelical Protestantism remained the dominant creed of the nation.

Chapters One and Two set the stage for arguing the thesis of this study. Chapters Three through Seven then gather in the various strands of the evangelical worldview and show how each strand contributed to the world view and activities of the Laos Mission. The weight of these descriptions of the origins of missionary activity leads to the conclusion that the Laos Mission took its dualistic worldview to northern Siam, defined northern Thai culture and religion as heathen, and framed Its activities as the means to conquer that heathenism.

A number of individuals have contributed a great deal to the research and writing of this thesis. I would like to particularly thank Dr. Fred Nicklason for his helpful advice and for guiding me through the process of bringing everything together. The staff at the Presbyterian Historical Society provided Important and timely reference assistance. The people at St. John United Methodist-Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Maryland, where I served as Interim Pastor during the writing of the thesis, deserve rich thanks for their support and encouragement. Thanks, finally, goes to Nee. This would never have been written apart from her love.

Notes

[1] Thailand is referred to by its official nineteenth-century name "Siam."

[2] This thesis uses the term "westernization" rather than "modernization." Missionary social change involved the transfer of western ideas, Institutions, methods, or technologies. "Westernization" is a more precise and avoids the sometimes highly charged debate over the meaning of "modernization.' See *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Languag*e, s.v. "westernize." See also Peter N. Steams. "Modernization and Social History Some Suggestions, and a Muted Cheer." *Journal of Social History* 14 (Winter 1980): 189-210; Raymond Grew. "More on Modernization." *Journal of Social History* 14 (Winter I960): 179-88: and Joseph R. Gusfleld. "Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change." *American Journal of Sociology* 72 (January 1967): 351-62

[3] Daniel McGilvary, *A Half Century Among the Siamese and the Lao*. (New York: Revolt 1912). 78-9: and Daniel McGilvary to Arthur Mltchell. August 23. 1884, vol. 4. Records of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.. Presbyterian Historical Society. Philadelphia.

[4] Maen Pongudom. "Apologetic and Missionary Proclamation: Exemplified by American Presbyterian Missionaries to Thailand (1828-1978). Early Church Apologists: Justin Martyr. Clement of Alexandria and Origen. and the Venerable Buddhadasa Bhikku. A Thai Buddhist Monk-Apologist" (Ph.D. diss.. University of Otago, 1979).

[5] Alex G. Smith. *Siamese Gold: A History of Church Growth In Thailand* (Bangkok: Kanok Bannasan. 1982).

[6] Herbert R. Swanson. *Khrischak Muana Nua: A Study In Northern Thai Church History*(Bangkok: Chuan Press. 1984).

[7] "Evangelicalism" refers to the American Protestant movement that arose out of revivalism and emphasized personal conversion experiences and the proselytlzation of the "unconverted." While It may be more precise to refer to the "evangelical sub-culture." committed evangelicals often experienced evangelicalism as a total culture. See Charles I. Foster, .*An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front 1790-1837* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 1960). viii. cf. 39: and G. Gordon Brown, "Missions and Cultural Diffusion." *American Journal of Sociology* 5 (November 1944): 214-19.

Chapter One

The American Presbyterian mission in northern Siam, founded in 1867, brought the heirs of two vastly different cultures into contact with one another. On the one side stood the descendents of the once rich and powerful Tai[1] Kingdom of Lan Na ("Kingdom of a thousand rice fields"). On the other side stood the American heirs of Calvin, Knox, and the Puritans. The study of missionary activities in northern Siam begins with each of these heritages.

I

While historians still do not know with any certainty how the Tai came to live in modern day northern Thailand, they generally assume that the Tai migrated into the region from the north during the eleventh century A.D. [2] The history of the Lan Na Kingdom started with King Mangrai (1239-1317), who began his career in 1259 as the ruler of a minor Tai city-state and, during a twenty year period, extended his power over various other minor states in northern Thailand until he became an important figure in the region. In 1281 he conquered the ancient and powerful city-state of Haripunjaya and cemented his dominance over a large territory. After these conquests, Mangrai proceeded to enliven the cultural life of his emerging kingdom by importing craftsmen and artists from other states and by promoting the Buddhist religion. In 1296 he also began the construction of a new capital, Chiang Mai (new city), for his Lan Na Kingdom. By the time of his death in 1317, King Mangrai had laid the foundations for a Buddhist state of regional importance with Chiang Mai as its centerpiece. One scholar has written that, "The new city had a brilliant destiny not only as a political center but also as a cultural center." [3]

By the end of the fourteenth century, the Lan Na Kingdom achieved both political stability and experienced the flowering of an impressive Buddhist culture. Chiang Mai became a widely recognized center of Buddhist art and learning. Its monks created an impressive Buddhist literature for which they won a reputation as skillful in the use of Pali, the sacred language of Theravada Buddhism. The kingdom reached its cultural and political heights during the reign of King Tilokaracha who reigned from 1441 until 1487. [4]

The period of power and cultural flowering lasted for only a brief era, however, and by the early sixteenth century the Lan Na Kingdom entered a phase of permanent decline caused in large part by incompetent political leadership. In 1558 the Burmese invaded and captured Chiang Mai, bringing to an end the Mangrai dynasty. For the next two hundred years the region suffered through a long era marked by Burmese domination, war, revolt, internal dissension, unrest, repression, and cultural decline. [5] At the end of that era, a Thai army captured Chiang Mai in 1776, and the northern states then regained a measure of self-rule under the nominal suzerainty of Bangkok. In spite of forceful political leadership and modest attempts at cultural revival, the centuries of tumult and decline made it impossible for northern Siam to regain the glory of its golden years. [6]

The first American Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Chiang Mai in April 1867 during a crucial period in northern Thai history. The French controlled portions of Indo-China and the British dominated Burma, an old and powerful rival of Siam, with frightening ease. Siam felt it could no longer allow its northern states the autonomy they had enjoyed for decades, and in 1870 it initiated the long process of integrating northern Siam politically and culturally into the Siamese state. [8] To that end, one scholar argues, the Bangkok government encouraged the

Presbyterians to go to Chiang Mai to weaken its traditional political and social structures. That the missionaries did, in fact, have far reaching influence in the North, implies that Bangkok used them successfully. In any event, the Siamese government in 1874 placed a viceroy in Chiang Mai and, thereby, gradually gained control over taxation and revenues, the local economy, and government bureaucracy in northern Siam. Revolutions broke out in 1889 and again in 1902, but Bangkok successfully suppressed each of them and by 1908 it fully incorporated the North into the Siamese state. [9]

When the first missionaries went to Chiang Mai, then, they entered a region which had only recently emerged from centuries of unrest with no hope of attaining even a shadow of its former greatness. It remained isolated from the larger world by a long journey up river which could take as long as three months to complete. The old ways and traditional power structures still dominated northern Thai life. The missionaries played no small part in bringing about the changes their arrival in Chiang Mai portended.

II

The turmoil-ridden history of Chiang Mai, however, represented only one element in the equation of missionary activity in northern Siam. The Presbyterians also brought a past with them, one which went back to the Protestant Reformation, the Calvinistic "Reformed" and "Presbyterian" churches of Europe and Britain, and American history going back into colonial times. That history profoundly affected the development of missionary activity in northern Siam.

In the late seventeenth century, Calvinists established Presbyterian churches in the English colonies gaining their strongest foothold in the Middle colonies where Presbyterianism eventually became the largest single religious grouping. Under the leadership of the Rev. Francis Makemie, the Presbyterians organized a presbytery in 1706 which they expanded into the General Synod in 1716. During the American Revolution the Presbyterians closely identified themselves with the revolutionary cause, and they emerged from the Revolution as one of the most prestigious religious bodies in the United States. In 1788 they completed the organizational development of American Presbyterianism by founding the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Although emerging from the Revolution as the largest religious sect in the United States, the Presbyterians did not expand as rapidly after 1800 as did the Methodists or the Baptists. While those denominations enthusiastically embraced the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening, that movement reawakened an older controversy among Presbyterians concerning the use of revivalism to gain adherents. An "Old School" faction emerged which acknowledged the importance of revivals but distrusted the more radical tendencies of frontier revivalism. That faction wanted to limit the use of revivalism among Presbyterians. The "New School" faction, on the other hand, sought to make greater use of revivalism. After years of bickering, the Old School faction in 1837 forced an open split between the two groups that led to the establishment of two denominations each claiming to be the "true" Presbyterian Church U.S.A. The two churches did not reunite until after the Civil War. [10]

The Presbyterian factional struggle culminating in the 1837 split had a direct bearing on the founding of the Laos Mission. Among other things, the two sides differed sharply over the denominational role in missions. Beginning in 1801, the Presbyterian Church cooperated with various New England Congregationalist bodies in the "Plan of Union," an agreement that reduced competition between missionaries and churches in frontier areas. The Plan allowed local churches to associate with both denominations and call pastors from either. Under the Plan, many New England Congregationalists in New York, Ohio, and other western states joined the

Presbyterian Church greatly enlarging what became the New School Presbyterian faction. The Congregationalists and Presbyterians also worked together in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.) and the American Home Missionary Society (A.H.M.S.), through which the Presbyterians channeled most of their missionary efforts.

Old School Presbyterians felt uneasy about cooperating with the Congregationalists who, they believed, represented a heretical danger to Presbyterian orthodoxy. The Old School wanted to discontinue that cooperation, limit the role of the New School within the Presbyterian Church, and establish denominational control over Presbyterian missionary activities so that Presbyterian missions propagated "true" Christian faith. In order to attract the resources of Presbyterian churches into distinctly Presbyterian missionary efforts, an Old School group established the independent Western Foreign Missionary Society (W.F.M..S) in 1831. It used the W.F.M.S. to forestall a New School drive to make the A.B.C.F.M. the official foreign missions arm of the denomination. [11] After the 1837 split, the Presbyterian Church (Old School) severed all relations with the interdenominational societies and established the Board of Foreign Missions to oversee its foreign missionary effort. [12]

It was the Board of Foreign Missions which sent the first Presbyterian missionaries to Bangkok and, a generation later, approved the establishment of a mission station in Chiang Mai. The beginnings of Presbyterian work in northern Siam, then, grew out of a heritage that reached back to the Protestant Reformation itself. That same heritage embodied the ideological framework which Presbyterian missionaries took with them to northern Siam.

III

Protestant missionary work in Siam began in August 1828 when the first two Protestant missionaries, representing the London Missionary Society, arrived in Bangkok. [13] In the early 1830s, the A.B.C.F.M. and the American Baptists established the earliest permanent Protestant missions in Bangkok. Thereafter, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions conducted a survey trip to Bangkok in 1838 and sent its first couple to Bangkok two years later. Illness and discouragement forced that couple to leave in 1844, but a new Presbyterian contingent arrived in Bangkok in 1847, establishing a Presbyterian presence broken only by World War II. During the first years of the Presbyterian Siam Mission, the King of Siam suspected that the American missionaries were foreign political agents, and he restricted their work accordingly. The situation improved in 1851, however, when King Mongkut (r. 1851-1868) came to the throne. Mongkut maintained cordial relations with the missionaries and used them to help introduce western ideas and technologies into his nation. The Presbyterian mission founded schools, built a printing plant, and carried on medical work in addition to its routine evangelistic activities. By 1860 the Siam Mission was firmly rooted in Bangkok and planning to expand its work into other cities.

Missionary interest in the northern Thai began with the Rev. Dr. Dan Beach Bradley, the most influential and famous of the early missionaries. Bradley went to Siam in 1835 under the A.B.C.F.M. and later transferred to the American Missionary Association (A.M.A.), a missionary agency working primarily among slaves and freedmen in the United States. [14] In the 1850s Bradley developed contacts with northern Thai delegations that visited Bangkok periodically to swear allegiance to the King of Siam. He talked with members of these delegations and gave them tracts, but his small mission never had enough funds to undertake a permanent mission in northern Siam.

Bradley left that task to the Presbyterians and his own son-in-law, the Rev. Daniel McGilvary. McGilvary arrived in Bangkok in 1858, and soon married Sophia Bradley, who then

joined the Presbyterian mission. In 1861 the McGilvarys opened the mission's second station, at the town of Phet Buri, south of Bangkok, where they encountered the long resettled descendants of northern Thai prisoners of war. Spurred by stories of Bradley's encounters with the northern Thai delegations and contacts with the northern Thai of Phet Buri, McGilvary and the Rev. Jonathan Wilson took a survey trip to Chiang Mai in 1863. They returned to Bangkok excited by they saw, but it took them more than three years to work through all of the arrangements necessary to establish a permanent mission in Chiang Mai. The McGilvary family finally left for Chiang Mai in January 1867, and the Wilsons followed them a year later.

The McGilvarys intended only to establish a mission station of the Siam Mission, but the Board of Foreign Missions soon recognized the Chiang Mai Station as a separate mission, the "Laos Mission." [15] The history of the Laos Mission divides into three general periods, the first of which began in 1867 and ended abruptly in September 1869. During this period, people came in crowds, even from distant villages, to see the McGilvary family, and the two elder McGilvarys took advantage of their visibility to preach their message. They soon gained seven converts which they believed marked the beginning of a "mass movement" to Christianity. The arrival of the Wilson family in 1868 added to the sense of progress, but this first period came to a bloody, sudden end when the chao muang (Prince or Lord) of Chiang Mai ordered the execution of two converts. The remaining converts either fled or renounced their new religion, and it seemed likely that the McGilvarys and Wilsons would have to leave. The chao muang continued to pose a threat to the future of the mission until his death in 1870.

The second period in the history of the Laos Mission lasted from 1869 until 1889. The mission slowly recovered from the persecution of 1869, began to create the lasting shape of its work, and expanded geographically into several new areas of northern Siam. McGilvary and other members of the mission itinerated through remote rural areas converting individuals and organizing small groups of converts. The first missionary doctor arrived in 1871, and the mission established its first permanent school, a girls' school, in 1879. By 1880 the mission established four churches, and in that year it opened work in another important region to the North By the end of the decade the mission's churches numbered 884 members scattered over a large geographical area. The general scope and shape of missionary activity had emerged.

The final stage in the Laos Mission's history opened in 1889 with the arrival of a contingent of "second generation" missionaries and a general expansion of the mission's program. The mission established several hospitals, a system of itinerating medical evangelists, pharmacies, and a leprosarium. It created a system of large boarding schools and village parochial schools. opened a theological school, and founded a printing press. Yet, even as the Laos Mission itself expanded, significant changes swept across northern Siam as transportation and communications with Bangkok improved dramatically. Those changes caused the Board of Foreign Missions to conclude that it needed only one mission in Siam, and in 1920 it ordered the unification of the Siam and Laos Missions. With that order, the history of the Laos Mission ended.

IV

In the course of its history, the Laos Mission engaged in an impressive range of westernizing activities. Indeed, from the time they began to prepare for the Chiang Mai mission, McGilvary and Wilson planned to take as much of the West with them as possible. They felt they needed a large supply of medicines and a doctor to help with the station's work. They wanted a printing press. They believed that their success would depend in part upon erecting western-style missionary homes and a chapel. [16] In his first annual report from Chiang Mai, McGilvary again listed the things he "needed" to insure the success of his mission. His list included a press,

type fonts, homes built with western building techniques, a school, a chapel, and the materials and techniques needed for literacy education. He observed that the members of the Laos Mission had "come out from civilization" and none of the tools needed for evangelism existed in Chiang Mai. [17]

The range of western products on these shopping lists demonstrates that McGilvary and Wilson assumed without thought that western ways, technologies, institutions, and ideas went hand-in-hand with missionary evangelism They consistently acted on that assumption and just as consistently used western ideas and technologies in their evangelistic campaign to convert northern Siam. At each turn of its history, the Laos Mission introduced more westernizing activities into its program.

Upon their arrival in Chiang Mai, the McGilvarys attracted large crowds of spectators, and they used these crowds as a forum for preaching their religion. They preached more, however, than just a new religion: their evangelistic message and style advocated the ways of the West. McGilvary, for example, taught his listeners something of astronomy and geography to prove the superiority of western learning to that of traditional northern Thai Buddhist cosmology. He then tried to associate Christianity with that superiority and, thus, win converts.. McGilvary also practiced medicine among the crowds as a way to gain their attention and sympathy. [18]

Sophia McGilvary's activities in those early years represented an equally radical importation of the West into Chiang Mai. In northern Siam women received no formal education so that very few could even read. Traditional religion, at the same time, severely limited their role in religion, the heart and soul of the culture. Sophia presented a stark contrast as she moved about the crowds, preaching and teaching in a manner quite unlike what they expected of a women. She was clearly literate, educated, and very much of a religious leader. Sophia's very presence, then, modelled a western conception of womanhood and religion, one she reinforced further when she formed a small woman's literacy class in 1868, the first recorded instance of western-style education in northern Siam. [19]

Missionary evangelism attacked traditional northern Thai society not only through western technologies and techniques but also with western religious ideas as well. The missionaries preached religious beliefs and concepts such as sin, forgiveness, salvation, and heaven very different from those of northern Thai Buddhism. They especially emphasized the contradictions between their understanding of sin and that of Buddhism. Northern Thai Buddhism taught, in essence, that the sinner could attain salvation through the accumulation of merit an the extinguishing of desires and attachments. The Laos Mission held that salvation came only through God's forgiveness given to those who believed in the westernized Christian religion of American Protestantism. [20]

As a part of its use of western religious ideas, the Laos Mission also attacked traditional northern Thai animistic beliefs and spirit propitiation ceremonies and activities. Not infrequently mobs in northern Siam forced individuals or families accused of witchcraft and demon possession to flee their homes permanently. The missionaries challenged these beliefs, gave haven to those accused of witchcraft, and interceded on their behalf with the authorities. They taught their converts to eschew animistic rites and practices, and they used western medicines to discredit the "native doctors'" reliance on propitiation rites. [21]

The missionaries particularly relied upon the use of western medicine to attract people to their message. In his first letter from Chiang Mai, McGilvary wrote that he had treated a considerable number of patients, including members of the royal family, because he believed he had a humanitarian duty to help where he could. He emphasized, however, the value of his

medical work for winning converts. It demonstrated the superiority not only of western medicine but also of western civilization and its religion. [22] Over the years, the Laos Mission consistently affirmed its belief in the value of missionary medicine for gaining adherents to Christianity. In 1912, for example, the mission's medical work played a key role in the conversions of thousands to Christianity during a malaria epidemic. [23]

Missionary hospitals, in fact, provided the earliest institutional setting within which the mission conducted evangelistic activities. The mission opened its first temporary hospital in a set of bamboo huts in 1872, and relatives and friends of patients normally stayed with the patients to help care for them. The missionaries evangelized both the patients and those who tended them and encouraged them to attend the hospital's daily chapel service. [24] The missionaries also used the hospital to teach Siamese literacy as a way to introduce them to the Bible. The mission had to teach Siamese literacy because it did have the resources to translate and publish the Bible in the northern Thai script until years later. [25]

These early efforts eventually led to the development of a full-fledged missionary medical program which dominated the importation of Western medicine into northern Siam well into the twentieth century. The Laos Mission created the first system of western-style hospitals. It established a cadre of medical evangelists to reach remote areas with medicine and evangelism. It established the first leprosarium in Siam. It set up a laboratory to produce western medicines. Missionary doctors conducted original medical research and performed a long list of medical "firsts." Taken together, the medical activities of the Laos Mission resulted in the first organized system of western-style public health care in northern Siam. [26]

Comparable to its medical program, the Laos Mission also created an extensive educational program in pursuit of the same evangelistic goals. In an 1862 letter, McGilvary defined education as the slow process of impressing young minds with the Christian religion, and he argued that education played an important part in evangelism and in seeing that the children of converts learned their parents' new religion. Citing the example of the missionaries who planted Christianity long ago among the Anglo-Saxons, McGilvary claimed that in the past missionaries often spread Christianity through the silent process of education rather than through revivalistic campaigns. [27] Only through Christian schools, he believed, could the mission raise up "an intelligent generation of enlightened Christians." [28]

Jonathan Wilson, second only to McGilvary in influence in the Laos Mission, went so far as to describe conversion to Christianity as an educational process. And the Rev. Chalmers Martin, a capable young missionary who arrived in Chiang Mai in 1884 and later had a distinguished academic career in the United States, wrote years later that Christian schools quickened the "dulled minds" of "barbarous peoples." He believed that if the first century apostles had lived in the nineteenth century they would have relied on education to evangelize the world.[29] The Laos Mission also expected its schools to produce "native" church leaders who would eventually take over the evangelistic and other work of the mission.[30]

The mission's educational program stressed literacy education. In 1876 Sophia McGilvary started a small literacy class for young girls that led in three years to the founding of the mission's first school. In that same year of 1876, the mission also established its first Sunday school, which it used primarily to teach illiterate converts how to read. When the mission expanded the Sunday school four years later literacy instruction remained in the curriculum despite the growing number of converts who could already read.[31] The missionaries promoted literacy because they believed that Christians should read the Bible for themselves, that those who learned to read demonstrated their commitment to their new religion, and that literacy increased a person's intelligence. [32]

As in the case of medicine, so also in education, the Laos Mission's work played a major part in westernizing change. The mission took an important step in that direction in 1879 when two young missionaries, Edna S. Cole and Mary M. Campbell, turned Sophia McGilvary's small literacy class into a boarding school. By October 1879 that school grew to include twenty-five full-time students, eighteen of whom boarded at the school. [33] The mission went on to create the first western-style educational system in northern Siam. It's schools taught literacy, western academic subjects including Siamese and English, western music, and industrial and domestic training. They trained teachers for the government school system which followed it. They trained many of the children of the princes and government officials in northern Siam. And the mission also created a fairly extensive system of village schools, normally related to local churches, that fed "prime" students into the mission's boarding schools. In all of these activities, the mission's schools set the standards for measuring northern Thai educational quality. [34]

Women's education provides an outstanding example of the Laos Mission's educational role in westernization. Traditional northern Thai religion stigmatized women with an inferior status and limited their participation in religious activities, which deprived them of formal educational opportunities since education was closely associated with religion. The Laos Mission, to the contrary, pursued women's education with zeal. It believed that women played key roles in creating Christian homes, raising Christian children, supporting local churches, and teaching in church schools. It also believed that only educated women could do all these things well. Thus, the mission went out of its way to educate women. It also opened the doors of the teaching profession to women and hired the first professionally trained women in northern Siam as teachers for its schools. [35] The mission, in short, tried to use education to westernize male-female social relationships, women's social role, and the place of women in religion.

Those women joined with the other employees of the Laos Mission to work, and often live, in a new social and institutional setting quite alien to traditional northern Thai society. The mission hired both Christians and non-Christians as household servants, watchmen, gardeners, porters, teachers, evangelists, pastors, hospital aides, construction workers, and printers; and it consciously used such employment to westernize and Christianize its employees. In some cases it hired potential converts in order to bring them under its influence. In all cases, its members taught their employees many of the skills and ideas needed to maintain the western character of missionary home and institutional life. [36]

In doing so, the Laos Mission took advantage, perhaps unconsciously, of the traditional northern Thai patron-client social system. In traditional society every individual had a patron to whom was owed loyalty and service. Patrons, in turn, had the responsibility of protecting and caring for their clients. The missionaries, in effect, established themselves as the patrons of their converts and their employees. In this way they could exert considerable influence over those under their patronage. [37] Thus, the missionaries attempted to use even traditional social structures as channels for Christianization and westernization.

Beyond their medical and educational efforts, the Presbyterians employed other western technologies to solve problems they faced in spreading their religion and expanding their presence. Printing provides an outstanding example. Even before he arrived in Chiang Mai, McGilvary wanted a printing press and type fonts for the distinct script and dialect of the North. In later years, he and other missionaries continued to feel this need and even called it the Laos Mission's "greatest need." [38] The mission, as usual, justified a press on the grounds that it could then distribute northern Thai Christian literature and spread its religious message more effectively. It also wanted northern Thai Bibles so that converts and potential converts could study the Bible for themselves. The mission made several attempts to transport a printing press to Chiang Mai, but distance, cost, and technical frustrations prevented it from doing so until

1892 when it finally opened the Chiang Mai Mission Press. That press soon produced millions of pages of printed northern Thai Bibles, tracts, and Christian literature per year, which it distributed throughout the region. [39]

The fact that the mission set up the first press to print the northern Thai script, involved it in another set of activities. In order to produce a printed literature, the Laos Mission standardized the northern Thai language's script, grammar, spelling, and usages. It compiled dictionaries and grammar texts. It also produced courses of study in northern Thai for new missionaries. The mission press became the largest and best northern Thai press, and, thus, when the Siamese government extended its power into northern Siam it naturally turned to the missionaries to fulfill its printing needs. In some years the press printed more material for the government than it did for the mission itself. The press also did job work for the British teak firms. As it carried out all of these tasks, the Chiang Mai Mission Press contributed significantly to the spread of western ideas and Siamese power into northern Siam.[40]

Missionary building practices affords another example of how the Laos Mission used western technologies. The mission built up an impressive physical plant that included schools, hospitals, church buildings, and missionary homes. It invested a great deal of time, effort, and money in those buildings. And even here the missionaries believed that their buildings served an evangelistic function: they presented visible proof of a permanent Christian presence and attracted many curious visitors with whom the missionaries could discuss their religion. The missionaries, furthermore, also evangelized the workers they hired to build their buildings. In the process of all of its building construction, the mission introduced a variety of building techniques and tools into northern Siam including such things as brick making machines, new ways to dig wells, new lighting systems, and even stained glass windows. [41]

In its medical, educational, and technological efforts, then, the Laos Mission became a major source of westernization in northern Siam. It introduced new ideas which challenged the traditional cosmology of northern Thai religion. It introduced new institutions, new medicines, new languages, new attitudes about women, new architectural styles, new forms of music and musical instruments, new patterns of employment, new ways of learning, and new technologies. Indeed, by popularizing more "modest" styles for women and by outfitting upper-class women in western fashions it even introduced new habits of dress. [42]

In 1881 the Norwegian traveler and naturalist, Carl Bock, visited Chiang Mai, and so taken was he by the westernizing activities of the Laos Mission that he misunderstood its underlying motivation. His description of the mission emphasized that the it's primary purpose was to instruct and induce the "natives" to "apply themselves to industries of a nature to elevate their minds, and to improve their general tone." He measured the success of the mission by its ability to influence peoples' habits, and he concluded that while the mission had won few converts it had "shed upon the country a ray of the light of civilization."[43] The Laos Mission, in other words, engaged in westernizing activities to such an extent that the casual observer could misunderstand the intention of the mission which, in theory, put evangelism first.

Conclusion

If its activities provide any measure, the Laos Mission simply assumed that western ideas, institutions, and technologies complimented and promoted the spread of the Christian religion in northern Siam. The available historical records show that it saw no contradiction between investing its resources in medical or educational institutions or in a printing press and its stated goal of converting the people to Christianity. The school, the hospital, and the press all contributed to that goal.

That assumption, furthermore, profoundly influenced mission conduct. It meant that the Laos Mission put great store on the historical heritage of the Presbyterian Church and the American nation while it ignored as unimportant the heritage the Lan Na Kingdom. The assumption meant that the Laos Mission could draw upon only the former heritage as it created the pattern of its activities, which is to say the Laos Mission engaged in westernizing activities simply because it assumed that it must. The question is, "Why did it make that assumption?"

Notes

[1] Scholars normally use the word "Tai" to distinguish the larger racial group of peoples found from north eastern India through Burma, China, Laos, and Thailand to northern Vietnam from the residents of Thailand, the "Thai."

[2] Hans Penth, (in Thai) "The Lan Na Thai Past," in *Lan Na Thai*, (Chiang Mai: The Province of Chiang Mai, 1983), 10-12.

[3] G. Coedes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. Walter F. Vella, trans. Susan Brown Cowing (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1968), 209, and see 208-26. See also David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 45-50, 74-9; Aroonrut Wichienkeeo, "Chiangmai Society in the Early Bangkok Period: An Analysis Based on Northern Thailand Palm Leaf Manuscripts" (M.A. thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1977), 69-70; and Penth, *Lan Na Thai Past*, 16-19.

[4] Saduphon Chungachit, (in Thai) "Phra Sirimungkhlchan: The Great Lan Na Thai Scholar," in *Lan Na Thai Studies*, eds. Prakhong Nimmanhaemin and Songsuk Prangwuthanakun (Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai Book Center, 1978), 137-38, 155.

[5] Wyatt, *Thailand*, 81-2, 118-20; Penth, Lan Na Thai Past, 20-2; and Singka Wanasai, *baebrian aksan lannathai* (*Textbook for the Lan Na Thai Script*) (Chiang Mai: Thai Department, Chiang Mai University, n.d.), 1-2.

[6] Wyatt, *Thailand*, 142, 155-56; Penth, *Lan Na Thai Past*, 22-3; and Nigel Brailey, "The Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement in Western Laos 1850-92 (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1968), 109-19.

[7] Wyatt, *Thailand*, 194.

[8] Brailey, "Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement," 156.

[9] Rujaya Abhakorn, "Changes in the Administrative System of the Northern Thai States, 1884-1908," paper presented to the International Seminar on Change in Northern Thailand and the Shan States 1886-1940," (Payap College, 20-25 June 1983); Brailey, "Origins of the Siamese Forward Movement," 328ff; Ansil Ramsay, "Modernization and Reactionary Rebellions in Northern Siam," *Journal of Asian Studie*s 38 (February 1979): 283-297; and Wyatt, i, 194.

[10] See Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978); and Gaius Jackson Slosser, ed., *They Seek A Country: The American Presbyterians* (New York: Macmillan, 1955).

[11] Marjorie Barnhart, "From Elisha Swift to Walter Lowrie: The Background of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 65 (Summer 1987): 85-96; and Earl R. MacCormac, "Mission and the Presbyterian Schism of 1837," *Church History* 32 (March 1963): 32-45.

[12] For a detailed description of the role foreign missions concerns played in the events of 1837 see Earl R. MacCormac, "The Transition from Voluntary Missionary Society to the Church as a Missionary Organization among the American Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists" (Ph.D. diss, Yale University, 1961), 129-209.

[13] This section is based upon Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 3-5; Prasit Pongudom, *praadsat saphakrischak nai prthatthai* (*The History of the Church of Christ in Thailand*) (Chiang Mai: Archives Unit, Church of Christ in

Thailand, 1985), 1-7; and Kenneth E. Wells, *History of Protestant Work in Thailand 1828-1958* (Bangkok: Church of Christ in Thailand, 1958), 1-48. See also George Bradley McFarland, ed., *Historical Sketch of Protestant Missions in Siam, 1828-1928*(Bangkok: Bangkok Times Press, 1928).

[14] See Donald Lord, *Mo Bradley and Thailand* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1969).

[15] 19th century Westerners called northern Siam, "Laos," and the people, "the Lao," hence the name of the mission.

[16] Daniel McGilvary to Irving, 28 July 1866, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary to Irving, 10 September 1866, vol. 3, BFM Records; and Jonathan Wilson to Irving, 2 December 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[17] Daniel McGilvary, Laos Mission Annual Report, *Foreign Missionary* 26 (May 1868): 280-81.

[18] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 77-80; McGilvary to Irving, 19 April 1867, vol 3, BFM Records; and McGilvary to Irving, 9 July 1867, vol 3, BFM Records.

[19] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 78-9; McGilvary letter, 28 June 1869, *Foreign Missionary* 28 (March 1870): 229; and Laos Mission to Executive Committee, 30 September 1868, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[20] Philip Hughes, *Proclamation and Response: A Study of the History of the Christian Faith in Northern Thailand* (Chiang Mai: The Manuscript Division, Payap College, 1982), 7-12; Philip Hughes, "Christianity and Culture: A Case Study in Northern Thailand," (Th.D. diss., South East Asia Graduate School of Theology, 1982), 70ff; and Philip Hughes, "Christianity and Buddhism in Thailand," *Journal of the Siam Society* 73 (January-July 1985), 23-41.

[21] Hughes, *Proclamation and Response*, 15-17; and Hughes, "Christianity and Culture," 173-80.

[22] McGilvary to Irving, 19 April 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records; *cf.* McGilvary to Irving, 9 July 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[23] See McGilvary to Irving, 10 August 1877, vol. 4, BFM Records; Wilson, Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 30 September 1879, vol. 4, BFM Records; Wilson to Lowrie, 1 July 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records; and Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 138-41.

[24] McGilvary to Irving, 10 April 1872, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[25] McGilvary to Irving, 4 December 1876, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary to Irving, 10 August 1877, vol. 4, BFM Records; and McGilvary to Irving, 1 October 1877, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[26] Herbert R. Swanson, "Advocate and Partner: Missionaries and Modernization in Nan Province, Siam, 1895-1934," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 13 (September 1982): 298-99, 303-06; and Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 51-2, 122.

[27] McGilvary, a letter, 9 October 1862, *Foreign Missionary* 21 (March 1863): 289-90.

[28] Daniel McGilvary, "Two Days among the Laos near Petchaburi, Siam," *Foreign Missionary*23 (September 1864): 98-100.

[29] Wilson, letter, n.d., *Foreign Missionary* 27 (March 1869): 240-41; and Chalmers Martin, *Apostolic and Modern Missions* (New York: Revell, 1898), 187-90.

[30] Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 77-8.

[31] McGilvary to Irving, 4 December 1876, vol 3, BFM Records; McGilvary, letter, 10 October 1876, *Foreign Missionary* 35 (February 1877): 283; McGilvary, letter, 17 July 1878, *Foreign Missionary* 37 (December 1878): 217; Wilson to Irving, 12 February 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records; Wilson, Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 30 September 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[32] Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 26; "Sessional Records of the First Presbyterian Church of Chiengmai," 1868-1880, 1886, Records of the American Presbyterian Mission, Payap University Archives, Chiang Mai; Sarah Peoples, "Native Christians in Chieng Mai, Laos," *Woman's Work for Woman* 15 (January 1885): 14-15; William Clifton Dodd, The Tai Race (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1923), 308.

[33] Mary Campbell to Irving, 20 October 1879, vol. 4, BFM Records; and Edna Cole to Irving, 1 October1878, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[34] Swanson, "Advocate and Partner,: esp. 299-301; McFarland, Historical Sketch, 210ff; and John H. Freeman, *An Oriental Land of the Free* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1910): 152-53.

[35] Herbert R. Swanson, "A New Generation: Missionary Impact on Women's Education in Nineteenth-Century Northern Thai Society" (Paper presented to HIST 809, "Women's History," University of Maryland, Fall 1985).

[36] See Annabelle K. Briggs, "Re-Stationed and Looking About," *Woman's Work for Woman* 16 (May 1901): 130-31; Wilson, Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 30 September 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records; "Sessional Records," APM Records, 83-5; and Hughes, *Proclamation and Response*, 17-19.

[37] Hughes, *ibid*.; and Smith, *Siamese Gold*, 83-4.

[38] McGilvary to Irving, 17 December 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary, Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 30 September 1868, BFM Records, vol. 3, BFM Records; Wilson, Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 30 September 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records; Chalmers Martin to Irving, 9 June 1885, vol. 5, BFM Records; and S.C. Peoples to Chalmers Martin (copy), 2 May 1887, vol. 6, BFM Records.

[39] See Herbert R. Swanson, "This Seed: Missionary Printing and Literature as Agents of Change in Northern Siam, 1892-1926" (Paper presented to the International Seminar on Change in Northern Thailand and the Shan States 1886-1940, Payap College, 20-25 June 1983), 4-6.

[40] Swanson, "This Seed"; cf. Lillian Johnson Curtis, *The Laos of North Siam* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1903), 296-98.

[41] Swanson, "Advocate and Partner," 301-02, 306-07; Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 33, 35, 45-9. See also Henry White, "Progress in the Laos Mission as indicated by brick and mortar and good hard wood" (Manuscript, 29 January 1914, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia); and "Narrative for the Year ending Oct 1887," Minutes of the North Laos Presbytery (Manuscript, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia).

[42] Curtis, The Laos, 112-13, 320; and Mary Backus, ed., *Siam and Laos as Seen by Our American Missionaries* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1884), 451-52.

[43] Carl Bock, *Temples and Elephants: Travels in Siam in 1881-1882* (1884; reprint, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), 219-20.

Chapter Two

Two facts stand out from the history of the Laos Mission: first of all, the mission invested significant amounts of time, finances, and personnel in the activities it imported from the West; and, second, the mission assumed that those activities would aid them in the Christianization of northern Siam. Taken together, these two facts suggest a partial answer to the puzzle of why the Laos Mission seemed to set goals which its activities seemed not pursue.

Activities that grow out of generally accepted assumptions and appear in retrospect to contradict stated goals suggest that the missionaries were not acting idiosyncratically or blindly. Something was happening on a deeper level. This chapter opens the exploration of the source of missionary activities in northern Siam.

I

In seeking to understand why the Laos Mission acted in particular ways, the historian faces certain difficulties. The task of explanation, in this case, requires one to look behind the events of missionary westernization and determine the motivations from which the events arose. The records currently available, however, frustrate any direct examination of motivations because they concentrate almost entirely upon the daily business and routine of the mission. The members of the Laos Mission seldom reflected upon the meaning of their work or the reasons they felt called to do it. On those occasions, furthermore, when the missionaries did reflect upon their work they displayed a set of rigid, dogmatic prejudices that seemed almost thoughtless. Their beliefs obscured rather than revealed their motivations. The nature of the historical record and the minds of the missionaries themselves walls off the historian from a direct examination of missionary motivations.

Recognizing that historians often face the difficulties just mentioned, Robert Berkhofer provides some guidance. He argues that describing the actual motivations of particular actors requires the historian know the "inside" of those actors in ways not usually available to them. Historians, therefore, should proceed with caution. They should not use pop-psychology to guess at motivation and should draw, instead, upon the social sciences to study larger patterns of activity. Such patterns reveal sociocultural explanations for the causes of historical events; and sociocultural explanations take the historian close to the heart of individual and group motivation.[1]

The work of sociologist Peter Berger provides one particularly useful social scientific system. His extensive writings contain a cogent, unified, mainstream interpretation of human action which integrates the thought of several key sociological schools into one theoretical system.[2] He, furthermore, believes that sociology has an almost "symbiotic" relationship with history, and throughout his work he shows sensitivity to the problems of studying societies in the context of their pasts.[3] Finally, Berger seeks to account for those human beliefs, such as the Laos Mission's assumption that evangelism required westernization, which the believer holds as fundamental and inarguable.

Berger begins with the seemingly simple premise that, "Reality is socially constructed." He argues that knowledge and the meanings individuals attach to knowledge are all socially derived. The consciousness of individual members of a society, therefore, grows out of their social experience.[4] He concludes that, "the organism and, even more, the self cannot be

adequately understood apart from the particular social context in which they are shaped."[5] Society and its individual members, in fact, have a "dialectical" relationship with each other. Individuals experience society as a potent, objective, and external reality that shapes their consciousness and plays a powerful role in the formation of individual character, social roles, and social identity. Yet, individuals also influence society and add to and change what other people know and believe. Berger concludes that the self is not a solid, given, enduring entity but, rather, a "process" constantly in dialogue with its social environment.[6]

Berger summarizes the social dialectic in three brief statements: "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product."[7] People, he contends, build their social world around them in regular, patterned ways so that they do not have to rethink every situation in which they find themselves. They, in a sense, mutually accept a set of rules by which to live together.[8] Those rules and patterns, in turn, provide a social environment of institutions, roles, and identities that people then experience as an objective reality beyond themselves. Language fixes that social reality in the individual consciousness. People, thus, see themselves as living in a meaningful, cohesive universe. Berger argues that society's power to force reluctant individuals to behave in certain ways shows that humans do experience society as an objective reality.[9] The social environment, in fact, seems so much like the natural environment that people normally accept their society's culture without question, thus allowing culture to shape their individual personality.[10]

Significantly, in terms of this thesis, Berger observes that religions have a particularly potent dialectical relationship with their adherents. Religion extends the social environment to encompass the entire universe causing adherents to believe that their religion's institutions, roles, and activities represent ultimate truth and are of ultimate significance. They reject the notion that their religion is a product of human activity, and thus they are all the more closely shaped by their socioreligious environment because they ascribe to it a divine origin and an immutable nature.[11]

Berger's sociological theory, in sum, shows that individuals and their actions cannot be adequately understood apart from the society into which they were born. The intricate, self-reinforcing process of the social dialectic causes individuals to internalize their sociocultural environment as a set of attitudes, motivations, and beliefs which govern their social relations and ways of acting.[12] The very fact that almost all people are unaware of this dialectical process means they are all the more bound to it.

In terms of the Laos Mission, Berger's theoretical framework suggests that the mission's assumption concerning westernization and evangelization originated in the social experience of its members. Missionary westernization in northern Siam, in other words, grew out of nineteenth-century American evangelicalism, the primary social habitat of the members of the Laos Mission. The source of the Laos Mission's activities, if Berger is correct, lies in the socially produced consciousness of the missionaries.

II

The activities of nineteenth-century American Protestant missionaries in other areas of the world lends credence to the argument that missionary westernizing activities in northern Siam originated in the missionaries' home culture. A brief survey of those activities reveals that American Protestant missionaries around the world engaged in activities identical to those the Laos Mission carried out. Stephen Neill describes a worldwide pattern of nineteenth-century Protestant missionary activity which included engaging in western-style educational, medical, and technological activities as well as linguistic studies, the translation of the Bible, and

changing the status of women.[13] An extensive historiographical literature substantiates Neill's generalizations, particularly for American Protestant missions.

American Protestant work in Hawaii provides one of the earliest examples of the pattern of missionary activities. From the time of their arrival in Hawaii in 1820, American Protestant missionaries served as the primary agents of westernization in the islands. They introduced writing and a Romanized alphabet, printing and a printed literature, western schools, and western medicine. They helped codify Hawaiian law and played a major role in introducing American-style political institutions. They brought new architectural styles and building methods to Hawaii. The imported machinery, including spinning and weaving machines. They sought, within limits, to change the status of women and to improve the quality of infant and child care. They taught the Hawaiians new trades. For some fifty years, the Protestant missionaries shaped the ways in which westernization changed Hawaii.[14]

In the Middle East American Protestant missionaries the substantial social impact of the missionaries, particularly among minorities, played a key role in the diffusion of western learning through education and printing. Missionary work led to a revival in Arab literature and contributed to the birth of Arab nationalism. Missionaries also educated the first generation of women intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire. They introduced new industries and skills through industrial education.[15]

This same world-wide pattern extended to the work of American Protestant missionaries in Persia and China. In both places they established the first western-style schools and hospitals, set up a printing press, and especially tried to change the lives of minority groups. The missionaries had a particular impact on the social status of women. They provided educational opportunities, taught hygiene and homemaking, and, in the person of women missionaries, provided role models for relative social freedom. The list of American Protestant missionary activities in nineteenth-century Persia and China, in fact, virtually duplicates those for Hawaii and the Middle East.[16]

Presbyterians in other parts of the world also conducted their work in the same manner as the Laos Mission. In northern India, for example, the Presbyterians tried to convert the "natives" through schools, literacy instruction, other educational programs, hospitals, dispensaries, and leper asylums. They worked to change the social position of women by opening girls' schools and girls' orphanages.[17]

In Korea and the Philippines as well Protestant missionaries, including the Presbyterians, carried on these same sets of activities.[18] Joseph Grabill concludes that the nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries were the "...main private interculturalists in American society." They substantially contributed to the westernization of non-western cultures, especially in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific.[19]

In every case, however, the stated goals of the missionaries did not include the westernization of foreign cultures. Missionaries went overseas for one single purpose: to convert the "heathen" to Christianity. And, with a few notable exceptions, they failed to convert more than a small minority of people to their religion. In short, American Protestant missionaries around the world carried out the same set of activities as did those in northern Siam and achieved the same low rate of conversions. They shared the Laos Mission's contradiction between stated goals and ineffective means.

The fact that nineteenth-century American Protestant missionaries persisted in carrying out similar activities throughout the world with the same unsatisfying results recalls Berger's

description of social and individual formation. Some factor prevented the missionaries from taking into account local mores and conditions and from wondering whether or not their methods, ideas, and institutions were appropriate to their particular situation. They acted globally on the assumption that only westernizing activities could successfully spread Christianity in non-western settings. The one factor that all of these missionaries shared was their American Protestant sociocultural heritage, and Berger would have the historian look precisely at that factor in the search to understand why the missionaries acted as they did.

Black American Protestant activities in Africa lend weight to the supposition that social and cultural background determined global missionary activities. Given the different social circumstances and experience of American blacks, one would expect that black missionaries might have acted differently than white missionaries. They did not. Irrespective of denominational affiliation, black American missionaries displayed the same attitudes, sought the same goals, and carried out exactly the same sets of activities as white missionaries in Africa and around the world. They shared the same sociocultural assumptions about the meaning and conduct of their missionary labors.[20]

III

On the two counts of sociological theory and world-wide patterns of Protestant missionary activity, then, sociocultural factors appear to offer the best means for understanding why the Laos Mission acted as it did. The biographies of the twenty-four individuals appointed to the Laos Mission between 1867 and 1889 shows that they did share a common sociocultural heritage, which consisted of citizenship in the American nation, evangelical Protestantism, and Old School Presbyterianism. The life experiences of the thirteen men and women who took leadership in mission activities in that period particularly exemplified the pervasive presence of that heritage in the lives of all the missionaries.[21]

Daniel McGilvary, more than any other individual, embodied and symbolized the Laos Mission. He founded the mission, recruited several of its members, set its tone and style, and initiated many of its activities. [22] And no one in the mission better demonstrated attachment to American evangelical culture and Old School Presbyterianism. Born in North Carolina in 1828, McGilvary lived in a home dominated by the stern Old School Presbyterian piety of his Scottish father. He went to school first in a church-related subscription school and then at the Bingham School, a school noted for its Christian character that had produced a number of Presbyterian preachers.[23] As a youngster, McGilvary also attended for a time a Methodist Church and Sunday school where he came in close contact with Methodist revivalism and camp meetings. But McGilvary clearly indicated later in life that his conversion was a quiet, private, studied event more typical of Old School Presbyterianism.[24]

After finishing school, McGilvary taught at the Pittsboro Academy in Pittsboro, North Carolina, a school that, like the Bingham School, had a firm evangelical reputation and emphasized Protestant "moral instruction." [25] The Pittsboro Presbyterian Church elected McGilvary a ruling elder, and therefore a member of the ruling body of the church, the Session. Presbyterians elected their elders for life and considered such election as a great honor, especially for one as young as McGilvary. As an elder, he attended meetings of Orange Presbytery, a level of involvement that gave McGilvary a still deeper understanding of and attachment to his denomination.[26]

In 1853, McGilvary carried his involvement one step further when he entered Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey, the seminary that dominated the thinking and the leadership of conservative Presbyterians for most of the nineteenth-century. McGilvary,

furthermore, studied under the most influential conservative Presbyterian theologian of the day, Dr. Charles Hodge, and he accepted as Hodge's highly orthodox standards for doctrinal purity as his own. [27] The Princeton Seminary faculty, particularly Hodge, also planted in McGilvary their own deep commitment to foreign missions and, thereby, strongly influenced his decision to become a missionary.[28]

Princeton Seminary left an indelible mark on Daniel McGilvary's thinking. At the time of his death in 1911, one of his eulogizers described McGilvary as a man of thoroughly orthodox Princeton views. He commended McGilvary for believing that science proved the truth of religion and for rejecting the "iconoclastic speculations" of biblical higher criticism. Such views typified the conservative "Princeton Theology."[29]

During his seminary years, McGilvary had his first missionary experience. In the summer of 1855 he worked in Texas as an agent of the American Sunday School Union (A.S.S.U.). Texas taught him some of the realities and difficulties of missionary work and working for the A.S.S.U. exposed him to yet another important evangelical organization. During that summer McGilvary itinerated extensively, started ten new Sunday schools, and distributed A.S.S.U. literature in many places.[30] He later carried out these very same activities in northern Siam.

After graduating from seminary, McGilvary returned to North Carolina for eighteen months to serve as the pastor of the Union and Carthage Presbyterian churches. Both churches shared McGilvary's Scottish heritage, and McGilvary made a lasting impression upon his parishioners in spite of his brief term of service. During this period he conducted at least one revival, which resulted in the addition of over fifty new members to the Union Church.[31]

Right up to the time that he departed for Siam in 1858, Daniel McGilvary lived a life thoroughly immersed in evangelical culture. He grew up in a pious home. He went to and taught in properly evangelical schools. He went to the most conservative of evangelical seminaries and found summer employment in a classic evangelical institution. He pastored two Presbyterian churches. At no time, in fact, did McGilvary study or work outside of the institutional environment of evangelicalism. It was his culture.

Historical records have left much less direct information about the lives of most of the other members of the Laos Mission. In the case of Sophia McGilvary, the record only hints at the role she played in the mission and tells even less about her life before she went to Chiang Mai. Much can be inferred, however, from the life of her parents. The Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, already described above as the premier missionary in nineteenth-century Siam, embodied a strain of evangelical culture quite different from that of his son-in-law, McGilvary. He came from the "burned-over district" of western New York where the revivalism of Charles Grandison Finney had deeply impressed him and led him to the mission field. Bradley accepted the "Oberlin Theology" and its doctrine of perfectionism, which taught that those who completely committed themselves to Christ could attain sinless perfection. He had both Congregational and New School Presbyterian ties. Sophia's mother, Emelie Royce Bradley, grew up in the same pietistic, evangelical environment of western New York and shared with her husband a deep commitment to evangelical Protestantism.[32]

Thus, Sophia McGilvary came from an intensely evangelical, revivalistic home, and she herself spent some time going to a grade school in Oberlin, Ohio, a center of "Finneyism." She demonstrated her own attachment to her family's religious faith by returning to Siam to work as a missionary with her father, and in later life Bradley wrote of her and all his children that he took pride in their devotion to the Christian religion.[33] If nothing else, her willingness to take

her children to distant, lonely Chiang Mai in 1867 and the long years of service she put in there suggest a deep level of commitment to evangelicalism.

Only one other missionary played a part in the history of the Laos Mission comparable to that of the McGilvarys. And like them, the Rev. Jonathan Wilson grew up in and never lived outside of the institutions of evangelical culture. Wilson was born in western Pennsylvania, a hot bed of Presbyterianism, in 1830, and in later years he recalled how his home church played a formative part in his early life to such an extent that he even named a northern Thai church after it. [34] After spending some time studying in the homes of two Presbyterian ministers, he attended a church-related academy and then entered Jefferson College in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. After graduating from Jefferson College in 1851, Wilson taught at Blair's Hall, Fagg Manor, Pennsylvania, for two years.

Jefferson College and Blair's Hall were both strong evangelical institutions. The Rev. John McMillan, the "father of the Presbyterian Church in western Pennsylvania" and a graduate of William Tennent's famous "Log College," founded the small private school which eventually evolved into Jefferson College. In 1802 the Presbyterian Synod of Virginia officially established Jefferson with the specific mission of training young men for ordained ministry. Jefferson made a significant contribution to the Presbyterian drive to "civilize" the Pennsylvania frontier. The Presbyterian Church looked to Jefferson College and other such colleges to provide ordained leadership for its home missionary movement.[35] Yet another eighteenth-century pioneer of western Pennsylvania Presbyterianism and student of William Tennent founded the highly evangelical Blair's Hall. By the 1850s the school had a long, distinguished history with many of its graduates going into teaching or the ordained ministry.[36]

Wilson entered Princeton Seminary in 1853, the same year as McGilvary, and he came under the same set of influences as did his future colleague. But the two men did not become friends until their last year in seminary when Dr. Samuel R. House of the Siam Mission visited Princeton in search of recruits. His compelling presentation brought both Wilson and McGilvary forward and precipitated their friendship. [37] After graduation, Wilson spent a year as a Presbyterian missionary to the Choctaw Indians of Oklahoma and taught at the Spencer Academy, a mission school.[38]

Wilson's life, in sum, paralleled that of McGilvary in several important respects. Both received a traditional, orthodox evangelical education. Both attended the most influential educational institution in the Old School Presbyterian Church. Both taught in church-related schools and had frontier missionary experience before they went to Siam. And between them Wilson and McGilvary dominated the Laos Mission during the period under study.

The scant biographical information available for Kate Wilson indicates that she shared her husband's attachment to evangelical institutions. Although nothing is known about her early life, when Kate Wilson left the field permanently in 1876 because of illness she moved to Oxford, Ohio, and maintained a close association with Western Female Seminary. At those times when she was too ill to care for herself, she stayed at the seminary, and her children went to school there in what she called a "Christian environment."[39]

Kate Wilson's presence in Oxford seems to have either initiated or, at least, encouraged a relation between the seminary and the Laos Mission. Founded in 1853, Western Female Seminary grew out of a movement in women's education that went back at least into the 1820s and endeavored to promote better Christian home life through the training of Christian girls in an environment of Christian piety. The movement had its origins in millennialism, and believed that

if it could inspire women to raise up their children in Christian faith it could hasten the coming of the Millennial Age of Christ's rule over the world.[40]

Western Female Seminary consciously modeled itself on the work of Mary Lyon at Mt. Holyoke Seminary in Massachusetts, one of the most influential members of the female seminary movement. The founding and long-time principal of the Oxford school, Helen Peabody, studied under and then taught with Lyon. The "Holyoke System" that Peabody instituted at Western Seminary emphasized domestic training, academic study, and Christian piety; and it required students perform domestic chores to help maintain the school and gain practical experience in housekeeping. Students, as a rule, boarded at the school. Western Female Seminary was a thoroughly evangelical Protestant institution, which prided itself on the fact that between 1853 and 1880 forty-one of its graduates went to the home or foreign mission fields. That number included one graduate who went to the Siam Mission in Bangkok and two who joined the Laos Mission.[41]

Edna S. Cole and Mary M. Campbell graduated from Western Female Seminary in 1878 and arrived in Chiang Mai the next year. Cole came from St. Louis and belonged to the Second Presbyterian Church there, while Campbell lived in Lexington, Kentucky, where her father was a Presbyterian minister. Both went to northern Siam with a deep commitment to evangelicalism nurtured by their years at the seminary. In their last year, they participated in an intense period of revival which swept the school and led directly to their decision to go into foreign missionary work.[42] McGilvary himself visited the school in 1880 to meet yet another student, Lizzie Westervelt, preparing for service with the Laos Mission. He noted with pleasure that the school was "pervaded by a deep religious righteousness."[43]

McGilvary hand picked Dr. Marion S. Cheek, a fellow North Carolinian, to be the mission's physician. Like McGilvary, Cheek studied at the Bingham School, and when he arrived in Chiang Mai in 1875 the local people and princes soon flocked to him for medical treatment.[44] Two pieces of evidence indicate Cheek's attachment to evangelical culture. Soon after Cheek's arrival, McGilvary praised him for his love of the Bible and of Hodge's Systematic Theology, the crowning jewel of nineteenth-century Presbyterian orthodoxy. The fact that Dr. Cheek also married one of Bradley's daughters and Sophia McGilvary's half-sister, Sarah, collaborates McGilvary's testimony concerning Cheek's orthodoxy,[45] It hardly seems like that a man of suspect piety or theology could have found his way into the good graces of a daughter of Bradley.

The Rev. Chalmers Martin began his work in Chiang Mai in 1884, but ill health forced him to leave the mission only two years later. Even within such a brief span, however, Martin made a significant contribution to the work of the mission and won great praise from the its other members for his zeal and competence. He too graduated from Princeton Seminary. He also acquired a master's degree from Princeton College (University), then still widely regarded as an evangelical institution. He too had home missionary experience before he went to northern Siam. He spent the summer of 1881 as a Presbyterian home missionary in Dakota Territory. And after he left the Laos Mission, Martin pursued a distinguished academic career: he taught Old Testament at Princeton Seminary and Princeton College; he served the Pennsylvania College for Women as President; and he then went to Wooster College where he taught Old Testament for twenty-six years.[46] In 1895 Martin presented the "Students' Lectures on Missions" at Princeton Seminary. Published in 1898 under the title *Apostolic and Modern Missions*, those lectures presented a thoroughly orthodox Presbyterian view of the missionary's calling and methods which McGilvary and Wilson could have endorsed without qualification. Those lectures confirmed that Martin also lived and worked entirely within evangelical culture.[47]

The biographies of the McGilvarys, the Wilsons, the Cheeks, Chalmers Martin, Edna Cole, and Mary Campbell collectively show an abiding commitment to evangelical, Presbyterian institutions. Of the remaining members of the Laos Mission, much less is known about their lives before they went to or after they left northern Siam. Only one of those members might, however, contradict the pattern the mainstays of the mission set. Dr. Charles W. Vrooman, the first physician to serve the mission, stayed in Chiang Mai for only two years, 1871-73, and his correspondence reveals only a man of the expected and typical missionary piety. Yet, in spite of his apparent orthodoxy, he left the mission under a cloud because McGilvary, at least, suspected him of theological looseness. Vrooman, evidently, did not adhere fully to Hodge and the Princeton Theology.[48] Since Vrooman came from western New York, a center of the New School faction, and arrived in Chiang Mai only a year after the New School and Old School denominations reunited, one might speculate that McGilvary's disillusionment with Vrooman reflected old theological tensions between the two schools. In any event, Vrooman's quick departure demonstrates that the Laos Mission tended to weed out those who did not display "proper" enthusiasm for its particular brand of evangelical piety and ideology.

The members of the Laos Mission shared a common heritage. They grew up in pious, evangelical homes, attended avowedly evangelical schools, belonged to evangelical Presbyterian churches, and dedicated themselves to one of the highest callings possible to the devout evangelical Christian, the foreign mission field. Some of them had direct or indirect contact with revivalism, a central component of nineteenth-century evangelicalism. Thus the lives of the members of the mission, as far as we know them, display an almost startling uniformity dominated by evangelical institutions and beliefs. And the following chapters will substantiate the correctness of Peter Berger's dictum that "reality is socially constructed."

Conclusion

Sociological theory and a world-wide pattern of American Protestant missionary activity indicate that the members of the Laos Mission most likely engaged in westernizing activities because they carried with them a set of beliefs that set the parameters of their work. Those beliefs grew out of their sociocultural heritage. The remainder of this thesis will devote itself to the task of describing that set of beliefs and its impact on Presbyterian missionary activities in northern Siam.

Notes

[1] Robert F. Berkhofer, *A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis* (New York: Free Press, 1969), see esp. 54-63.

[2] Robert Wuthnow *et al.*, *Cultural Analysis: The Work of Peter Berger, Mary Douglas, Michel Foucault, and Jurgen Habermas* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 21-54; Nicholas C. Mullins, *Theories and Theory Groups in Contemporary American Sociology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 184-86; and Philip E. Hammond, "Peter Berger's Sociology of Religion: An Appraisal," *Soundings* 52 (Winter 1969): 415-24.

[3] Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1963), 20, 168-69; and Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1966), 72ff.

[4] Berger, Invitation to Sociology, 118, 121; Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 13, 17, 134; Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "Sociology of Religion and Sociology of Knowledge," in *Sociology of Religion: Selected Readings*, ed. Roland Robertson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 66, 69; and Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York, Anchor Books, 1967), 15.

[5] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 68.

[6] Peter Berger, "Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness," *History and Theory* 4 (1965): 202; Peter Berger and Hansfried Kellner, *Sociology Reinterpreted: An Essay on Method and Vocation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 91-2; Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 66-7,145-46; Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 87-90; and Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 6-7, 14.

[7] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 79; cf. Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 18.

[8] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 70-7; and Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 6-7, 27.

[9] Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 8-14, 90; and Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 87, 98, 106.

[10] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 106-108; Berger, Sacred Canopy, 89; and Berger, "Reification," 200-01, 203-07.

[11] Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1973), 75; Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 115-17; Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 27-8, 46-9; and Peter Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," *Social Research* 21 (Winter 1954): 479-80.

[12] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 17, 68.

[13] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1986), 215-18.

[14] Merze Tate, *The United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965): 4-13; and Joseph L. Grabill, "The 'Invisible' Missionary: A Study in American Foreign Relations," *Church and State* 14 (Winter 1972): 93-105.

[15] See Robert L. Daniel, *American Philanthropy in the Near East 1820-1960* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970); James A. Field, *America and the Mediterranean World 1776-1882*(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); and Frank Andrews Stone, *Academies for Anatolia: A Study of the Rationale, Program and Impact of the Educational Institutions Sponsored by the American Board in Turkey: 1830-1980* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1984).

[16] For Persia see see Ahmad Mansoori, "American Missionaries in Iran 1834-1934" (Ph. D. diss., Ball State University, 1986); and Frederick J. Heuser, Jr., "Women's Work for Women: Belle Sherwood Hawkes and the East Persia Presbyterian Mission," <i<="" i="">65 (Spring 1987): 7-18. For China see Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1929); Paul Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats: The American Protestant Missionary Movement in China, 1890-1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958); Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China*(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); and James C. Thompson, Jr., Peter W. Stanley, and John Curtis Perry, *Sentimental Imperialists: The American Experience in East Asia* (New York: Harper and Row, Harper Torchbooks, 1981), 50-1, 56-60.</i

[17] John Crosby Brown Webster, "The Christian Community and Change in North India: A History of the Punjab and North India Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1834-1914" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1971).

[18] George L. Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832-1910* (1927; reprint, Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1980); and Kenton J. Clymer, *Protestant Missionaries in the Philippines, 1898-1916: An Inquiry into the American Colonial Mentality* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 17-20.

[19] Grabill, "'Invisible' Missionary," 104.

[20] See Sylvia M. Jacobs, ed., *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa*(Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), esp. 16-17, 64-73, 155ff, 185-86.

[21] The remaining eleven missionaries were either individuals who stayed on the field only for a brief period before leaving, usually because of health, or individuals appointed at the very end of the period under study.

[22] Wells, *History of Protestant Work*, 85.

[23] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 20-1; and John K. Roberts, *History of Union Presbyterian Church* (Carthage, NC: Kelly Printing Co., 1910).

[24] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 24-8.

[25] Charles L. Coon, *North Carolina Schools and Academies 1790-1840* (Raleigh: Edwards and Braughton, 1915), *passim*.

[26] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 32-3.

[27] McGilvary to Lowrie, 8 November 1875, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[28] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 37.

[29] S.C. Peoples, "Rev. Daniel McGilvary, D.D. An Appreciation," *Laos News* 8 (October 1911): 116-20.

[30] McGilvary to Dear Sirs, 27 March 1855, 30 April 1855, 31 May 1855, ca. September 1855, and 7 November 1855, Records of the American Sunday School Union, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

[31] Roberts, *Union Presbyterian Church*, 16-17; and Minutes of the Session, First Presbyterian Church of Carthage 1850-1906, 15-16, at the First Presbyterian Church, Carthage, NC.

[32] Lord, *Mo Bradley*, *passim.*

[33] Lord, *Mo Bradley*, 205.

[34] Wilson to Lowrie, 12 May 1880 and 23 July 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[35] "Jonathan Wilson," *Necrological Report* [*Princeton Seminary Bulletin*] (1912): 143-44; J.P. Wickersham, *A History of Education in Pennsylvania* (1886; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 111, 400-03; Howard Miller, *The Revolutionary College: American Presbyterian Higher Education 1707-1837* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 126-28, 187-88, 250; and Colin Brummitt Goodykoontz, *Home Missions on the American Frontier* (1939; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1971), 377-78.

[36] *Necrological Report*, 143; Wickersham, *Education in Pennsylvania*, 110-11.

[37] Daniel McGilvary, "Rev. Jonathan Wilson, D.D., An Appreciation," *Laos News* 8 (July 1911): 78-81.

[38] *Necrological Report*, 144; Curtis, *The Laos*, 252-53.

[39] K.M. Wilson to Lowrie, 24 August 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records; J.C.H., "Chieng Mai, Northern Siam," *Woman's Work for Woman* 9 (April 1879): 136-38; and Daniel McGilvary, "Rev. Jonathan Wilson, D.D., An Appreciation," *Laos News* 8 (July 1911): 78-81.

[40] "Annual Report of the Principal of the Western Female Seminary," 1871 (Oxford, OH: W.A. Powell, 1871); and Olive Flower, *The History of Oxford College for Women 1830-1928* (Oxford, OH: Miami University Alumni Association, 1949), 51. See also Leonard I. Sweet, "The Female Seminary Movement and Woman's Mission in Antebellum America," *Church History* 54 (March 1985): 41-55.

[41] *Memorial: Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Western Female Seminary* (Indianapolis: Carlon & Hollenbeck, 1881), 3-11, 222-23.

[42] Helen Peabody, *Mary Margaretta Campbell: A Brief Record of a Youthful Life* (Cincinnati: Silvius and Smith, 1881).

[43] Daniel McGilvary, Letter, 29 April 1879, *Foreign Missionary* 38 (September 1879): 187; "Movements of Missionaries," *Foreign Missionary* 37 (November 1878): 185; and McGilvary *A Half Century*, 238.

[44] Alma Cheek Redden, *A Chronicle of Two Pioneer Families: The Bentons and the Taylors of the North Carolina Back Country* (Greensboro, NC: Acme Printing and Typesetting Co., 1969), 24; Curtis, *The Laos*, 289; Cheek to Irving, September 1882, vol. 4, BFM Records; and Wilson to Irving, 2 May 1883, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[45] McGilvary to Lowrie, 8 November 1875, vol. 3, BFM Records. The citation for Hodge is: Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1872-73.

[46] Curtis, *The Laos*, 288-89; McGilvary to Mitchell, 18 August 1885, vol. 5, BFM Records; Chalmers Martin, "Journal of my Summer in Dakota, May-Sep. 1881," Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

[47] See Martin, *Apostolic and Modern Missions*, New York: Revell, 1898.

[48] C.W. Vrooman to Irving, 20 February 1870, vol. 3, BFM Records; Vrooman, letter, 6 February 1872, *Foreign Missionary* 31 (July 1872): 51-2; Vrooman, report, Foreign Missionary 32 (July 1873): 53-6; and McGilvary to Lowrie, 8 November 1875, vol. 3, BFM Records;

Chapter Three

Had they stopped to consider the matter, the members of the Laos Mission would have described themselves as individuals of conventional piety and orthodox theology. They did not engage in creative, speculative theological reflections, partly because they felt no reason for doing so and partly because the pressures of missionary work left them little time for such exercises. Their writings and their activities, nonetheless, reveal a consistent worldview, which allowed them to make sense out of their mission and their personal lives. At the center of that worldview sat a fundamental observation about the nature of all of reality and, in particular, about the relationship between Protestant Christianity and northern Thai Buddhism. That observation provides an important introduction into the lager web of their beliefs.

I

One day early in 1882 workmen uncovered a long-buried Buddha image in the Chiang Mai mission compound, once the site of a Buddhist temple. Local tradition had preserved knowledge of the image, and people often entered the compound at night to leave offerings for it. Jonathan Wilson, a senior missionary, ordered the image dug up, and a large crowd quickly gathered to see the five-foot, headless sacred image. The next day, much to the horror of the people, Wilson took an axe to the image, destroyed it entirely, and spread its rubble on a compound footpath, a particularly sacrilegious disposal of the venerable image. A colleague wrote that his action caused "quite a stir."[1]

Although as far as is known no other member of the Laos Mission ever desecrated a Buddha image, Wilson's radical act revealed the fact that he believed that a wide gap existed between Protestant Christianity and northern Thai Buddhism. They represented, in fact, two distinct, mutually antagonistic spheres that shared nothing.

Daniel McGilvary articulated this dualistic attitude about the world as clearly as any other member of the mission. In December 1867, for example, McGilvary explained to the chao muang of Chiang Mai that he had moved to Chiang Mai to teach "the true religion," an obligation he must fulfill no matter what the danger or hardship.[2] When other people repeated asked why the McGilvary came to Chiang Mai, they replied that they came to Chiang Mai with a message of mercy and an offer of "eternal life from the great God and Saviour."[3] The first sphere, then, encompassed the Christian religion, truth, mercy, and eternal life, and the Laos Mission acted as the agent of this sphere in seeking to expand its bounds into northern Siam.

In 1880 McGilvary described the second sphere, northern Thai Buddhism, as a decaying, tottering, comfortless edifice based on an absurd system of beliefs. People accepted it only because they had no alternatives.[4] Twenty-four years later he debated with a young, articulate Buddhist abbot concerning the form and content of their two religions and proved, he felt, that Buddhism was unreasonable, abstract, and failed to base itself on fact. He called it a "philosophy of despair" and exclaimed, "what a gulf between the Buddha and the Christ!"[5] At other times, McGilvary charged that Buddhism was an agent of darkness and Satan which propagated a system of lies an created in its followers a stolid indifference to the world.[6] He extended this condemnation to include the animistic practices the people combined with their Buddhism into a popular religion. That combination, according to McGilvary, made the northern Thai demon worshippers as well as idolaters. In sum, McGilvary believed that northern Thai popular religion was inconsistent, incoherent, contradictory, and thoroughly false.[7]

All the members of the Laos Mission up to 1889 shared McGilvary's dualistic views. Wilson, not surprisingly, believed that the missionaries went to northern Siam to fulfill the explicit command of Christ to convert the entire world to Christianity. He claimed that Buddhism involved little more than "silly rituals" based on a "cold and gloomy" philosophy.[8] He despaired over the corrosive influences the false teachings of Buddhism had on the people. After a particularly frustrating day distributing tracts at a Bangkok temple, he complained, "this idolatry in Siam. How cold, forbidding, delusive, dark, degrading. The heart sickens at such sights."[9] Wilson acted on his beliefs in 1882 when he destroyed the Buddha image. He also expressed his views in 1874 when he discovered a mission employee conducting a spirit propitiation ceremony on the mission's grounds. He seized the various pieces of equipment and the offering, angrily threw them out a window, and demanded that the employee leave the premises.[10] Wilson, in fact, displayed particularly rigid, extreme views and an equally vivid, emotional disdain for Buddhism.

Yet, even missionaries like Dr. Vrooman, the man of "suspect" theological views, shared Wilson's general feelings about Buddhism. Vrooman disparaged Buddhism as a superstition involving the worship of evil spirits and "dumb idols."[11] Chalmers Martin, a decade after his brief stay in northern Siam, published a vivid description of "heathenism," specifically including Buddhism," in which he emphasized the falsity, dishonesty, impurity, and hopelessness of heathen religions.[12] A book published by the Presbyterian Church in 1884 based on missionary correspondence characterized northern Thai religion as a "hideous "superstition of "benighted" beliefs playing on the credulity of the people.[13]

The first sphere, then, included truth and true religion while the second sphere contained falsehood and false religion. These two spheres, however, extended to include much more than just religion. The missionaries believed that every aspect of life shared in the characteristics of the sphere within which people found themselves so that, in this case, the whole of northern Thai culture and society was lost in hopeless sinfulness.[14] In the midst of a severe malaria epidemic in 1884, Kate Wilson begged American Christians to send more help to northern Siam, pleading that the northern Thai not be left in the ignorance, helplessness, and loneliness of heathenism. She wrote, "Do not leave them while they are crying out for help, with tears of sorrow running down their cheeks. Do not leave them while they are groping their way to the cross."[15] A year earlier, Edna Cole questioned whether even Christian converts could truly shed the taint of ignorance and deadness. She wrote, "Oh, these people, even the Christians are dead! dead!"[16] McGilvary and his compatriots believed that the influence o Buddhism and of animism permeated and corrupted all of northern Thai life. McGilvary himself wrote about the power of the whole social system of customs and "superstitions" which went with "priest-craft" and claimed that Satan had for ages held "undisputed sway" over northern Siam. Summarizing in a few words his belief that heathenism tainted all of northern Thai society, McGilvary wrote that it was "a nation given to idolatry."[17]

In that condition the nation, not just the religion, lacked the ingredients of a true civilization, making it not only heathen but also uncivilized. McGilvary felt the impact of that sociocultural condition from the moment he arrived in Chiang Mai in 1867. He found himself in a place that lacked everything he equated with civilization. He felt cut off socially and sensed that his family had "come out from civilization" to a place that had no presses, no schools, no commerce, and no European society. American and Europe mean civilization while northern Siam lacked it.

Religion, nevertheless, determined the condition of society and culture. Protestant Christianity encouraged the growth of civilization while Buddhism resulted in an uncivilized condition,[18] and that contrast meant that the Laos Mission looked upon northern Siam as a vast

field of battle and itself as living in the midst of "enemy country." Satan commanded the enemy forces while it, on the other hand, represented the army of God invading Satan's territory. Quite often, in fact, the missionaries employed military allusions and terms when they wrote about their work. They called themselves "generals" and spoke of the Christian converts as the troops in "God's militia." They "invaded" new villages" and "consolidated their lines" when training new converts. Buddhist monks, temples, and revivals represented instruments of Satan and his forces of darkness.[19]

The missionaries expressed the nature of their war with heathenism in moral terms. They battled the degrading influences that heathenism had on the moral fiber of northern Thai society with the truth of the Christian religion. Heathens lived in filth and dirt. They lacked ambition. They gambled, drank, and engaged in perverse sex. They lived in dark, unsanitary hovels dominated by family bickering and strife. Tough outwardly friendly, the northern Thai displayed cowardice, maliciousness, and hypocrisy. They had no honor. Christian converts, on the other hand, immediately displayed the moral benefits of their new religion. They became cleaner, happier, less ignorant, and even more ambitious as a result of their condition. They lived in better homes and exemplified the opposite of all the evil and filthy traits of the unconverted heathen."[20]

Missionary dualism, then, divided the world into two incompatible spheres, one good and one evil, one moral and one immoral, one Christian and one Buddhist, and everything associated with each sphere took on the essential qualities of that sphere. The missionaries used dualistic thinking to explain their purpose for working in northern Siam. They used it, furthermore, to contrast the characteristics of their religion and society from those of the northern Thai, thereby gaining a secure self-definition in the face of an alien culture. Dualism allowed them to make moral judgments about what was good and bad and how they and their converts should conduct themselves. From dualism, in short, they justified their presence in northern Siam, their beliefs about it and themselves, and their goals and activities.

Without such self-justification, the Laos Mission could not have accomplished anything in northern Siam. the missionaries lived in what Peter Berger would describe as a "marginal situation" that threatened their definitions of reality with an alien, competing set of definitions. An alien society, Berger writes, poses a threat because it demonstrates that one's own beliefs, values, and ideas are not inevitable. There are alternatives. Berger also notes that people experience such marginal situations as a "night side" of life, death being the paradigmatic "marginal situation."[21] Missionary descriptions of northern Thai Buddhism and culture suggest that in their isolation from their own culture they experienced northern Thai society as a threat. It represented evil. It was the enemy. They often used the word "dead" to describe its fundamental condition. Dualism provided an over-all cognitive framework that allowed the missionaries to securely define themselves and cope with the apparently dangerous environment within which they worked.

II

The Laos Mission did not hold its dualism in isolation from the rest of the nineteenth-century American Protestant missionary movement. Throughout the world the Protestant missionaries acted time and again on the premise that the world divided itself into tow sides, those for and those against God. Nowhere in the world did Protestant missionaries make that distinction any more precisely and consistently than did the corps of men and women who worked among the American Indians. The dualism of the missionaries to the Indians was particularly notable because Indian missions preceded and influenced the emergence of the American foreign missionary movement.

The attitudes of Presbyterian missionaries towards the Indians in the period 1837 to 1893, for example, revealed a pattern of beliefs strikingly similar to the dualism of the Laos Mission. Just as in northern Siam, so on the frontier Presbyterian missionaries divided the world into the "saved" and the damned." And just as in northern Siam, Presbyterian missionaries to the Indians extended the spheres of salvation and damnation to cover all of society. They believed, on the one hand, that all of the most impressive scientific, technological, philosophical, and intellectual achievements of the West must be attributed to the influence of Protestantism on society.[22] Indian societies, on the other hand, displayed the essential unity of "heathenism." They fell short of the standards of western (American) civilization and needed Christianity to escape their condition. Presbyterian missionaries called the Indians pagans, idolaters, degenerate devil worshippers, wretched, lost, and superstitious, categories similar to those used by the Presbyterians in northern Siam. they, too, believed that this 'spiritual" condition corrupted Indian morality causing them to be unfeeling, sexually immoral, irresponsible, liars, dirty, and lazy, among other categorizations.[23] The missionaries clung rigidly to their cognitive universe in which the distinct spheres of the civilized and the heathen stood in total and irreconcilable conflict. Even Indian converts remained tainted and suspect because they may not have cast off their old heathenism.[24]

The Presbyterian missionaries to the Indians shared their dualistic attitudes with other Protestant missionaries. They all believed, to one extent or another, that they had to "civilize" as well as Christianize the Indians, and most of them believed that the two tasks were inseparable. They all believed in the essential unity of each of the two spheres, accepting as given that the sphere of civilization and Christianity was essentially good and moral. Heathenism and savagism, on the other hand, damned the Indians to a degraded, immoral, uncivilized existence.[25]

Missionaries to the Indians did not stand alone in their dualistic views on distinctions between whites and Indians. Nineteenth-century white Americans in general hung their attitudes about the Indians on the ideas of "civilization," "savagism," and a rich set of cognate terms that, taken together, forcefully divided all of reality into two neat spheres. Dualism so insinuated itself into the thinking of nineteenth-century American culture that throughout the nineteenth century, white Americans tended to look on Indians as satanic. The Indians lived in a fallen, heathen, rude, unrefined, and immoral state. They failed to progress to a higher state of civilization, and by themselves they never could attain that higher state.[26] Most white Americans, it seemed, concluded that the Indian failure to progress made them little more than wild beasts who posed a threat to frontier whites because prolonged contact with Indians could result in the "savagization" of whites, a reversal of the natural order of human progress.[27] In the political arena, the Federal Government conducted its policy towards the Indians on the assumption that since the Indians lacked civilization it should Americanize and Christianize them. After the Civil War, the influential Indian Reform Movement encouraged the government to engage in a radical program of assimilation, which would turn the Indians into, settled, de-tribalized, middle class Christian farmers.[28]

Dualism, in the context of white-Indian relations, served an important cognitive purpose. From colonial times onwards, white Americans defined the Indians as the antithesis of European civilization in order to preserve their sense of identity in a new, strange environment. European colonists, in danger of loosing their civilization in the wilds of North America, felt a deep-seated need to define themselves and their place as members of their new, apparently unique society. For generations thereafter, white Americans found solace and security in the fact that they were not like the Indians, that is dirty, immoral, backwards, and savage. They remained "civilized." Whereas the Indians had no future because they failed to progress, white American civilization seemed to them to have a glorious future.[29]

The Laos Mission, thus, appropriated in dualism a cognitive tradition Americans had long used to define their relationship with an alien, threatening "other." In North America and in northern Siam, white Americans found themselves struggling to maintain their culture and identity at the margins of their own society. Dualism not only allowed them to preserve their own identity, but also created a satisfying set of categories for manipulating their world. Dualism made the world orderly and understandable even as it made social relationships manageable.

III

Although the English colonists in North America used dualism on the first alien people they encountered, the Indians, the English actually brought the inclination to divide the world into spheres of good and evil with them from the British Isles. They simply fit the Indians into an already well-established dualistic framework that had several sources. The English remembered, for example, that in the distant past the Britons had been the "savages" who benefited from the Roman conquest and civilization of Britain. The urban under class, the "wild Irish," and the Highland Scots, among others, served as points of origin for dualistic thinking because they seemed to exhibit savage qualities by the crude, barbaric, and warlike way they lived. The English especially applied the distinction between barbarism and civilization to the Irish whereas in North America, they refined their prejudices against an alien people during long wars of conquest and colonization. The English also associated the concepts of savagism and civilization with religion so that Protestantism comprised an essential element of "true" civilization. The English, therefore, especially looked down on the Irish whose Catholicism made them heathens and pagans in English eyes.[30]

Dualism, then, came to North America well-refined and ready for use, and white Americans learned to make frequent use of it in their increasingly pluralistic sociocultural world. Protestant Americans, for example, continued to look down upon Catholic Irish Immigrants as ignorant, lazy, promiscuous, and uncivilized "beings" unfit for civilized life.[31] Protestants, displaying a fear handed down from the Reformation, considered all Catholics "infidels," a useful cognate term for "heathen," and sought to limit their political influence. Even when nineteenth-century Catholic and Protestant workers seemed to have much in common, religious differences brought them into conflict and sometimes led to sectarian rioting.[32] Throughout the nineteenth century American Protestants regarded Catholicism and Catholic immigrants a threat to their civilization. They feared that the immigrants and their religion would subvert their culture and drag them down into an immoral, undemocratic condition.[33]

American Presbyterians shared the Protestant fear of Catholicism, and the predominate Scotch-Irish branch of American Presbyterianism displayed a virulent anti-Catholicism that went back to the Scottish Reformation and the prolonged confrontation with Catholicism in Ireland. Ulster Scots "knew" with a certainty born in conflict that Irish Catholics were a heathenish, immoral, and dangerous enemy.[34] After the American Revolution, many Presbyterians accepted the widely held notion that God had preserved North America unspoiled, especially during the colonial wars with France, until Protestantism grew strong enough to settle the continent. Presbyterians continued to fear the threat of Catholicism to American civilization into the twentieth century.[35]

Catholicism and the American Indians provided but two instances of the much more pervasive and consistent dualistic habit of mind. From colonial times, whites categorized black Americans, slave and free alike, as "savage" and "heathen," associating whiteness with civilization and blackness with savagism.[36] Nineteenth-century evangelical Protestants equated black ghettoes with Satan, placed blacks with Indians at the bottom of the scale of

civilization, believed that the very presence of blacks defiled and endangered white civilization, and sought to evangelize blacks in order to protect that civilization.[37] The fact that blacks themselves accepted and employed dualism demonstrated the extent of its power in American thinking. Booker T. Washington applied its categories to Indians and treated them with the condescension and paternalism savages "deserved." Nineteenth-century black American Protestant missionaries used those same categories on African "natives." Even those black American denominations, such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, most independent of white Protestantism, accepted without question the superiority of western culture.[38]

Nineteenth-century Americans, including evangelical Protestants, exercised their dualistic habit of mind repeatedly. They despised Jews as a race trapped in darkness and in need of the enlightenment of civilization.[39] They justified the conquest of California by asserting that the Catholic Spanish Californians were decadent, improvident, arrogant, and immoral. The continued presence of Spanish Americans in areas conquered during the Mexican War seemed to threaten American control over those territories and signaled the beginning of a campaign of cultural conquest aimed at destroying Chicano culture. Protestantism played a key part in the conquest of what had been a Roman Catholic region. Protestant America also drew on dualism to justify its prejudice against another group of Californians, the "heathen and degraded" Chinese immigrants.[40] Protestant Americans, in short, used dualism to define any alien religious, cultural, ethnic, or racial group with one or more of the large family of terms associated with heathenism, savagism, paganism, and barbarism. They felt that all alien peoples represented threats to their "righteous empire."[41]

The uses of dualism did not stop with alien races, religions, and cultural groups. Americans and American Protestants used it to define regional geographical relationships. Americans living in the settled East tended to look down on the frontier West in spite of its beauty and opportunities, as a potentially dangerous place because it lacked the civilized, stable Institutions of the East. The West appeared to be an unchurched, unstable, and primitive breeding ground for vice. Easterners particularly worried over the rapid settlement of the frontier and whether the fragile American democracy could absorb millions of people living under the influence of its semi-barbaric environment.[42]

Antebellum northerners and southerners drew on dualistic thinking as well. One antebellum southern Protestant church leader called Northern abolitionists "infidels" and "heretics" and, more generally, contrasted the morally superior South to the "base" North. He equated the South with "civilization" and argued that it had a mission to "civilize" its "heathen," "barbaric" slaves. [43] Southerners often believed that their slave society stood at the pinnacle of world civilization.[44] The Civil War intensified regional bitterness, and both sides believed that they fought on the side of God in a battle between good and evil. Northerners claimed that they fought to preserve "democratic civilization" from an alien, slave-dominated way of life. They interpreted the Civil War as a battle between two competing and incompatible civilizations, their own democratic and their enemies' feudalistic and materialistic.[45]

The dualistic interpretations expressed by both sides during the Civil War represented, in fact, yet another use of dualism. In the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican-American War, Americans characteristically branded their enemies with such as labels as "agent of Satan," and "Anti-Christ." They attacked anti-war factions as the enemies of freedom.[46] Robert Jewett shows how this tradition has continued uninterrupted down to the present, and he finds the true origins of the American use of dualism during war in the apocalyptic literature of the Old and New Testaments. In every one of its wars, Americans believed their pure, righteous nation engaged in a cosmic battle against the

unprincipled, dirty, lawless, cowardly, arrogant forces of Satan. The "blood thirsty Huns" of World War exemplified the archetypical American enemy.[47]

While wars presented a ready-made opportunity for the use of dualism, it manifested itself in other ways that more clearly demonstrated its pervasive influence on American thinking. It defined, most especially, the social roles of men and women. Especially in antebellum America, society considered women more civilized and morally virtuous than men. God intended them to create a civilizing Christian environment for their children and husbands in the their homes. Men and children, Americans claimed, tended to be less civilized and needed the gentle restraining influence of women to keep them in check. Domestic dualism erected rigid boundaries around women so that they would not stray into the "less civilized" male sphere and lose their gentle civility. Indeed, well into the nineteenth century, men and women believed that women constitutionally could not survive in the more aggressive world of men.[48]

Dualism, in fact, insinuated itself into almost every facet of American thought. Of politics, William McLoughlin writes. "There has scarcely been an election in American history since 1796 which was not conducted as a fight between good and evil for the power to steer the ship of state toward the millennial harbor."[49] The nineteenth century carried dualism to lengths that seem a little bizarre by later day standards. In New England upper class antebellum horticulturists claimed that their hobby promoted morals, refinement and other virtues and proved that they were civilized individuals. Antebellum vegetarians condemned meat eaters as savage, ferocious, twisted, stupid, rotten, and perverts. Workers expressed anger at their employers with the same dualistic style of language.[50]

IV

Dualism dominated no aspect of nineteenth-century American life more than the thinking and behavior of Protestantism, its unofficial national religion. Not only did Protestants attack Catholicism, Judaism, Mormonism, Unitarianism, and Indian religions as heathen, but they also employed dualism against each other. Standard American church and religious history texts reveal an almost incredible propensity on the part of Protestants to charge each other with infidelity to Christ as dozens of new denominations split from older ones. From the colonial era onward, Protestants battled with each other in a pluralistic, highly competitive religious environment which included the emergence of dozens of new Protestant groups each convinced they represented "true" Christianity.[51] Cole makes the point that the northern evangelical denominations often attacked each other as harshly as they did other "heralds of the Devil," such as the Universalists.[52]

Presbyterians entered into the dualistic spirit of things with a will. In Europe and in the British Isles, the ancestors of American Presbyterians had suffered and inflicted their share of persecution and intolerance. In Scotland, for example, dualistic thinking thrived in an environment where the Kirk had to fight to be born, fight to survive, and long afterward continued to think and act like a church at war. The combativeness of the Scottish Presbyterians often fed upon itself causing irreconcilable controversies and formal splits within the Kirk.[53] Leyburn notes that the immigration to Ulster, which began in the seventeenth century, reinvigorated Scottish combativeness as it reinforced Presbyterian hatred of Catholicism.[54]

A great many American Presbyterians came from Scotland and Ulster, and the rest seemed quite as able to think dualistically so that American Presbyterians exhibited the same combative divisiveness as the Scottish Kirk. In the mid-eighteenth century, colonial Presbyterians split into two warring factions, the Old Lights and New Lights, over the issues of the purity of Presbyterian doctrine and the use of revivalism. Scotch-Irish immigrants had a major hand in the

events, which followed and led to the first formal split between American Presbyterians. Each side hurled damning charges at the other and believed that the other hurt the cause of God and Presbyterianism in America.[55]

In the early national period, Presbyterians continued to fight over how best to preserve the purity of the denomination. A powerful faction of orthodox church leaders feared the rise of "heterodox" views at the College of New Jersey, the most important institution for Presbyterian ministerial training, and led the movement which founded Princeton Theological Seminary in 1812. The orthodox sought to create in Princeton Seminary a safe haven for student morals and Presbyterian orthodoxy.[56] During this same era, dissension concerning the highly charged revivalism of the southwest frontier led to debates over their propriety. In the face of charges of impropriety and impiety, significant numbers of frontier Presbyterians withdrew from the Presbyterian Church to form their own or join other denominations.[57]

In each of these cases, the parties involved assumed they engaged in a battle between truth and error in which their side represented truth. They dared not compromise for the stakes involved divine truth and eternal salvation or damnation. This dualistic division of the Presbyterian Church into camps reached cataclysmic proportions in the 1830s in the dispute between the New School and Old School briefly described earlier. Each side accused the other of heresy and believed that the other side subverted the purity of the Presbyterian Church and endangered its ability to save the lost.[58] Tensions and the dissension split the Presbyterian Church in a bitter struggle for control even in places like Indiana, where the small, struggling Presbyterian Church could not afford to engage in divisive feuding.[59]

The Civil War created yet another intractable division among Presbyterians. When the war broke out, Confederate Presbyterians established a separate church, and at the end of the war the two regional denominations found it impossible to reunite. The Southern Church charged that the Northern General Assembly had made "heretical" pronouncements concerning the war while the Northern Church condemned Southern Presbyterians as heretics for rebelling against the United States and not repenting of the sin of slave-holding.[60] And so it went. The Northern church closed out the nineteenth century with a long series of divisive heresy trials over the "inerrancy" of the Bible. As usual, the issues at stake had to do with the purity of the church's doctrine, and, as usual, Presbyterians divided into two camps, each claiming truth for itself and heresy for its opponents.[61]

Gary Scott Smith characterizes nineteenth-century American Calvinism, particularly in the Presbyterian Church U.SA. as heavily committed to and influenced by dualism. Presbyterians believed they battled against an array of anti-Christian foes including secular humanism and theological liberalism. The Presbyterian Church, he notes, zealously committed itself to Calvinist orthodoxy and attacked any doctrine, idea, or group, which seemed to challenge it. Presbyterians presumed that they worked for the earthly reign of Christ and were, thus, on the side of the Kingdom of God. Above all else they believed that a state of total conflict existed between the "diametrically opposed and irreconcilable" Kingdom of God and "kingdom of this world."[62]

Conclusion

When Jonathan Wilson took his axe to that long-buried Buddha image, he did so, then, from a habit of mind that had long since permeated the fabric of American thinking. That habit of mind divided the world into two spheres, each entirely separate and distinct from the other. Each sphere had its own essential nature, everything within that sphere sharing that nature, so that when Wilson looked at the Buddha image he did not see a religious object that people

venerated. He saw an Idol. He saw a blasphemous representation of a false prophet. There could not be any good in that object because it originated in Satan's sphere. Wilson used his axe. Therefore, not only to reaffirm the division of reality into two parts but also to strengthen and expand the sphere of God while weakening that of Satan. From within the logic of dualism, his acted would seem entirely logical to nineteenth-century Americans.

Reality, says Berger, is socially constructed. The reality that the Laos Mission created in northern Siam set solid limits upon the types of activities in which the mission could engage. Those activities had to reflect the "fact" that northern Thai society was essentially evil while American society was essentially good. They had to proceed from the assumption that missionary activities could in no way draw upon that which was essentially evil in pursuit of mission goals. In the logic of dualism, then, lies the path to understanding why the Laos Mission acted as it did.

Notes

[1] Edna S. Cole, "From Chieng Mai," *Woman's Work for Woman* 12 (November 1882): 367-68. *cf.*Backus, *Siam and Laos*, 452-53. See also Holt S. Hallet, *A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in the Shan States* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1890), 109.

[2] McGilvary to Irving, 17 December 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[3] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 78-9.

[4] McGilvary to Irving, 11 June 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[5] Daniel McGilvary, "The Buddha or Christ," *Laos News* 1 (October 1904): 109-111.

[6] Daniel McGilvary, "Two Days among the Laos near Petchaburi, Siam," *Foreign Missionary* 23 (September 1864); McGilvary to Irving, 19 April 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records, 100; McGilvary, "Laos Mission.-Chiengmai," *Foreign Missionary* 26 (May 1868): 279-81; McGilvary to Irving, 12 January 1869, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary, letter, 28 June 1869, *Foreign Missionary* 28 (March 1870): 229-32; and McGilvary, Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 1 October 1875 to 1 October 1876, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[7] McGilvary quoted in Backus, *Siam and Laos*, 426; McGilvary, letter, 10 October 1876, *Foreign Missionary* 35 (February 1877): 282; and McGilvary, letter, 20 May 1878, *Foreign Missionary* 37 (October 1878): 153.

[8] Wilson to Irving, 24 July 1868, vol. 3, BFM Records; and Wilson to Irving, 31 August 1882, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[9] Wilson, letter, 8 April 1862, quoted in "The Missionary Work in Siam," *Foreign Missionary* 21 (August 1862): 82.

[10] Wilson, letter, 5 June 1874, *Foreign Missionary* 33 (December 1874): 215.

[11] Vrooman to Irving, 6 February 1872, vol 3, BFM Records; and Vrooman, report, *Foreign Missionary* 32 (July 1873): 55-6.

[12] Martin, *Apostolic and Modern Missions*, 106-08.

[13] Backus, *Siam and Laos*, 504-09. For a similar by more extensive exposition of the same views, see Curtis, *The Laos*, 178ff.

[14] See Hughes, *Proclamation and Response*, 7-12.

[15] K.M. Wilson, "Shadows in Laos," *Woman's Work for Woman* 14 (May 1884): 149-50.

[16] Cole, "The Laos Mission," *Woman's Work for Woman* 13 (March 1883): 83.

[17] McGilvary, Summary of a report published in *Foreign Missionary* 28 (July 1869):31; McGilvary, letter [February 1859], *Foreign Missionary* 28 (September 1869): 82; McGilvary, Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 1 October 1875 to 1 October 1876, vol. 3, BFM Records; and McGilvary, letter, 10 October 1876, *Foreign Missionary* 35 (February 1877): 284.

[18] McGilvary to Irving, 19 April 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary to Irving, 17 December 1867, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary, "Laos Mission.-Chiengmai," *Foreign Missionary* 26 (May 1868): 280-81; McGilvary, Summary of a report published in *Foreign Mission* 28 (July 1869): 31; and McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 70.

[19] McGilvary to Irving, 12 July 1869, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary, letter 10 October 1876, *Foreign Missionary* 35 (February 1877): 283-84; Dodd, *Thai Race*, 166; and Swanson, *Khrischak Muang Nua*, 40.

[20] See Hughes, "Christianity and Culture," 74-5; Cort, *The Laos*, *passim*; Edna S. Cole, letter, *Woman's Work for Woman* 10 (September 1880): 319; Wilson to Lowrie, 23 July 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records; and S. C. Peoples, letter, 14 January 1886, *Foreign Missionary* 45 (June 1886). See also, W. A. Briggs, "Missions Among the Laos of Indo-China-1," *Missionary Review of the World* 12 (April 1899): 268; and Katherine Andrews Denman, "The Laos Woman's Ordinary Life," *Woman's Work for Woman* 16 (May 1901): 132-33.

[21] Berger, *Invitation to Sociology*, 147-48; Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 23-4, 44-5; and Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 125-27, 138.

[22] Michael Coleman, "Presbyterian Missionaries and Their Attitudes to the American Indians, 1837-1893," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1977), 79, 80, 86.

[23] Coleman, "Presbyterian Missionaries," 97-110; and Michael Coleman, "Not Race, but Grace: Presbyterian Missionaries and American Indians, 1837-1893," *Journal of American History* 67 (June 1980): 41-6.

[24] Coleman, Presbyterian Missionaries," 224-27.

[25] Berkhofer, Robert F. *Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), 3-6, 11-13, 31-3.

[26] Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 22, 25, 48, 86-8.

[27] Ronald T. Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 83-4; and Leroy V. Eid, "The Indian Contribution to the American Revolution," *Midwest Quarterly* 22 (Spring 1981): 282.

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Chapter Four

Although an apparently simple-minded, almost childish world-view, the Laos Mission's dualism expressed itself in a complex system of thought that encompassed all of reality and provided the missionaries with a secure, comforting definition of their place in the divine scheme of Creation. The particular conservative American Presbyterian system revealed in the activities of the Laos Mission combined several cognitive traditions, the most important of which were the idea of conversion and Scottish common sense philosophy. The missionaries in northern Siam, in other words, spoke a particular "dialect" of dualism, one that depended upon conversionism and common sense philosophy for its vocabulary.

I

Dualism posed a problem for nineteenth-century American evangelicals. Believing that all non-evangelicals and even other evangelicals denied God and Truth because of their beliefs, evangelicals had to have some way of relating to non-believers. Evangelicalism solved that problem through the idea of conversion. It sought to change heathens, savages, and infidels into true believers by convincing them of the error of their beliefs and the truth of evangelicalism.

As youths, Daniel McGilvary, Edna Cole, and Mary Campbell had personal conversion experiences. Sophia Bradley McGilvary and Sarah Bradley Cheek came from a home environment that taught the value of such experiences. And all of the missionaries saw it as their mission to convert the heathen to Christianity. In 1869, the year after his arrival in Chiang Mai, Wilson expressed gratitude that he could participate in preaching Christianity to the northern Thai. He believed that God called him to that work to prepare the way for future large-scale conversions to Christianity.[1] Dr. Vrooman spoke for all the mission when he wrote that his first duty, even as a missionary doctor, was to convert the heathen and, thereby, establish the "Kingdom of God" in northern Siam.[2] In later years, McGilvary wrote to a newly appointed area secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions to express his joy that the secretary had committed his life to the world's conversion, which was "the great work of the Church."[3]

The idea of conversion had a long, honorable history in the Christian tradition going back to the earliest days of the Christian church. Pope Innocent IV (1243-54) at the time of the Crusades provided Christian Europe with a rationale for conversions when he ruled that, while Christian armies should not forcibly convert Muslims, Christians had the God-given right to proselytize Muslims and to conquer Muslim territory when their rulers prevented Christian missionaries from exercising that right.[4] The Innocentian tradition of aggressive conversionism carried over into Protestantism and played an important role during the Reformation. A century later, English Calvinists carried their Protestant version of the "Innocentian Conception" with them to North America where the ideal of conversion had a powerful influence, especially in New England.[5]

The emergence of the revivalistic New Light party at the time of the Great Awakening made the concept of conversion a key concept among colonial Presbyterians as well. The New Lights believed that each personal conversion experience required a struggle between the Holy Spirit and the unregenerate heart. They accepted the guidance of theologians and revivalists, such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, who taught that every true Christian must have a personal conversion experience. Without that experience they could not hope to live the life of self-denying service and high morality expected of the truly pious.[6]

The same movement that gave birth to the New Light Presbyterians, the Great Awakening, also give birth to revivalism as a powerful force in the evangelical drive to convert the unconverted. Perry Miller calls revivalism a "central mode" in America's search for a national identity and notes that the use of revivalistic techniques represented a "dominant theme" in American society between 1800 and 1860.[7] And revivalism influenced the ways in which Protestants understood and expressed themselves religiously to such an extent that Handy terms it the "most powerful force in nineteenth-century Protestant life."[8] The ascendancy of revivalism, moreover, reinforced the importance of the idea of conversion among American Protestants. During the Second Great Awakening, which began in the 1790s and continued into the 1830s, local churches took as their chief purpose fostering conversion experiences among the churched and unchurched alike.[9]

By the time of the American Revolution, New Light revivalism dominated the Presbyterian Church, thereby assuring that the idea of conversion and the techniques of revivalism would play an important role in the post-Revolutionary era Presbyterian thinking. A series of 1786 student revivals at two Virginia Presbyterian colleges helped stir the Second Great Awakening. Early nineteenth-century conservative Presbyterian revivalists, however, did not approve of the hand-clapping, foot-stomping frontier revivalism of the Methodists and Baptists. They drew, instead, on the New Light tradition of rational conversion experiences to fashion the antebellum Old School Presbyterian understanding of revivalism.[10]

Old School Presbyterians practiced an emotionally subdued form of revivalism that prized rational, intellectually sound conversion experiences based on reason and a right understanding of reality. They believed that emotional frontier revivalism threatened Calvinistic orthodoxy by over-emphasizing the inner religious experience and giving too large a role to human initiative in the process of salvation. While never rejecting revivalism as such, Old School Presbyterians did reject the emotional, egalitarian revivalism that seemed hostile to the things orthodox Presbyterians valued most including reason, scholarship, an educated clergy, and a larger role for religion in political and social issues.[11]

Old School Presbyterianism's particular brand of revivalism profoundly influenced the ways in which the Laos Mission went about its work. McGilvary himself experienced an almost classic Old School personal conversion that took place gradually, quietly, and in the confines of his desire to reason out the meaning of religion for his own life. Significantly, he had that experience despite attending a Methodist Church that exhibited the livelier, more emotional revivalism of Methodism.[12] The Laos Mission carried over into its activities precisely this model for revival and conversion.

Conversion, for the Laos Mission, meant change. It meant a complete change by which the convert became a new person with a new set of values, social relationships, and beliefs. Pa (Aunt) Kammol, for example, experienced deep tension with her family when she converted to Christianity in 1876. Her brother, the head of the family, demanded that she continue to make certain ritual offerings to the family spirits even after her conversion. When she refused, the brother called a family meeting and loudly threatened her with dire consequences if she did not fulfill her family obligations. She again refused and sought a compromise with her brother by promising to pay the family a lump sum of money that would cover her obligations.[13]

Lung (Uncle) Tooi also came into tension with traditional structures once he converted to Christianity. In April 1877 a member of the royal family ordered him to go to work out in his fields on a Sunday and warned him that he would go to jail if he did not show up on the appointed day. Lung Tooi knew that he dared not miss the mission church service if he wanted to remain in the good graces of the missionaries, and so he sought to satisfy both his new religion

and his old patron by going to worship and then waiting until Sunday afternoon to go, at the last possible moment, to work in the fields. His ploy did, to some extent, work. The missionaries reprimanded him for being intimidated by merely earthly powers and for working on the Sabbath but decided to be lenient because Lung Tooi seemed genuinely repentant of his sins.[14]

The tensions Pa Kammol and Lung Tooi felt typified the experience of the convert community. Converts ceased to live according to the rhythms of Buddhism, the heart and core of northern Thai culture, and began to live according to a calendar centered on the Christian Sabbath. They lived under a new set of strictures concerning their social relationships. The convert community defied traditional attitudes about educating women. Converts began to dress differently. They could not marry according to the traditional northern Thai forms. In later years as the number of Christians slowly increased, courts of law had to excuse Christians from taking the traditional oath because it involved acknowledging the Buddha. The convert community required a separate medical system because converts could not avail themselves of the animistic practices of traditional medical treatments. Conversion to Christianity represented such a radical break with northern Thai culture, in fact, that relatively few individuals did convert.[15]

The missionaries, then, intended to create an entirely new culture in northern Siam, one that would embody their vision of a truly Christian community. They drew upon the Innocentian tradition of conversion and the evangelical emphasis on revivalism to frame a radical definition of conversion. They, in effect, required converts to give up their former culture as well as their former religion when they accepted Christianity. The missionaries' understanding of what it meant to live in a dualistic world left them no choice but to create a new culture for their convert community.

The idea of conversion and the techniques of revivalism, as it turned out, both fed upon and elaborated the dualistic world view not only of the members of the Laos Mission but also of conservative Presbyterians in general. Early nineteenth-century conservative Presbyterians used the ideas and techniques of revivalism to combat alien philosophies, particularly deism, in much the same way that the Laos Mission of fifty years later used them to attack northern Thai Buddhism. As a result, they evolved through the course of the nineteenth century a standard, closed attitude towards non-evangelical and even "liberal" evangelical systems of thought. Conservative Presbyterians attacked those systems as "atheistical" or "infidel" and sought to destroy their influence and assimilate their adherents into their own system of thinking and acting.[16] Presbyterians in the United States and Presbyterian in northern Siam, in short, worked for exactly the same ends: the conversion of the heathen (or infidel) to conservative Presbyterian evangelicalism. In northern Siam the missionaries interpreted that conversionist program as meaning they must create a counter-culture for their converts.

In the restrained manner of the Old School, the Laos Mission did not make much of revivalism directly. From time to time McGilvary could comment on the need of the mission and/or its churches to experience "a baptism of the Holy Spirit." He believed that only a revived "full heart glowing with the love of God" could reach and convert the heathen, and he berated himself when he failed to have that revived heart.[17] The mission more often, however, linked revivalism to statistical head counts. In 1886, for instance, the minutes of the North Laos Presbytery observed that its churches had experienced a "constant revival" because of their impressive gains in the number of converts won.[18]

In its later history, the Laos Mission displayed a fixation with such statistical measures as its members tried to demonstrate the progressive success of its evangelistic efforts.[19] This concern for statistics reflected the dualistic, revivalistic conversionism of American evangelicalism as it searched for ways to measure the success of its crusade to convert the world

and establish an ideal society. That search planted a fascination with statistics among Presbyterians, as well as other evangelicals, that continued into the twentieth century and provided the Presbyterian Church bureaucracy with an easily obtained, easily evaluated measure for denominational success.[20]

In the end, however, each convert added to the roles of a northern Thai church represented something more than a number. They stood for the unfolding of a missionary counter-culture based on the conversion of individual northern Thai "heathens" to Protestant Christianity. The idea of conversion, in sum, set the Laos Mission's agenda.

II

Nineteenth-century conservative Presbyterians, including the members of the Laos Mission, drew on the cognitive tradition of Scottish common sense philosophy to express the ideas of conversion and revivalism in the rationalistic, intellectual categories Presbyterians valued so highly. Although no party identified itself with common sense philosophy any more closely than conservative Presbyterianism, that common sense philosophy enjoyed a more broadly based popularity in the United States. The Laos Mission, thus, used widely accepted categories of American thinking in its own work in northern Siam.

Until the end of the Civil War, all American evangelical Protestants framed their campaigns to convert non-evangelicals in terms of common sense philosophy. They used its categories to express their hopes and fears, and they found comfort in its reassuring "proofs" of the correctness of evangelical beliefs. Common sense philosophy, furthermore, greatly influenced intellectual discourse in the United States and contributed to the development of American higher education, various specific academic fields, American jurisprudence, and themes in the arts. Scottish philosophy also influenced the thinking of a variety of individuals and groups including particular political leaders such as Jefferson and Madison, revivalists, abolitionists, and even apologists for Southern slavery.[21]

Nowhere, however, did common sense philosophy receive a warmer welcome than among conservative Presbyterians. Introduced initially just before the Revolution by John Witherspoon at the College of New Jersey, Scottish philosophy became the standard expression of Presbyterian orthodoxy after Archibald Alexander began to teach it at Princeton Seminary. Princeton Seminary, the alma mater of McGilvary, Wilson, and Martin, remained the center of American Presbyterian common sense thought throughout the nineteenth century, and from that center Presbyterian educators, ministers, and missionaries taught and preached its precepts throughout the United States.[22]

The events surrounding the first northern Thai to convert to Christianity demonstrated how the Laos Mission used common sense philosophical categories in the conduct of its own work. Nan Inta first visited the McGilvarys in 1868 when he asked for medicine for a mild cough, and he soon began to visit them regularly to talk about religion. According to McGilvary, Nan Inta felt uneasy in his Buddhism and showed a keen interest in the differences between the Buddhist and the Christian (that is, western) cosmologies. McGilvary described him as an intelligent man who desired to know the truth and showed an affinity for science. In his pursuit of truth, Nan Inta learned to read Siamese so that he could study the Bible and other missionary literature. The turning point in Nan Inta's thinking came when McGilvary's accurate prediction of a solar eclipse proved to Nan Inta that his largely mythical Buddhist cosmology was not true. McGilvary, however, made it clear that Nan Inta did not rush into his decision but carefully thought out his position. McGilvary has left the enduring image of Nan Inta walking in the rice

fields one day, head bowed in contemplation of the missionaries' religion, and then suddenly exclaiming, "Its true!"[23]

Later missionary accounts of Nan Inta's conversion turned it into a heroic, near epic confrontation between the forces of God and Satan that resulted in the triumph of Truth. Nan Inta represented for them a paradigm of success, the model of what they sought for all of northern Siam.[24] In that light, the missionary reports of Nan Inta's conversion experience portrayed a number of themes strikingly reminiscent of common sense philosophical categories.

Stated together, those themes included the fact that Nan Inta had to make a choice between competing cosmologies and decided which of them represented reality as it "really" exists. The missionaries saw his choice as one between a speculative, godless, thoroughly human system of superstition and a rational, common sense description of the universe as God created it. In making his choice, moreover, Nan Inta carefully thought out his decision, and his moment of decision to convert culminated a much longer rational, studied process that relied on "inductive reasoning" to fit known facts into a common sense world view. Science played a key role in convincing Nan Inta of the truth of the missionary world view. And, finally, his decision led Nan Inta to make a total break with northern Thai Buddhist culture. He became the first member in the missionaries' counter-culture.

Competition between competing cosmologies and philosophies in the time of the Enlightenment provided the impetus for the emergence of the Scottish school of common sense philosophy. It grew out of the philosophical challenge issued by Hume and Berkeley to ordinary Christian faith. Hume, in particular, argued that the human senses do not provide reliable verification for the existence of an external world, that cause and effect cannot be proven to exist outside of the human mind, and that human beings can have no certain knowledge concerning the existence of God, metaphysics, or the human soul. The Scottish philosophers attacked Hume's philosophy because it cast grave doubts on Christian faith.[25]

They sought to establish the reality of the external world as commonly perceived by our senses and drew heavily upon the scientific thinking of Bacon, Newton, and Locke to accomplish their task. They reasoned that through scientifically guided introspection the philosopher can achieve a predictable and universal description of how the human mind operates and, thereby, establish beyond doubt the reliability of the human senses.[26] Through this method of introspection, termed "inductive reasoning," the Scottish philosophers sought to establish the existence of certain self-evident "first principles." Such first principles arise from the every day, ordinary "common sense" understanding of reality that gives sensible people confidence in their own personal existence and in the material world of their senses.[27]

The Scottish philosophers used their concepts of common sense and first principles to defend orthodox piety and traditional morality. God, they reasoned, created the principles of human common sense, and those principles themselves bear witness to the objective reality of God and the factuality of the Christian religion.[28] Those who follow their consciences, furthermore, base their actions on an objective, pre-existent standard created by God. Conscience is an immediate, intuitive, fundamental, and self-authenticating process that in and of itself proves that the Author of the Universe must also be a Moral Being.[29]

Stated most baldly, Scottish common sense philosophy served as an elaborate defense of orthodoxy and traditional morality against modern philosophies and ideologies. It provided a reassuringly complex schema proving that God did, in fact, exist and had, equally to the point, created the world of the sense and established commonly accepted, old-fashioned behavior. It fit,

then, the needs of the American Presbyterians for a defensive philosophy with which to fend off competing theologies, philosophies, and ideologies.

The missionary descriptions of Nan Inta's conversion experience expressed these themes perfectly and revealed the fact that common sense thinking shaped their habits of mind. As representative of the Old School, conservative wing of nineteenth-century American Presbyterianism, they could hardly have thought otherwise. Princeton Seminary, a dominant force in shaping the conservative Presbyterian intellect, promoted the spread of common sense philosophy throughout the Presbyterian Church in the form of the so-called "Princeton Theology." And the Princeton Theology had a forceful impact on the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church, particularly their attitudes towards the people they sought to save. Scottish philosophy taught them that all peoples everywhere had the same nature and lived within the same reality. All they had to do in order to "save" the lost was to demonstrate to them the errors of their thinking and then remove them from the "heathen condition" that made them inferior. Coleman observes of Presbyterian missionaries working with the Indians that while their correspondence with the Board of Foreign Missions seldom discussed theology, nonetheless, the "spirit of Princeton pervades their letters."[30]

That same spirit pervaded the thinking of the Presbyterian missionaries in northern Siam as well. Their use of science provides an excellent example. Bozeman summarizes common sense philosophy in its Scottish and American forms under the rubric of "Baconianism" because it drew heavily on the scientific thought of Roger Bacon, especially for the "inductive method" it used to reach its philosophical conclusions.[31] Scottish philosophy and the Old School Presbyterians in America, indeed, showed a special affinity for the natural sciences to the extent that many leading Presbyterian clergy dabbled in scientific studies "on the side" and Presbyterian journals prominently featured scientific articles. The Presbyterians generally saw a close connection and harmony between science and theology by which the natural sciences revealed the "facts" from which inductive reasoning could reconstruct and comprehend reality. They held that that scientifically-correct understanding of reality, in turn, pointed towards the Creator of the universe. According to these views, scientific study was a worshipful undertaking.[32]

Nan Inta, it will be remembered, made his decision to convert on the basis of scientific evidence and reasoning that he learned from the McGilvarys. Daniel McGilvary, in particular, often put himself in the role of interpreter of western scientific thinking. From his interpretation of Nan Inta's conversion, McGilvary drew a conclusion. Since the time of the solar eclipse that led to that conversion, he wrote, "I have thought a great deal of our need of a thoroughly scientific man in the field, with astronomical and philosophical instruments to teach science in connection with Christianity." A good telescope, he concluded, would convince more northern Thais of the foolishness of their religion than any amount of teaching.[33] Although the Presbyterian Church never sent such a person to northern Siam, the Laos Mission frequently turned to the teaching of western cosmology and science, especially geography and astronomy, to prove the truth of Christianity. In 1873, for example, McGilvary spent considerable time with a northern Thai prince imparting both scientific and religious information to him. On another occasion, in 1876, he convinced another prince of the sphericity of the earth by showing him the moon and stars through a small sea glass.[34]

Common sense philosophy, in sum, represented a "habit of mind" for the members of the Laos Mission. It reinforced their intellectual commitment to a rational orthodox theology. It gave them assurance that their orthodoxy truly defined the reality of the universe. It described for them the process by which people became "warm-hearted" converts to the Christian faith. The

members of the Laos Mission, then, used common sense philosophy as interpreted to them through the Princeton Theology to make sense, common sense, out of their world.

III

Most striking of all, however, was the way in which common sense philosophy and the Princeton Theology served the Laos Mission as yet another weapon in its dualistic arsenal. In the end, that philosophical and theological tradition proved most useful to conservative Presbyterians because it defended their orthodoxy and traditional morality while providing the means to attack the beliefs of the unconverted. In theological terms, common sense philosophy and the Princeton Theology proved useful because of their value to Christian "apologetics," the defense of the faith.

The Princeton theologians based their defense of their religion on the fundamental premises of common sense philosophy. Archibald Alexander, the dean of the Princeton theologians, believed that the senses give a reliable picture of reality, accepted the idea of first principles, and believed that God created the world of cause and effect and its first principles. He believed that a person's conscience provides a reliable inner guide to right behavior and showed that the Creator of the universe (and the conscience) was a moral being.

Building on these common sense ideas, Alexander began his defense of the Christian faith with yet another Scottish premise: that human reason was the same everywhere, in all situations and cultures, and in every age. He went on to argue that the Bible contained the sole measure of truth and reason, and taught the reasonable moral laws upon which people can live happily. Alexander claimed, in other words, that there was only one truth and that truth was universal.

Charles Hodge, who taught both McGilvary and Wilson, refined Alexander's use of common sense philosophy into an intricate defense of the Bible. He claimed that the Bible contain all truth, that no truth existed apart from it, and that the inductive method provided the method for bringing that truth to light. In the cautiously methodical fashion of common sense reasoning, the inductive method gathered the facts contained in the Bible, discovered the connections between those facts, and inferred from those connections a larger system of truth.[35]

Hodge used common sense philosophy, then, as a tool to maintain Calvinism's traditional emphasis on the Bible as the repository of all truth, and he and his successors evolved the doctrine of "plenary inspiration" in order to prop up the assertion that the Bible contained all truth That doctrine claimed that the Holy Spirit authored the Bible and insured that no errors of any type, scientific or otherwise, appeared in it. The Bible, therefore, was the consistent and self-validating standard of measure for all other truths.[36]

Hodge, furthermore, displayed the circular reasoning to which common sense philosophy so easily lent itself. He began with the assumption that the Bible contained all truth and then moved in a series of carefully delineated steps based on that assumption to demonstrate that it did, in fact, contained all truth. The closed system of his thinking allowed Hodge to have confidence in the correctness of his theology and, as importantly, confidence in his attacks upon those who did not believe as he did. Hodge and the other Princeton theologians created a closed circle in which the assertion of truth led to belief in that truth which led, finally, to the assertion that all who would be "saved" must also believe that truth. These thinkers and their church made of "common sense" what they wanted it to be and then posited on that "common sense" the aura of objective, incontrovertible truth.[37]

By its very nature, the Princeton Theology perpetuated among Presbyterians a closed attitude towards the larger world that encouraged Presbyterian missionaries to draw only upon American Protestant ideas and activities for their work. The highly influential writings of the Rev. James S. Dennis, an 1867 graduate of Princeton Seminary and well-known Presbyterian missionary in Syria, demonstrated the extent to which the Princeton Theology influenced Presbyterian missions. Dennis accepted the "Baconian" principle that a single, universal standard of common sense applied equally to all peoples. They all had the same religious needs and, therefore, the same need for the same salvation. Like Alexander and Hodge, Dennis sought to prove the truthfulness of the Christian religion and entitled his first book, Christian Evidences. In keeping with his views, Dennis declared that Islam, was an "irrational" religion the inferiority of which was "self-evident." He believed that the Ottoman Empire could escape its degraded social, moral, and religious condition only with the help of American Protestant missionaries.[38]

The same circular reasoning that Alexander and Hodge taught at Princeton and Dennis lived out in Syria suffused the attitudes of the missionaries in northern Siam with a self-confident belief in the truth of their world view and an equally self-confident rejection of everything northern Thai. Thus, they attacked Buddhism as a mere "speculative" system, trusted in the reasonableness of their own religion, and believed in the scientific truth of the Christian religion. Thus, they divided their world into separate realms of Good and Evil, secure in the common sense knowledge that the "real world" was so divided.

In his classic study of white American attitudes about the American Indian, Roy Harvey Pearce points out that Scottish philosophy contributed a great deal to the white American understanding of savagism and civilization. It described a single, universal pattern for human development in which nations and peoples progressed from "rude" savagism to civilization. Every aspect of human culture and society participated in that pattern so that all peoples everywhere must attain civilization in the same way as the civilized European societies attained it. Since people everywhere and of every race, according to common sense philosophy, had the same nature, inferior people could only be the product of an inferior sociocultural environment. Scottish philosophy judged the Indians as culturally (not racially) inferior because they lived in a savage condition.[39]

The logic of antebellum American attitudes regarding the American Indian would have made perfect "sense" to the missionaries of the Laos Mission because they faced a similar situation. They lived among what they believed to be an inferior people in desperate need of "salvation." They identified the same factor, culture, as the cause of northern Thai inferiority.

Common sense thinking provides an understanding of the hidden assumptions that under girded missionary thinking. They assumed that all peoples everywhere were the same and in need of the same salvation. They assumed that there must be only one measure of truth. They assumed that their Protestant, conservative Presbyterian truths provided that measure. They assumed that any system of thought that varied from their own must be mere, idle, impotent, unreasonable, dead, human speculation. In all and through all, they assumed that the world and values they believed in were the world and values God created. For the members of the Laos Mission all of these assumptions amounted to nothing less than good common sense.

In terms of the activities of the Laos Mission, those assumptions and the hidden labyrinths of Scottish philosophy and Princeton theology boiled down to one simple premise: if the Laos Mission was to save the northern Thai then it must destroy the cause of their heathenism, traditional, Buddhist-centered culture. The activities of the Laos Mission must tear down the edifice of Buddhism and replace it with a new, Christian-centered culture.

Conclusion

In her 1903 book on northern Siam, missionary Lillian Curtis described in dramatic fashion the trials and problems Nan Inta suffered through in reaching his decision to convert to Christianity. She wrote how he hesitated to convert because he would "be cut off from his own people and kindred, and would be branded as an outcast. An outcast amidst friends and loved ones!" Nan Inta faced, she thought, a test of his manhood because conversion would cut him loose "from every tie that binds him to the past and present, from family and organized society." Satan tempted Nan Inta so that he labored to make his decision in the midst of an almost cosmic struggle until, at last, he yielded up himself fully to God. Curtis called the struggle of Nan Inta's conversion to Christianity "the birth-throes of Light into the midst of a people in darkness."[40]

Implicit in her presentation of that great moment of missionary joy when they won their first convert lay the attitudes of revivalistic conversionism and the Scottish tradition of conservative Presbyterian theology. Conversion meant radical change. It meant no compromise with the forces of evil. It meant living and believing the way God created all peoples everywhere to live and believe. It meant casting off the ugly mantle of heathenism and taking on a new way of thinking and behaving. Conversion in the Scottish mode meant that the converts must give up their former culture and assimilate themselves to a missionary counter-culture.

The missionary image of Nan Inta walking among the rice paddies, finally, distilled the dualistic, conservative understanding of conversion and common sense into one moment. In the Innocentian tradition, the Laos Mission brought a radical, aggressive conversionism to northern Siam. In the Old School theological tradition, it expressed that conversionism in the rationalistic categories of common sense philosophy. The two streams melded quite comfortably into a subdued yet intense missionary understanding of what it meant for a northern Thai to convert to missionary religion and culture. Upon those two streams, the Laos Mission built its work.

Notes

[1] Wilson, Letter, n.d., *Foreign Missionary*, 27(May 1869): 240.

[2] Vrooman to Irving, 6 February 1872, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[3] McGilvary to Dr. Arthur Mitchell, 23 August 1884, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[4] Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Missions: European Approaches toward the Muslims*(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 159-61; and Robert I Burns, "Christian-Islamic Confrontation in the West: The Thirteenth-Century Dream of Conversion," *American Historical Review* 76(December 1971): 1386-434.

[5] Harold J. Grimm, *The Reformation Era 1500-1650* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 318ff, 417ff; and John T. McNeil, Calvinism, 107-18, 237-54, 290ff; William S. Simmons, "Conversion From Indian to Puritan," *The New England Quarterly* 52 (June 1979): 197; and Jerald C. Brauer, "The Rule of Saints in American Politics," *Church History* 27(September 1958): 245.

[6] Edwin Scott Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1965), 48, 85; Marsden, *Evangelical Mind*, 31-3; Joseph Conforti, "Jonathan Edwards's Most Popular Work: 'The Life of David Brainerd' and Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Culture," *Church History* 54(June 1985); and Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucibl*e (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 205-06.

[7] Miller, *Life of Mind*, 6-7.

[8] Handy, *History*, 29. See also Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon, 1957); 45-6, 78; and Marion L. Bell, *Crusade in the City: Revivalism in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1977), 19.

[9] Donald G. Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830: An Hypothesis," *American Quarterly* 21(Spring 1969): 38.

[10] Sweet, *Revivalism*, 119; Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment*, 22-5, 242-44; and Andrew W. Hoffecker, *Piety and the Princeton Theologians: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1981), vi-vii.

[11] Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 321-23; Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 164; Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment*, 33-4, 112-13; and Miller, *Revolutionary College*, 200-03.

[12] McGilvary, *Half Century*, 26-28.

[13] McGilvary to Irving, 12 August 1876, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[14] Sessional Records, 56-9.

[15] Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 130-32; Curtis, *The Laos*, 112-13; and Hughes, *Proclamation and Response*, 12-13.

[16] See Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment*, 65-6, 177-81. See also Loetscher, *Broadening Churc*, 21-2; and Fred J. Hood, "Presbyterianism and the New American Nation, 1783-1826: A Case Study of Religion and National Life" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1968), 52-3.

[17] McGilvary to Lowrie, 8 November 1875, vol. 3, BFM Records; cf. McGilvary to Irving, 20 April 1871, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[18] McGilvary, letter, *Foreign Missionary* 27 (November 1868): 143-45; Minutes of the North Laos Mission 1887-1888, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

[19] Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 63.

[20] Ernest G. Borman, *The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985)< 136-41, 163; Bell, *Crusade*, 165; Leonard I. Sweet, "The View of Man Inherent in New Measures Revivalism," *Church History* 45 (June 1976): 212; and Richard W. Reifsnyder, "Presbyterian Reunion, Reorganization and Expansion in the Late 19th Century," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 64 (Spring 1986): 27-38.

[21] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 356; Mark A. Noll, "Common Sense Traditions and American Evangelical Thought," American Quarterly 37 (Summer 1985): 219-20; Hood, *Reformed America*, 90-2; Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture*, 62; Lillian B. Miller, "Paintings, Sculpture, and the National Character, 1815-1860," *Journal of American History* 53 (March 1967): 698; McLoughlin, "Pietism," 169; Roy Branson, "James Madison and the Scottish Enlightenment," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40 (April-June 1979): 235-250; McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, 69, 120-21; Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, 84; and M.L. Bradbury, "Samuel Stanhope Smith: Princeton's Accommodation to Reason," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 48 (Fall 1970): 189-202.

[22] Bozeman, *Baconian Ideal*, 22ff, 33-8.

[23] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 96-9; McGilvary, letter, *Foreign Missionary* 28 (August 1869): 58-9; Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 30 September 1868, vol. 3, BFM Records; and McGilvary to Irving, 12 January 1869, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[24] See Curtis, *The Laos*, 263-65.

[25]Frank Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, revised by Ledger Wood, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1957), 358-68; and John C. Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture: A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology* (Marlton, NJ: Mack Publishing Co., 1978), 17-22.

[26] Gladys Bryson, *Man and Society: The Scottish Inquiry of the Eighteenth Century* (1945; reprint, New York: August M Kelly, 1968), 18-20; cf. Bozeman, *Baconian Ideal*, 5-6.

[27] May, *Enlightenment in America*, 344-45; S.A. Grave, "Reid, Thomas," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 7 (New York: Macmillan & The Free Press, 1967), 120; and Miller, *Revolutionary College*, 165.

[28] Grave, "Reid," 120-21; and S.A. Grave, *The Scottish Philosophy of Common Sense* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 159.

[29] Hoveler, *James McCosh*, 10-12; and D.H. Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience: The Shaping of the American National Ethic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 40-1.

[30]Coleman, "Presbyterian Missionaries," 68; cf. 52-67, and Coleman, "Not Race," 60.

[31]Bozeman, *Baconian Ideal*, 5-6. Induction: The process of inferring a general law or principle from the observation of particular instances. See *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "induction."

[32] Bozeman, *Baconian Ideal*, 39-43, 53-60, 72-7, 96-101.

[33] McGilvary, letter, *Foreign Missionary* 28 (September 1869): 81.

[34] Annual Report of the Laos Mission, 1 October 1875 to 1 October 1876, vol. 3, BFM Records; and McGilvary to Irving, 28 February 1873, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[35] Hoffecker, *Princeton Theologians*, 58; and Bozeman, Baconian Ideal, 151.

[36] Ernest R. Sandeen, "The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism," *Church History* 31(September 1962): 307-21.; and Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture*, 142.

[37] Miller, *Revolutionary College*, 277-78; and Marsden, *Evangelical Mind*, 234.

[38] William H. Berger, "James Shepard Dennis: Syrian Missionary and Apologist," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 64 (Summer 1986): 97-111.

[39] Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization*, 82-91.

[40] Curtis, *The Laos*, 264-65.

Chapter Five

At each step of the way, dualism revealed new complexities and extensions that reinforced evangelical Presbyterian assumptions about the nature of reality. Dualism led to the concept of conversionism, and that concept led to the techniques of revivalism and also encompassed Old School uses of Scottish philosophy. The process did not stop there. Dualism also expressed itself in yet another complex of ideas in doctrines concerning the future, society, and the American nation. That complex of ideas, in turn, further defined the activities of the Laos Mission.

I

Along with Wilson's shattering the Buddha image with his axe and Nan Inta wandering across the rice fields in contemplation, the scene of a young northern Thai couple waiting to be married in 1878 presents one of the most powerful images in the history of the Laos Mission. The bride and groom were Christians, and theirs was to be the first Christian wedding in northern Siam. The Laos Mission felt ecstatic about the wedding because it marked, the mission hoped, the beginning of a true Christian community able to propagate itself in part through the nurture of Christian families. The day of the wedding came. The wedding party assembled. But, then, at the very last moment a problem arose. Traditionally, the family of the bride paid a "spirit fee" to the head of their clan not only to guarantee the fortunes of the couple but also to legalize the ceremony. In this case, the bride's family refused to pay the fee because they were Christians and refused to have anything to do with spirit propitiation. The clan patriarch, on the other hand, would not agree to suspension of the payment, and the local authorities in Chiang Mai refused to take any action in the matter. The mission postponed the wedding ceremony and appealed to the King of Siam for assistance. The King referred the matter back to his viceroy in Chiang Mai who issued, on October 8, 1878, a proclamation granting the Christian community the legal right to exist and follow its own religious forms. The mission and hailed this "Edict of Toleration" as a major turning point in the history of Christianity in northern Siam because it seemed to liberate the church from the legal persecution under which it had suffered since 1869.[1]

The elation with which the mission greeted the edict grew not so much out of the event itself, however, as from the mission's assumption that the edict offered it free and unhindered competition with Buddhism. The Laos Mission believed that animistic Buddhism corrupted all of northern Thai culture and society with its ignorance, impiety, and stifled intellect. It assumed that conversion meant much more than simply exchanging one religion for another. "True" conversion transformed the whole life of the convert, moral and cultural, as well as religious so that the conversion of individual northern Thais to Christianity would progressively purify and "civilize" the whole of northern Thai society.[2] Hence, this opportunity to compete without legal restraint in the marketplace of religious beliefs seemed to guarantee the triumph of Christianity and "civilization" in northern Siam. The "Edict of Toleration," in the eyes of the mission, did more than just make it possible for converts to marry in a new way. It established the Laos Mission's legal right to plant a much larger range of western ideas and forms in both the convert community and the larger society.

In the thinking of the Laos Mission, the relationship of religion to civilization worked in both directions. Not only did the mission think that the introduction of Christianity into northern Siam meant the introduction of western civilization, but also it assumed that the importation of elements of western civilization would encourage the spread of Christianity. McGilvary wrote

that the westernization of northern Siam was the "will of God" and that God had plans for northern Siam which went beyond the religious work of the mission. An image from the pen of McGilvary captured the quite unconscious but total association the missionaries made between their religion and their own culture. In a June 1869 letter, McGilvary reported how he had dined with the chao muang (Prince) and several "chief princes" of Chiang Mai in the "foreign custom," that is seated at a table using western cutlery and dishes. McGilvary marveled at this sign of "progress" towards civilization in isolated, backwards Chiang Mai, and he speculated at the possibility that one day the chao muang, his princes, and McGilvary might sit "around the table of the Lord" together as well.[3]

This broad view of the relationship between culture and religion in northern Siam significantly influenced the ways in which the missionaries conducted themselves because it defined what they sought to accomplish. The Laos Mission worked for nothing less than a radical social and cultural transformation of northern Siam in which American culture as well as evangelical religion would replace traditional northern Thai Buddhist culture and religion. The Laos Mission sought to create in northern Siam a place in which the people would worship in western-style churches, worship and rest on western holy days, live by the western calendar, and even dress in western-style clothes. In carrying out this agenda, the members of the Laos Mission became visible models of and advocates for the transformation of Buddhist culture into an American look-alike culture.[4]

II

Certain extensions of evangelical dualism reinforced the Laos Mission's habit of identifying American culture with Protestant piety. Although superficially theological in nature, those extensions allowed American Protestants to incorporate their feelings of nationalistic pride into their piety so that love of country and love of God became virtually the same thing. Those extensions of dualism encouraged evangelicals to see in their crusades to change the world as patriotic as well as pietistic in nature. The doctrine of "millennialism" provides a convenient, revealing entry point into those extensions.

Nineteenth-century evangelicals fervently believed that an "end time" would come when Christ would rule the earth in peace and justice for a thousand years. Students of nineteenth-century evangelicalism now routinely divide it into two general camps, "postmillennialists" and "premillenialists." While both groups accepted the idea of Christ's Second Coming, the postmillennialists, as a rule, believed that the millennium would emerge gradually from the course of progressive human history before the Second Coming. Premillennialist, or "millenarians," believed that the millennium would come abruptly and without preparation after the Second Coming. Postmillennialism dominated nineteenth-century evangelical thinking. While some scholars caution that too much can be made of the distinction, in general historians characterize postmillennialists as those who believed in human progress and sought to combine that belief with older apocalyptic doctrines. That combination encouraged them to exert themselves in schemes intended to hasten the coming of the millennium.[5]

Although apocalyptic doctrines went back to the very beginnings of the Christian religion and even further back into Judaism, American postmillennialism traced its roots to the reemergence of apocalypticism during the Reformation. At that time, Protestants habitually identified the papacy with the Antichrist, and growing numbers of them accepted the idea of a future millennium.[6] Belief in the millennium took root in England as well as other parts of Europe, and when English colonists arrived in North America they brought millennialism with them. The New England Puritans, for example, claimed that they went into the wilderness to prepare for the latter-day glory. Other colonists used the categories of millennialism to make

some sense out of the American Indians. Many colonists, though not all, believed that the Indians were the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, and their conversion to Christianity would mark the beginning of the millennium.[7]

American evangelicals closely associated millennialism with revivalism. The First Great Awakening popularized the idea of God's Coming Kingdom, the millennium, among American Protestants, and during the Second Great Awakening evangelists spurred their hearers on towards conversion with predictions that the millennium was close at hand.[8] One historian, observing the spread of revivalistic millennialism, comments that nineteenth century America was "drunk on the millennium."[9]

The doctrine of millennialism, in fact, expanded the arena of dualism by subjecting the past to its categories. Evangelicals interpreted all of human history and the whole of time itself as a vast arena in which God and Satan fought a great cosmic battle between good and evil. God urged humanity upward towards a golden age marked by complete submission to divine rule, but the forces of Satan resisted progress and tried to pull humanity down into a condition of barbarism and heathenism.[10] Americans became particularly conscious of their participation in this cosmic war when then the United States was at war. They identified their cause with that of God, their foe's with Satan, and claimed to fight for the very future of humanity. They associated American victory on the battlefield with the hope of the millennium.[11]

Postmillennialist dualism anticipated that humanity would enter the millennial gold age progressively, and the idea of "progress" had a long connection with Christian millennialism traceable from English and Scottish thinkers back through the Reformation, and, ultimately the apocalyptic beliefs of the early church.[12] Nineteenth-century American evangelicals made the association between progress and millennialism an absolute one so that the belief in progress reinforced evangelical enthusiasm for the millennium, which, in turn, motivated many to convert at revivalistic meetings. Revivalists, on the other hand, often believed that the preaching of the millennium in and of itself promoted progress and made them, therefore, indispensable to the continued progress of the nation. The rapid geographical, economic, and technological growth of the United States further encouraged the evangelical belief in progress. Science and evangelical religion appeared to be making great strides together toward the millennium.[13] As always, doctrines and ideas such as that of progress encouraged evangelicals to involve themselves in the crusade to save the world from the realm of darkness and hasten the coming of the millennium.

Millennialism and its doctrine of progress influenced Presbyterians no less than other evangelicals. They, for example, joined other colonial Americans in identifying the cause of the English in the French and Indian War and the cause of the revolutionaries during the American Revolution with the cause of God's Coming Kingdom. They accepted the belief that America, as the chosen agent of God, held the future of all of humanity in its hands. And they generally accepted the postmillennial faith in the progressive unfolding of the millennium before the Second Coming, an unfolding which would destroy Catholicism, uplift morality, and lead to a "knowledge of the Lord" among all the peoples of the world. The Civil War, which ended only two years before the founding of the Laos Mission, whipped these views up to a new pitch among Northern Presbyterians who viewed the war as a battle between God and Satan for the future of humanity.[14]

After the Civil War, Presbyterians and other evangelicals continued to believe in a vague way in the coming of the millennium; but, as in the case of revivalism, the belief in the millennium became more attenuated. Moorhead notes that as postbellum evangelical piety gradually lost its emphasis on immediate, emotional conversionism and the fear of hell a less passionate view of progress came to the fore.[15] The influential late nineteenth-century

missionary writings of James Dennis, as a Presbyterian example, show that he continued to believe in a coming age when Christianity would triumph over the world, but he devoted the bulk of his effort to proving that Christianity enhanced social progress.[16]

Evangelicals, in summary, used the idea of the millennium to rationalize time into the scheme of dualism. They looked for the progressive triumph of the sphere of light over time until the day came when all of humanity would worship the God of the Christian religion. Belief in the millennium allowed evangelicals to bring the other elements of dualism out onto the historical stage. It made "progress" and "civilization" cognates. It turned the concepts of "savage" and "heathen" into tools for historical interpretation. It placed virtually every encounter with a non-evangelical group into a chronological framework and cast onto those encounters a millennial, as well as cosmic, significance.

Evangelical postmillennialism, furthermore, reached out into time not only to turn all of history into a cosmic confrontation between good and evil but also to place the American nation at the center of that confrontation. Evangelicals came to believe that the United States had a special role to play in bringing about the millennium, and they pointed to the progress it was making to prove that God had moved it to the forefront of history. In America's progress, they believed, lay the hope of humanity to reach the golden end time.[17]

America's nationalistic millennialism emerged in the eighteenth century at a time when Protestant Americans, including the Presbyterians, did not distinguish between the religious and political arenas and tended to think about them in similar ways. They blended republicanism with millennialism into a single system of meaning. The American Revolution intensified the identification of millennial and republican expectations so that Americans interpreted their republican victory over the British in millennial categories. America had become God's agent in bringing freedom, republicanism, and the Christian faith to the world.[18]

Belief in the millennial role of the American nation grew during the nineteenth century until it became an essential part of evangelical doctrine.[19] That belief drew on the vivid Old Testament accounts of God's calling Israel to be the "Chosen People" so that Protestant Americans thought of their nation as a Chosen Nation akin to that of ancient Israel. As in Old Testament times, God led the nation, protected the nation, and, when necessary, disciplined the nation.[20] This "New Israel" took ancient Israel's place as God's primary agent in history and, concurrently, assumed its God-given divine mission to save the world. The belief that America was a nation with a mission had a powerful influence on the course of nineteenth-century events. Even those who opposed the more obvious forms of that belief, such as the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, did so only on the basis of their belief that America could not fulfill its mission through geographical expansionism. They did not doubt that America had mission.[21]

This one-on-one identification of nation and religious calling had serious consequences for Protestantism. John Edwin Smylie argues that because of the pluralistic environment of American denominationalism, nineteenth-century Protestants did not have one, single "true" church to which they could belong. They posited the need for such an institution on the nation, which became for them something of a "universal church." By the end of the nineteenth century, then, Protestants uncritically and almost entirely identified their religion with their nation and did not distinguish what they considered to be Christian from what they considered to be American. Smylie concludes, " Instead of Christianizing the nation, the churches have been nationalized."[22]

Within the logic of dualism, "nation" meant more than just a set of political structures and ideals, and in the course of the nineteenth century American Protestants fused the notion of

Chosen Nation with the sum total of their own culture and society. They believed that their nation and their way of living reflected Christian principles, which meant that the patterns of American culture and society increasingly determined the patterns of Protestant religious thinking and acting. By the 1890s, American Protestants almost entirely identified their religious hope for the future with the "progress" of the American nation and its civilization.[23]

III

Presbyterians of all persuasions took the relationship between religion and nation very seriously, and Old School and New School Presbyterians alike accepted the view that America was God's New Israel. Conservative Presbyterians, moreover, did not take their lot as citizens of the New Israel lightly or comfortably, because the Old Testament warned them that the role of divine agent was not an easily fulfilled role. The New Israel must show itself able to fulfill its mission, and these Presbyterians, therefore, insisted that religion must have a central place in the life of the nation. They firmly believed that the nation's hope for survival and prosperity rested entirely upon its moral strength, and moral strength could not be sustained without true religion. They demanded that the nation's political leaders, its laws, and its citizenry as a whole must live in accordance with Protestant Christian principles and values.[24]

The loss of true religion and of high moral standards, according to them, put the nation in grave danger not only because such losses weakened the nation internally but also because they invited divine punishment. The Old Testament showed time and again that when the Hebrews displeased God with their immoral behavior and worship of false gods divine punishment followed. During much of the War of 1812, for example, leading Presbyterians interpreted American military failures as proof of divine judgment on the nation for national sins, particularly the sin of electing non-Christian such as Jefferson to public office.[25] Fifty years later New School preachers cited the Old Testament once again to warn the North that the nation was suffering through the Civil War because of past national sins and the only hope for the future lay in repentance.[26]

Given the seriousness with which they viewed the role of Chosen Nation, Presbyterians did not hesitate to set an agenda for the United States that would safeguard it from divine punishment and help it fulfill its divine mission. The nation, they decided, must maintain its religious liberty at all costs. Presbyterians, however, used the term "religious liberty" in a particular manner. They meant that all Protestant Christians should have the liberty to read the Bible for themselves and worship God as they saw fit within the constraints of the Protestant tradition. Religious liberty meant liberty for Protestants, and to allow non-Protestants unrestrained freedoms would only put the nation in grave danger. Presbyterians, as one example, resisted increased Irish Catholic immigration before the Civil War because they believed it threatened freedom of religion and the existence of the nation. More generally, Presbyterians believed that while the government should not try to control Protestantism it should also not remain indifferent to the religious condition of the nation.[27]

The conclusion Presbyterian drew from their views on the relationship of the nation to religion persuaded them that for the nation's sake they had to involve themselves in protecting the nation from immoral and unchristian influences. They consciously sought to exercise control over society, the classic example of their efforts being the campaign they led in the 1820s to keep the Sabbath undefiled. Drawing on the biblical injunctions concerning "keeping the Sabbath,"[28] Presbyterians considered safe-guarding Sundays for worship and rest important to the moral and spiritual well-being of the nation, and they viewed with alarm a government decision taken in the 1820s to allow the delivery of mail on Sundays. They felt that this decision not only profaned the Sabbath but also threatened the much needed Protestant influence over

government. Local Presbyterian churches and higher judicatories all conducted aggressive lobbying and petitioning to try to get Congress to repeal the Sunday delivery of mail.[29]

Presbyterians perceived the question of the Sabbath as something more than simply a matter of preserving correct doctrine. They believed that the "moral"[30], as well as religious, well-being of the nation depended upon observing the Sabbath because morality and piety reinforced and sustained each other. Presbyterians concluded that this inseparable association of morals and piety meant they had to involve themselves with social morality. Presbyterians looked back to the sixteenth-century Scottish Reformation for the origins of their keen interest in social moral behavior. Leyburn writes that the reformed Kirk worked a revolution in Scottish moral behavior through the agency of local church governing boards, which closely examined the morality of their flocks and frequently punished the reprobate.[31] True to the spirit of the Scottish Reformation, the eighteenth-century Scottish common sense philosophers emphasized the role of the conscience as the divinely given guide to human behavior which leads human beings on to their divinely-appointed ends.[32]

The Scottish common sense emphasis on moral behavior became a prominent feature of American evangelicalism. Until the Civil War era, in fact, senior courses in "moral philosophy" capped nearly every college curriculum in America. In those courses, clergy professors introduced their students to common sense philosophy and its defense of "common sense," that is, traditional, ethical behavior based on their interpretation of biblical ethics.[33]

Evangelicals of all stripes, including Presbyterians, carried around in their heads, or consciences, a checklist of proper behavior that defined the arena of morality. They used this checklist to demonstrate their own moral uprightness and to gauge the probity of others. An enumeration of some of the items on that checklist would include the following: orderliness, obedience to authority, physical fitness, being energetic, intellectual agility, dedication to helping others, patriotism, piety, being law-abiding, courageousness, courteousness, and rationality.[34] During the course of the nineteenth-century, the rise of industrialism and big business added to the list values that served the interests of the industrial work place, such as frugality, temperance and moderation, self-discipline, valuation of work, regard for personal property, orderliness, and self-restraint. Many American Protestants eventually came to associate morality with business success.[35]

In point of fact, the larger web of nineteenth-century Protestant values grew out of traditional American rural and village life. Protestants felt that the agrarian society most of them grew up in represented the stability, orderliness, and security which seemed to be slipping away from an urbanizing society. The old-fashioned rural life, in particular, embodied traditional Protestant piety, and that piety seemed to them to be as threatened by urbanization and other social forces as did rural values themselves.[36]

Morality, in sum, mattered to Presbyterians and to all Protestants. Presbyterians in particular believed that the future of their nation and the preservation of its civilization depended upon its moral strength. They believed that they themselves must act to preserve that moral strength, for only the inculcation of religious piety could keep the nation safe. God's Chosen Nation, America, must demonstrate its worthiness to fulfill its divine mission otherwise God would punish it. Morality very definitely mattered to nineteenth-century Presbyterians.

IV

The elation of the Laos Mission over the "Edict of Toleration" encompassed this whole set of ideas concerning the relationship of religion to society. For the first time since the

persecution of 1869, the mission saw a clear opening into northern Thai society that promised it an opportunity to introduce a Christian culture into that society. They could begin to shape the northern Thai people into what they considered a moral, civilized society founded on rational Christian beliefs and institutions. Quite "naturally," they assumed that Christian institutions in northern Siam would replicate the ones already established in Christian America.

While the members of the Laos Mission seldom overtly expressed the connection between nation and piety, they acted in ways that presupposed that connection. The most important single instance of such action came early in the mission's history. In keeping with their heritage as evangelical Presbyterians, the missionaries in northern Siam emphasized the importance of keeping the Christian Sabbath within the fledgling Christian community. They demanded that converts prove the genuineness of their conversions by rejecting the Buddhist holy days, calculated according to the lunar calendar, and observing the Christian Sabbath. The Laos Mission continued well into the twentieth century to judge the quality of individual converts as Christians in large measure by their willingness to keep the Sabbath. Nothing brought a stern reprimand from a missionary as quickly as working or having parties on the Christian Sabbath.

The mission used the observance of the Sabbath as one of its weapons in the war to undermine Buddhist culture. In traditional northern Thai society, patrons had the right to call upon the labor of a client at any time they needed it, and the client had no right to refuse a legitimate, reasonable request. When Christian converts began to refuse to meet their obligations on Sundays, as they did, they challenged a central relationship in their society, the one between client and patron. They, in fact, challenged the legitimacy of the highest powers in their country as well, because all power rested, finally, on the ability of patrons to call upon the services of clients.[37]

The mission's attempts to introduce the Christian Sabbath into northern Thai society represented one of its earliest westernizing activities, a direct assault upon traditional Buddhist culture, and the spearhead of its campaign to Christianize northern Siam. [38] The chao muang understood quite well that the Laos Mission's instructions on keeping the Sabbath undermined the very set of relationships upon which his own power as the Prince of Chiang Mai rested. And he moved to squelch the incipient revolutionary convert community, as we have seen, by executing two of its leaders.

It is not likely that any one of the four missionaries living in Chiang Mai in 1869 worked through the logic of Sabbath observance and the relationship of religion to the nation. They did, however, associate their intention to Christianize northern Siam with the necessity of keeping the Christian holy day. They assumed without question that the observance of the Sabbath comprised part and parcel of the Christian life and of a Christian society. Behind that seemingly simple assumption lay the far more complex dualistic web that began with the perception of the United States as God's Chosen Nation and worked its way through the deification of republicanism to the Presbyterian emphasis on restraint of and control over national morality as the means to preserve America's ability to carry out its divine mission. The rationale behind Laos Mission's attempt to introduce Sabbath observance into northern Siam, in fact, duplicated the Presbyterian-led evangelical campaign of the 1820s to enforce observance of the Sabbath in American society. Quite simply, the nation that does not observe the Sabbath cannot be a Christian nation.

The members of the Laos Mission did not exhibit directly the millennial thinking that subsumed the idea of America as God's Chosen Nation, but they did quite frequently call upon yet another expression of that thinking, the belief in the leading of providence. Bozeman writes that Presbyterians associated "providence," divine activity in human affairs, with the

postmillennial idea of progress. Old School Presbyterians, in particular, believed that the world progressed according to divine will and a divine plan, which already charted the future improvement of humanity. Old School Presbyterians tied the idea of providence back into their common sense philosophy, which made providence inherent in nature. Providence, thus, expressed itself as a progressive natural law. Old School conservatism, furthermore, understood that providence did not function either irrationally or in a revolutionary manner. Providential change accumulated slowly and orderly as well as progressively.[39]

The nineteenth-century Presbyterian concept of providence represented a major change in Presbyterian thinking about God's activity in history. Traditional Calvinism affirmed God as an active, independent, sovereign, and unpredictable agent in human affairs. God acted as God chose to act. After the American Revolution, however, Presbyterians gradually discarded the traditional view of providence and replaced it with a God who acted predictably through natural laws and the natural order of things. Disasters, for example, took place for natural reasons, and Presbyterians no longer interpreted them as divine interventions into human affairs.[40]

American Presbyterians, furthermore, identified providence with millennialism, the doctrine of America as the Chosen Nation, and liberty, thus reaffirming their belief that the nation could not survive without religion. Providence, they supposed, worked in human affairs for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and America played a special, leading part in bringing about the millennial kingdom. They equated progress and providence with the spreading of the Christian message around the world, and they also believed that only through the workings of providence was civilization made possible. Hood concludes that the doctrine of providence, the idea of religion as necessary for national liberty, and belief in the millennium "...served as a network of religious symbols in terms of which the Presbyterians responded to the development of the new nation."[41]

The Laos Mission adapted the doctrine of providence to its own situation in northern Siam, one in which it saw itself as the agent and beneficiary of divine activity. The missionaries never wrote of providence as punishing them and always interpreted providential activity in a positive light. God, they knew with certainty, sustained and promoted their work. In these views, the mission reflected the position of their denomination concerning providence: everything worked out according to God's long-range plan for northern Siam without any miracles or divine visitations, in the biblical sense, ever occurring. Historical events, it seemed to the mission, revealed the ongoing work of providence and always pointed towards the ultimate victory of northern Siam's local agent for the Kingdom of God, the Laos Mission.

In September 1866 McGilvary wrote of the chain of events that led the chao muang of Chiang Mai to give his permission for the establishment of a mission station in his city, "The whole history of this affair has been so providential that the hand of God must be in it." He later wrote that God had stimulated his interest in Chiang Mai, and he intended to follow that leading until such time as God shut the way. Wilson wrote that he too felt that providence was leading his family to go to Chiang Mai as well.[42]

At every turn of events, McGilvary, Wilson, and the other members of the mission turned to the doctrine of providence to rationalize their understanding of events around them. As the McGilvarys went about establishing themselves in Chiang Mai in 1867 and 1868, they believed the goodness of God assisted them. When the Wilsons arrived in 1868, McGilvary interpreted their arrival and his close friendship with Jonathan Wilson as acts of providence laying the groundwork for the future of the mission. Other events received similar interpretations: when the chao muang gave the mission land for a station; when events in Bangkok brought an end to the persecution of the converts in 1869; when the mission baptized its first convert; when it opened

its first school in 1879; and when the "Edict of Toleration" was published. Providence, the mission claimed, caused these events.[43]

Even at difficult times, members of the mission maintained their faith in the workings of providence. During the persecution of the small church in 1869, the most harrowing period in the entire history of the Laos Mission, McGilvary saw the hand of God at work. He believed that the execution of the two "martyrs" was providential because it would serve the same purpose as did the executions of the early church martyrs. It would strengthen the church by scattering the converts into other regions where they would spread their faith.[44] When several new members of the mission left the field permanently because of illnesses in 1883, Wilson could only remark that, "God's dealings with us as a Mission have been inscrutable. Only this we know, that he has dealt with us so much better than we deserve."[45]

God, then, always worked in ways beneficial to the missionaries, and they interpreted every momentary advantage or encouraging happening to the work of providence. In an 1880 letter, McGilvary expressed confidence in the ultimate success of the mission because God promised in the Bible that Christianity would spread to "the ends of the earth." McGilvary tied his absolute confidence in the future of the mission to one of the few direct references to millennialism found in the records of the Laos Mission. He called Buddhism, "...the modern dragon ready to fall before the Ark of the Lord." The "dragon" in both the New and the Old Testaments was an eschatological figure which represented Satan and the enemies of God. In that letter, he went on to catalog the standard list of evils which proved that Buddhism was of the realm of Satan including complaints that it was an absurd system, a characteristic complaint for one trained in the Princeton Theology and common sense philosophy.[46] Quite unconsciously, McGilvary brought together in one cognitive "lump" the leading of providence, millennial expectations, Presbyterian theology and philosophy, and a dualistic judgment on Buddhism.

McGilvary's dualistic disdain for a "heathen" religion, in sum, lay at the core of his confidence in providence's intentions for the Laos Mission. In all of the "providential leadings" experienced by the mission, God worked to build up the mission while tearing down Buddhism and everything associated with it. The mission's doctrine of providence complimented their use of Sabbath observance and their hope in the "Edict of Toleration" as elements in a cohesive system born of its millennial, progressive, and nationalized evangelical Presbyterian cognitive heritage. The Laos Mission used the Sabbath to invade the traditional northern Thai calendar with a "moral alternative," the observance of which would lead to God's favor for the North. In the same way, it relied upon the "Edict of Toleration" to open northern Thai society and politics to its influence, again, to the end that the Christian religion might replace Buddhism and animism. Through the doctrine of providence, the missionaries held onto a firm assurance of historical precedent and natural law that their invasion of the North would ultimately succeed.

Conclusion

The evangelical doctrines of millennialism, progress, and America as the New Israel expanded the web of dualism into a satisfying, dynamic philosophy of history that assured evangelicals that as long as America remained faithful to God it must triumph over the forces of evil. Those doctrines focused the attention of evangelicals, most particularly the Old School Presbyterians, on the need to preserve and spread Protestant influence throughout American society. Those doctrines also shaped how the Laos Mission thought about its own missionary situation in northern Siam. It saw itself as an agent of providence in northern Siam charged with the mission of "saving" that region from heathenism by Christianizing and civilizing it in accordance with the workings of providence. The Laos Mission acted as if it thought of itself as

an embodiment of the New Israel led by providence to extend the Kingdom of God in northern Siam.

Notes

[1] McGilvary, *A Half Century*, 207-19; and Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 28-9.

[2] Hughes, *Proclamation and Response*, 7-9, 12; Hughes, "Christianity and Culture," 74-5; and Philip J. Hughes, "Theology and Culture: Implications for Methodology of a Case Study in Northern Thailand," *Colloquium: The Australian and New Zealand Theological Review* 18 (October 1985): 44.

[3] McGilvlary, *A Half Century*, 219; and McGilvary, letter, 28 June 1869, *Foreign Missionary*, 216.

[4] Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, esp. 59-113; Swanson, "Advocate and Partner," 305-09; and Maen, "Missionary Proclamation," 45-6.

[5] James H. Moorhead, "The Erosion of Postmillennialism in American Religious Thought, 1865-1925," *Church History* 53 (March 1984): 61-2; Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, 9; Grant Underwood, "Early Mormon Milenarianism," *Church History* 54 (June 1985): 216-20; and Hood, *Reformed America*, 74-5.

[6] Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of the Idea of Progress* (1949, reprint; New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 56ff; Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, 2-3; and Norman Cohn, "Medieval Millenarism: its bearing on The Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements," in *Millennial Dreams in Action: Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements*, ed. Sylvia L. Thrupp (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), 32-9.

[7] Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia*, 75-93; and Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, 3-4.

[8] Miller, *Life of Mind*, 81; and H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937), 135.

[9] Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 42.

[10] See Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, 53.

[11] Hatch, *Sacred Cause*, 37-43, 53, 85-7; Gribbin, *Churches Militant*, *passim*; and Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, x-xii, 39-41, 54-5, 63.

[12] Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia*, *passim*.

[13] McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, 5; J.F. Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," in *The Religion of the Republic*, ed. Elwyn A. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 198; and Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 78.

[14] Hood, Reformed America, 70-5; Fred J. Hood, "Evolution of the Denomination Among the Reformed of the Middle and Southern States, 1780-1840," in *Denominationalism*, ed. Russell E. Richey (Nashville: Abingdon, 1977), 140; and Miller, *Revolutionary College*, 50-9.

[15] Moorhead, "Erosion of Postmillennialism."

[16] R. Pierce Beaver, "Missionary Motivation through Three Centuries," in *Reinterpretation in American Church History*, ed. Jerald c. Brauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 131-32; Berger, "Dennis," 102-06, 109; and Moorhead, "Erosion of Postmillennialism."

[17] See McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, 5, 105; and Maclear, "The Republic and the Millennium," 198, 213.

[18] Hatch, *Sacred Cause*, 53-59, 89-91, 155-59; and Hood, *Reformed America*, 65-6, 73.

[19] Martin Marty, *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America* (New York: Dial, 1970), 16; and Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 43.

[20] Clebsch, *Sacred to Profane*, 54-7; and Russeel B. Nye, *This Almost Chosen People: Essays in The History of American Idea*s (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, 1966), 186-90.

[21] Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny*, 1-2; Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 261-66; and Hudson, *Religion in America*, 209-10.

[22] John Edwin Smylie, "National Ethos and the Church," *Theology Today* 20 (October 1963): 313-14, 318-19. See also William A. Clebsch, *From Sacred to Profane America: The Role of Religion in American History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 39ff; Hatch, *Sacred Cause*, 22-4, 43; and Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, 73-81, 126-28.

[23] Coleman, "Presbyterian Missionaries," 80-1; Coleman, "Not Race," 343; and Robert T. Handy, *Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 113, 115.

[24] Hood, *Reformed America*, 7-8, 40. See also Marsden, *Evangelical Mind*, 105, 184.

[25] Hood, *Reformed America*, 108.

[26] George Marsden, "Kingdom and Nation: New School Presbyterian Millennialism in the Civil War Era," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 46 (December 1968): 68-9.

[27] Hood, *Reformed America*, 51-4, 57.

[28] See, for example, Exodus 20:8-11; 23:12.

[29] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Prelude to Abolitionism: Sabbatarian Politics and the Rise of the Second Party System," *Journal of American History* 58 (September 1971): 316-41; Cole, *Social Idea*s, 105-09; and Miller, *Revolutionary Colleges*, 220-21.

[30] The nineteenth-century use of "moral" was broader and more ambiguous than is our later usage. Meyer points out that in addition to ethics, Americans used it to describe empirical as opposed to a-priori reasoning and to designate human as opposed to natural factors in events. Meyer, *Instructed Conscience*, 27-8.

[31] Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, 30, 56-7.

[32] Meyer, *Instructed Conscience*, 41.

[33] William G. McLoughlin, Jr., "Introduction: The American Evangelicals: 1800-1900," in *The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology*, ed., William G. McLoughlin, Jr. (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 2. For an excellent study of the moral philosophers in America see Meyer, *Instructed Conscience*.

[34] Faust, "The Proslavery Argument," 10; Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness*, 167; Mary McDougall Gordon, "Patriots and Christians: A Reassessment of Nineteenth-Century School Reformers," *Journal of Social History* 11 (Summer 1978): 562; Takaki, *Iron Cages*, xvii, 6-7; and Robert A. Trennert, "Educating Indian Girls at Nonreservation Boarding Schools, 1878-1920," *Western Historical Quarterly* 13(July 1982): 281.

[35] Paul Faler, "Cultural Aspects of the Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts, Shoemakers and Industrial Morality, 1826-1860," *Labor History* 15 (Summer 1974): 367-94; Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 47, 51; and Don H. Doyle, "The Social Functions of Voluntary Associations in a Nineteenth-Century American Town," *Social Science History* 1 (Spring 1977): 345.

[36] Boyer, *Urban Masses*, viii, 2, 43; and Hood, *Reformed America*, 9.

[37] Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 12-13.

[38] See Berkhofer's discussion of the missionary use of Sabbath observance as an assault on American Indian cultures in *Salvation and Savage*, 60-1; and Coleman on Presbyterian missionary use of the Sabbath against the Indians in "Presbyterian Missionaries," 121.

[39] Bozeman, *Baconian Ideal*, 711-13; and Theodore Dwight Bozeman, "Science, Nature and Society: A New Approach to James Henley Thornwell," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 50 (Winter 1972): 307-25.

[40] Hood, *Reformed America*, 27-8, 31-9.

[41] Hood, *Reformed America*, 68-70, 74-5; and Hood, "Presbyterianism," 156.

[42] McGilvary to Irving, 10 September 1866, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary to Irving, 6 November 1866, vol. 3, BFM Records; and Wilson to Irving, 20 October 1866, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[43] McGilvary to Irving, 2 October 1868, vol. 3, BFM Records; McGilvary to Irving, 12 January 1869, vol. 3, BFM Records; Wilson, excerpts from a letter, 28 July 1870, *Foreign Missionary*29(December 1870): McGilvary, letter, 20 May 1878, *Foreign Missionary* 37(October 1878): 150; and 184; Edna S. Cole to Irving, 1 October 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[44] McGilvary to Irving, 1 November 1869, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[45] Wilson to Irving, 24 November 1883, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[46] McGilvary to Irving, 11 June 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records. For one biblical use of the "dragon" motif, see Revelation 12. See also *The Interpreter's Dictionary to the Bible*, s.v. "dragon."

Chapter Six

Evangelicals responded to their dualistic situation with a zeal to help God change the world. They felt God called them to act in ways that would defeat the kingdom of darkness and expand the kingdom of light. They concluded that they must, in fact, exert control over their society in order to root out evil in and insure the moral and doctrinal purity of the New Israel. The techniques of revivalism offered them one means of gaining that control, but evangelicals found that it could not rely on revivalism alone. Under the rubric of conservative "reform," American evangelicals created another set of organizations and strategies fit to purify their nation.

The Laos Mission, heirs to the evangelical world view, stood also as heirs of conservative reform. The missionaries, in fact, made no cognitive distinction between the institutions and strategies of reform and the world view out of which they arose. Worldview, strategies, programs, and institutions formed one common sense whole to them. They, therefore, took the strategies and the institutions of reform with them because conservative evangelical reform seemed the logical way to accomplish the Christianization of northern Siam. The evangelical reform movement described in this chapter led directly to the activities of the Laos Mission.

I

The evangelical reform movement took shape in the post-Revolutionary era, an era evangelicals experienced as a time of threatening social change when it appeared that religion was losing its influence over American society. The Revolutionary era itself distracted the nation from more pious concerns and encouraged interest in the new "infidelism" of militant deism and rational religion presented a serious threat to traditional piety. The further stress of creating a new nation and coping with social change also distracted it from religious concerns.[1] Although the actual situation may not have been as serious as Protestant leaders supposed, rightly or wrongly, Protestant leaders believed that religion was in decline and reacted accordingly.[2]

Evangelicals responded to the decline in piety partly by developing and emphasizing denominational structures and concerns and partly through the Second Great Awakening.[3] But they eventually realized that defense of their religion required them to join together across denominational lines. In order to achieve interdenominational cooperation, conservative evangelicals, led by the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, borrowed the model of reform cooperation from the British noncomformists and founded a whole set of American cooperative, voluntary associations.[4] These evangelical reform groups concretely embodied the revivalistic, millennialist, activist, aggressive, perfectionist, common sense, dualistic worldview of evangelicalism, even as they devoutly sought to conquer the nation and the world for their faith.[5]

The first "wave" of British-influenced voluntary reform associations in the United States were not reform societies in the strictest sense of the term but, rather, missionary societies. The first of those societies, the New York Missionary Society (founded 1796), modeled itself after the London Missionary Society. To a large extent, however, the missionary societies set the stage for the later reform societies, and the reform societies remained, essentially, missionary societies devoted to the conversion of some segment of society for the millennial good of all the world.[6]

The fact that American reform began as a missionary movement seeking to convert the world left an indelible imprint on it. All of the various nineteenth-century American reform movements, evangelical and otherwise, had their origins in revivalism, drawing from it the underlying ideas and the methods needed to achieve their aims. As reformers attacked intemperance, poverty, delinquency, or immorality, they utilized the intensity and the emotionalism of revivalism to carry themselves forward. Even non-evangelical American reformers incorporated millennial and perfectionist themes in their thinking, and revivalism provided them also with the techniques of persuasion reformers needed to gain converts to it.[7]

At the heart of that heritage stood a set of five organizations, sometimes called the "Evangelical United Front" by historians, created specifically to Christianize American society. The Big Five included the American Education Society (founded 1816), the American Bible Society (1816), the American Sunday School Union (1824), the American Tract Society (1825), and the American Home Missionary Society (1826). These five societies maintained extremely close working relations with each other and shared many of the same directors on their governing boards. They even met each year during the month of May at the same location.[8]

As befit their close working relationship, each society had a set of responsibilities complimenting those of the other four. The American Education Society (A.E.S.) prepared young men for the ordained ministry and home missionary work. The American Home Missionary Society (A.H.M.S.) took young men trained by the A.E.S. and sent them to the frontier to conduct missionary work. The American Sunday School Union (A.S.S.U.) organized and trained young people in the expectation that they would one day become leaders and members of local churches. The American Bible Society (A.B.S.) and the American Tract Society (A.T.S.), as well as the A.S.S.U., provided the propaganda literature and the tracts needed for evangelistic campaigns.[9]

Beyond the Big Five and their networks of regional, state, and local affiliates, existed a second set of evangelical reform societies aimed at the moral uplift of one social group or another. Although not overtly missionary and revivalistic in intent, these societies sought the same ends as the Big Five, namely, the conversion of the infidel and the protection of social morality. The evangelical moral reform societies were as millennial and revivalistic as the Big Five.

The single most important revivalist of the nineteenth-century, Charles Grandison Finney, also had a profound influence on the course of the evangelical moral reform movements. Finney's revivalism brought personal piety out of the homes and the churches into the public arena where he called upon the converted to confront the unconverted with the perils of eternal damnation and the joys of eternal salvation. Finney and his followers created an excited, emotional, fervent revivalistic movement that aimed to remake society through the conversion of individuals to revivalistic pietism. That movement called upon the vision of the millennium to inspire the converted in their task of remaking society into a purified, thoroughly Protestant society. While Finney himself remained attached to "pure" revivalism, many of his followers translated their enthusiasm to convert the world into parallel reform movements focused on particular issues. Finney revivalism stimulated the temperance movement and made it the centerpiece of antebellum reform. Disciples of Finney appropriated his fervor, goals, and techniques for militant abolitionism, the drive to purify society by ending slavery.[10]

Finney revivalism's doctrine of perfectionism proved to be one of its most important contributions to dualistic evangelical reform. Perfectionism held that those who lived according to their divinely given natures and acted benevolently towards others could achieve holy perfection in this life.[11] It rooted itself in a "romantic faith" that, in turn, grew out of the

traditions of conservative Protestantism. It believed in progress and identified progress with the protection of America and Protestantism from the dangers of infidelity. Perfectionism desired the Christianization of American society. It emphasized morals and moral order. Thomas argues that this romantic perfectionism spread itself broadly across American Protestantism and planted even more deeply the demand that Protestants totally commit themselves to immediate efforts to convert society.[12]

Perfectionism placed a great premium on action and impelled its adherents to action. Perfectionist evangelical reformers could not remain neutral to evil. They had to fight against evil because they believed that the very future of their nation and the whole human race depended upon their ability to act for change. Social problems represented barriers to the millennium, and social action hastened the millennium.[13]

The perfectionist emphasis on action, on saving society, and on achieving the millennium reinforced one of the fundamental tendencies of the whole web of dualism: intolerance. In their haste to win the future and their certainty that they alone held the keys to the future, reformers warred even with each other. They split and split again into factions pursuing the same goals but resisted working together because each believed the other failed to move in the directions perfectionism dictated. Perfectionism radicalized leading elements in the temperance movement, the abolitionist movement, and the peace movement and made the dread of failure so great that compromise with other factions became impossible.[14]

The temperance movement stood out among the evangelical moral reform societies as the largest, the most typical, and the most typically perfectionist of all of them. Spearheaded by the American Temperance Society, the antebellum temperance movement identified alcoholism as the most important cause of social immorality including idleness, self-indulgence, waste, and poverty. The early nineteenth-century temperance societies promoted only the temperate use of alcohol, but, under the influence of revivalistic perfectionism, a radical wing emerged and called for total abstinence. Historians routinely note that the temperance movement had close links to evangelical revivalism and shared with revivalism the same dualistic mind set. Temperance reformers assumed that the consumption of alcohol and everything associated with it was totally evil, and temperance societies conducted what amounted to revivalistic campaigns to convert people from the use of alcohol to total abstinence.[15]

Historians have devoted attention to the antebellum temperance movement because those close ties to evangelicalism made it a centerpiece in the evangelical drive to gain control over society. Social historians note the role temperance played in introducing a new work ethic into the industrializing American economy. Evangelicals feared that the rise of an unrestrained working class would introduce new dangers to the purity and piety of society, and they allied themselves with the entrepreneurs in evangelizing workers with a set of ethics congenial to production and the social control of the workers. That ethic emphasized all of the values that became associated with the middle class, the social heartland of evangelicalism, including sobriety, frugality, respectability, promptness, and industry. Temperance reformers and their allies among factory owners and workers assumed that if the boisterous, rowdy workers could be sobered up they would improve morally and become better, more controlled workers and citizens.[16]

These same antebellum concerns carried over into the Midwest after the Civil War where an often aggressive evangelical prohibition movement waged war on drink. The evangelical drive to prohibit drinking amounted to a cultural battle between evangelicals and ethnic and Catholic immigrant groups which cherished alcohol consumption as part of their European heritage. The prohibitionist evangelicals emphasized conversion and rural values while fearing cities and

Catholics. They identified themselves with the Protestant missionary movement to Christianize the world. Like their antebellum forbearers, they looked upon drink as the source of all social evil, the greatest threat to Christian values, and an instrument of Satan.[17]

The larger antebellum reform movement, indeed, exerted a potent influence on the evangelicals well after the Civil War ended. Postbellum evangelical reformers associated themselves with all of the ideas of nation, millennium, progress, perfectionism, and reform even when, at first glance, their goals seemed far removed from the web of dualism. Health reformers, for example, sought the millennium through healthful living. They reasoned that such living would necessarily include upright moral living and a strong Christian faith that would lead inexorably to the perfection of individuals and society.[18] In their search for labor reform, labor leaders also relied upon millennial thinking to give workers the vision, the framework, and the moral imperative they needed to protest against employers. Postmillennialism, Finney perfectionism, and antebellum evangelical revivalism were the predominant influence on the American labor movement from the Civil War to the end of the century. Labor leaders, like health leaders and reformers of other causes, sought the perfection of the world.[19]

The reform mentality, then, filtered through evangelicalism throughout the nineteenth century, and the temperance movement simply exhibited the attitudes and the methods of the other antebellum and postbellum reform movements. Abolitionism, the women's rights movement, the Indian Reform movement, and others shared the millennialism, revivalism, perfectionism, and dualism of the temperance movement. They grew out of the same evangelical soil and pursued the same millennial ends.[20]

II

The members of the Laos Mission experienced the conservative reform movement as a part of their own world view through their conservative Presbyterian heritage. Given their belief in the necessity of religion for society and their concern for the purity of society, the reform impulse came quite easily to Presbyterians. In the post-Revolutionary era they shared the fears of other evangelicals concerning the supposed decline of religion in the nation and joined the Congregationalists at the core of the evangelical reform movement.[21] Presbyterians dominated the movement in the South, and they played a strong role in the West, where others often associated reform societies with Presbyterianism.[22]

The Old School wing shared the Presbyterian interest in reform activities partly, at least, because evangelical reform itself was a conservative movement that drew on the ideas of the past in the search for a better future.[23] Old School Presbyterians, however, chose their reform causes and organizations with some care. They, for example, could not accept radical abolitionism because of its associations with the heresies of radical revivalism and because its demand for immediate change denied the Old School mentality.[24]

Old School Presbyterians took an active part in founding and leading a wide variety of reform societies, but even in the post-Revolutionary era conservative Presbyterians tended to participate in benevolent and moral reform societies entirely or largely comprised of Presbyterians. They constantly worried about maintaining the "purity" of Presbyterian orthodoxy.[25] Conservative Presbyterians felt uneasy about the way in which the Congregationalists and New School Presbyterians dominated many of the evangelical reform societies with their liberal, "heretical" tendencies. In 1816 conservative Presbyterians began a drive to create a set of denominational agencies to carry out missionary and reform functions entirely under the control of the General Assembly.[26]

The actions the Old School took, out of their fear of contamination, created a major turning point in Presbyterian history. When the Old School rejected as too dangerous the Congregationalist-New School drive to Christianize all of society through interdenominational efforts, it withdrew from that effort and retreated behind the walls of denominationalism in order to protect the purity of its faith and provide for the care of its members. It built a fortress to protect "true Christians" from the influence of the world.[27]

From within the walls of the Old School fortress, however, conservative Presbyterians continued to struggle for the Christian reform of society. The Presbyterian Church (Old School) after 1837 created its own apparatus of boards and agencies, modeled after the voluntary reform associations, to carry its religion into the world. In the process, the Old School denomination turned itself into a reform-like missionary society with the self-given charged of Christianizing the world.[28]

Old School Presbyterians, then, took a leading part in the nineteenth-century evangelical, perfectionist reform movement in their own particular way. They focused on the divergence between society as it should be and its reality, and, as a consequence, they emphasized the conversion and perfection of society instead of the individual. Conservative Presbyterians felt themselves called by God to accomplish those ends through reforming action.[29] Even though they overtly rejected Finney perfectionism as a dangerous theological innovation, conservative Presbyterians actually shared that perfectionism in a broader, more covert manner.[30]

In fact, while Presbyterians never lost their emphasis on collective perfectionism, they even gradually accepted the more widely held viewpoint that the reform of society must be achieved through the conversion of individuals, one by one. This combination of collectivist and individualistic perfectionism profoundly influenced the Presbyterian understanding of how reform took place. They retained their desire to "save" all of society, but they looked to the revivalistic mechanics of individual conversions to gain that social salvation.[31]

Presbyterians looked upon the individual members of threatening outside groups, such as the American Indians, Catholics, or "secular humanists," as embodiments of all of the qualities of infidelity and impurity of their group. In order to conquer the sinfulness of the group, evangelical individualism convinced the Presbyterians that they must conquer the individual sinfulness of each person within that group. In the case of groups with a distinct culture, conquering the sinfulness of individuals meant stripping them of their culture and replacing it with evangelical culture. The heathen and the infidel, according to this line, were the victims of their culture.[32] Their only hope for attaining individual and social perfection lay in "escaping" the evil influences of their original culture.

Old School Presbyterianism, in sum, acted out of a mode at once aggressive and defensive. As a conservative participant in the evangelical reform movement, it aimed for the kinds of social change, which impelled it into an aggressive, crusading posture. Yet, in true conservative Presbyterian fashion, it also remained fearful of the dangers of contamination from the outside world. Both the aggressive and the defensive modes fed upon and reinforced that fundamental evangelical dualism that warned against the world outside as a dangerous, evil place.

The Laos Mission's drive to establish a separate counter-culture made sense only in the context of this defensive-aggressive attitude. It conceived of the missionary counter-culture as a safe haven within which the mission could "decontaminate" its converts. Therefore, they had to make that counter-culture as perfect as possible, which meant as unlike northern Thai "heathenism" as possible. The mission, in short, felt it must act aggressively to change heathen culture into Christian culture. In its fundamental stance, the Laos Mission attacked to defend.

III

As American evangelical churches, interdenominational agencies, and benevolent and moral reform societies sought to reform their nation, they developed an elaborate set of techniques to that end. That set of techniques became a virtually set pattern to which evangelicals turned habitually each time they challenged the "forces of Satan" for the sake of their religion and society. Although the pattern grew up over a period of decades and out of various historical situations, three particular situations shaped it. These were the challenges posed by urbanization, westward expansion, and the American Indians. It was that same pattern which the Laos Mission utilized to create its own activities.

Of the three sources of evangelical reform activity, Protestant missionary activity among the American Indians, may well have been the most important one of all. Colonial mission efforts among the Indians provided inspiration and models for both the foreign missionary and the voluntary reform movements of the nineteenth century, both of which traced their institutional origins back to early Indian missions societies.[33] Many of the strategies and tactics the evangelical missionaries and reformers later used in the cities, on the frontier, and against special groups, such as slave holders, may be traced back to missionary work among the Indians.

Presbyterians, among the Cherokees in the early nineteenth century provides an excellent example of the development of Indian missions. In pursuit of the goal of converting the Cherokees, Protestant missionaries established schools, aided the Cherokees in learning farming, taught them English, produced a Christian literature in the Cherokee language, and otherwise consciously sought to facilitate the assimilation of the Indians into American culture.[34]

Protestant missionary work among the Indians, more generally, emphasized education including, common schools, Sunday schools, and a significant reliance on boarding schools. All of these schools taught English literacy, "academic" subjects such as geography, and heavy doses of religious and moral instruction. Missionaries to the Indians also itinerated extensively among them. They promoted the establishment of voluntary associations, especially Indian missionary societies, temperance societies, and benevolence associations. Missionary work among the Indians strongly encouraged women's education and undertook domestic training programs to improve the economic and moral conditions of Indian families. Protestant missionaries also introduced the Indians to western medicine and attempted to turn the "wild" Indians into farmers and tradesmen.[35]

Evangelicals carried this general set of activities over into and refined it in the crusade to reform the cities. Nineteenth-century evangelicals perceived urbanization as a threat because cities seemed so uncongenial to the traditional values of rural America. Cities, they felt, bred disorder, chaos, and immorality, and beginning in the post-Revolutionary period they responded to the moral challenge of the cities in a number of ways. They established urban missionary societies and conducted urban revivalistic campaigns. They organized Bible and tract societies that produced and distributed large amounts of literature including Bible portions and tracts. They set up Sunday schools and went out in the streets to round up children and adults for the Sunday schools. They used the Sunday schools to teach literacy as well as more religious subjects. Urban missionaries itinerated through their urban territories visiting homes and carrying out the distribution of literature and the organization of Sunday schools and churches.[36] Eventually, millennial enthusiasm waned among the evangelical urban missionary and reform movement, and more sophisticated, realistic, and professional organizations, such as the YMCA and charity groups not specifically related to churches, took over the work of evangelical urban reform. Yet, even in the Gilded Age evangelical urban workers continued to

draw on the repertoire of responses created earlier in the century. They updated and republished a flood of older tracts. They pressed for increased numbers of revivalistic services. They tried to increase the number of Sunday schools.[37]

The western frontiers, as described earlier, seemed to pose a similar threat to social stability and moral order. Evangelicals responded to that threat with strategies and tactics like those, which they used among the Indians and in the cities. The "Mississippi Valley Campaign," which involved both denominational societies and the Evangelical United Front's Big Five societies, provides one of the most significant and clearest examples of that response. The campaign began when evangelical emissaries took a series of survey trips into the South and West in the decade before 1820. They reported that the frontier was a degraded, semi-barbaric, immoral, and heathen society desperately in need of salvation. Samuel J. Mills, in particular, returned to the East to sound the alarm and demand that the scattered agencies of the E.U.F. organize a vast national campaign to win the frontier for Christ.

The alarm Mills and others raised stimulated the evangelical reform movement to found its national societies, and the Big Five emerged as the focal point for the western campaign. In 1829 they launched a great campaign that sought to put a Bible in every home, place a school in every district, and locate a pastor for every one thousand people. The Big Five flooded the frontiers with tracts and Bibles. Sunday Schools began to appear. The American Education Society not only trained pastors in eastern seminaries but also established seminaries out on the frontier. By 1831 the American Home Missionary Society had 483 missionaries in the West and South while the American Sunday School Union had another 112 workers in those regions. A substantial number of denominational missionaries also engaged in frontier work.[38]

All three of the most influential domestic evangelical missionary and reform campaigns used the same general set of activities, with varying degrees of emphasis, to accomplish the Christianization of the objects of their work. Especially in the case of the missionary work with the Indians, these efforts went well back into the colonial era. Early urban missionary and reform efforts utilized the same general pattern of activities and contributed to the process, which made them so popular among Protestant missionaries. The great missionary and reform campaigns on the frontier solidified the types of activities engaged in and greatly expanded the scope of their use and the resources Eastern evangelicals expended on them.

IV

In a landmark 1957 article, Clifford Griffin argued that the concept of "social control" should be applied to the reform activities of antebellum American evangelicals, particularly the Presbyterians and Congregationalists. He pointed out that an organized movement among antebellum Protestants, which he summarized under the heading of "religious benevolence," sought to use religion as a means for maintaining control over society by dictating to the public how they should behave. That movement identified particular groups, such as Catholic immigrants, as dangerous and carried out specific activities aimed at converting those groups. It did so because it believed that the safety of the nation depended upon Protestant control over the nation.[39]

Several historians have questioned the Griffin's arguments and particularly reacted against the implication that antebellum evangelicals exercised social control primarily out of economic, social, and political self-interest. The critics contend that a genuine concern for others, more than self-interest or fear, motivated those who led the crusade for social control . The evangelicals genuinely believed that people would live happier, more moral lives as Protestants,

and they would gain eternal life. The concept of social control, the critics claim, obscures the humanitarian impulse that lay behind it.[40]

In reality antebellum evangelicals exhibited mixed motives. They did wish only the best for those they sought to control, but their dualism encouraged evangelicals to so closely associate the good of society with their own piety that they could not but conclude that what was good for them was good for the nation.[41]

Gerald Grob's study of nineteenth-century mental hospitals provides a way in which to understand what social control meant in the evangelical context. According to Grob, antebellum evangelicals considered mental illness a moral problem. Social deviants caused their own mental condition by departing from the values of rural, Protestant American culture. Evangelicalism dealt with this form of moral deviance by creating the mental hospital, a place that isolated social deviants in a controlled, therapeutic environment using "moral therapy" to cure deviance. Moral therapy included occupational therapy, religious exercises, games and amusements, and an emphasis on a safe, humane environment.[42]

Grob's concept of moral therapy describes the strategy evangelicals pursued in their larger drive to reform American society. Evangelicalism, especially in the antebellum era, tried to exert social control in the United States by giving the whole nation a healthy dose of moral therapy. Born of the Second Great Awakening, for example, the early nineteenth-century New York City missionary movement sought to exercise social control over the urban poor through a massive campaign of moral therapy which included the usual elements of evangelical reform tactics: educational programs, distributing Bibles and literature, home visitation programs, and revivalistic campaigns. That campaign paid especial attention to combating intemperance, prostitution, and Sabbath-breaking, which it believed to be the "real causes" of poverty. It tried, in short, to solve the "problem" of poverty by reforming the moral behavior of the poor.[43]

Moral therapy, moreover, provides an excellent description of the aggressive-defensive nature of Old School Presbyterian reform. As the 1820s crusade to save the Sabbath from Sunday mail delivery demonstrated, the Presbyterians shared in the evangelical reformist concern for social control and moral therapy. Considering such issues as Sabbath-breaking as moral issues, Presbyterians practiced an aggressive moral therapy that sought to change the other into a mirror image of oneself. And, just as moral therapy took place behind the safe walls of an institution, so the Old School resolved to give their therapy from within the confines of their own separate agencies and institutions. On the frontier Presbyterians emphasized the role of the church in maintaining public order, providing public education, disciplining church members, and exerting political influence. Non-Presbyterians accused them of trying to make the Presbyterian Church a de facto established church bent on curbing the religious and moral liberties of others.[44]

Even at the end of the nineteenth century, Presbyterians continued to assume that God was at work in their society expanding divine lordship and control over it. They still believed that God commanded them to exert control over society, particularly the intellectual life of the nation, which Presbyterians considered to be their special responsibility. They still demanded that political structures conform to their interpretations of biblical principles, and they still made those demands in the firm conviction that the survival of the nation depended upon living up to those principles.[45] Hood concludes that nineteenth-century Presbyterian thought was an "ideology of religious conquest" which sought to protect older social values and enhance the power of the clergy within society.[46] One could hardly find a branch of American evangelicalism more exemplary of the concepts of social control and moral therapy than the Presbyterians, particularly of the Old School persuasion.

Conclusion

The web of American evangelical and Old School Presbyterian thinking, the heritage of the Laos Mission, has now been expanded to cover yet another set of strands, including reform, perfectionism, social control, and moral therapy. These strands themselves created a variety of evangelical movements, institutions, and organizations that embodied the drive for reform and social control. In spite of the addition of these strands, however, dualism remained firmly in place at the heart of the evangelical web. The evangelical reform movement, social control, and moral therapy, like revivalism before them, did nothing more than express in concrete historical forms the dualistic desire to convert the threatening other into a non-threatening similar.

In origin and intent, the evangelical reform movement remained essentially an expression of evangelicalism's missionary impulse, particularly among the Old School Presbyterians. In terms of the Laos Mission, this association of missions and reform meant that the mission functioned as if it were an agent for the evangelical reform movement in northern Siam. The Laos Mission expressed the same impulse, shared the same cognitive heritage, sought the same ends, and acted in ways similar to the American evangelical reform movement.

Notes

[1] Foster, *Errand of Mercy*, 3-10; Mathews, "Second Great Awakening," 33-4; Handy, *History*, 153-54; and Marsden, *Evangelical Mind*, 8-9.

[2] Richard W. Pointer, "Seedbed of American Pluralism: The Impact of Religious Diversity in New York, 1750-1800" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1981), 275-79.

[3] Mathews, "Second Great Awakening."

[4]Marsden, *Evangelical Mind*, 3-4; James Luther Adams, "The Voluntary Principle in the Forming of American Religion," in *The Religion of the Republic*, ed. Elwyn A. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 226-29; and Lewis, "The Reformer as Conservative," 93-4.

[5] Foster, *Errand of Mercy*, 208ff; Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 8-9, 43, 149; Donald M. Scott, "Abolition as a Scared Vocation," in *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, ed. Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman (Baton Rouge: Lousiana State University, 1979),52-3; Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness*, *passim*; Bell, *Crusade*, 102; Thomas, "Romantic Reform"; and Elwyn A. Smith, "The Voluntary Establishment of Religion," in *The Religion of the Republic*, ed. Elwyn A. Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 177-78.

[6] Oliver Wendell Elsbree, *The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America* (1928; reprint, Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1980), 51; Cole, *Social Ideas*, 102; Foster, *Errand of Mercy*, 65; and McLoughlin, "Introduction," 13.

[7] Cole, *Social Ideas*, 96, 102; and Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers*, 1815-1860 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 37.

[8] Hudson, *American Protestantism*, 85-7.

[9] Kuykendall, *Southern Enterprize*, 15-18.

[10] Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York 1815-1837* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 95-115; Weisberger, *Great Revivalists*, 89; and Lesick, *Lane Rebels*, 84-6.

[11] McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, 101-04; and Sweet, "View of Man," 219-21.

[12] John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," *American Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1965): 656-60. See also Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform, 109-13, 141-47; and McLoughlin, "Pietism."

[13] John Shanklin Gilkeson, "A City of Joiners: Voluntary Associations and the Formation of the Middle Cleass in Providence, 1830-1920" (Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1981), 43-4; and Marsden, *Evangelical Mind*, 256-57.

[14] Thomas, "Romantic Reform," 660-62, 674.

[15] Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 5, 40, 44-5; Handy, *History*, 181-82; Handy, *Christian America*, 51-2, 90-2; and Gilkeson, "City of Joiners," 8, 11.

[16] Gilkeson, "City of Joiners," 9-23; Jill Siegel Dodd, "The Working Classes and the Temperance Movement in Ante-bellum Boston," *Labor History* 19 (Fall 1978): 510-31; Faler, "Cultural Aspects"; and Johnson, *Shopkeeper's Millennium*, esp. 79-83.

[17] Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest*. For a case study in Iowa see Jerry Harrington, "Bottled Conflict: Keokuk and the Prohibition Question, 1888-1889," *Annals of Iowa* 46 (Spring 1983): 593-617.

[18] Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness*, 153-67.

[19] Gutman, "American Labor Movement," 90-2.

[20] See Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*.

[21] Hudson, *American Protestantism*, 60, 78-9; Miller, *Revolutionary College*, 194-96; and Foster, *Errand of Mercy*, 123.

[22] Kuykendall, *Southern Enterprize*, 80-8; and Rudolph, *Hosier Zion*, 203-10.

[23] Griffin, Ferment of Reform, 30-1.

[24] Murray, *Presbyterians and the Negro*, 75ff, 113-17.

[25] Miller, *Revolutionary College*, 193-94, 213-14, 228-29.

[26] Elwyn A. Smith, "The Forming of a Modern American Denomination," *Church History* 31 (March 1962): 74-99.

[27] Smith, "Modern American Denomination," 90-3, 95-6.

[28] Hood, *Reformed America*, 194-96; and Hood, "Evolution of the Denomination," 157-60.

[29] Hood, "Presbyterianism," 158; *cf.* Lois Banner, "Presbyterians and Voluntarism in the Early Republic," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 50 (Fall 1972): 194.

[30] McLoughlin, "Pietism," 163-70; and Marsden, *Evangelical Mind*, 79-81.

[31] Hood, *Reformed America*, 3, 64, 196-97.

[32] See Michael Coleman, "Christianization and Americanizing the Nez Perce: Sue L. McBeth and her Attitudes to the Indians," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 53 (Winter 1975): 356-57; and Prucha, *Great Father*, 204-05.

[33] R. Pierce Beaver, "Methods in American Missions to the Indians in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Calvinist Models for Protestant Foreign Missions," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 47(June 1969): 148; and Charles I. Foster, *Errand of Mercy*, 220.

[34] Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The National Experience 1783-1876* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 234-42.

[35] Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 16-45, 63-6, 74-6, 115; and Coleman, "Presbyterian Missionaries," 33-9.

[36] Boyer, *Urban Masses*, viii, 9-12, 22-51, 70-5, 85, 122; and Mohl, "Urban Missionary Movement," 125. For an excellent study of evangelical activities in the cities see Carol Smith Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City: The New York City Mission Movement, 1812-1870* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971).

[37] Boyer, *Urban Masse*, 133-35; and Rosenberg, *American City*, 186.

[38] Hudson, *American Protestantism*, 85-91; Foster, *Errand of Mercy*, 189-203; and Goodykoontz, *Home Missions*, 215-69.

[39] Clifford S. Griffin, "Religious Benevolence."

[40] Lois W. Banner, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation," *Journal of American History* 60 (June 1973): 23-41; and John W. Kuykendall, *Southern Enterprize: The Work of National Evangelical Societies in the Antebellum South* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1982), 2-6. For similar comments in the field of 19th century institutional history see also Constance M. McGovern, "The Myths of Social Control and Custodial Oppression: Patterns of Psychiatric Medicine in Late Nineteenth-Century Institutions," *Journal of Social History* 20 (Fall 1986): 3-24; and David J. Rothman, "Social Control: the Uses and Abuses of the Concept in the History of Incarceration," *Rice University Studies* 67 (Winter 1981): 4.

[41] Goodykoontz, *Home Missions*, 16-17; and W. Daivd Lewis, "The Reformer as Conservative: Protestant Counter-subversion in the Early Republic," in *The Development of an American Culture*, ed. Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 81-4.

Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth-Century Social History, ed. Tamara K. Hareven (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 250-79. For evidence that American used institutional moral therapy for dealing with indigency as well as mental illness, see Walter I. Tratner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1984), 56-61.

[43] Mohl, "Urban Missionary Movement." For similar views on the New York City urban missionary movement for the years up to 1850 see Rosenberg, *Religion and the Rise of the American City*, 2-9.

[44] See T. Scott Miyakawa, *Protestants and Pioneers: Individualism and Conformity on the American Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 21-31; Ted C. Hinckley, "The Presbyterian Leadership in Pioneer Alaska," *Journal of American History* 52 (March 1966): 742-56; and Ted C. Hinkley, "Sheldon Jackson: Gilded Age Apostle," *Journal of the West* 23 (January 1984): 16-25.

[45] Smith, *Seeds of Secularization*, 47-8, 54-6.

[46] Hood, *Reformed America*, 27, 81-2, 85, 112.

Chapter Seven

Perfectionist, reformist, dualistic evangelical Presbyterian thinking about the "threatening other" permeates the writings of McGilvary, Wilson, and the other members of the Laos Mission. The mission sought to Christianize and civilize, that is to reform, the whole of northern Thai culture and society of people. In the tradition of Old School Presbyterian thought, furthermore, the mission sought the perfection of northern Siam through the conversion of individuals to American Protestant Christianity. It labored over each conversion and tested the convert to discover the genuineness of his or her desire to become a Christian. Their Old School emphasis on the importance of literacy in the life of the potential convert and on the need to study and to rationalize one's decision to convert slowed the conversion process and made it even more of a process focused on individuals.

The rationale behind the Laos Mission's activities lay in the dynamic of its intention to reform northern Thai society through individual conversions. That intention severely limited the scope of its activities to those that it believed would "save" northern Thai society from the "evils" of its animist-Buddhist culture. The Laos Mission could not draw upon northern Thai ways and values to determine its own activities because heathenism tainted everything northern Thai. Consequently, the mission felt that it had to use only activities it learned from its own American Protestant heritage.

I

The fact that the Laos Mission could only draw from its own cultural heritage for its work and that it looked to individual conversions as the way to save the whole society determined the underlying strategy upon which the mission acted. That strategy dictated that the Laos Mission must convert northern Siam to Christianity by segregating individual converts from their culture and assimilating them into a "missionary culture" derived from American evangelicalism. The mission, in other words, used the same strategy found in Grob's concept of moral therapy whereby mental patients were segregated from the outside world and assimilated into the moral culture of the hospital. It might well be argued that the mission looked upon its converts as mental patients. Just as antebellum mental health care interpreted mental illness as a moral and religious condition, so too did the Laos Mission look upon heathenism as a religious and moral condition. In order to cure the northern Thai of the moral illness of heathenism, the mission felt it must segregate northern Thai Christians from the taint of their former culture and assimilate them into a culture compatible with their new religion, that is an American-like culture.

In the years between 1867 and 1889, the mission segregated converts and potential converts primarily by housing them in mission compounds and/or employing them as domestic servants in mission homes. In this way, the mission exposed northern Thai individuals to an alternative culture that it believed would remove the stain of heathenism from the lives of its converts and potential converts. The mission's institutions and compounds became the means by which it carried out its program of moral therapy for northern Siam.

In his study of domestic service in nineteenth-century America, Katzman argues that domestic service was a modernizing agent that introduced poor immigrant and black women to the values and habits of mind of their employers. They had to learn to live by the clock, follow certain procedures and schedules, and learn new values of efficiency and orderliness. Katzman observes about young immigrant domestics that, "In effect, young girls moved through both

space and time, from the backward agrarian countryside into the modern urban industrial society."[1] Northern Thai converts and potential converts took a similar journey when they entered the employ and the homes of the missionaries.

While no statistics are available for the numbers of individuals who lived with the members of the Laos Mission for the period 1867 to 1889, mission records leave the impression that the number was substantial. As early as 1869, the McGilvarys had a blind convert who lived with them. In 1872 McGilvary commented of another potential convert who had lived for him for some time that he "...has long since ceased to be an idolater."[2] In 1877 Saan Kam, an important official from the village of Mae Dok Daeng, came to McGilvary very ill, and McGilvary treated him in his own home for some time. After an extended period of recuperation, Saan Kam left convinced of the truth of Christianity and eventually converted.[3] In 1880 a young man spent a month with the Wilsons during which time. they spoke often about Christianity, and after his conversion he returned to his village where he helped found a church.[4]

Accusations of witchcraft frequently drove people to live with the missionaries in the 1870s and 1880s. Villagers reacted to local calamities by claiming that an evil spirit possessed someone among them, and they would drive the person considered possessed and his or her family out of the village. Many of these people fled to the missionaries for refuge. In 1878, the year McGilvary remembers taking in the first of such refugee families, a family from that same village of Mae Dok Daeng fled to the McGilvarys where they also learned about and converted to Christianity. They returned to Mae Dok Daeng to become the nucleus of a church there. Holt Hallet recorded that when he visited Chiang Mai in 1884 he found sixteen families accused of witchcraft living with the missionaries.[5]

Young girls composed another important category of residents in missionary homes. Chantah, a daughter of one of martyrs of 1869, went to live with the McGilvarys after her father died, and in 1875 she reached an age where she could work as a domestic in the home. She learned how to care for the McGilvarys' son, to perform domestic chores, to sew, and to read. When Sophia McGilvary began her small class that led to the Girls' School, Chantah became her teacher's aide and later a full-time assistant teacher. Cole and Campbell regularly housed some of their students in their own home on a permanent basis. In 1882 Cole had eight girls living with her, and she consciously attempted to create a pious, disciplined, and literate environment for "her girls" hoping that they would become capable Christian mothers, wives and church leaders.[6] Some twenty years later another member of the Laos Mission commented on another eight young Christian women who had all been housed by missionaries for extended periods of time She wrote,

While these women are not perfect...it does our hearts good to see beautiful Christian character being developed in them After all, that is the great and important work--character building, rather than receiving mere numbers into the church. In the missionary homes these girls were taught to sew, cook, wash dishes, serve the table, sweep, etc., and in the school to read and write In both places they were taught to think. Above all, they early learned of the love of God and to serve Him and their fellow men.[7]

This statement presents the rationale behind the entire process of segregation and assimilation that guided, unconsciously in many ways, the work of the Laos Mission. It also quite aptly restates the process Katzman described regarding domestic servants in the United States.

The above quotation also points to the importance of the mission's boarding schools, the clearest and most significant long-term examples of the segregate and assimilate strategy. In the period under study, the mission founded two boarding schools, the Girls' School in 1879 and the

Boys' School in 1888, and most of the mission's students boarded at the schools under the daily supervision of missionary teachers. In October 1880, for example, twenty-two of the Girls' School's thirty-three pupils boarded, and in July 1889, thirty-five of fifty-five regular attendees at the Boy's School stayed in the dormitory.[8]

Both schools used an entirely western curriculum that duplicated without adaptation subjects and methods used in the United States, especially literacy and religious instruction.[9] In the years after 1889, these two schools bred the first northern Thai professional teachers, produced a number of church leaders, and remained for many years the leading examples of western education in northern Siam. The comments of one later mission educator shows that the mission's boarding schools sought nothing less than the assimilation of its pupils into the westernized missionary culture. Kate Fleeson in Lampang wrote in 1893 that she valued the boarding schools because, "One can have so much more influence over the girls when they are under one's control all the time." She described how the boarding schools could insure that Christian girls possessed the skills, the knowledge, and the morals needed to make good Christian mothers and wives.[10]

The mission, seeking the same ends, regularly employed converts in a wide range of domestic and institutional positions.[11] In 1872, when the mission only had six converts it employed at least three of them. One recent convert had been in mission employ for almost a year before his conversion. McGilvary commented upon the death of one of the leading members of the convert community that for the five years after his conversion he regularly lived with and worked for one or another of the mission families. Later, when the mission began to ordain leading converts into formal church positions, such as deacon and elder, it normally employed them as teachers and evangelists.[12] At times the missionaries hired non-Christians and then used their increased proximity and influence with these people to encourage them to convert Dr. Cheek in 1875 influenced his language teacher that way.[13]

In a significant number of instances, the Laos Mission pursued the segregation and assimilation of converts through mission hospitals. In December 1872 McGilvary recounted how two men treated at the mission's crude bamboo hut hospital became potential converts. One, interestingly enough, stayed in missionary homes for some time after his hospital stay. The other one died in early 1873 but not before he demonstrated the influence of the hospital upon him by refusing the care of spirit doctors.[14] In 1876 Lung (Uncle) Nan Panya and Lung Tooi converted to Christianity after extended stays in the hospital during which time they studied Christianity. The following year Chai Ma converted while he was staying with his wife who was in the hospital.[15]

The mission's annual report for 1875-1876 justified its desire for a permanent hospital on the grounds that such a hospital would make it easier to get potential patients away from spirit doctors and under the influence of the mission.[16] Hospital conversions continued throughout the entire history of the Laos Mission and culminated in 1912 when a severe malaria epidemic brought hundreds of new patients under hospital care and thousands more under the treatment of mission-trained medical evangelists. Hundreds converted as a result of successful treatments. In 1908, meanwhile, the mission opened a leprosarium, and because of the social fear of leprosy in northern Siam it was a highly segregated community under the full control of the mission. By 1913 most patients at the leprosarium were converting and the mission founded a leper church.[17]

The mission drew no boundaries between these various means for segregating and assimilating its converts and potential converts. In 1872, for example, McGilvary wrote about one recent convert who had first studied Christianity during a long stay in Dr. Vrooman's

temporary hospital and then lived with the McGilvarys in their home for more than a year. McGilvary planned to take this convert on a missionary tour with him because the trip would be a good "school" for him.[18] The mission's treatment of that unnamed convert encapsulates the consistent segregate and assimilate strategy it employed to Christianize northern Siam.

Virtually every westernizing activity of the Laos Mission repeated that same strategy. It's stringent, insistent demand that converts live according to the rhythms of the Christian calendar effectively segregated them from the holidays and rest days provided in the traditional northern Thai calendar while it cast them more deeply into westernized patterns of living.[19] As was seen earlier, the "simple" mission requirement that converts must not work on Sundays changed their relationship with their patrons and, thereby, weakened their participation in one of the central, traditional human relationships of their society. When the mission insisted that its converts only use western medicines and medical treatment, it further segregated them from a traditional society that relied heavily on animistic practices for medical treatment.[20] In the same manner, the Laos Mission tried to develop a northern Thai Christian literature so that its members would not have to read traditional literature, that was mostly either Buddhist or bawdy (by missionary standards). In fact, the mission established its press partly to exercise control over what was printed in the northern Thai script so that only that which might aid their cause was published.[21]

In order to understand, then, why the Laos Mission engaged in any particular activity, the historian must always search for evidence of the strategy of segregate and assimilate. In what ways does a particular activity segregate converts and potential converts from their former culture? In what ways does the activity in question try to assimilate them into the missionary?

II

From within the worldview of dualism, the strategy of segregate and assimilate was entirely logical. One "saved" those trapped in the sphere of the "damned" by segregating them from that sphere and by assimilating them into the sphere of the "saved." The Laos Mission, it must be said again, did not create something new in its work. American evangelicals used this same strategy long before the founding of the Laos Mission because it was a logical consequence of their worldview. They both cared about and feared the people of other races, cultures, creeds, and philosophies. They believed those people would burn in hell for eternity and would destroy the purity of evangelical faith and American republicanism unless they changed their beliefs and moral standards. "Logically," segregating them from their old ways and assimilating them into evangelicalism and Americanism represented the best hope for them and for evangelical America.

While nineteenth-century evangelical reformers and missionaries drew on a varied arsenal in their war on sin and infidelity, they frequently turned to educational programs as the chief weapon in that war. Conservative evangelicals, in particular, reasoned that well educated people could better understand and accept the truths of Christianity. They also assumed that educated people would see the value of a pure life and, therefore, would lead more upright lives. Evangelicals valued education, especially literacy, because it gave people direct access to the Bible. They also believed that education in and of itself stimulated intelligence. At the heart of the matter, lay the need for evangelicals to communicate their beliefs and values in ways that would substantially shape or reshape the beliefs and values of others.[22] Education represented the essence of the evangelical strategy.

As the essence of the evangelical strategy of segregate and assimilate, education had a place in the intricate web of evangelical thinking that linked it to the other elements of that web.

Evangelicals looked to education as the means by which they would achieve the "Great Society" of the millennium. Since the millennium would bring the end of ignorance and superstition, education seemed an important way with which to advance the coming of the end time. And because of its millennial role, the drive for universal education became an important element in antebellum strategy for attaining the millennium, reform.[23]

Evangelicals linked their hopes for moral reform and the control of vice to education as well. Up to at least 1870 American schools at every level took it upon themselves to instruct children and young people in what amounted to a Protestant morality. They sought to dispel doubts and questions about moral standards and to insure the prosperity and stability of the nation through sound moral education. Education, then, became the primary means of social control in antebellum America.

Scottish common sense philosophy contributed to the American concern for education. From its premise that the conscience is grounded in a set of moral first principles, common sense philosophy reasoned that knowledge of those principles would aid people in leading moral, happy lives. The Scottish philosophers believed that children were born into a "brutish" state from which they could be rescued only through education. Education could protect children from the influences of ignorant parents, lift them out of the state into which they were born, and guide them toward a higher plane where they could escape from false ideas and opinions. Fallible human conscience, in short, must be properly educated in order for it to know and adhere to the first principles of morality. The American academic moralists, a dominant voice in American education until after the Civil War, put these common sense views at the heart of American education.[24]

Grounded in the reasoning of common sense philosophy, antebellum education generally emphasized moral instruction and discipline as the core of its curriculum. Moral instruction comprised, for example, the core of the antebellum common school movement, one of the most important of the pre-Civil War reform movements. Horace Mann looked upon the common school as the means to insure the continuance of republican government because it would cure vice, ignorance, and poverty. The common school movement constantly reminded students through textbooks and instruction that Protestant Christianity was the one true religion, that America was a divinely favored nation, and that moral behavior was important for personal happiness and national survival.[25] Gordon concludes, "the educational awakening [in its early stages] was a Protestant crusade to establish a culture that became the dominant system of values in the new nation." The instilling of Protestant values amounted to nothing less than the moral instruction of students.[26]

The Protestant domination of American education and use of the schools to inculcate Protestant morality continued through the end of the century. In places like Cincinnati, postbellum educational reform aimed at teaching Protestant values, limiting the influence of "infidels" and Catholics, and maintaining a virtuous republic. Even in the early twentieth century when educational practices moved away from heavy doses of Protestant moralizing, the underlying aims of education to instill values and protect public order remained unaltered.[27]

Post-Revolutionary Presbyterian uses of education reflected that Scottish heritage and the dualistic worldview Presbyterians shared with all evangelicals. In theory and in practice, Presbyterians relied on education to maintain the doctrinal and moral purity of their own denomination and to inculcate Presbyterian ideals and values in the general population. Trinterud summarizes the Presbyterian role in education in the post-Revolutionary period by observing that they were "pre-eminently the educators of the middle states," and used their schools to combat

the spread of deism, reverse the decline of religion, and train a generation of leaders who shaped the new nation politically as well as religiously.[28]

The Presbyterians played a particularly important role in spreading higher education to the frontier. Sharing with other Eastern evangelicals the fear that the frontier regions were regressing into a state of savagism and infidelity, and they turned to educational strategies to combat the dangers the frontier posed to evangelical religion and American republicanism. Presbyterians devoted large amounts of resources in frontier colleges in order to maintain the high educational standards of their own clergy and laity and plant those same standards in frontier society in general.[29]

The concept of moral therapy aptly describes the uses to which Presbyterians put their education Old School Presbyterians, it will be remembered, emphasized the importance of careful reflection and intellectual struggle as key elements in the conversion process takes place gradually and without great emotional outbursts. Presbyterians assumed that such a process required a carefully controlled educational environment that fed students heavy doses of religious and moral instruction. Such education would turn the students into moral, orthodox beings.[30]

Antebellum Presbyterian higher education, like antebellum mental hospitals, attempted to isolate its "inmates" from the pernicious influences of society and parents by maintaining a strong discipline. The Presbyterian colleges feared that society would contaminate their students, and, therefore, the colleges had to become moral communities in which students would learn how to live moral lives. The colleges restricted students' rights to leave campus, expelled rebellious students, and even limited the amount of money parents could give students, all in an attempt to protect the students from vice, idleness, extravagance and disorder. In short, Presbyterian educators sought to exert a strict social control over their students and, through them, influence the larger society. Presbyterians placed their colleges next to their churches as the pillars of their drive to Christianize the frontier.[31]

They used parochial schools in exactly the same way. Between 1846 and 1870 the Old School denomination established 264 parochial schools around the nation largely out of anxiety over the growth of radical revivalism, the increasing secularization of public education, and a shortage of Presbyterian ministers. It believed that its parochial schools would strengthen its influence over the minds of its children by making sure that they receive a proper religious and moral education. The ultimate purpose of the schools was to provide the children with the religious knowledge they needed to have a conversion experience. As in the case of the Laos Mission's schools, these parochial schools were small, often operated under primitive conditions, opened somewhat irregularly, often included boarding arrangements, had irregular student attendance, and more often than not was taught by women.[32]

The Presbyterian understanding of education, in sum, fit perfectly into the larger web of dualism. The Presbyterians held that progress could only be achieved and civilization maintained through education. They depended upon education to maintain the morality and, therefore, the virtue of God's Chosen Nation. They expected that the millennium would arrive only when "knowledge of the Lord" reached all peoples, knowledge spread only through education. Presbyterians associated moral reform and benevolent activities with education, and they believed that through education they could improve the lot of the poor and assimilate all of the diverse alien groups immigrating into the United States. Education, then, came down to a matter of exerting social control over more than just students in Presbyterian colleges and schools. It amounted to nothing less than the way in which the Presbyterian Church intended to apply moral

therapy to the whole nation so that it could exert a benevolent social control over the nation and, thus, protect republicanism and liberty.[33]

Geiger makes an important observation about the founding of Presbyterian colleges in the West, one that may be extended to Presbyterian schools and academies as well. He notes that their founding was "essentially a missionary activity."[34] On the Indiana frontier, Presbyterian missionaries and churches founded Sunday schools, parochial schools, colleges, and a seminary. Rudolph notes that Indiana Presbyterians considered higher education "the very capstone of Hoosier Zion."[35] In New Mexico Presbyterian missionaries created a school system that preceded public education, trained many early New Mexico leaders, and dominated education among the Spanish in New Mexico into the twentieth century. Presbyterians had a similar impact on Texas where they were leaders in education even though Texans did not flock to the churches of this Eastern-dominated denomination. The Presbyterian drive to civilize the Alaskan frontier, likewise, utilized education to achieve its purposes.[36]

The Presbyterian Church U.S.A. looked to education not only to extend its geographical reach but also to attack "problem" groups. In 1864 the P.C.U.S.A. established a Committee for the Education of Freedmen as its mission arm for the freedmen, and from that time onwards the Presbyterian Church relied primarily on education to achieve the "uplift" of the freedmen. As late as 1916 the P.C.U.S.A. still had some ninety schools for black students in the South.[37] The Presbyterians dealt with the "danger" the Mormons presented by establishing the first Protestant parochial schools in Utah, which they used to try to wean Mormon children away from their parents.[38]

One might cite such examples endlessly because the Presbyterians so persistently and consistently emphasized education in their campaigns to purify the world of Satan. It is not surprising, then, to find the Laos Mission also using education to the extent that it did in its campaign to purify northern Siam. Nor is it surprising to find that the Laos Mission called upon exactly the same array of educational strategies and programs as did Presbyterians and evangelicals in the United States. In both nations they established Sunday schools, emphasized literacy, established boarding schools, created a parochial school system, focused on religious and moral training, and provided a large place for women in education. Given the Scottish heritage of the Presbyterian Church, its concept of conversion, and the dominance of common sense philosophy over it, it felt "only natural" for Presbyterian in the United States and in northern Siam to rely on education to achieve their missionary and social control goals.

The Laos Mission's educational program had a long, honorable history in the United States before the mission imported them into northern Siam. Sunday schools, for example, paved the way in evangelical education, provided the earliest opportunities for women to involved themselves in education, played a major role in the Evangelical United Front's drive to civilize the West, and were closely related to revivalism. From its American beginnings in the late eighteenth century, evangelicals used Sunday schools to try to extend their control over alien ethnic and racial groups and to instruct the nation in moral purity. The evangelicals in Britain and the United States first used Sunday schools to teach literacy to impoverished adults and children.[39]

The boarding school, another key element in the program of the Laos Mission, had long received particular attention by those working with the American Indians. They favored the strategy of segregate and assimilate, and the boarding school seemed to them an ideal way to accomplish that strategy.[40] Boarding schools for Indians, in fact, provided outstanding examples of Grob's description of institutional moral therapy for mental patients. The boarding schools attempted to instill in their Indian pupils that long list of rural, middle class evangelical

values alluded to frequently in this thesis as well as evangelical piety and the skills to survive in American society. It should be noted that government-sponsored schools acted as aggressively in their attempts to "reeducate" Indian children as did missionary boarding schools, and they both pursued the same goals of teaching white morality, piety, and mores to their "savage" charges.[41] The application of moral therapy to boarding school situations went beyond the Indian boarding schools, and the Protestant-dominated nineteenth-century American society frequently turned to boarding schools as one way to deal with potentially "dangerous" children, including orphans and those from poor families.[42]

Programs of literacy education also played a part in the evangelical campaigns of cultural conquest and social control. By the 1830s, evangelicals believed that literacy provided another channel through which they could transmit their piety and morality, and their frontier programs depended heavily on teaching literacy and distributing mountains of tracts and Bible portions. Literacy provided, furthermore, a means by which society could constantly reform itself because it gave the public direct access to literature needed to instruct it in moral, pious behavior[43]

When the Laos Mission, then, established parochial schools, Sunday schools, literacy classes, literacy as a test of the quality of church membership, domestic and industrial education programs, it used a strategy for religious and social control American evangelicals had long employed. It drew upon the worldview and the consequent experience of evangelicals, particularly Presbyterians, in dealing with the threatening other. Those threatening others embodied evil, disorder, and infidelity to the evangelicals, and one of the best ways evangelicals had of eliminating their threat was to put them and their children in classrooms where they could learn how to believe and behave as the "children of God" ought to believe and behave.

III

In addition to education, American evangelicals and their counterparts in northern Siam, used various forms of technology that presented a somewhat different approach to the relationship of missions to westernization than did education. Whereas educational activities directly engaged in moral therapy and social control and exemplified the strategy of segregate and assimilate, the importation of western building skills, sewing machines, or even printing technology did not do so directly. Yet, as was seen earlier, the Laos Mission could justify its uses of western techniques and technologies on the grounds that in one way or another they advance the "cause of Christ" in northern Siam.

Beneath those rationalizations lay a deeper evangelical habit of mind that identified progress and providence with technological advancement. Protestant Americans came to see railroads, canals, and rapid industrialization as the work of God leading the American nation ever upward towards the promised millennium. Protestants tended to look upon missions as a movement cut from the same cloth as technological advance. They, in fact, could look upon technological change as another type of reform that advanced in lockstep with the spread of education and other reform movements.[44]

The uses of medicine provide a case in point. The tradition of using medicine for missionary purposes went back to colonial times when Indian missionaries used prayer and bleedings to free Indians from the "heathen" influences to bring them under great missionary control.[45] As has been seen, in the nineteenth century, Protestants used medical institutions as elements in the campaign for moral reform. Dolan notes that Protestant zeal so dominated even public hospitals and asylums in antebellum New York City that the Catholic Church felt constrained to establish its own hospitals to protect its people from proselytization. In Protestant hospitals, Catholics felt surrounded by enemies.[46]

No single form of technology presented as clear a rationale for evangelical use for evangelistic purposes as did printing Protestant use of printing technology began during the Reformation when they mounted what one study refers to as the first propaganda campaign in history using the medium of printing. Luther, Calvin, and their followers used the printed word to make the Bible widely available in the vernacular languages, to spread their doctrines, and to attack the Catholic Church.[47] The Puritans brought printing with them to New England, where their missionaries not only translated and printed the Bible in Indian languages but also created a printed Indian-language literature as well.[48]

In the ensuing years, evangelicals used printing time and again to advance their cause against the forces of evil and disorder in American society. The American Tract Society, as already described, stood among the "Big Five" of the Evangelical United Front, and it, along with the American Bible Society, produced massive amounts of literature in the E.U.F. campaigns to "win" the South, the West, and the cities for evangelicalism. The Sunday School movement also gladly employed technological advances in printing to promote its cause.[49]

In the meantime, Lyman Beecher used the strategy of distributing printed tracts as early as 1806 in his moral reform crusade to influence public sentiment in favor of outlawing dueling. In later years evangelical reformers, such as those in the temperance movement, continued to rely on the distribution of printed tracts to try to mold public thinking.[50] Even during the Civil War, Northern evangelicals turned to the distribution of printed literature as one of the ways in which they tried to convert Union soldiers to evangelicalism.[51]

Printing, in short, fit back into the larger web of dualism because it joined education as a medium by which evangelicals argued their cause against the "outside world." The evangelical desire to convert the world forced it to engage in campaigns of persuasion, and Findlay notes that, "Propaganda materials in bewildering profusion thus became the order of the day in support of every evangelical society. The benevolent societies created their own periodicals and scattered other printed items by the hundreds of thousands on to the public."[52]

Thus, the Laos Mission's use of medicine, printing, and other technological advances amounted to something much more than opportunism. The missionaries did not engage in these activities simply because they looked like good ways to convert the heathen. Rather, they were drawn to the use of medicine, printing, and western technologies because of their worldview that identified technological advances with the superiority of Christian, American civilization. Those advances pointed to a progressive future that would one day attain the promised millennium They helped to reform society by providing channels for the propagation of evangelical ideas.

Conclusion

In a very important sense, then, evangelicals saw something much more than a piece of machinery when they looked at the printing press. They saw an idea. By the same token, the pills, the buildings, the literacy classes, and all of its other westernizing activities expressed the worldview of the Laos Mission, a world view it brought with it from evangelical America. The machinery and the brick and mortar and the schools rooms represented, finally, the hope of a Christian northern Siam that accepted not only the Christian religion but also the whole of Christianized American and western life.

Notes

[1] David M. Katzman, *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 134-37, 171.

[2] McGilvary, letter, 31 October 1869, *Foreign Missionary* 28(March 1870): 228; and McGilvary to Irving, 4 December 1872, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[3] McGilvary, *Half Century*, 195.

[4] Laos Mission Annual Report, September 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records.

[5] McGilvary, *Half Century*, 206-06; and Hallet, *A Thousand Miles*, 110.

[6] Swanson, "New Generation," 10-11.

[7] Anabelle K. Briggs, "Re-Stationed and Looking About," *Woman's Work for Woman* 16 (May 1901), 130.

[8] Edna S. Cole to Irving, 1 October 1880, vol. 4, BFM Records; and D. G. Collins to Mitchell, 9 July 1889, vol. 7, BFM Records.

[9] See descriptions of course work and teaching methods in Eliza L. Westervelt to Mitchell, 6 November 1888, vol. 6, BFM Records; William Clifton Dodd to Mitchell, 17 December 1889, vol. 7, BFM Records; and Collins to Mitchell, 9 July 1889, vol. 7, BFM Records.

[10] Kate N. Fleeson, "First Boarding-School for Girls at Lakawn, in Laos Land," *Woman's Work for Woman* 8(January 1893): 7-8.

[11] see Hughes, *Proclamation and Response*, 18.

[12] Wilson, letter, *Foreign Missionary*, 31(March 1872): 308; McGilvary, letter, 20 May 1878, *Foreign Missionary* 37(October 1878): 150; and Martin, letter, 9 June 1885, *Foreign Missionary*, 44(October 1885): 224-25.

[13] McGilvary to Irving, 1 November 1875, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[14] McGilvary to Irving, 4 December 1872, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[15] "Sessional Records," 46, 71.

[16] Laos Mission Annual Report, 1 October 1875 to 1 October 1876, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[17] Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 138-41, 152; Smith, *Siamese Gold*, 123-24.

[18] McGilvary to Irving, 10 April 1872, vol. 3, BFM Records.

[19] See E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present* 38 (1977): 56-97, for a cogent presentation of the cultural impact of changes in the conceptualization of time.

[20] see Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, 131-32.

[21] Swanson, "This Seed, 11-12.

[22] Clebsch, *From Sacred to Profance*, 15, 104-08; and Glyndon G. Van Deusen, "Some Aspects of Whig Thought and Theory in the Jacksonian Period," *American Historical Review* 63 (January 1958): 316.

[23] Glenn T. Miller, "Images of the Future in Eighteenth Century American Theology," *Americastudien/American Studies* 20(1975): 97-8; *cf.* Nye, *Almost Chosen People*, 12-6.

[24] J.C. Stewart-Robertson, “The Well-Principled Savage, or the Child of the Scottish Enlightenment," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 42 (July-September 1981): 503-25; Meyer, *Instructed Conscience*, esp. 47-8, 63-7; and Faler, "Cultural Aspects," 384-87.

[25] Frederick Binder, *The Age of the Common School, 1830-1865* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974), 48-51, 97-8.

[26] Gordon, "Patriots and Christians, 554, *passim.*

[27] Handy, *History*, 181-83; and Janet A. Miller, "Urban Education and the New City: Cincinnati's Elementary Schools, 1870 to 1914," *Ohio History* 88 (Spring 1979): 152-72.

[28] Leybrun, *Scotch-Irish*, 43, 57, 72-3; and Trinterud, *American Tradition*, 258-61.

[29] C. Harvey Geiger, *The Program of Higher Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: An Historical Analysis of Its Growth in the United States* (Cedar Rapids, IA: Laurance Press, 1940), 48-52, 55-6.

[30] Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment*, 171-72.

[31] Miller, *Revolutionary College*, 261, *cf.*260-70; and Trinterud, *American Tradition*, 271.

[32] Lewis Joseph Sherrill, *Presbyterian Parochial Schools* (1932; reprint, New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1969), 9-14, 25, 51, 108-23, 146-47.

[33] see Hood, *Reformed America*, 75ff; and Smith, *Seeds of Secularization*, 74ff.

[34] Geiger, *Higher Education*, 56; and Sherrill, *Parochial Schools*, 64-6.

[35] Rudolph, *Hoosier Zion*, 137-39, 159ff, 187.

[36] Edith J. Agnew and Ruth K. Barber, "The Unique Presbyterian School System of New Mexico," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 49 (Fall 1971): 197-221; Richard B. Hughes, "Old School Presbyterians: Eastern Invaders of Texas, 1830-1865," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 74 (January 1971): 324-36; and Hinckley, "Presbyterian Leadership," 744-45.

[37] Murray, *Presbyterians and the Negro*, 163-76.

[38] Topping, "Ogden Academy," 38-9.

[39] See Robert W. Lynn and Elliot Wright, *The Big Little School: Sunday Child of American Protestantism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Grover L. Hartman, "The Hoosier Sunday School: A Potent Religious/Cultural Force," *Indiana Magazine of History* 78 (September 1982): 215-44; Foster, *Errand of Mercy*, 78-81, 157-67; Cremin, *American Education*, 66-7; Handy, *History*, 179-80, 281-83; and Mohl, "Urban Missionary Movement," 121-23

[40] see Henry Warner Bowden, *American Indians and Christian Missions: Studies in Cultural Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 139-40; and Beaver, "Methods in American Missions," 134-38.

[41] Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 36ff. Several studies of individual schools make the same points. See esp. Trennert, "Educating Indian Girls"; Adams, "Education in Hues": David Wallace Adams, "Schooling the Hopi: Federal Indian Policy Writ Small, 1887-1917," *Pacific Historical Review* 48 (August 1979): 335-56; and Sally J. McBeth, "Indian Boarding Schools and Ethnic Identity: An Example from the Southern Plains Tribes of Oklahoma," *Plains Anthropologist*28 (May 1983): 119-28.

[42] See Trattner, *From Poor Law*, 109ff; for examples see, Marian J. Morton, "Temperance, Benevolence, and the City: The Cleveland Non-Partisan Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1874-1900," *Ohio History* 91 (1982): 68-9; and R.S Patterson and Patricia Rooke, "The Delicate Duty of Child Saving: Coldwater, Michigan, 1871-1896," *Michigan History* 61 (Fall 1977): 195-219.

[43] Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 22-6, 35; Cremin,*American Education*, 70-2; and Clebsch, *From Sacred to Profane*, 15.

[44] Miller, *Life of Mind*, 52-3; and Nye, *Almost Chosen People*, 12-16.

[45] Simmons, "Conversion," 205ff. See also Berkhofer, *Salvation and the Savage*, 115.

[46] Jay Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865*(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1975), 130-31.

[47] Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton, trans. David Gerard (London: NLB, 1976), 288-94, 295ff.

[48] Beaver, "Methods in American Missions," 145.

[49] Foster, *Errand of Mercy*, 71-7, 81, 108ff, 187-88; Hood, *Reformed America*, 168; and Boyer, *Urban Masses*, 45.

[50] Macler, "'True American Union,'" 49; and Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest*, 194-95.

[51] Smith, *Revivalism*, 76-7.

[52] Findlay, "The SPCTEW," 32.

Conclusion

In the nineteenth-century, the Laos Mission engaged in westernizing activities at the expense of its evangelistic agenda because its dualistic, evangelical, Old School Presbyterian perspective set rigid cognitive parameters for the scope of its work. Over and over again, that perspective returned to one simple fact: the world and all of reality was sliced into two distinct, incompatible, mutually exclusive spheres. Around that simple fact, American nineteenth-century evangelical culture erected a richly textured system of thought that turned simple-minded dualism into a grand world view. From the heights of that world view, evangelicals surveyed a coherent universe built on "common sense."

It seemed only sensible, to believe that evangelicalism must resist all other world views, ideologies, and theologies. By definition anything that denied the truth of evangelical Protestantism denied God and the true nature of the universe. It seemed only sensible, moreover, to devise strategies to convert those who believed the "wrong" things into believers in the Protestant truth. And so it went: revivalism seemed sensible because it provided the means to convert the unconverted. Millennialism and a belief in progress proved that the Protestant truth would eventually conquer all doubters and sinners. The ideas of civilization and savagism described the boundaries of the opposing spheres of good and evil and placed nations and societies in a comforting sociocultural schema. The belief in the United States as the New Israel, God's Chosen Nation, enabled evangelicals to subsume their nation and its republican values within the web of dualism.

And since the world was so obviously divided into opposing camps, it made only sense for evangelicals to seek to exert control over American society. How else could they preserve the purity its God-given millennial mission required of it? How else could they assimilate dangerous competitors? Social control, "of course," meant isolating the impure from the rest of society and exposing them to moral therapy. Over the course of the decades, the evangelical movement reached out to reform the nation through a series of crusades, great and small. In each case, evangelicals identified a corrupt enemy who endangered society and conducted its crusade to convert that enemy. They evangelized the poor, prostitutes, consumers of alcohol, slave holders, or even meat eaters. They evangelized Catholics, immigrants, Jews, Chinese, Mexican Americans, urbanites, frontier dwellers, Mormons, Deists, and the American Indians.

Dualism stood as much more than a theory interesting only to intellectual historians. The whole course of white America's attitudes towards and actions against the American Indian makes no sense apart from dualism. The history of nineteenth-century mental institutions, education, art, political institutions, family and gender relationships, and even wars (especially wars) makes equally little sense apart from the key elements of evangelical dualism. The history of nineteenth-century evangelicalism itself cannot be understood apart from the supposedly "simple" fact of its dualistic worldview. Dualistic thinking revealed itself in every facet of the movement, institutions, and events of evangelicalism.

The power of evangelical dualism lay in the fact that it defined itself as based upon eternal, biblical truth, the only trustworthy window onto the nature of reality available to the human race. The popular common sense philosophy that turned dualism into a philosophical system purported to provide people with a realistic, trustworthy method for judging truth from falsehood and right and wrong. It did so through a circular reasoning that allowed what evangelical beliefs to be the measure of what should be believed. Among Presbyterians, the

Princeton Theology linked common sense philosophy to orthodox Calvinism, conservative revivalism, and biblical literalism, making of this system of thought that same self-based standard of truth and moral behavior. By its own norms for truth, Presbyterian evangelicalism locked its worldview within itself so that its adherents must automatically reject contradictory belief systems out of hand.

It is fair to ask, how dualism could have such power over evangelicals as to determine not only how they thought but also how they acted. In his description of the dialectical process between society and the individual in the development of individual consciousness, Berger emphasizes that, as a rule, people are quite unaware that the process is even taking place. The social environment seems to them to be virtually identical with their natural environment.[1] Berger describes this process of "reification," as, "...the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra-human terms." Reification creates a paradox in which humanity produces a social reality while denying all the while that it does such a thing.[2] Trained to believe in the truths of the beliefs they learned from childhood, and taught that the very act of questioning those beliefs denied truth, evangelicals normally acted without question upon what they "knew" to be true.[3]

Evangelicals remained caught in this cyclical, unconscious mind set because, particularly in the case of the Presbyterians, their religious beliefs and their philosophical framework clearly taught them that only that which they believed and cherished made "sense". Anything else, they assumed, did not make sense and must be discounted as not true and not of the realm of the light. Reification, therefore, hardened the evangelical understanding of the world into a world view that found in the alien what it taught should be found: dangerous infidelity to God and Truth. The process Berger so aptly describes was complete. Evangelicals internalized dualism. They experienced it as an objective reality. And they externalized what they learned in a way that confirmed that dualism.

Emotion reinforced the power of evangelical dualism. The elaborate vocabulary evangelicals employed in reference to those outside the sphere of salvation captured the disdain, fear, revulsion, and anger evangelicals felt towards them. The emotional content of categories such as heathen, savage, infidel, idolater, degenerate, and uncivilized made it difficult for evangelicals to treat threatening others as anything more than objects for pity and conversion. The abolitionist, the teetotaler, the reformer, and the missionary shouted always and again the battle cry of evangelicalism, "No Compromise!" Emotional revulsion against evil kept that commandment uppermost in evangelical minds.

Essentially a conservative movement, evangelicalism aimed at preserving orthodox theology, established morality, and traditional mores. In the nineteenth-century it stood for the rural past against urbanization, frontier barbarism, and Indian savagism. It stood, that is, for social order and morality against all of those forces that it perceived as threatening Protestant hegemony.

Evangelicalism's aggressive-defensive posture grew out of its dualistic conservatism. Believing in the superiority of the old ways, it displayed a siege mentality in its battle to conserve the old. It attempted to maintain the purity of its institutions and organizations while attacking the impure from its purified, protected core. Evangelicalism, at one and the same time, sealed itself off from the outside world while crusading to expand its boundaries and bring more "lost souls" into their safety. Through its reform campaigns, it forayed out into enemy territory to establish new bases of purity and morality.

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Operating out of evangelicalism's dualistic frame of mind, the Laos Mission defined northern Thai religion and culture in what amounted to a self-fulfilling prophesy. Defining as heathen and uncivilized anything beyond the pale of their own religious and social heritage, Presbyterian missionaries found what they knew they would: uncivilized, degraded, immoral, superstitious, illogical, dead heathenism. Virtually every aspect of northern Thai society fell, in their eyes, within the domain of Satan. The members of the Laos Mission, in other words, entered northern Siam with an already internalized dualism that they experienced as objective reality. They then externalized that dualism in such a way as to confirm and cement its reality, for them, in northern Siam.

Here we must return to the "prime directive" of evangelical dualism: no compromise with the enemies of God. Nineteenth century evangelicalism, with its revivalistic, perfectionist heritage prevented the Laos Mission from attempting any adaptations of northern Thai mores to their purpose of Christianizing the region. It had to preserve the purity of its own beliefs and structures. It had to win a complete victory over heathenism. Emotionally, as well as ideologically, the missionaries could not allow themselves to be canny in adapting their religion to the culture of the region. Nor could they patiently accept "corruptions" in the short term. The ideology of dualism locked the missionaries away from northern Thai culture and society, and they had, then, no choice but to use American ideas, institutions, and technologies in their work.

Dualism created a dilemma the Laos Mission could neither escape nor solve. On its home ground in the United States, conservative evangelical dualism sought to protect orthodox religion and traditional society from the ravages of social change. But in northern Siam the Laos Mission tried to use this conservative dualism as an instrument of radical social revolution. The dynamics of their world view simply did not fit the missionaries' use of it: they were not revolutionaries with a vision of a great new society. They, rather, sought to recreate an alien way of life in northern Siam while hiding behind the walls of their evangelical fortresses, the compounds and institutions of the mission itself. While revolutionaries travel light, hide themselves among the people, and speak to the desires of people for change, the Laos Mission carried a heavy agenda that divorce it from the lives of the people.

The aggressive-defensive posture of evangelicalism trapped the Laos Mission into a mode of operation designed to frustrate its goal of Christianizing northern Siam. Evangelical defensiveness constantly erected barriers of strangeness between itself and the people. It demanded that those who accept Christianity go through a deculturalization process that radically altered their social situation. In overtly attacking the whole northern Thai social structure, Evangelical aggressiveness gave the missionaries the appearance of interlopers who had to be resisted. It was hardly the way to run a social revolution.

Another key to the problem of why the missionaries conducted themselves as they did lies in the dynamics of Christianization and westernization itself. After "deciding" that they could borrow nothing from northern Thai religion and society, the missionaries imported more and more of their own culture in ever expanding circles of activities that, in turn, thoroughly distracted them from evangelizing northern Siam. Education provided an outstanding example. The missionaries saw that in order to spread Christianity they had to teach "the knowledge of the Lord" in schools. But they could not use northern Thai schools, curricula, or methods of instruction because Buddhism dominated northern Thai education. They had to create an entirely new system of education. In order to do that, they had to build proper school buildings, procure proper teaching equipment, train teachers, devise suitable curricula, and produce textbooks.

Each of these activities drew the missionaries on by logical extensions to engage in still more activities. The construction of a school building took vast amounts of time as the

missionaries had to find building supplies, supervise construction, train craftsmen in new techniques, and create an administrative structure to support all of these other activities. Equipment had to be imported which meant still more time in lobbying the Board of Foreign Missions for funds, then locating sources of supplies, ordering those supplies, and then getting them shipped upriver to Chiang Mai. The production of textbooks required a press, intensive linguistic study, and translating materials into northern Thai.

At every twist and turn, then, the mission had to go on to still other activities that led it down still other avenues that, in turn, led it further and further way from its stated goal of changing the people' religious beliefs, until the mission became primarily an agent of westernization rather than Christianization. The task of recreating American evangelical culture in northern Siam proved to be a gargantuan undertaking. But given the defensive attitudes of the mission that caused them to fear for the purity of their religion if they took anything at all from northern Thai society, the Laos Mission had no choice. It dare not compromise with heathenism. It could use only that which came from the sphere of the good. They could only do what American Protestant missionaries around the world did, namely, import as much of the West as possible into the cultural situations where they worked.

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The members of the Laos Mission were conventional conservative Presbyterian evangelicals living out their conventional faith and piety in a most unconventional place. They made sense out of their situation through their dualism, a worldview that encompassed all of reality and truth to them. On the basis of that world view they believed that the only path to the conversion of the northern Thai to Christianity lay in reconstructing American evangelical values, mores, habits of mind, and religious institutions and practices in northern Siam. In the end, the overwhelming demands of westernization forced Christianization into the background so that the Laos Mission became a major source of westernization in northern Siam while that region remained firmly Buddhist and animist.

From within the logic of dualism, then, the Laos Mission did not act in a puzzling manner. The mission acted out the logical consequences of its dualistic world view believing, as it did, that it could convert the heathens only by removing them to a safe haven where the values, the moral behavior, the beliefs, and the institutions of missionary culture could sustain them in their acceptance of Christianity. How else, they would have asked, could one combat the evil terrors of heathenism? The magnificent edifice of evangelical dualism allowed no other strategy and no other set of activities to attain that strategy.

In the end, the members of the Laos Mission presented the spectacle of deeply committed, highly motivated people who wanted to change the world for the better and yet walled themselves off in a narrow system of prejudice that frustrated their commitment to assist others. Paradoxically, the very worldview that motivated them to go to northern Siam kept them from doing what they wanted to do once they arrive. Their experience reveals a pattern of paradox in which human fallibility twists, turns, fragments, and even frustrates human ideals in the strangest ways, especially for these missionaries who were doing what they thought was right in the only way they thought they could do it.

Notes

[1] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 106-08; Berger, *Sacred Canopy*, 89; and Berger, "Reification," 203-07.

[2] Berger and Luckmann, *Social Construction*, 106; cf. Berger, "Reification," 200-01.

[3] See Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 109-24.

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